



Pets for Life

A Look at the Relationship Between People and Their Companion Animals

A study and activity guide for high-school students and their teachers



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For more information on companion animals and animal protection issues, write to The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, or call (202) 452-1100. Visit The HSUS on the Web at www.hsus.org. For more information about The HSUS's *Pets for Life* campaign, please visit www.petsforlife.org.

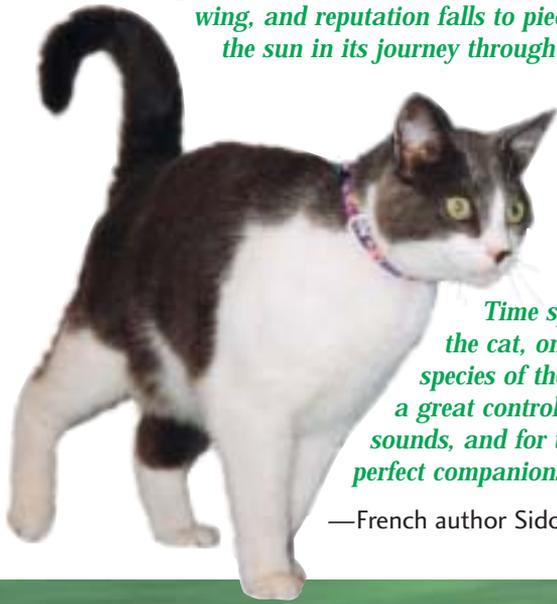
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The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground when the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only to be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wing, and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.

—Senator George G. Vest,
speaking to a jury about a dog,
Old Drum, who died in 1869



Time spent with cats is never wasted. By associating with the cat, one only risks becoming richer. I am indebted to the species of the cat for a particular kind of honorable deceit, for a great control over myself, for a characteristic aversion to brutal sounds, and for the need to keep silent for long periods of time. Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet.

—French author Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette

Where in this wide world can a man find nobility without pride, friendship without envy or beauty without vanity? Here: where grace is laced with muscle and strength by gentleness confined. He serves without servility; he has fought without enmity. There is nothing so powerful, nothing less violent; there is nothing so quick, nothing less patient.

—from “Ode to the Horse” by Ronald Duncan



Animals have been our friends and helpers for thousands of years. They've shared our burdens, added to our joy, and showed us the true meaning of friendship. If you've been fortunate enough to experience a positive relationship with an animal—whether it be cat, dog, horse, parakeet, rabbit, or any number of small critters—then you know that the bond between people and companion animals is one to be protected and cherished.

As the largest animal protection organization in the world, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) strives to help all animals. Our efforts to

help companion animals include support services for animal shelters nationwide, educational programs to combat animal cruelty, and legislative efforts to end practices that exploit and harm animals, such as greyhound racing and puppy mills. Our Pets for Life campaign seeks to preserve the special bond between people and companion animals. To that end, it offers a variety of programs to empower pet caregivers to solve the problems that threaten their relationships with pets. For more information about The HSUS and its programs, please visit www.hsus.org.

Education: The First Step

All positive change begins with knowledge. That’s why our youth education division, the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education, endeavors to teach young people about the important issues facing animals today. One of the ways we do that is through our series of study and activity guides for high-school students and their teachers. (View our other study and activity guides online at www.humaneteen.org. See “Get Into the

If you undertake one of the projects or activities in this book, write to us about your experience. We may feature you in HumaneTeen, www.humaneteen.org, our website for teens active in animal protection. To be considered, send your name, age, and a brief description of your project or activity to humaneteen@nahee.org.



Issues.”) *Pets for Life* will help you learn more about the furry, feathered, and finned friends with whom we share our lives, the important role animal shelters play in helping them, and simple, effective

ways you can make a difference.

As you read through this guide, we encourage you to take time to review the critical-thinking questions throughout. And consider taking up one of the projects or activities in the various “Explore the Issues” or “Take Action” sections.

We’ve seen it again: With energy and enthusiasm, teens have the potential to make an enormous difference in the lives of animals, both in their communities and nationwide. Give it a try!

Pets for Life is intended to give you an overview of people’s relationship with pets, humane issues affecting companion animals, and ways you can help animals in your community. For more information about specific animals and pet care, please visit the “Pets” section of www.hsus.org. Helpful resources are also listed at the end of this guide.



Our Animal Friends

There’s never been a better time to be a companion animal. Although all animals are considered property under current U.S. laws, most people have moved far beyond that way of thinking. Today, animals are more likely to be treated as companions, confidantes, coworkers, and family members than ever before. About 62% of all American households include at least one companion animal, which means more than 63 million homes in the United States have a pet.

A Look at Pet Caregivers

Before we go on to discuss pets, let’s take a look at the people who choose to include them in their families. (When possible, we’ve replaced the commonly used phrase “pet owner” with “caregiver” throughout to reflect The HSUS’s belief that companion animals should be treated as friends and family members, not as property.) Every year, ani-

Number of pets in U.S., 2001 -2002

Pet	Population
Cats	73,000,000
Dogs	68,000,000
Fish	165,000,000
Birds	19,000,000
Small animals	19,000,000

Source: American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, Inc.

mal-related organizations, such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA), determine the **demographics** (statistical data of a population) of pet caregivers. Here are just a few of those results:

- Families with children between the ages of 5 and 17 are the most likely to have pets; people least likely to have pets are singles and the elderly.

- Highest rates of pet caregiving are in the Mountain Pacific and West South Central regions of the U.S. The lowest rates are in the Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and New England regions.

- The more people in a family, the less emotionally attached they are to their pets.



- Cat caregivers report less attachment to their cats than dog caregivers do to their dogs.

- Women report more attachment to pets than do men.

- Households with yearly incomes under \$30,000 report more emotional attachment to pets than do households with incomes over \$50,000. Similarly, college graduates report less attachment to pets than do people with less education.

- Dog caregivers spend an average of \$196 annually in veterinary expenses; cat caregivers spend \$104 annually.

Source: *State of the Animals 2003*

Another survey by the APPMA determined how caregivers acquired their cats and dogs. They found that about 74% of dogs were acquired from sources that typically required some forethought and planning, such as from a breeder, an animal shelter, or a pet store. Interestingly, only 38% of cats were acquired with forethought. Instead, most people received their cats from friends or relatives or took in strays on a whim. This information is significant because it may play a role in pet relinquishment, discussed at length in “Animal Shelters: A Haven in Need,” later in this guide.

Think About It

- Why, do you suppose, do the AVMA and APPMA compile pet caregiver demographics?
- Which, if any, pet caregiver demographics listed above surprise you? Explain.

- Why might animal protection organizations be particularly interested in how caregivers acquire their pets?

Explore the Issues

Do pets resemble their caregivers? Are there really personality differences between “dog people” and “cat people”? Are dogs who are closely attached to their caregivers less able to solve problems? Researchers are hard at work



answering these fascinating questions (and many others) about the relationship between people and companion animals. Keep up-to-date with the latest human/animal research with *Anthrozoös*, the journal of the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ), and *Society and Animals*, the journal of human-animal studies published by Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PSYETA). If your school library does not subscribe to these quarterly publications, ordering information for *Anthrozoös* is available at www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CCAB/anthro~1.htm. Ordering information and article summaries for *Society and Animals* are available at www.psyeta.org/sa/.

A Special Bond

Given that pets often require a significant amount of time, money, and energy, why do so many people go to the effort of establishing such close bonds with companion animals? Perhaps the easiest and most widely accepted answer is that animals offer that rarest of commodities: unconditional love. Unlike people, pets don’t care what we look like, how much money we make, what mistakes we’ve made, or what grades we earn. Whether we’ve had a bad day at school or on the job, pets greet us affectionately and hang on our every word once we walk through the door. The world around us may always be changing, but our companion animals’ love for us stays the same. As the following survey indicates, the vast majority of people keep pets for emotional reasons.

Reasons people give for having pets	% of pet caregivers
For the pleasure of having [the pet]	79
To give love to	67
To cheer home	64
To receive love from	63
As an adult's companion	60
As a child's companion	46
To have something to take care of	34
For protection	33
To teach a child responsibility	29
To keep another pet company	20
To control rodents	11
For breeding	3
For entering in pet shows	2

Source: Doyle Dane Bernbach, Inc., 1983

As highly social animals, humans need to connect with and establish relationships with others. Companion animals give us an opportunity to bring the adage “friends are chosen family” to life. Many pet caregivers consider their animals members of the family—and treat them that way, too! (It’s no wonder that “Baby” is one of the most popular pet names.) In studies, researchers have observed similarities between the way people treat infants or small children and companion animals. For example, they tend to use a higher-pitched voice and ask simple, repetitive questions when speaking to pets, in a pet caregiver’s version of “baby talk.” Likewise, games in which people engage pets—catch, peek-a-boo, and hide-and seek—tend to be like those played with small children.

Explore the Issues

Some recent surveys show just how Americans feel about their pets: 63% give their dogs presents at Christmas, and 75% take them for rides in the family car; 65% of cat owners share their beds with snoozing cats. More than a third of all pet caregivers display their pets’ photos at home (Gallup Organization, 1996). And according to a *Psychology Today* survey, 99% of pet owners talk to their pets, and 25% celebrate their pets’ birthday.



What other fun or interesting statistics can you uncover about people and pets? Conduct your own investigation online. Enter phrases such as “pet survey,” “attitudes toward pets,” and “pet statistics” into a search engine. Some of the results are sure to surprise you—and bring a smile to your face.



Think About It

- Of all the animal species in the world, what factors may have influenced why we have developed such a close relationship with dogs? Cats? Horses?
- Which of the following best describes the kind of relationship you have with the animals in your life: master-subject, owner-property, friend-companion, or parent-child?
- One of the most telling signs that pets are viewed differently from animals in the wild is that we assign names to pets. Doing so gives each animal his or her own identity and personality and puts the animal on the same level as people we know and care about. Interestingly, the names we give to our pets often have stories or memories attached to them. If you have a pet, what is his or her name? Why did you name your pet that? What, if anything, does the name say about how you view the animal? About how you view yourself?

Most Popular Pet Names

1. Max
2. Sam
3. Lady
4. Bear
5. Smokey
6. Shadow
7. Kitty
8. Molly
9. Buddy
10. Brandy
11. Ginger
12. Baby
13. Misty
14. Missy
15. Pepper
16. Jake
17. Bandit
18. Tiger
19. Samantha
20. Lucky
21. Muffin
22. Princess
23. Maggie
24. Charlie
25. Sheba
26. Rocky
27. Patches
28. Tigger
29. Rusty
30. Buster

Source: ASPCA

Take Action

In the “Think About It” above, we asked you about the significance of your pet’s name. Alexa Albert, a researcher from the University of Rhode Island, took that question to 320 pet caregivers in Provi-

dence. She discovered that dogs were more likely to have been given human names than were cats. She also found that people who considered their pets “family members” or “extremely/very important” were significantly more likely to not only have pets with human names but also nicknames. Albert concluded that pet names were an indicator of animals’ status within the household.

Does Albert’s theory hold up in your community? Conduct a simple survey of pet caregivers in your community. To get a more accurate picture, it’s best to interview as many people as possible. (For help analyzing your data, you may wish to seek the help of a math or science teacher.) A sample survey appears below.

Name of pet _____
Type of pet _____
I consider my pet a member of the family. <input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> agree somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> disagree
I consider my pet <input type="checkbox"/> extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> very important <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat important <input type="checkbox"/> not important
I regularly use a nickname for my pet <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

Feel free to add questions in an attempt to uncover correlations between pet names and other aspects of the human-pet relationship. For example, are pets with human names more likely to be allowed to sleep in their caregivers’ bed? More likely to be given birthday gifts? Less likely to be allowed to roam?

Does your data support Albert’s theory? Contradict it? Consider sending the results of your survey to us at humaneteen@nahee.org. We may publish it in HumaneTeen.

More Than Friends

They provide love and companionship, a listening ear, cuddles, and hugs. They bring laughter and play into our lives. Some pets even make us exercise when we’re feeling lazy. Instinctively, pet caregivers just know that pets are good for people. In recent years, research has been backing up those beliefs and proving companion animals can benefit people in tangible ways. In particular, many studies



have been undertaken to determine the effects of companion animals on human health. While this field of research—often dubbed the human-animal bond, or simply “the bond”—is relatively new,

the results so far are promising. For example, take the relationship between blood pressure and animal companionship. Numerous studies have shown that while talking to people causes blood pressure to rise, talking to and touching pets lowers it. (Exactly why this happens is unknown, but it has been suggested that pets’ nonjudgmental and affectionate nature decrease stress, long believed to raise blood pressure.) Other studies have shown similarly positive results. Based on those studies, scientists have found that having pets decreases the chances of dying from heart disease; pet caregivers have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels; and people with AIDS who have pets experience reduced stress and less depression. This area of research is continually growing. To help you keep up with current research on the health benefits of animals, we’ve included several resources for you to investigate.

