In Praise of the Natural Dog

By Michael W. Fox, Ph.D., Dr. Ph. M. McAdor, DVM

The act of training dogs is an arduous one, but it is also a rewarding one. It requires patience, understanding, and above all, love. Dogs are not just pets, they are members of our families. They bring joy and companionship into our lives, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are treated with respect and kindness.

The process of training dogs involves teaching them commands and behaviors that will help them become well-behaved and well-adjusted members of society. This can be a challenging task, especially if the dog is not well-socialized or if it has any behavioral issues. However, with patience and perseverance, it is possible to train even the most difficult dog.

Training dogs is not only a way to keep them safe and healthy, but it is also a way to strengthen the bond between the dog and its owner. It is an opportunity to spend quality time together, to learn about each other's strengths and weaknesses, and to develop a mutual understanding.

In the end, the act of training dogs is not just about teaching them commands and behaviors. It is about love, respect, and compassion. It is about understanding and appreciating the unique qualities that make each dog special.

Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., HSUS vice president, Educational Initiatives, formerly oversaw the activities of all regional offices.
natural domesticated animals, such as chicken and sheep. They also defend their territory from intruders, including dogs new to the neighborhood; it is further enhanced by-products. In poor communities that lack sewage and garbage-disposal services, these dogs play an important public-health role. Natural dogs also readily adapt to living with humans and domesticated animals if they are raised in such an environment from puppyhood. Natural dogs become very protective of their adoptive human “pack,” including the family’s territory and property. They play with and guard young children, protect livestock, and, in the jungle or bush, hunt and roam with men and boys at the forge for food or tend live stock. Indirectly, natural dogs may even benefit other free-living animals by scaring them away from the fields and livestock of farmers who would retaliate for any damage done. Yet, natural dogs remain widely feared. While some people befriend them, even take them into their homes, many react to the dogs’ presence with indifference or active hostility. When free-roaming dogs suffer a rabies epidemic, for example, villagers often respond by clubbing, spearing, or stoning any sick dogs, including those that are not necessarily rabid. Like other paragons of self-sufficiency, within human environments they often have difficulty subsisting. When war, drought, or famine afflicts the human community, the natural-dog community also suffers. In some societies the dogs may be killed. Subsidized rabies and distemper vaccinations, routine anti-parasite treatments, and effective birth control are needed to help free-roaming natural dogs whose circumstances cause them to suffer. Natural dog look-alikes can be found from Detroit to Delhi, Rio to Rome. Anyone looking for a good canine companion should visit his/her local animal shelter. Natural dogs, and those who resemble them, have extollent temperaments, provided they have been socialized and not abused. I can virtually guarantee that, at any shelter at any time, you will find at least one such dog waiting to be adopted into a loving home. With a little experience or advice, you can easily pick out an adult or puppy with the exemplary traits of the natural dog’s characteristics. A nonthreatening, inquisitive, friendly human “pack.” Insect, left: To avoid frightening inquisitive culvers, a natural dog approaches them with a nonthreatening crawl. Above: Humans who befriend free-roaming dogs and provide them with handouts help protect the dogs from diseases they might otherwise acquire while hunting or scavenging for food.