

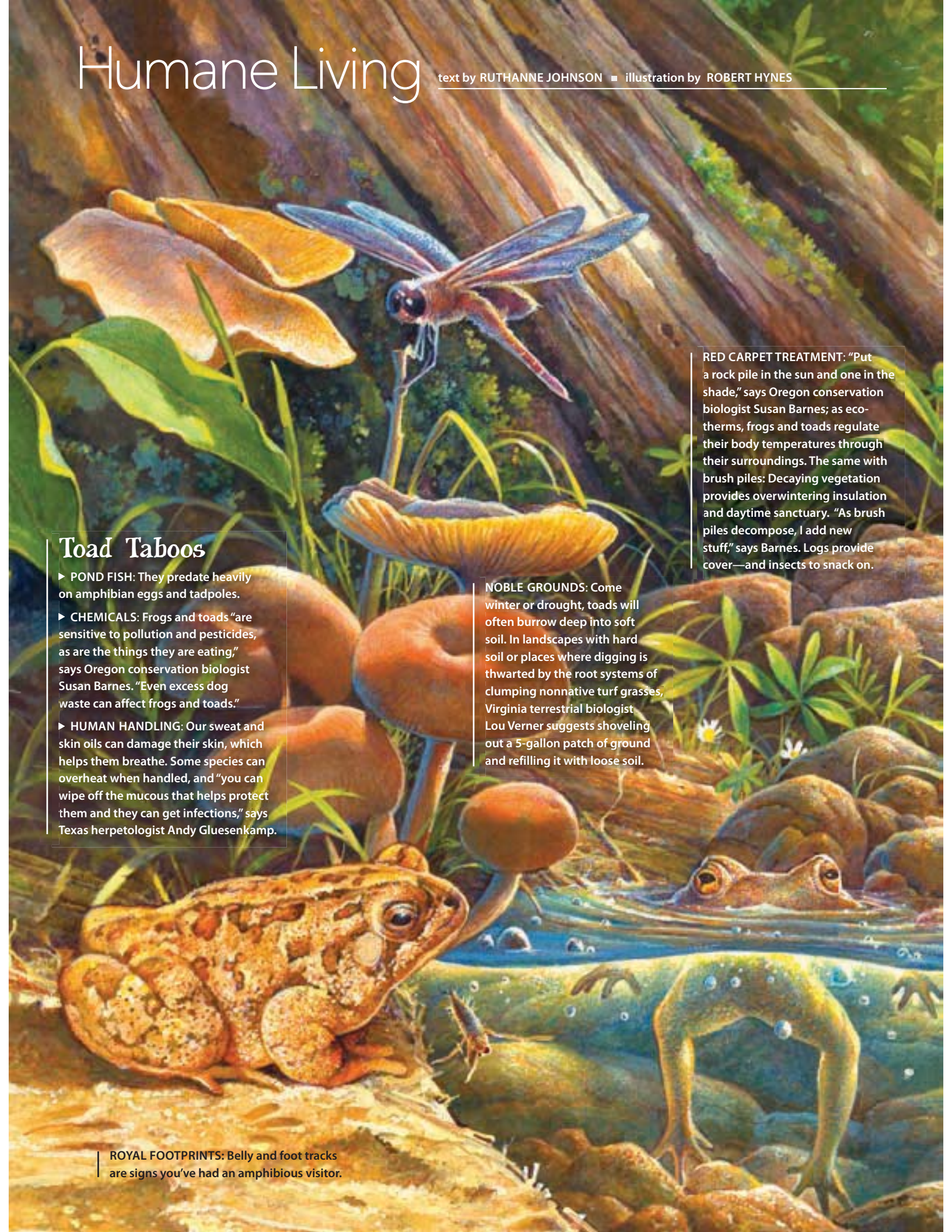
Toad Taboos

- ▶ **POND FISH:** They predate heavily on amphibian eggs and tadpoles.
- ▶ **CHEMICALS:** Frogs and toads “are sensitive to pollution and pesticides, as are the things they are eating,” says Oregon conservation biologist Susan Barnes. “Even excess dog waste can affect frogs and toads.”
- ▶ **HUMAN HANDLING:** Our sweat and skin oils can damage their skin, which helps them breathe. Some species can overheat when handled, and “you can wipe off the mucous that helps protect them and they can get infections,” says Texas herpetologist Andy Gluesenkamp.

NOBLE GROUNDS: Come winter or drought, toads will often burrow deep into soft soil. In landscapes with hard soil or places where digging is thwarted by the root systems of clumping nonnative turf grasses, Virginia terrestrial biologist Lou Verner suggests shoveling out a 5-gallon patch of ground and refilling it with loose soil.