Think About It

Do you think it is important to study the effects of companion animals on human health? Why or why not?

Pets are also known for helping people in social settings. As icebreakers and image-makers, companion animals serve an important role in helping people make friends and practice social skills. For example, virtually anyone who’s had a dog has experienced the **social lubricating effect** of pets at one time or another: While walking a dog, people are often smiled at by strangers, asked to pet the dog, and told stories about strangers’ own pets. Researchers have investigated pets’ roles as social facilitators and have found that people with pets are actually perceived by others as more attractive and as having more desirable personality characteristics. The classic example, of course, is that politicians are considered more trustworthy when pictured with pets. (President Nixon’s dog, Checkers, is often credited with boosting his image!) Various studies have also proven what com-

mon sense tells us: People are simply more likely to be noticed and spoken to when they're with their companion animals.

Still other research has focused on the success of **animal-assisted therapy (AAT)**. An ever-growing field, AAT seeks to improve the social, mental, emotional, and physical well-being of people through



© R. Stockdale/Stockdale Studios

interaction with animals. The AAT programs you may be most familiar with are those in which nursing home residents enjoy regular visits from volunteer dogs, cats, and even rabbits. But animals are also increasingly

being used in programs to help disabled and abused children, prisoners, students with learning disabilities, and people with a wide range of medical conditions, from cerebral palsy to traumatic brain injury. (For more about the role of horses in AAT, see "Horses as Healers," p. 21.) While the majority of these programs do not record data or measure results, studies have shown that AAT programs offer many benefits, among them reducing the loneliness of residents in long-term care facilities and increasing people's social and verbal interactions.

Think About It

Companion animals have been compared with psychotherapists, who listen and empathize but don't make judgments. How might this characteristic help abused or troubled children in AAT programs reconnect with people and heal from traumatic events?

Do you think it is important for people involved in AAT programs to record information and participate in studies? Explain your answer.

Explore the Issues

Can an Appaloosa a day keep the doctor away? Do

a little digging into the fascinating field of animal-assisted therapy. For a social studies or English class, prepare a presentation that explores AAT and its role within your community. Ask a local animal-assisted therapist to speak to your class about his or her experiences working with others. Some great sources of information include Delta Society, www.deltasociety.org, Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy, www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/publist1.html, and the Center for the Human-Animal Bond, www.vet.purdue.edu/chab.

Take Action

If you're interested in taking part in an AAT program (and think your pet would be great at it), visit www.deltasociety.org to learn more about the opportunities available. The organization also offers a video and educational material to help train your pet to be a suitable helper. If you do become involved in AAT, e-mail humaneteen@nahee.org. We may feature you in www.humaneteen.org!

Think About It

Animal shelters, whose common goal is finding good homes for the animals in their care, are typically categorized as one of two types. **Open-admission shelters** (also called open-door) accept every animal coming through their doors but often have to **euthanize** (humanely kill) unadopted animals to make space for others. **Limited-admission** (also called "no-kill") **shelters** do not euthanize animals they feel are healthy and adoptable but may turn away animals because they have no room or because the animals are considered unadoptable. Before you go any further, write down your opinions and feelings about both types of shelters. We'll come back to your statements later in this book.

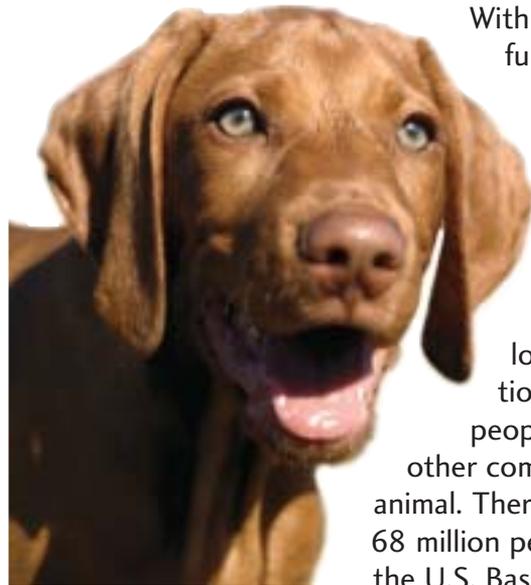


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Celebrating Dogs and Cats

Their fuzzy faces help sell products from cars to cola. Greeting cards abound with photos of them in every imaginable shape and size. Their photos and stories fill our comic strips, magazines, books, television screens, and websites. When it comes to caring about animals, it's raining cats and dogs in America. More people have dogs and cats than any other pet, making them the most popular pets in the U.S. (Though more fish are kept as pets than any other, only about 12% of U.S. households have them.) More than a third of all U.S. households include a dog or a cat. Here we'll take a look at our canine and feline friends and explore some of the issues that face them.

About Dogs



With their soulful eyes, thumping tails, and friendly nature, dogs have shared a longer relationship with people than any other companion animal. There are some 68 million pet dogs in the U.S. Based on the

discovery of human and dog fossils and cave drawings depicting dogs, experts believe that dogs and people have enjoyed a special relationship for at least 12,000 years. Most scientists now agree that all dogs are descended from wolves. The most popular theory holds that the two species forged a bond thousands of years ago, when wolves began hanging out near human families to feed on the scraps and debris they left behind. Eventually, people began taming wolf cubs and breeding those with the most submissive or affectionate natures. Over thousands of years, those wolves became today's **domesticated** dogs.

Think About It

Wolves have been around for 5 million years and have been hunted nearly to extinction. Dogs have been around for just 12,000 years or so, and yet their numbers continue to rise. What do you suppose accounts for the difference in each animal's ability to succeed?

A Dog for Every Purpose

From pug to puli to Pomeranian, it's hard to believe

Fast Facts: Dogs

Family: *Canidae*

Species: *Canis familiaris*

Relatives: *wolf, fox, coyote, jackal*

Life span: 8 to 16 years

Pet population in U.S.: 68 million

that the several hundred dog breeds that exist today descended from one common ancestor. Through selective breeding for traits such as bone structure, fur type, personality, and function, people have managed to mold dogs into a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and abilities. Today, **purebred**

dogs—those whose parents are of the same breed—are typically categorized into groups, according to their function.

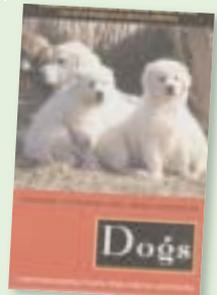
The American Kennel Club (AKC) uses the seven groups below to classify the 150 breeds it recognizes. Other breed registry organizations (such as the United Kennel Club) use different group designations.

The **hound** group includes some of the oldest known purebred dogs.

Another Point of View

Authors Lorna and Raymond Coppinger disagree with the

popular theory that people shaped wolves into today's domesticated dogs. Instead, they argue that domestic



dogs evolved as a result of natural selection, with no help from humans. Read their fascinating theories about domestic dogs in *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

The greyhound, Ibizan hound, and pharaoh hound were popular hunting dogs in ancient Egypt, and the elegant Saluki can be traced back more than 7,000 years to Sumeria. Scent hounds, which include basset hounds and bloodhounds, share similar features, such as floppy ears, long muzzles, and powerful noses, to aid them in tracking prey by scent. Bred to chase down prey, sight hounds, such as Afghan hounds, Salukis, and greyhounds, were selectively bred to have lightly built bodies, excellent vision, and amazing speed.

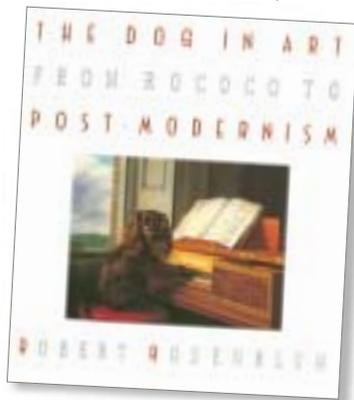


out game for hunters. Retrievers' soft mouths allow them to retrieve birds without damaging the body. Bred to work closely with people, sporting dogs are known for their trainability and good nature. This group includes some of the U.S.'s most popular breeds, such as golden retrievers and Labrador retrievers.



Explore the Issues

A portrait of a pouty spaniel on his mistress's lap. An elegant sculpture of a hound at rest. An oil painting of hounds on the hunt. Around the world, dogs have been celebrated in art, from ancient cave drawings to modern paintings. Research and write an art history paper about dogs as subjects in art. What can you surmise about the changing perception of dogs, given how they are represented in the works you have studied? For excellent resources on dogs in art, you may wish to check out Iain Zazcek's *Dog: A Dog's Life in Art and Literature* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2000) and Robert Rosenblum's *The Dog in Art: From Rococo to Post-Modernism* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988). Commercial websites that sell art prints, such as www.art.com and www.allposters.com, may also be useful in your research.



Think About It

Top Ten Dog Breeds Registered by the AKC, 2001

1. Labrador retriever
2. golden retriever
3. German shepherd
4. dachshund
5. beagle
6. Yorkshire terrier
7. poodle
8. boxer
9. Chihuahua
10. Shih Tzu



- Take a look at the current "Top Ten" list of registered dogs. What kinds of events or publicity do you think might alter the list? What trends in purebred dog ownership, if any, have you noticed in your community? How might increased popularity negatively affect a specific dog breed?
- Do you think that purebred dogs have more status than mixed-breeds? For example, what qualities or characteristics come to mind when you think of a German shepherd? A Labrador retriever? A cocker spaniel? A mixed-breed dog?
- Some people acquire dogs as status symbols. What kinds of images can a dog help people portray? How might acquiring a dog as a status symbol cause problems for both dogs and people?

The **terrier** group earns its name from the Latin word for earth, *terra*. Terriers were developed to "go to ground" in pursuit of small prey such as rats, badgers, foxes, and otters. Many of the terrier breeds were developed in England over the past 100 years. From the largest of terriers, the Airedale, to the smaller border terriers and Norwich



terriers, these dogs are known for their plucky spirit, high energy, and excellent digging abilities.

The **working** group includes heavily built, powerful dogs such as Akitas, Siberian huskies, Great Danes, and St. Bernards. Though dogs

from other breed groups are used in different jobs, the working group includes only those historically used for guarding, rescue work, and sledding. Not

Snoopy. Marmaduke. Odie. Beethoven. Scooby Doo. Rin Tin Tin. Old Yeller. Millie. What do these dogs all have in common? They're all famous, whether it's in the comics, television, movies, literature, or the White House. For an index of other famous dogs, see www.citizenlunch-box.com/famous/dogs.html.

surprisingly, many of the dog breeds in this group have been used in wartime.

The **herding** group, as its name implies, consists of dogs developed to help people manage and

protect livestock. Though modern methods of animal agriculture have greatly reduced the use of herding dogs, these dogs remain popular for other reasons, thanks to their agility and intelligence. Herding dogs include the German shepherd, Old English sheepdog, the rough collie, and the border collie, who is extremely popular in agility trials and flying disc competitions.

The **non-sporting** group is sometimes described as the “catch-all” group, as it includes those dogs who were either developed for no particular purpose or are no longer used in their originally intended capacity. In other words, it consists of dogs who don't fit into any other category. Not surprisingly, then, this group is very diverse, ranging from Dalmatians and bulldogs to poodles



and Lhasa Apsos, among others.

The **toy** group consists of small dogs developed for their roles as human companions and lapdogs. Many of these dogs, such as the Pekingese, Maltese, and Italian



greyhound, were the cherished pets of royalty. Toy dogs are characterized by their small size and friendly nature. This group includes pugs, Shih Tzus, miniature pinschers, and Chihuahuas, the world's smallest dogs.

Think About It

When it comes to dogs, how would you define intelligence? Would it be a willingness to learn and obey commands? The ability to solve problems? A strong personality that refuses to bend to human will?

Visit www.petri.com/dogint and see what breeds of dogs are considered the most—and least—intelligent. From personal experience, do you agree with this list? Why or why not? What do you think the author of this list used as his basis for intelligence?

Problems with Purebreds?

When it comes time to add a dog to their family, many people choose to purchase a purebred dog. The AKC, the largest dog registry organization in the U.S., recognizes 150 kinds of purebred dogs. Worldwide, some 400 breeds are recognized. Some people seek a specific breed because they have a job in mind for the dog: protection, herding, hunting. Others select purebred dogs for their looks or presumed personalities. Importance may be given to the fact that the dog “has papers”—that is, the



dog has been registered with the AKC or another breed registry organization. Animal protection

The Humane Society of the United States Complete Guide to Dog Care

By Marion S. Lane and the staff of The Humane Society of the United States (Boston: Little, Brown, 2001).



Looking for a dog? Have a question about your pooch? Ask your school librarian to order a copy of *The Humane Society of the United States Complete Guide to Dog Care*, which provides tips and information about various aspects of dog caregiving, including choosing the right dog, preparing for a dog's arrival, training and socialization, and selecting a veterinarian. This 390-page book also offers important advice about responsible pet care and suggests simple ways you can model appropriate pet care to others.

high quality. Even the AKC notes that it “is not itself involved in the sale of dogs and cannot therefore guarantee the health and quality of dogs in its registry.”

organizations point out that being registered does not ensure that a dog will be of good quality. Registration papers state only the recorded lineage of a dog. It does not matter if the dogs are suitable for breeding or if the dogs or their puppies are healthy. “Having papers” means that a puppy's parents are purebred, not necessarily that the parents are healthy or of

Health and temperament problems are sometimes noted in purebreds, often as a result of careless breeding practices. For example, many Dalmatians are born deaf; German shepherds and Rottweilers often suffer from hip problems; many collies have eye diseases; dachshunds frequently have back problems. Undesirable personality qualities, including aggression, nervousness, and extreme shyness, may also show up in dogs who have not been bred well. Conscientious breeders eliminate dogs with such problems from their breeding programs.

If you're looking for a purebred pet, The HSUS encourages you to first contact a breed placement (rescue) group or your local animal shelter. If you're still interested in purchasing a pet from a professional breeder, do some homework first. To find a reputable breeder, talk with veterinarians, seek out local dog and cat clubs, and visit official dog shows and/or agility trials. Here are some things to look for.

Signs of a reputable, responsible breeder:

- breeds only one or two breeds and knows the breed standards for both
- includes the animals in the family and allows the animals to live in the home
- will not sell animals to pet stores or in any other way that does not allow the breeder to meet and interview prospective purchasers
- sells pets with contracts requiring that the animals be spayed or neutered unless they are determined to be “show quality” and will be actively competing in dog shows
- educates buyers about the breed and responsible pet care and remains available for support after the sale

Marvelous Mutts

Dogs don't need pedigrees to be perfect companions. Mixed-breed dogs—those whose parents are not the same breeds or who are mixed-breeds themselves—are as loving and intelligent as the rest. Thanks to “hybrid vigor,” mixed-breed dogs often enjoy better overall health and life spans than purebred dogs. Whether you're looking to adopt a mixed-breed dog, need information on mutts, or want to sponsor an event to promote their adoption, visit www.maydayformutts.org.

Created by Karen Derrico, author of *Unforgettable Mutts: Pure of Heart, Not of Breed*, Mayday For Mutts is a holiday intended to increase the adoption of mixed-breed, older, and special-needs dogs, put an end to “canine discrimination” toward mutts, and educate the public about the need for spaying and neutering to reduce the pet overpopulation problem.



- tests for genetic problems and offers to show the official test results
- requires that if the new family is unable to keep the pet, he or she will be returned to the breeder, no matter what the pet's age

You can also contact The HSUS Companion Animals and Equine Protection Section for a larger checklist of what to look for in a responsible breeder.

Think About It

- The AKC's website states, "All dogs are wonderful, but purpose-bred or purebred dogs are more predictable in many important ways than random-bred dogs and therefore make better pets." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Breeders pay a fee to register their dogs, and registration fees are a large source of income to the AKC. How might that fact influence how the AKC regards mixed-breed dogs?

Explore the Issues

- After the release of Disney's live-action film *101 Dalmatians*, people flocked to buy the spotted pups from pet stores and breeders. When people realized that the dogs were more work than they had bargained for—often because of tendencies toward behavior problems, deafness, and skin conditions—they relinquished scores of Dalmatians to animal shelters and breed placement groups. Interview your local animal control officer and ask if he or she has noticed any incidents of "fad pets" in your community. Ask how this problem could be avoided. Write up your interview and run it in your school newspaper to educate fellow students about the problems of fad pets.
- Compare the AKC's current Top Ten Dog Breeds list with those compiled five and ten years ago. Which dogs have remained the most popular in the last decade? Which dogs from past lists are no longer ranked in the top ten? Which are new to the list? What might account for these particular changes?

Take Action

Adore Akitas? Love Labradors? Crazy about Cairns? If you and your family are fans of a particular breed of dog, consider becoming a foster family for a breed placement group. As a foster family, you can

provide a loving home for a purebred dog until a permanent placement is found. To locate a breed placement group in your area, see www.shelterdog.org and www.pets911.com.

Friends and Helpers

While specific dog breeds were first developed to help people hunt prey and watch over flocks, dogs today perform a remarkable variety of jobs. In addition to providing companionship to people—arguably their most important "job" of all—dogs are used for police work, detection of bombs, drugs, and mines, assisting disabled people, keeping airport runways free of birds, and participating in pet-facilitated therapy, among many other duties. The term "service dog" is often used to describe a dog who has been specially trained to perform a specific job.

To repeat the oft-used cliché, it's no wonder that dogs are called man's best friend. Beyond providing companionship and affection, dogs have proven willing and able to put our needs and desires before their own. Nowhere does that become more obvious than in the relationship between **assistance dogs** and their handlers. Recognizing the



© R. Drew/Associated Press

important roles assistance dogs play in helping people with disabilities live normal lives, a law called the Americans with Disabilities Act allows assistance dogs to accompany their handlers into any area accessible to the public, whether it's the supermarket or the movie theater.

Assistance dogs are highly trained to perform specific tasks, depending on their handler's disability. **Guide dogs** act as eyes for visually impaired people; **hearing dogs** act as ears for deaf people; **mobility assist dogs** act as arms and legs for the disabled; **walker dogs** provide balance for the disabled; **seizure alert/response dogs** get help for people who suffer from seizures; and **psychiatric service dogs** provide support to those with mental disabilities.

Take Action

Before they enter official training programs, many assistance dogs spend their puppyhoods with volunteer foster families who socialize them and teach them basic obedience skills. Would you or your family be able to provide a solid foundation for an assistance dog? For more information, contact an organization for guide dogs (or other assistance dogs) in your state. A state-by-state listing is available at www.thepuppyplace.org. Another good source of information is www.guidedogs.com.

In addition to helping disabled people live happier, well-balanced lives, dogs have also proven invaluable in protecting and saving lives. Many police departments pair officers with highly trained **patrol dogs** who protect their partners and assist in apprehending and holding suspects. Breeds frequently used in K-9 work are German shepherds, Belgian Malinois, and Doberman pinschers. Thanks to their amazing sense of smell—it's been estimated that they smell at least one million times better than people—dogs are also frequently used in **narcotics and explosives detection, search and rescue missions, and missing person searches.**

Accelerant detection dogs are useful in identifying causes of fires and possible arsonists. Breeds frequently used for scent work include bloodhounds, Labrador retrievers, and golden retrievers, although most kinds of dogs could be trained to perform such work. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) employs a number of dogs in its investigations; you can read more about their service dogs at www.fbi.gov/dogs.



Think About It

Many dog breeds, including Airedales, giant schnauzers, and German shepherds, have served people during wartime. Other dogs are used in dangerous occupations such as patrol work and bomb detection. Do you think it is morally acceptable for people to use dogs in dangerous lines of work? Explain your answer.

Let 'Em Work

When you see an assistance dog at work, follow these tips:

Don't pet, feed, or call to the dog. Doing so may distract him from his work and possibly compromise the safety of his handler.

Talk to the handler, not to the dog. If you have a question, comment, or concern, address it directly to the handler, not to his or her dog.

Explore the Issues

Contact your local police department and ask if they have a K-9 unit. If so, see if you can interview the K-9 handler about his job and his relationship with his canine partner. Some questions to ask include: How long have you and your dog been together? What kind of training did each of you undergo? What is your dog's life like when he's not working? Can you describe a typical day in your life as a K-9 unit? Can you describe a time when your dog found or apprehended a suspect? Write up your interview for your school newspaper, or submit it to your local newspaper.

Take Action

You or your animal protection club can help dogs in the line of duty by raising funds to purchase bullet-proof vests for police dogs. Many nonprofit groups accept donations. To see if there is one in your area, type "bulletproof vests, dogs" into a search engine. Another great site is www.dogvest.com, which includes a listing of state Vest-A-Dog programs you can become involved with.

Issues Affecting Dogs

Earlier, we discussed the importance of the human-animal bond and how this relationship has benefited people in numerous ways—from improving our health, jumpstarting our social lives, and providing comfort and companionship. Sadly, that special bond is sometimes broken or distorted by people—for profit, for status, or for lack of knowledge. In this section, we'll explore some of the specific issues that face dogs and ways you can help solve those problems.

Puppy Mills

Every year, **puppy mills**—large-scale breeding facilities—produce thousands of purebred puppies for sale. Those puppies are sold either to brokers and pet stores across the country or directly to the public via the Internet, newspaper ads, and at the breeding facility itself. Animal protection groups, including The HSUS, have long been outspoken critics of the substandard care that most dogs receive in puppy mills. Puppy mill operators' primary concern is making a profit; the care of the dogs is secondary. To reduce costs and maximize profits, puppy mill operators often don't give the dogs adequate food, shelter, or veterinary care. Documented problems with puppy mills include overbreeding, inbreeding, minimal veterinary care, poor quality of food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and the killing of unwanted animals. Adult breeding dogs spend their entire lives in puppy mills, producing litter after litter of puppies. Once females are no longer able to produce enough puppies per litter, they are commonly killed or auctioned off cheaply to someone intent on getting "a few more litters out of her." The same fate awaits male dogs once they are no longer able to mate.

Due to the poor breeding that takes place in puppy mills, dogs produced there may suffer from a variety of health problems, some of which may not appear until years later. In addition, lack of socialization



with people may make them ill prepared to be good family pets. The HSUS and other humane organizations strongly oppose puppy mills and encourage people to adopt animals from shelters or to acquire purebred dogs only from reputable, responsible breeders and breed placement (rescue) groups rather than pet stores or inexperienced "backyard" breeders.

Explore the Issues

Some animal protection groups contend that the

AKC shares some responsibility for the proliferation of puppy mills. Do you agree or disagree? Research the Internet to form your own opinion. Write an opinion paper on the topic and present it to your English or debate class or at your school's animal protection club meeting.

Take Action

Discourage people in your community from purchasing puppies from pet stores. Design flyers and posters explaining the connection between puppy mills and pet store puppies. For more information, visit www.nopupppymills.com or www.hsus.org. Distribute your flyers at malls with pet stores and ask permission to hang your posters in veterinary offices and pet supply stores that don't sell dogs. Don't forget to e-mail us at humaneteen@nahee.org and tell us about your project!

Dogfighting

Illegal in all 50 states, the cruel "sport" of dogfighting is nonetheless alive and well. Dogfights can last up to two hours and end only when one of the dogs is no longer willing or able to continue.

Injuries sustained by fighting dogs are frequently severe or fatal. Dogs often die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, exhaustion, or infection. Specifically bred and trained to fight, "pit bull" type dogs are those most often used. However, not all "pit bull" type dogs are aggressive. When raised with kindness, many are loving family pets.

Besides the cruelty inherent in such events, law enforcement officers have noted other serious problems as well. Illegal gambling is the norm at dogfights; dog owners and spectators bet thousands of dollars on the outcomes of the fights. Firearms and illegal drugs are often prevalent. And young children are sometimes present at the events, which can promote insensitivity to animal suffering and a lack of respect for the law.

Explore the Issues

Most people are unaware of the prevalence of dogfighting and the dangers it brings to communities. Research the problem and ways you can teach others about it at www.AnimalFighting.org. While



you're there, check out The HSUS's undercover video. Be advised that the video contains graphic footage of fighting and injured dogs.