RED CARPET TREATMENT: “Put a rock pile in the sun and one in the shade,” says Oregon conservation biologist Susan Barnes; as ectotherms, frogs and toads regulate their body temperatures through their surroundings. The same with brush piles: Decaying vegetation provides overwintering insulation and daytime sanctuary. “As brush piles decompose, I add new stuff,” says Barnes. Logs provide cover—and insects to snack on.

ROYAL FOOTPRINTS: Belly and foot tracks are signs you’ve had an amphibious visitor.



Welcome, Prince Charming

Create a humble abode for the backyard toad

The real world is no fairy tale for frogs, toads, and other amphibious critters: Though they've existed on Earth for over 300 million years, more than 160 of the 6,900 known species are believed to have gone extinct in the past few decades. A 2004 study found that nearly one-third of the species are threatened with extinction, including 427 that are critically endangered.

Among the causes are habitat loss, climate change, pollution, chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides, introduced species, and diseases spread by amphibians sold in the food industry and pet trade. With their permeable skin and land-to-water commute, amphibians are particularly vulnerable, making them one of the first to go when there's a problem. "They can't just fly off when something happens to their habitat," says Save the Frogs founder Kerry Kriger.

The good news is that animal lovers can help rescue Prince Charming by creating toad- and frog-friendly backyards, where shelter, food, and water abound. In return, amphibians eat garden pests and mosquitoes, and their crooning and croaking form the perfect soundtrack to a beautiful sunset. Says Virginia terrestrial biologist Lou Verner: "It adds a lot to the evening, just to know that you provided habitat for species that are struggling to keep a foothold."

This illustration shows some of the plants and animals found on the property of Lou Verner, a terrestrial biologist in St. Stephens Church, Va. For species information and tips specific to your region, contact a local botanic garden, nature center, wildlife agency, or university extension service.



FIT FOR A KING: Make a comfy hidey house by tipping a flowerpot on its side and burying it halfway in the soil, with a thick floor of dirt or mulch, moss, leaves, and twigs. Place in a cool, shady spot with a nearby sunny area. For Texas herpetologist Andy Gluesenkamp, even an old boot on his back porch became the perfect hideout for a visiting Gulf Coast toad.

NATIVE FEALTY: Native vegetation of various heights provides cover and moisture and attracts insects. On herpetologist Andy Gluesenkamp's Central Texas property, amphibians seek refuge in the deep leaf litter and roots and trunks of oak trees.

WATERY DOMAIN: Provide moisture, refuge, and a place to breed by maintaining a permanent pond or seasonal water source. In addition to providing food and cover with insect-attracting natives, add logs, sticks, and protruding rocks for egg-laying and sunning spots. To prevent freezing in winter, when some frogs hibernate on pond bottoms, ponds should be at least 3 feet deep and have a mechanized circulation system. Can't spring for a pond? Place a shallow flowerpot saucer or trash can lid in the ground, with the lip at ground level, and keep it filled with fresh, nonchlorinated water.

▲ **FIND TIPS** for building a backyard pond—and learn how to join The HSUS's Urban Wildlife Sanctuary Program—at humansociety.org/allanimals.



KRISTEN BELL

Best known for star turns in the hit TV show *Veronica Mars* and films including *Couples Retreat* and *When in Rome*, Kristen Bell's everyday role is friend to all animals and "mom" to two rescued dogs.

Growing up, Bell fostered dogs from the Michigan Humane Society. And she's continued to take in strays, volunteer for animal shelters, and support a number of animal protection causes. She serves on the honorary committee of The HSUS's Genesis Awards and—inspired by Sadie, an elderly dog rescued after Hurricane Katrina—launched the Special Needs Pet Project (crowdrise.com/kristenbell) to help The HSUS save animals from disasters and cruelty.



She recently appeared on the silver screen in *Big Miracle*, based on the true story of an Alaskan community that galvanized worldwide support to save whales trapped in sea ice. In this edited interview, Bell explains why she'll always champion animals in need.

You play a TV reporter in *Big Miracle*. If you were a reporter in real life, what animal issue would you cover?

I would like to expose people to the issue of factory farming, which has long been taboo since people tend to shy away from the seedy underbelly that is our meat, poultry, and dairy industry. There are so many ways to support humane farming with very little effort on the part of the consumer. I'd also like to promote pet adoptions. I've also learned a lot about the tens of millions of sharks killed each year for their fins, most to make shark fin soup. Besides the brutality with which they are harvested, many sharks are now on the endangered species list, and that can have drastic effects on ocean ecosystems.

How have your pets shaped your views on animal protection?

Growing up, I felt my dogs were my best friends. I simply cannot imagine not standing up for my best friends. I have two rescue dogs now, and they give me more love. They know when I'm sad or sick or angry, and none of that stops them from pursuing a cuddle. They are the loveliest creatures I know.