Greyhound Racing

Greyhounds are one of the world's oldest breeds of dog—and one of the fastest. These gentle, graceful dogs are capable of running at speeds up to 40



miles per hour. Unfortunately, the greyhound racing industry is responsible for the deaths of

as many as 20,000 greyhounds each year. When dogs are no longer fast enough to race, or if puppies are determined unlikely to win at the track, they are often killed. As with any business, profit is the bottom line in greyhound racing; therefore, greyhounds are often killed with the least expensive methods, including gunshot, bludgeoning, and starvation. Other documented problems occur in the greyhound racing industry as well. Dogs spend the majority of their adult lives in crates, pens, or fenced enclosures with limited human companionship. And greyhound training activities continue to cause many domestic rabbits and wild jackrabbits to be maimed and killed every year, although such practices are illegal.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, many “retired” greyhounds are adopted into loving homes, where they make wonderful companions. But adoption alone is not the answer to the problem. There will never be enough homes for all the greyhounds produced by the industry each year. That's why The HSUS and other animal protection organizations are actively working on legislation to ban greyhound racing in the states that still allow it.

Think About It

How might the greyhound racing industry affect animals waiting for homes in animal shelters?

Take Action

Never attend greyhound races and urge others to avoid them as well. Consider taking your compassion a bit further by fostering greyhounds until suitable homes are found for them or by launching an effort to ban greyhound racing in your state. For

ideas and information, see www.hsus.org. For more information about adopting a greyhound, visit www.adopt-a-greyhound.org.

Ear Cropping and Tail Docking

Ever wonder why some Doberman pinschers' ears stand perfectly straight, while others' flop? Or why so many terriers sport such curiously short, rounded tails? Hint: These dogs aren't born that way. Many purebred dogs have their ears **cropped** and their tails **docked** to meet breed standards. Cropping usually involves cutting off part of a young dog's ears and bracing and bandaging them straight up while the wounds heal so that the ears remain upright and pointed. Docking removes the end of puppies' tails usually when they are just a few days old. Though few, if any, practical arguments exist in support of ear cropping, supporters of tail docking argue that the practice helps hunting dogs avoid painful tail damage while pursuing game through heavy vegetation. They also claim that docking helps keep longhaired breeds cleaner around the tail area.

The HSUS opposes surgery on dogs when done solely for the cosmetic preference of the owner and without benefit to the animal himself. Although the AKC does not require cropping and docking, it still allows individual dog show judges the power to penalize uncropped ears and undocked tails in the show ring. The AKC also openly encourages these as standards for breeds and shows pictures of the breeds in these “ideal” forms.

Think About It

Ear cropping is illegal in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, and South Africa. Similarly, tail docking is against the law in 13 European countries.

In the U.S., ear cropping and tail docking are controversial but allowed by law and acceptable to the AKC. According to the AKC's Canine Legislation Position Statements, “ear cropping, tail docking, and dewclaw removal, as described in certain breed standards, are acceptable practices integral to defining and preserving breed character and/or enhancing good health.” Why, do you think, are practices such as ear cropping frowned upon in some parts of the world and regarded as desirable in others?

Dog Tethering

The scene is a familiar one: In a backyard, an “outside” dog spends all his days on the end of a chain, receiving little, if any, attention. Sadly, dog **tethering**—tying dogs outside for long periods of time—is a fairly common form of pet neglect. Many caregivers tether their dogs because they don’t know how to deal with behavior issues or housetraining problems. Some see tying a dog out as a way of protecting their property by deterring trespassers. Others simply know of no better way to keep their dogs from roaming.



© D. Thompson/PAWS

Whatever the reason, dog tethering causes dogs to suffer greatly. As pack animals, dogs are social creatures who long to be with their families. Without adequate shelter, tethered dogs are exposed to bad weather. If they’re lucky enough to have food and water dishes

that are filled regularly, it’s still common for their chains to overturn the dishes, leaving the dogs hungry and thirsty. Tethered dogs are also at risk of being attacked by other dogs or wild animals and teased by cruel people.

Dog tethering can also be annoying and dangerous for people who live nearby. It should come as no surprise that tethered dogs often receive little or no training, attention, or socialization. As a result, they usually don’t know how to behave around people or other animals. Out of boredom, tethered dogs may bark constantly. They are also notoriously territorial. They may lunge at passersby or bite people and animals who come within reach of their chain, in order to protect their small space.

As people become more aware of the problems with dog tethering and the risks it presents to communities, they are making efforts to outlaw dog tethering. The practice is already banned in several U.S. counties, thanks to the efforts of concerned citizens and local humane societies.

Take Action

If you know of a tethered dog in your community, don’t try to confront the owner yourself. Report the situation to your local humane society or animal control officer. For more information on how to help dog caregivers treat their dogs better, contact the Companion Animals and Equine Protection Section at The HSUS at (202) 452-1100.

About Cats



Move over, Rover. In 2001, there were some 73 million pet cats in the U.S., making them the nation’s most popular pet. (Though more people have dogs than cats, households with cats are more likely to have multiple cats, which accounts for their higher population.) The

rise in cats’ popularity has been attributed to Americans’ changing lifestyle: from houses to apartments, one-income families to two-income families, forty-hour work weeks to longer work weeks. These clever and friendly creatures can be wonderful companions for city and country dwellers alike.

Friends in Time of Need

The domestication of the cat is almost as interesting as the animal himself. Nestled in the Nile River valley, ancient Egypt has been credited with some of the world’s most important achievements. But perhaps most impressive—at least to cat lovers—is the domestication of the cat. Between 7000 and 5000 B.C., African wildcats began living near human settlements along the Nile River.

Fast Facts: Cats
Family: *Felidae*
Species: *Felis catus*
Relatives: *tiger, lion, bobcat, cheetah*
Life span: 12 to 18 years
Pet population in U.S.: 73 million

The clever creatures had discovered that wherever people lived, so did rats and other tasty rodents, who fed on crops and grain supplies. In ancient Egypt, rodents were a major threat to food supplies. Egyptians observed that the small cats roaming around possessed excellent hunting abilities. Before long, they were depending on the sociable, graceful animals to help protect their crops and grain from certain destruction by rodents. They began welcoming cats into their homes—and into their hearts. Steadily and surely, cats began the slow process of domestication. People began breeding cats who were friendlier and well-adapted to living with humans. Over thousands of years, cats have developed into the affectionate companions they are today. Intelligent and mysterious, playful and independent, they're among the most fascinating of all animals to observe.



Explore the Issues

Ancient Egypt enjoyed a love affair with the cat like no other. To mourn the loss of their feline friends, Egyptians shaved their own eyebrows. Wanting to keep the pleasure of cats' company all to themselves, they forbade the exportation of cats to other countries. They couldn't bear to part with them even at death—beloved cats were entombed with their owners.

But cats haven't always enjoyed such devotion. Throughout history, they've been vilified as demons and scapegoats. Research societal attitudes and spiritual beliefs about cats in different cultures and

at different times in history. (The timeline on p. 17 may help in your research.) Present your findings in an oral report for a social studies class.

Think About It

- People have developed cats into a number of breeds, from the sleek, vocal Oriental breeds to large, fluffy Maine coons and Persians. Compare the numbers of registered purebred cats and dogs: The Cat Fanciers' Association, a purebred cat registry, registered about 69,000 purebred cats in 1996. That same year, the AKC registered 1.3 million dogs. What factors might account for the difference?
- How do you think Edward Lowe's 1947 invention—cat litter—changed our relationship with cats?

Free-Roaming Cats

Unfortunately, cats' independent nature leads many people to believe that they can take care of themselves, indoors and out. You've probably heard it before: "I could never keep my cat inside all the time—he just loves it outdoors!"



Many caregivers believe keeping their cats inside deprives them of enjoyment and adventure. Cats allowed to roam outdoors, however, often are hit by cars or fall victim to disease, poisons, attacks by other animals, or mistreatment by humans. In fact, The HSUS estimates that the average life span of a free-roaming

Declawing Cats

Many people decide to declaw their cats as a way of preventing them from damaging their furniture and carpets. But declawing is hardly a simple operation. Instead of removing just the cat's claws, declawing—or *onychectomy*—involves full amputation of the first bone on each digit of the paw. By comparison, it's like having your fingers cut off at the top joint. The HSUS opposes declawing when done solely for the convenience of the owner and without benefit to the animal, which is the most common situation. Many animal shelters ask prospective cat adopters to sign a contract stating that they will not have the cat declawed. With regular nail trimming, a scratching post, and patient training, most destructive scratching can be eliminated. Declawing should be considered only as a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted.

cat is about three years, compared to 12-15 years for a safely confined cat. In a 2001 study (Jacobs Jenner & Kent), two out of three veterinarians recommended keeping cats indoors, most often citing dangers from vehicles and disease. Given this information, it's easy to see why humane organizations urge people to keep their pets indoors.

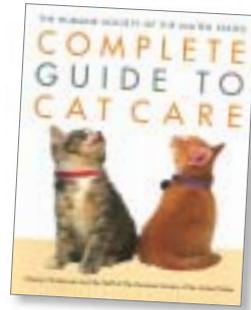
But not all cats roaming outdoors unsupervised are pets. The **free-roaming** cat population is difficult to define. Free-roaming cats can be owned cats who are lost, allowed outside, previously owned cats who have been abandoned, cats who are fed by several residents in an area but owned by none of them, or so-called working cats who serve as "mousers."

Free-roaming cats may also be **feral**, unsocialized cats who are one or more generations removed from a home environment and who may live in a colony of similar cats. Almost every community has a colony of feral cats. While the number of stray and feral dogs has fallen to a very low level, this is not true of cats. One study provides a very rough estimate of about 30-40 million feral/stray cats in

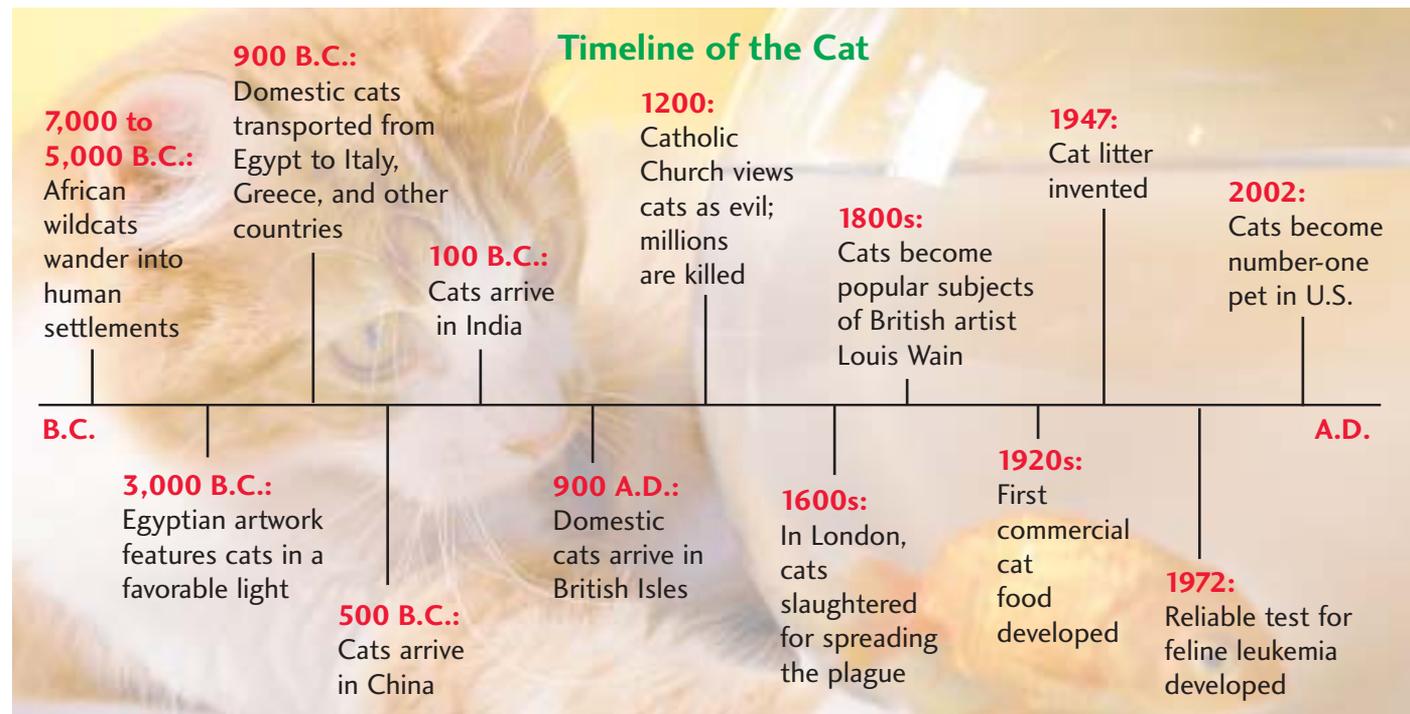
the U.S. Free-roaming cats cause numerous problems in a community. They prey on small mammals, songbirds, and other wildlife, spread **zoonotic** diseases (diseases that can be spread from animals to people, such as rabies), and cause car accidents. In addition, unsterilized, free-roaming cats contribute to the high number of cats who end up in our nation's animal shelters every day. For all of those reasons, The HSUS

The Humane Society of the United States Complete Guide to Cat Care

By Wendy S. Christensen and the staff of The Humane Society of the United States (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).



If you're thinking about adopting a cat or want reliable, up-to-date information about caring for a feline friend at home, pick up a copy of The Humane Society of the United States Complete Guide to Cat Care. This 322-page book provides a complete history of cats, a look inside the feline mind, tips on making the indoors a stimulating environment for cats, and ways you can help cats in your own community.



Saying Goodbye

Near this spot

Are deposited the remains of one
Who possessed beauty without vanity,
Strength without insolence,
Courage without ferocity.

And all the virtues of man without his vices.

This praise, which would be unmeaning flattery
If inscribed over human ashes,
Is but just tribute to the memory of
Boatswain, a dog.

—Inscription on tombstone of Lord Byron's dog

Coping with the death of a beloved pet can be one of life's saddest experiences. In fact, more than half of all pet caregivers say that the biggest drawback to having a pet is "sadness when they die" (APPMMA, 2001-2002). Many people spend more time with their animal companions than they do with friends or relatives, so the loss of that animal causes a great disruption in their lives. To help people who are grieving the loss of a companion animal, The HSUS offers the Kindred Spirits program, which includes tips for coping, suggests various ways of memorializing a pet, and allows people to place a special message in memory of their deceased pet in the Diary of Kindred Spirits. For more information, see www.kindredspirits.org or call 1-866-MYFRIEND. There are also many support groups for people grieving the loss of a pet. Check with your veterinarian or animal shelter for more information on groups in your area.

strongly recommends that cats be kept indoors and allowed outside only on leashes or in specially designed cat enclosures.

Explore the Issues

- Almost every community has a colony of feral cats. Because feral cat colonies are often perceived as a nuisance or public health threat, local governments have sought to solve the problem through one of two methods: live-trapping and euthanizing the cats, or trapping, neutering, and releasing them (TNR).

For a social studies project, imagine that you are your county's director of animal care and control.

Your assignment is to come up with a plan to solve the feral cat problem in your community. Here is the situation: A colony of about 50 feral cats lives behind the local high school. Parents, teachers, and students want the cats removed for fear of rabies. Many of the cats appear to be malnourished or sick. The majority of the town's residents want the cats removed as soon as possible and by any means. A small group of activists and some students and teachers, however, say that killing the cats is inhumane and is not a long-term solution to the problem. Your small animal shelter has room to house approximately 40 cats; typically about half of those cages are occupied.

Develop a plan that will keep the public safe and help solve the problem in the long-term. Resources that will help you in developing your plan include Alley Cat Allies, www.alleycat.org, and The HSUS Statement on Free-Roaming Cats, at www.hsus.org. You may also read *Community Approaches to Feral Cats* online at www.AnimalSheltering.org.

- With the cloning of a cat in the Missyplivity Pro-

The Trade in Dog and Cat Fur

Since 1997, The HSUS has investigated the international trade in dog and cat fur. Their findings ultimately resulted in a U.S. ban on products containing the fur of those animals. The HSUS investigation revealed that in China, the Philippines, and Thailand, millions of dogs and cats each year are killed for their fur. The methods used to kill them are grisly: Dogs are bludgeoned or bled to death, and cats are often strangled by wire nooses. It takes as many as 12 dogs or 24 cats to make one coat. Dog and cat fur is also used for fur-trimmed parkas, gloves, hats, toys, and fur-covered animal figurines.

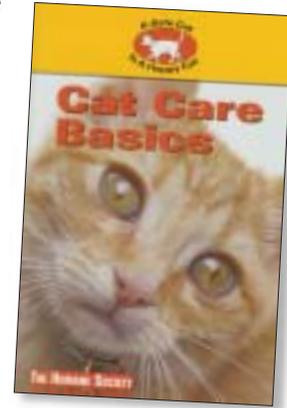
The industry uses misleading labels on its products to hide the fact that cats and dogs have been killed to make them. Dog fur products have been sold under such names as *gae-wolf*, *goupee*, *Sobaki*, and *loup d'Asie*. Common names given to cat fur products include *maopee*, *goyangi*, *katzenfelle*, and *gatto cinesi*. To learn more, read "Betrayal of Trust: The Global Trade in Dog and Cat Fur," at www.bandogcatfur.org.

ject, cloning of companion animals became a reality. What do animal protection organizations think about this practice? Compare and contrast a few groups' official policy statements on the cloning of companion animals. Contact information for animal protection groups may be found in the "Resources" section at the end of this book. For an interesting twist, compare animal protections groups' view of companion animal cloning with churches' and human rights organizations' views on human cloning. Are they similar in some ways? What are the major differences?

Take Action

- If your cat is allowed to roam, bring him or her indoors for good. For tips on how to make the transition easier, pick up a copy of *The Indoor Cat*, by Patricia Curtis (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1997).
- Think of the cat caregivers in your life. Chances are, a good many allow their feline friends to roam

outdoors. But they're not necessarily uncaring or uncommitted toward their pets, are they? If they're like many people, they simply don't know or understand the risks associated with allowing cats outdoors. They may believe the old myths that cats have a basic need to explore the outdoors and would be miserable indoors. Help educate cat caregivers in your community. Safe Cats, a new campaign developed by The HSUS. You can distribute Safe Cats brochures and make public service announcements to encourage responsible pet ownership. For pricing and ordering information, call (202) 452-1100 or read about the Safe Cats campaign at www.hsus.org.



Noble Companions



Horses and people have shared a close bond for thousands of years. Graceful and beautiful, intelligent and sensitive, horses rival dogs in their service and loyalty to people. Horses

belong to a family of mammals called *Equidae*, which also includes zebras and wild asses. Today's domestic horses (and ponies—who are horses with a height of less than 14.2 hands) are thought to be descended from horses domesticated in eastern Europe about 4,000 years ago. In 1492, Christopher Columbus brought domestic horses to North America. (In North America, native wild horses became extinct about 10,000 years ago. Herds of horses, including mustangs in the U.S., do live in a wild state, but they have all descended from domestic ancestors and are now feral.) Today, there are approximately 6.9 million horses in the U.S., which includes horses kept for both commercial and recreational purposes.

Fast Facts: Horses

Family: *Equidae*

Species: *Equus caballus*

Relatives: *zebras, donkeys, mules*

Life span: *up to 35 years or more*

Population in U.S.: *6.9 million*

A Unique Relationship

As herd animals, horses are highly social and form

Horsekeeping in the U.S.

Activity	Number of horses
Racing	725,000
Showing	1,974,000
Recreation	2,970,000
Other*	1,262,000

*Includes farm and ranch work, police work, rodeo, and polo

Major Breed Registrations, U.S., 1999

Breed	Number of registered foals
Quarter horse	135,528
Paint	62,186
Thoroughbred	36,500
Miniature horse	19,899
Tennessee walker	13,375
Arabian	11,501
Standardbred	11,183
Appaloosa	10,099
Anglo & Half Arab	4,453
Morgan	3,220

Source: American Horse Council

complex bonds with other horses. They easily transfer their affection and loyalty to humans who care for them, proving ready, willing, and able to work alongside people in the most challenging of



tasks. Horses have good memories and a desire to please, making them easy to train and work with. While early horses were mostly used to pull carts, chariots, and covered wagons, by the 8th century B.C., riding horses was a popular means of transportation. Until the invention of the steam locomotive, horses (and their relatives, mules and donkeys) were the primary means

of transporting both goods and people, including soldiers in war. They were also used for agricultural work, drawing water from wells, pulling heavy logs, and building railroads. With the invention of the

train (nicknamed the “iron horse”), automobiles (“horseless carriages”), tractors, and military tanks, our need for horses decreased dramatically. Yet our relationship with them continues to thrive. By far, most horses kept in the U.S. are simply for recreational riding and companionship. Some are used in racing, showing, ranch work, rodeo, polo, therapeutic riding programs, and police work.

Explore the Issues

Thanks to automobiles, horse-drawn carriages are a thing of the past—except in places like New York City. There, people can take an “old fashioned” carriage ride for a small sum. Critics charge that carriage horses are worked too hard, too long, and in unacceptable weather conditions, including extreme heat and humidity. Several humane organizations are working to improve the working and living conditions of New York City’s carriage horses. For more information on carriage horses and how you can help make their lives better, visit www.aspca.org and www.hsus.org and enter “carriage horses” into their search engines.

A Sore Subject

One of the most popular breeds of horses is the Tennessee walking horse. Originally developed in the South as gentle riding horses, Tennessee walkers are known for their smooth, comfortable stride. Today, modern competitions require the horses to exhibit an exaggerated, high-stepping gait. The flashy gait can be achieved through selective breeding and humane training practices, yet a few unscrupulous trainers resort to “soring.” Some methods of soring include applying chemical irritants to legs and hooves or driving nails or other objects into the sensitive areas of hooves, causing much pain to the horses. Because of the pain, sored horses raise their front legs immediately after touching the ground, thus producing the high step. Along with animal protection groups, dedicated horse enthusiasts and breeders have spoken out about the cruel practice, which was made a criminal offense with 1970’s Horse Protection Act.

To learn more about the practice of soring and how you can help stop it, visit www.thegaited-horse.com/morethansore.htm.

Horses as Healers

My favorite sport is horseback riding, because when I'm on a horse, I feel free. Since I can't walk, I can't play sports the way other kids can. When I'm on a horse, I pretend I'm not handicapped. I've learned to ride and balance myself on a horse just like anybody else; in fact maybe even better. I can run, jump, climb steep hills on mountain trails, splash through bubbling creeks, and discover new places my wheelchair can never take me. I can ride for hours, and my arms don't get tired the way they do when I push myself around in my chair. I wish I could ride a horse to my classrooms, but I don't think it would be allowed!

Letter courtesy of Institute of Equestrian Therapy

The above letter was written by Alison, a young girl confined to a wheelchair. Alison wrote this letter in 1985, while participating in the therapeutic riding program at the Institute of Equestrian Therapy. Today, hundreds of such programs around the country are helping people with a range of physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. Some of those disabilities include post-traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, autism, spina bifida, and multiple sclerosis. The term "therapeutic riding" encompasses a wide variety of activities between horses and disabled persons, including **hip-
potherapy**, which uses the movement of the horse as a treatment to help patients with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction.



Think About It

How might learning to ride a horse help someone who has attention deficit disorder (ADD)? How might spending time with horses help children from abused families?

Take Action

- Therapeutic riding programs often rely on volunteers to care for horses and assist disabled persons. Consider volunteering at a program near you. To find a local therapeutic riding program, see www.narha.org.
- Educate others about the various ways horses help the disabled. Ask a representative from a local therapeutic riding program to speak at your school.

For more information about therapeutic riding programs, visit American Hippotherapy Association, www.americanequestrian.com/hippotherapy, and the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, www.narha.org.

Commitment, of Course

Caring for a horse is distinctively different from caring for any other companion animal. Unlike other animals commonly kept as pets (with large birds being the exception), horses can live for 30 years or longer. And while pet-care costs for any animal can mount to surprising levels, caring for horses can be extremely expensive. In fact, the cost of purchasing a horse is often much less than the

cost of maintaining one for just one year. In addition to daily feeding and grooming requirements, horses require regular veterinary and hoof care and constant access to a dry, safe, comfortable shelter to protect them from rain, wind, and snow. People who are unable to keep horses on their own property must pay boarding fees to a local stable. Add up all the costs for caring for a horse, including veterinary care, and you come up with a yearly figure that greatly exceeds the average cost of caring for any other companion animal. Horses also require a great deal of exercise and companionship, 365 days a year.