Why is compassionate living important to you?

I feel better about my life when I know I am making an effort to stand up for what I believe in. I think living by example is the best way to make change.

I feel better about my life when I know I am making an effort to stand up for what I believe in. I think living by example is the best way to make change.



BOOK SHELF

"In every culture throughout the world ... there are people who love dogs," writes Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson in *Dogs Make Us Human*, a celebration of the human-canine bond. The 100 stunning images, by wildlife photographer Art Wolfe, cross all continents and cultures: from



urbanites in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park to tribesmen in the remote New Guinea highlands. The one constant is the dogs, whether pampered Pomeranians or hardworking herding types; they've been integral members of the human family for at least 15,000 years. Masson explores some of the theories surrounding the evolution of this unique friendship, but for the most part lets the photographs speak to the core truth: "We want to be around them as much as they want to be around us."

Sharks have a bad reputation—and they have paid a heavy price for it. Tens of millions are slaughtered each year for shark fin soup. Thousands more are killed in tournaments, their bodies strung up like trophies at marinas. They're even culled to appease beachgoers. In *Demon Fish*, *Washington Post* environmental reporter Juliet Eilperin travels throughout the world to study the history and behavior of sharks, those who kill them, and those who protect them. With one-fifth of the world's shark species facing extinction, her book is a timely reminder of the vulnerability of our



oceans' greatest predators. "Sharks are among us, and ... we are about to decide whether we will coexist or not," Eilperin writes. "... The choice is ours, not theirs."

The Amazing Tofu Makeover

Tofu. Many Americans still view the Asian staple as a flavorless blob of coagulated bean curd. Until a few years ago, John Scharffenberger felt the same: “Tofu was something you would throw into things if you were avoiding animal protein. It was sort of benign but nothing interesting.”

But a trip to a local farmers market in 2009 convinced the Berkeley, Calif., entrepreneur otherwise. At one vendor’s stand, he sampled a five-spiced nugget from Hodo Soy Beanery, a small tofu maker in Oakland. The firm exterior gave way to a creamy center that melted in his mouth. “It surprised me that something related to tofu was so delicious,” Scharffenberger says.

The man famous for making sparkling wines and fine chocolates had stumbled onto a small yet growing food trend—artisanal tofus in a range of flavors and textures, crafted from the best organic ingredients and a blend of old and new technologies.

One of these tofu innovators is Twin Oaks Community Foods in Central Virginia, long known for its handcrafted tofu. Today, the brand includes the More Than Tofu line, with flavors like Indian masala, spicy Thai, and garlic shiitake available at many Whole Foods Markets and independent natural foods stores in the eastern U.S. “It has the seasoning mixed throughout the curds; it’s not just marinated and seasoned on the outside,” says Jon Kessler, who helped develop the flavor-infused tofus. “I had one customer tell me she had to cut back because they taste like candy and she couldn’t keep them in the refrigerator.”



Scharffenberger was so impressed with Hodo Soy Beanery’s creations that he joined the company as an adviser and today is co-CEO. His mission: to convince Americans to give tofu its due. That includes people close to home: “My mother told me, ‘I’ve never had tofu.’ I said, ‘Mom, you have. I gave it to you last year and you loved it.’ She said, ‘That was tofu?’ ”

Wherever you live, artisanal tofu is likely available at local farmers markets, restaurants that specialize in tofu dishes, or natural foods stores. “The key to modern cooking is diversity and convenience,” Scharffenberger says. “The nice thing is that tofu has it all. ... It’s worth a second try.” — Ruthanne Johnson

Simple Italian Herb Baked Ziti



Flavored tofu lends itself to a quick, family-friendly meal. Extra time? Add sautéed onions, garlic, and vegetables to the mix. Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound pasta** such as ziti, spirals, or small shells
- 3 cups of your favorite Italian tomato sauce**
- 16 ounces Italian-flavored fresh tofu**
(such as Twin Oaks’ More Than Tofu Italian herb flavor or Small Planet’s garlic and herb flavor)*
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon sea salt and dash of pepper**
- 1 cup non-dairy mozzarella cheese**, grated (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350° F and blend tofu, oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
2. Cook pasta al dente, according to package directions, and drain.
3. Layer pasta, tofu mixture, and tomato sauce in 2-quart baking dish.
4. Sprinkle with non-dairy cheese.
5. Bake for 15–20 minutes.

* If your local stores don’t carry Italian-flavored fresh tofu, substitute 16 ounces of extra firm tofu (the freshest you can find) mixed well with 2 teaspoons of Italian seasoning.

➤ FOR MORE RECIPES, visit humanesociety.org/recipes.