Because horses are usually kept for riding, owning horses poses a dilemma when they become too old or unhealthy to be ridden. While horses are still capable of providing companionship, some people

may view the tradeoff as not worth it. If a horse is unable to be ridden, then the work and expense required to care for the animal for life—which may be years—may be undesirable to their owners. Unable to be ridden or shown, many former pleasure horses are sent to horse auctions, where they are sold for slaughter.

[A Sad End](#)

It comes as a shock to most people that horses are killed in the U.S. for human consumption. In 2001, more than 55,000 horses were slaughtered. Because there is no demand for horse meat here, it is exported to markets in France, Belgium, Holland, Japan, and Italy, where it is considered a delicacy.

Most horses sent to slaughter are sold at livestock auctions or sales. Many of the horses that HSUS investigators see purchased for slaughter are in good health and bought for only a few hundred dollars. Horses commonly slaughtered include unsuccessful racehorses, pleasure horses who are old, lame, or ill, surplus riding school and camp horses, and foals who are “byproducts” of the pregnant mare urine industry (see sidebar at right).

Horses bound for slaughter are shipped by truck, frequently for long distances. They are usually not rested, fed, or watered during travel. It is not uncommon for horses and ponies to be crammed into double-deck trucks designed for cattle and pigs. The truck ceilings are so low that the horses are unable to hold their heads up in a normal position. Inappropriate floor surfaces lead to slips and falls and sometimes even trampling. Some horses arrive at the slaughterhouse gravely injured or dead. Serious problems exist at the slaughterhouse as well. Although federal law requires that horses be rendered unconscious prior to slaughter, some horses are improperly stunned and may still be conscious when they are hoisted by a rear leg to have their throats cut.

[A Solution to Slaughter?](#)

A main component of the The HSUS’s Pets for Life campaign is educating people about the responsibilities of caring for a pet for the animal’s natural life span. Horses present a unique situation as a result of their high cost of maintenance, long life span, and the fact that they’re often kept for rea-

Pregnant Mare Urine Industry

Premarin® is a drug made from the urine of pregnant mares, which is rich in the hormone estrogen. The most widely prescribed estrogen replacement drug, Premarin® is commonly prescribed to relieve hormonal deficiency symptoms associated with menopause or hysterectomy. There are an estimated 500 pregnant mare urine (PMU) farms in North America, the vast majority of which are in Canada. About 30 PMU farms exist in North Dakota, and more have reportedly been established in Minnesota.

Animal protection groups are very concerned about the treatment of horses at PMU farms. From September until March or April, PMU mares are tethered in narrow stalls with a cup positioned over the vulva to collect urine. In addition to lack of exercise, PMU mares cannot interact naturally with other horses and may not be given adequate bedding material. The foals of PMU mares are taken from their mothers after three or four months. “Surplus” foals—those foals not kept for future PMU production—are usually shipped to feedlots and fattened for slaughter. PMU mares who are barren or unproductive are also sent to slaughter. To learn more about the PMU industry, type “Premarin” into any search engine, or see www.hsus.org.

sons other than simple companionship. As with all companion animals, people should consider the lifelong needs of an animal and the ways in which their own lives will change during that animal’s life span. By considering all the variables that go into caring for a pet for life, people can make wiser, more humane decisions—and hopefully eliminate the slaughterhouse as an option for unwanted horses. Some solutions include adopting horses from equine rescue organizations instead of breeding them, and providing humane euthanasia for horses instead of sending them to slaughterhouses.



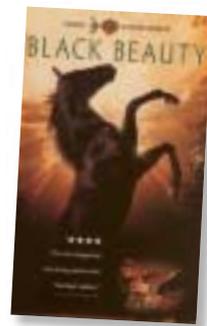
Think About It

- How might individual horse owners help reduce the number of horses sent to slaughter?
- Explain the differences between euthanizing unwanted dogs and cats at animal shelters and killing horses at slaughterhouses.
- How might the public respond if it were discovered that people were auctioning their older cats and dogs off to be slaughtered? (Like horses, dogs and cats are eaten in other countries.) Why might people regard the plight of unwanted horses differently from that of unwanted cats and dogs?

Explore the Issues

- In terms of the way animals are treated, what are the similarities and differences between horse racing and greyhound racing? Compare and contrast the two industries in a paper for an English or debate class. Research how the animals are treated on and off the racetrack, how they impact the economy, and what happens to animals who are no longer able to race. Useful resources include the National Greyhound Adoption Program, www.ngap.org, and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, www.trfinc.org, as well as the animal protection organizations listed at the end of this guide.
- *Black Beauty*, Anna Sewell's classic tale about a loyal horse who suffers abuse at the hands of his

owners, is heralded by animal protection organizations as one of the finest works of humane literature. In fact, George Angell, the founder of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was responsible for the widespread distribution of humane storybooks to schools, including *Black Beauty*, three million copies of which had been circulated by 1909. To teach children in your community about kindness to animals, make arrangements to read *Black Beauty* to elementary classes in local schools. If time allows, consider a showing of the 1994 remake of *Black Beauty*. For activity ideas, visit www.nahee.org, the website of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education. Click on *Black Beauty* in the "Favorite Flicks" section.



Take Action

If you and your family are willing to make a lifetime commitment to a horse, consider adopting one from a local equine rescue group. If you're unable to make a lifetime commitment but would still like to get involved, you may be interested in learning how you can provide a foster home to a horse in need. You can locate one in your area at www.equinerescueleague.org.

The Best of the Rest

Not all companion animals are furry, four-legged friends: Americans share their homes with more than 178 million fish and birds. And many people find that small critters—such as mice, rats, gerbils, rabbits, and guinea pigs—provide the loving relationship they seek with an animal, with less of a financial or time commitment. Most of those animals, though not domesticated in the strictest sense, can be content in captivity if given proper care.



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Number of small animals as pets, 1997

Hamsters	1,876,000
Guinea pigs	1,091,000
Ferrets	791,000
Gerbils	764,000
Mice, rabbits, rats, and other rodents	1,053,000

Source: U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook, 1997

Not surprisingly, small animals (with the exception of birds) are most likely to live in homes with young children. Many parents want their children to experience the companionship and responsibility

of a pet and decide that small mammals—such as rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs—or fish are the best choice. Responsible parents and pet caregivers acknowledge that pets are not temporary playmates for children, but family members who depend on the entire family, especially adults, to take care of them. Parents wishing to provide a pet for their young children must expect that the adults in the household will ultimately be responsible for the animal's care.

Rabbits are popular pets. According to one survey, one out of four small pet caregivers keeps a rabbit. Rabbits can make cuddly, affectionate companions.

Resources for Rabbit Lovers

Formed in 1988 by a small group of dedicated rabbit caregivers, the House Rabbit Society seeks to educate the public about responsible care of rabbits. The group also rescues and finds homes for rabbits. Check out their fun, informative website at www.rabbit.org.

Like cats, they can even be trained to use a litter box, increasing their appeal to city and apartment dwellers. Because rabbits are social animals, they need a fair amount of attention and companionship. Rabbits tend to live longer than the average rodent companion. A rabbit who has been spayed or neutered (always a

good idea to improve overall health, prevent unwanted litters, and stop urine marking in the home) can live eight to twelve years. Though the majority of caregivers obtain their rabbits from friends or pet stores, keep in mind that animal shel-

ters and rescue groups often have rabbits up for adoption.

Think About It

- What famous rabbits can you name? Why do you think that the rabbit has become such a popular figure in children's literature, movies, and cartoons?
- Is it okay to get a pet solely "for the kids"? Explain your answer.
- As a young child, did you have a pet? How would you describe yourself as a pet caregiver back then?

Guinea pigs aren't really pigs. The guinea pig is actually the domesticated variety of the cavy, a wild animal that lives in the mountains of Chile and Peru. With a life span of up to five years, guinea pigs can make delightful companions for people of all ages. They are extremely social and should be kept in pairs, but they also enjoy interaction with humans. Like rabbits, guinea pigs require ample space and a significant amount of attention if they are to be true companions who enjoy the company of humans and are comfortable being handled by them.

Hamsters, gerbils, mice, and rats are popular first pets for young children. These little



© R. Stockdale/Stockdale Studios

Rabbits Read Telephone Books?

What type of shavings is best for hamsters? Should I get one rabbit or two? What kinds of treats are safe for guinea pigs? As with all pets, the key to getting the right pet for you—and keeping him or her happy—is learning as much as you can about the animal before bringing one into your home, and committing to caring for that pet for his or her entire life. For specific information on how to care for your small animal, check out the "Pet Care" section at www.hsus.org.

The site gives a brief history of popular companion animal species, as well as specific guidelines on how to care for each of them properly. To find a specific animal quickly, just enter the species into the search engine. Your library and the Internet are also great sources of information about pet care. (And to answer the question: No, rabbits don't read phone books. They do, however, enjoy ripping them to shreds!)



Looking for a Piggy?

Unfortunately, some caregivers give up on their guinea pigs when they realize the work involved in keeping them happy and healthy. The good news is that you can provide a loving home to a guinea pig in need! Check with your local shelter to see if they have any guinea pigs up for adoption. You may also wish to visit www.guineapigs.info. This comprehensive site includes information about how to care for your pig as well as how you can adopt a guinea pig (or two!) in your area.

critters are fascinating to watch, fun to play with, and relatively simple to care for.

First brought to the U.S. in 1938, hamsters are inactive during the day and awake at night, an important fact to keep in mind in deciding where to house the animal. (Squeaky wheels can get annoying in the wee hours!) The average life span of a hamster is three years.

Clean and friendly, gerbils have been

kept as pets since the 1950s. Gerbils, who live an average of two to three years, are social creatures

who prefer to live with other gerbils. As with all little critters, don't keep males and females together. You could end up with more little pets than you bargained for!

Mice are fairly easy to care for. They prefer to live in groups and can also become accustomed to gentle handling. One of the biggest drawbacks is their short life span of one to two years.

Despite their poor reputation, rats are curious, intelligent, and often affectionate pets. Unlike some of the other small rodents, rats can establish a strong bond with their caregivers. They can be taught to perform a variety of behaviors and enjoy interacting with people. To keep them from getting lonely and bored during the day, it's often best to keep them in pairs. Rats' life expectancy is three to four years.



Think About It

What are the benefits of keeping small animals as pets? What are the drawbacks?

Get the Word on Birds

The allure of a hyacinth macaw or a sparkling white cockatoo is hard for some people to resist. These stunning, highly intelligent birds—which can cost thousands of dollars—are prized as companions. But at what cost to the birds? Are exotic birds, such as parrots, cockatoos, and lovebirds, really suitable as pets? Can they be truly happy in captivity?

According to animal protection organizations, including The HSUS, probably not. Although birds can and do make wonderful companions, many require an enormous amount of time, knowledge, energy, and space to care for properly. And large birds give new meaning to the phrase “lifetime commitment.” With a life span of more than 60 years, parrots can easily outlive their owners.

Of equal importance is the problem of how those birds end up in pet stores. Many of the larger species, such as cockatoos and macaws, are taken from their wild habitats. Up to 80% of birds caught in the wild die in the course of capture and shipment. In some areas, local populations of wild birds have been decimated because too many have been captured for the pet trade. Additionally, wild-caught birds often suffer from stress and the inability to adapt to life in captivity, making them prone to medical and behavioral problems.

Before you decide to bring a bird into your family, do your homework. Be sure to purchase only those birds who have been bred and raised in captivity, such as cockatiels, parakeets, and canaries. If your heart is set on one of the larger bird species and you are positive that you have the time, energy, and resources to properly care for one, be sure to acquire a bird who has been bred in captivity, not taken from his wild home.



Explore the Issues

- Mention the word “rat,” and you’ll more than likely get a negative response. Yet many people not only like rats, they keep them as companions! Research the rat’s history throughout our culture, including its suspected role in the spread of disease, its use in scientific research, humans’ efforts to control rat populations, and how the rat has gained favor with pet caregivers. Write a paper for your science or social studies class.

- Ferrets and gerbils are illegal as pets in California. Why is that so? For more information, contact the California Department of Fish and Game at (916) 227-1305 or visit www.cdfa.ca.gov.

Feathered Friends

Beautiful to look at and often refreshing to listen to, birds have been kept as pets for hundreds of years. Today, they are gaining in popularity as pets. In 2000, about 7% of U.S. households had at least one bird, and widows and single people are increasingly choosing to have birds as pets. Cockatiels and parakeets are the most popular pet birds.



Cockatiels are intelligent, playful, and affectionate animals who closely bond with their human caregivers. Many are beautiful singers; a few can mimic some words. Like all birds, cockatiels require a var-

Here, Fishy, Fishy

Fish are steadily becoming more popular pets. In 2000, about 12% of all U.S. households had fish, whether freshwater, tropical, or saltwater. While many fish, such as goldfish and guppies, are tank-raised, others are not. Many species—particularly saltwater species—have been caught in the wild. In some cases, divers squirt cyanide into coral reefs to stun fish for capture. The poison kills most of the fish, coral, and other marine life with which it comes into contact. The fish who survive are sold to the pet trade. Animal protection organizations urge fish enthusiasts to purchase only tank-raised fish.



ied diet, mental stimulation, and frequent attention. Additionally, they can live as long as 20 years, longer even than the average dog or cat. While wild cockatiels still live in their native Australia, pet cockatiels are almost always cage-bred, which, from a humane perspective, makes them suitable pets.

Like cockatiels, pet parakeets are almost always cage-bred. These cheerful, friendly, little birds live about eight years on average, and require much attention from their caregivers. They tend to bond closely with people and also enjoy living with other parakeets. Although canaries don’t form close bonds with people, these cage-bred birds can make

Reptiles as Pets

Do you know someone who has a pet iguana? How about a snake or a lizard? Probably so. After all, reptiles (and amphibians, such as frogs and salamanders) have become increasingly popular pets in the U.S. Millions are kept in American households, and at least 1.7 million are imported as pets each year. Countless others are removed from the wild right here in the U.S. to supply both the domestic and international pet trades. Sadly, many of those animals die in transport or shortly after reaching their destinations. And all reptiles carry Salmonella, a serious and sometimes deadly bacteria dangerous to people, particularly children.



Learn more about the problems with keeping reptiles as pets. Check out *Reptiles as Pets: An Examination of the Trade in Live Reptiles in the United States*, by Joseph Franke, M.S., and Teresa M. Telecky, Ph.D. (Washington, DC: The Humane Society of the United States, 2001). For ordering information, contact The HSUS.

cheerful companions.

Think About It

Most people have pets to enjoy the human-animal bond. Fish, obviously, cannot bond with their owners. What might be some other reasons that people keep fish?

Wild Animals as Pets

From bobcats to prairie dogs, hedgehogs to chinchillas, it is not uncommon for wild animals to be



kept as pets. Like most animal protection groups, The HSUS strongly opposes the keeping of exotic and non-domestic animals as pets, including lizards, snakes, and turtles. Unlike dogs and cats, who were domesticated thousands of years ago and depend on us for food, shelter, and attention, wild animals are self-sufficient and

fare best without human interference.

When a person assumes responsibility for an animal, that means providing appropriate, humane care. It is notoriously difficult to provide for all of an exotic animal's needs in captivity. Wild animals have specialized nutritional and social needs that are usually unmet by their owners. They often grow to be larger, stronger, and more dangerous than

people can handle. Wild animals kept as pets may even pose a danger to public safety through disease and parasites.

Unfortunately, wild animals kept as pets often spend their days in cages or aquariums. It is not uncommon for them to die at a young age due to inadequate care—or to be relinquished to shelters when the novelty of having a wild animal as a pet wears off. A large percentage of wild and exotic animals kept as pets are dead within the first two years of captivity. Wild animals also suffer during their capture and transport to pet stores. In addition, the wild-pet trade threatens the existence of some species when they are taken from their natural habitats. For more information about the trade in wild animals as pets, please visit www.hsus.org.

Explore the Issues

“Cost of pet maintenance” is listed as one of the top reasons people give up their animals to animal shelters. Choose a companion animal and determine how much it would cost for you to maintain that animal's care over his or her lifetime. Be sure to include initial purchase price or adoption fee, costs for veterinary care (including routine check-ups, vaccines, and illness/emergency care), license fees, food, shelter (including kennel or pet-sitter fees, if you travel), toys and treats, grooming, and all necessary pet care items, depending on the animal chosen (e.g., litter box, cat litter, aquarium, bedding, collar, leash, etc.). Good sources of information include your local shelter, veterinarian, and the Internet (type “pet care costs” into a search engine).

Animal Shelters: A Haven in Need

From providing safe homes for unwanted animals to educating others about responsible pet care, animal shelters provide vital services to people and animals in their community. The HSUS estimates that there are approximately 3,000 animal shelters in the U.S. That figure encompasses a wide variety of organizations. Some nonprofit animal shelters are funded by donations. Others are municipal

facilities operated by a city or county and funded by taxpayers. While some animal shelters focus solely on direct care of homeless animals, others are “full-service,” with animal care and control staff who investigate animal cruelty and enforce laws and humane educators who teach children and others about responsible pet care. Whatever services they provide and however they're funded, all animal

shelters share a common goal: helping animals in need.

Think About It

What do you know about the animal shelter in your community? Write down what you know and set it aside. We will come back to your answers in an upcoming activity.

The History of Animal Shelters

In the early 1700s, colonists constructed *pounds*—simple, stonewalled enclosures to hold cattle or pigs who strayed from their grazing areas. As a rule, the animals remained impounded until their owners paid the pound master a few pennies in penalty for allowing their livestock to wander. As the number of people living on farms dwindled and the populations of towns and cities increased, the need



for livestock pounds diminished. The need for dog pounds, on the other hand, grew. Dogs, however, rarely fared as well in pounds as did livestock. In fact, poor pound conditions in the mid 1800s led humanitarians such as Henry Bergh, George Angell, and Caroline Earle White to campaign for reform. While Bergh and Angell worked to create laws to protect animals, it was White's work that made the greatest difference in the way shelters for homeless animals were run.

White and other members of the Women's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Pennsylvania convinced the city of Philadelphia to award them the contract for controlling stray dogs. They proceeded to build the first truly humane shelter for homeless dogs and cats in the U.S. Soon, interested parties in other states sought advice from the Women's SPCA on how to create humane facilities in their regions.

Animal shelters and animal control agencies took another leap forward in the mid-1900s. No longer willing to be seen as "dog catchers" working in

Officers for Animals

More than likely, your town or local animal shelter employs an animal control officer, or ACO. (The title of this position varies from place to place. Other common names are humane officer, dog warden, or animal care officer.) ACOs perform a variety of important jobs. One of their most vital functions is enforcing animal-related laws in your community, from making sure that people don't allow their dogs to roam to investigating cases of possible animal cruelty.

ACOs bring lost, stray, injured, and abandoned animals to the animal shelter so that they can receive proper care and have the chance to be reunited with their owners. In addition, they respond to calls concerning dangerous animals, dog attacks, loose livestock, and trespassing cats, among many other things. If you're interested in learning more about ACOs, visit the National Animal Control Association website at www.nacanet.org.



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Take Action

Schedule an interview with your community's ACO. If the ACO is able to accommodate you, ask if you can spend a day or at least a few hours on the job with him or her. This is known as "shadowing," and it's an excellent way of learning firsthand about a particular occupation. Before your interview, develop a list of questions. Some questions to ask include: How long have you been in this job? What kind of training have you received? Do you work for an animal shelter or the municipal government? What kinds of cases do you handle each day? How can our town's citizens help animals in the community?

Publish your article in your school newspaper, or ask the editor of your town's newspaper if he or she will consider running your article to increase public awareness of the ACO's important role in your community.



“dog pounds,” shelter personnel and members of humane groups sought training for all those involved in animal control. Today, animal shelters are staffed by well-trained professionals who provide a wide variety of services, including safe shelter and adoption for homeless

and abused animals, identification and recovery of strays, community education about responsible pet care, obedience training classes for dogs, animal-assisted therapy, low-cost spay/neuter operations and veterinary care, and the creation and enforcement of animal protection laws. In short, many animal shelters are now a community’s ultimate resource for all matters concerning companion animals.

Shelters are changing in other ways, too. While dogs were once the primary residents, now there are more cats than dogs in shelters. (In some shelters, there are as many as three cats to every dog.) Many shelters also provide care for rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, horses, mice, gerbils, and birds. For people who are looking to add a pet to their family, animal shelters offer a surprising range of companion animals for adoption, from kittens and puppies to older, already-trained dogs and cats. For people who prefer a specific breed, The HSUS estimates that about one out of every four dogs at shelters is a purebred.

Steady Progress

Animal shelters and other humane organizations have made significant strides in reducing the numbers of unwanted animals. From the limited data available, it’s apparent that shelter intakes and euthanasias have been in steady decline since at least the 1940s. To give you an idea, a 1973 survey estimated that 13.5 million animals were eutha-

nized annually. A follow-up study in 1982 suggested that number had dropped to an estimated range of 7.6 million to 10 million. Today, The HSUS estimates that about 3 to 4 million animals are euthanized each year. Significantly, the number of animals taken in by shelters and the number of euthanized animals have continued to drop even as the owned pet population continues to rise. A 2001 shelter demographic survey found that the rate of shelter euthanasia is lowest in the Northeast and highest in the South, with significant decreases in euthanasia rates in the Midwest and the Sunbelt. For an example of one shelter’s decreasing intake and euthanasia rates, see the table below.

The animal intake/disposition experience of one large California shelter					
Year	Dogs	Cats	Total	Returned to caregiver/adopted	Euthanized
1970	23,500	22,600	49,100	9,130	37,025
1971	26,425	20,785	46,210	7,095	39,935
1972	18,265	14,212	32,477	7,650	24,917
1973	20,034	14,920	34,95	9,278	25,676
1974	17,131	10,890	28,021	9,989	18,032
1975	15,019	10,052	25,071	9,552	15,519
1976	12,530	8,528	21,058	7,250	13,808
1977	11,199	8,001	19,200	6,770	12,430
1978	9,949	6,899	16,148	5,073	11,775
1979	8,969	6,055	15,054	5,870	9,154
1980	7,603	6,628	14,231	5,580	8,651
1981	8,235	6,888	15,123	5,634	9,489
1982	8,301	7,833	16,144	5,789	10,345
1983	8,199	6,729	14,928	4,922	10,006
1984	8,360	6,639	14,999	5,041	9,958
1985	8,477	7,014	15,491	5,522	9,969
1986	8,141	8,010	16,151	6,099	10,052
1987	7,165	8,710	15,875	5,962	9,913
1988	7,171	8,916	16,087	6,199	9,888
1989	6,843	9,021	15,864	6,274	9,590
1990	5,866	9,211	15,077	6,088	9,009
1991	5,224	9,442	14,666	6,042	8,624
1992	5,226	9,702	14,928	6,176	8,752
1993	5,116	8,257	13,373	5,902	7,471
1994	4,723	7,312	12,035	5,797	6,238
1995	4,894	6,963	11,857	5,544	6,313
1996	4,925	6,499	11,424	5,624	5,800
1997	4,934	5,866	10,800	5,470	5,330

Source: State of the Animals 2003

Some of the decline in the number of animals entering shelters can be attributed to the success of the Legislation, Education, Sterilization (LES)

initiative championed by The HSUS's Phyllis Wright in the 1970s. This three-pronged approach sought to reduce the numbers of animals handled and euthanized by shelters. Major projects of LES included the establishment of spay/neuter programs, mandating licensing fees, and educating the community through humane education programs about proper treatment of companion animals, including the need to spay and neuter.

[The Need for Information](#)

As you've seen, commendable progress has been made in reducing both the number of animals entering shelters and the number of animals euthanized. Despite this remarkable progress, **pet overpopulation** (more animals than there are good homes for them) is still being cited as the biggest reason for animals entering shelters, and many shelters and other humane organizations have focused the majority of their efforts on spay/neuter campaigns. But is pet overpopulation really the number-one reason animals are entering shelters?

In order to answer that question and many others about the pet surplus problem, a group of 11 American humane organizations, breeder groups, and veterinary associations formed the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy (NCPSP). The NCPSP was established to gather and analyze data about companion animals and to use that information to recommend programs that reduce the number of unwanted pets in the U.S. The NCPSP has conducted studies regarding animal entry and exit numbers from shelters nationally and the characteristics of animals and humans involved in relinquishment of animals to shelters. What has been uncovered so far may surprise you.

[Why Do Pets End Up in Shelters?](#)

According to many animal shelters, unwanted litters of puppies and kittens are no longer their biggest problem. Many facilities whose kennels are full are actually reporting very few problems resulting from unspayed animals. Increasingly, they are taking in pets who once had a home but have been **relinquished** (given up) by their owners. To better understand the reasons behind pet relinquishment, the NCPSP conducted a Regional Shelter Survey. Their study found that



- the majority of relinquished dogs and cats are between 5 months and 3 years of age;
- most relinquished dogs and cats had been owned from 7 months to 1 year;
- approximately half of all pets

relinquished are spayed or neutered;

- animals acquired from friends are relinquished in higher numbers than animals from any other source;
- 96% of relinquished dogs had received no obedience training;
- 24% of dogs and 17% of cats are surrendered for immediate euthanasia for reasons including old age, serious illness, and serious behavior problems;
- dogs are reclaimed by their caregivers at significantly higher rates than cats;
- approximately 25% of dogs and cats in shelters are adopted; 63% are euthanized;
- relinquished animals are far less likely to have been seen by a veterinarian within the last year.

The NCPSP also completed confidential interviews with pet caregivers who were relinquishing their dogs or cats to animal shelters. The table on the next page outlines their findings.

What conclusions can we draw based on the valuable data provided by the NCPSP? For

Don't Leave Home Without Them

"Moving" and "landlord won't allow" are among the top reasons people give for relinquishing their pets to shelters. If you or your family has pets and needs to move to another rental property, don't assume you'll have to give up your pet. Visit www.rentwithpets.org, the most comprehensive website for pet-related housing information. You may also request a free copy of The HSUS's booklet "13 Steps to Finding Rental Housing That Accepts Pets." Write to Pets for Life, The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

starters, it is very clear that people need to really think about why they want a pet and to plan how they will care for the animal for his or her entire life. Agreeing to take an animal from a friend to help out, for example, does not require forethought or even a real desire to have a pet. Not surprisingly, animals acquired from

friends are relinquished at the highest rates. Similarly, relinquishing pets because they cost too much, they require too much time, or there are too many other animals in the household also shows a common theme of lack of planning. Programs that encourage people to plan before acquiring pets, then, could help reduce the number of relinquished animals. From the evidence, it also appears that establishing a relationship with a veterinarian early on when acquiring a pet and providing basic obedience training for dogs may help to prevent pet relinquishment. Interestingly, the NCPPSP's study also shows that although the majority of cats and dogs are clearly adoptable, a sizeable number have serious issues affecting their adoptability, such as illness or behavior problems.

As the NCPPSP and other entities continue to explore the reasons behind pet relinquishment, humane organizations hope to use that knowledge to keep people and their pets together for life. To learn more about the NCPPSP and its ongoing research, visit www.petpopulation.org.

Think About It

- The reasons in the list above were given by the people who were relinquishing their pets. Are you surprised at any of their answers? What might be some of the limitations of such a study? Behavior problems are considered by animal care professionals to be a major factor in pet relinquishment. Why, then, do you suppose, are reasons like “allergies” or “moving” higher on the list?
- According to a study conducted by Peter Hart

Top Ten Reasons People Give for Relinquishing Their Pets to Animal Shelters

Dogs	Cats
1. Moving	1. Moving
2. Landlord doesn't allow pets	2. Landlord doesn't allow pets
3. Too many animals in household	3. Too many animals in household
4. Cost of pet maintenance	4. Cost of pet maintenance
5. Owner having personal problems	5. Owner having personal problems
6. Inadequate facilities	6. Inadequate facilities
7. No homes available for litter mates	7. No homes available for litter mates
8. No time for pet	8. Allergies in family
9. Pet illness(es)	9. Soiling
10. Biting	10. Incompatibility with other pets

Research Associates, 55% of Americans think it is better to adopt an animal from a shelter than to buy one from a pet store or breeder, primarily because shelter animals are most in need of homes. Yet studies conducted by the APPMA indicate that only 18% of people adopt their cats and only 17% adopt their dogs from shelters. How might you explain this discrepancy?

- Unfortunately, there is currently no centralized system for collecting data from animal shelters. It is even difficult to determine exactly how many shelters there are in the U.S.; the estimate of 3,000 given earlier in the guide is a rough approximation based on a survey by The HSUS. With the advent of computer technology, some of the more advanced shelters are beginning to collect data on the animals entering their facilities, returned to their caregivers, or euthanized, but this kind of record-keeping remains uncommon. Do you think it would be useful if all animal shelters collected data on animals entering their shelters? If so, what information do you think would be most useful in developing strategies to keep people and their pets together?

Take Action

Hold a shelter collection at your school. First, call your local animal shelter and ask what they need. Shelters often need donations of cat and dog food, cat litter, blankets and towels, medical supplies such as cotton balls and bandages, treats, toys, and office and cleaning supplies. Advertise your collection with posters and announcements. Designate a

place where students can drop off their donations. When you've rounded up all the goods, arrange to deliver them to the shelter. Animal shelters can use donations year-round, but you could consider holding your first collection during the first full week of November, to celebrate **National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week**. For more ideas on how to celebrate this important week, visit www.AnimalSheltering.org or e-mail asi@hsus.org.

Explore the Issues

Research and write a biography of one of the humane movement's leaders: Henry Bergh, George Angell, Caroline Earle White, or Phyllis Wright. In your paper, describe how that person's efforts have influenced the humane care of animals and the work of humane organizations.

Take Action

According to a study by Peter Hart Research Associates, 55% of Americans value the role of animal shelters a great deal. The study also found that more than 60% of Americans know only "some" or "very little" about the various services and functions that animal shelters perform.

Educate yourself about your local animal shelter. Call ahead and schedule a visit to learn more about

Watch Your Words

Imagine that you're an employee at an animal shelter. For years, you've cared for homeless, abandoned, and abused dogs and cats. Read the following statements. Pay particular attention to the words in boldface.

"I had to go to the **pound** to pick up my dog. The **dog catcher** picked up my dog for wandering. The last time I was at the pound, it was to **rescue** this same dog. He had one day left before they were going to **kill** him. If it wasn't for me, he'd be a **goner**."

How does the speaker view his local shelter? How might his statements make you feel? How might you respond? In what ways might this speaker's word choices affect how his message is received? Why might a shelter employee object when people say that they have "rescued" an animal from a shelter?



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the shelter's operations and services. Questions to ask include: How many animals does your shelter care for each year? What are your adoption requirements and fees? What is your rate of adoption? Does the shelter euthanize unwanted or unadoptable animals? If so, what

is the time frame for an animal to be adopted? How is the shelter funded? How many people does the shelter employ? What are their roles? Does your shelter keep data on animals entering and leaving? Do you accept volunteers?

Once you've gotten the facts, compare them to what you wrote down earlier in response to the "Think About It" on p. 6. Were your initial thoughts accurate? What facts were you wrong about? Consider putting the information you've uncovered to good use. Make a presentation for your animal protection club, compose an essay about the important work of animal shelters for your school or town newspaper, or help the shelter establish a website, if it doesn't already have one.

Good Shelter, Bad Shelter?

One of the most controversial debates in the animal sheltering field centers on the issue of limited-admission ("no kill") shelters. Animal shelters typically fall into one of two categories: limited-admission and open-admission, or "open-door." Open-admission shelters accept all dogs, cats, and other companion animals in need. These shelters do not turn away animals when the shelter is full. They provide care to every needy animal in their community, even if the animal is clearly sick, injured, or aggressive or otherwise unadoptable. Because space and resources are so limited, animals may be euthanized to make room for other incoming animals. Open-admission shelters believe that humane euthanasia of homeless companion animals is preferable to the harsh lives and deaths these animals face when they must fend for themselves out-

doors. Stray animals suffer from starvation, disease, poisoning, abuse, injuries from traffic accidents, wildlife attacks, and severe weather. If they are not spayed or neutered, they bring even more innocent animals into their world of suffering. In addition, not every animal that enters a shelter is adoptable.



Open-admission shelters have to make difficult decisions, based on health, age, and temperament, as to which animals can be adopted out and which need to be euthanized. In addition, they are often called upon to take in wild animals that people tried—and failed—to keep as pets. Such animals,

which cannot be adopted out, include lizards, snakes, raccoons, monkeys, and even large, exotic wildlife.

In recent years, limited-admission shelters have received a lot of attention. Limited-admission shelters do not euthanize adoptable animals. Instead, they hold the animals until a suitable home is found, no matter how long it takes. Because such shelters feel that euthanizing animals is not an option, dogs and cats may be kept at the shelter for years. There is concern about the length of time some limited-admission shelters keep animals and about the quality of life a companion animal has when he or she is confined for very long periods of time, which may result in animals becoming “cage crazy.” As a rule, limited-admission shelters do not accept animals who are unlikely to be adopted. They also must turn away animals when the shelter is full. The animals that limited-admission shelters turn away are often relinquished to an open-admission shelter. The term “no kill” for such shelters is also inaccurate; most responsible limited-admission shelters euthanize animals who are very ill or considered dangerous.

The bottom line is that no shelter wants to euthanize animals. The fact is, there are not enough good homes for the millions of animals surrendered to shelters each year, and not enough people look

About Euthanasia

The word **euthanasia** is derived from a Greek term meaning “good death.” When animal shelters must euthanize old, sick, aggressive, or unwanted animals, they strive to provide the most humane death possible. In order to be humane, every euthanasia technique must result in painless, rapid unconsciousness, followed by cardiac or respiratory arrest, and ultimately death. Along with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the National Animal Control Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association, The HSUS recommends the intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital as the preferred method of euthanizing companion animals.

to a shelter when they are thinking of getting a pet. The good news is that limited-admission and open-admission shelters are beginning to work together to meet their common goal of finding good homes for healthy, adoptable animals. And, as we discussed earlier, humane organizations are hard at work determining strategies to preserve the human-animal bond and reduce the number of animals entering shelters. Though there will always be a need for animal shelters in our society, the progress that has already been reported by animal shelters promises a brighter future for companion animals.

Think About It

- At HumaneTeen (www.humaneteen.org), our website for teens interested in animal protection, we often receive comments from teens criticizing shelters for euthanizing animals. Many praise limited-admission shelters and often even go so far as to say that they would never volunteer at or donate to a shelter that euthanizes animals. Do you think that knowing the facts about open-admission and limited-admission shelters might change these teens’ opinions? Explain.
- An animal shelter director once stated that no one would ever think to blame the American Cancer Society for cancer, yet some members of the public and the media continue to blame animal homelessness and euthanasia on animal shelters. What do you think the director meant?
- How do open-admission shelters complement

Giving Their All

Compassion fatigue is defined as stress resulting from caring for traumatized or suffering people or animals. This stress disorder often results in irritability, sleeplessness, emotional withdrawal, anxiety, isolation, and feelings of helplessness and inadequacy. Animal care workers, who deal with an ongoing flood of unwanted animals, euthanasia, and animal abuse, are at risk of developing compassion fatigue, which is also common among nurses, emergency care workers, and rescue personnel. To learn more about this disorder, type “compassion fatigue” into any search engine or see the March/April 2001 issue of *Animal Sheltering* at www.AnimalSheltering.org.



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Take Action

- Do you love animals and wish you could find more ways to help them? Volunteer at your animal shelter! Many have programs that allow teens to interact with animals and the public, raise funds, and publicize animals up for adoption. If service learning is a requirement at your school, consider meeting those credits with a commitment to your local animal shelter. From designing web pages to organizing walkathons or helping screen potential adopters, there are plenty of opportunities for providing shelters with meaningful assistance while also advancing your academic skills and experience.
- From pet adopt-a-thons at local malls to “Pet of the Week” spots in radio, television, and newspaper ads, many shelters around the country are seeking creative ways of increasing pet adoption. Using the Internet, research innovative adoption programs at shelters across the country. Then schedule a meet-

limited-admission shelters? How might limited-admission shelters help open-admission shelters? Could limited-admission shelters exist if there were no open-admission shelters? Explain.

Explore the Issues

- Write an English paper about the myths, problems, and potential of limited-admission shelters. For your paper, interview your community’s animal care and control staff as well as personnel at both limited-admission and open-admission shelters. Ask if you can present your report to your class, and consider inviting guest speakers from a limited-admission and an open-admission shelter. For more information about limited-admission and open-admission shelters, see the 2002 issues of *Animal Sheltering* magazine at www.AnimalSheltering.org.
- Animal shelters are sometimes called upon to deal with **animal hoarders**. Animal hoarders are people who keep many more animals than they can properly care for. Investigate the many psychological theories that may explain animal hoarders’ behavior and present an oral report on the topic. Good sources of information on animal hoarding include “People Who Hoard Animals,” by Dr. Randy Frost, in the April 2000 issue of *Psychiatric Times* (www.psychiatrictimes.com) and www.hsus.org. (Enter “animal hoarders” into the search engine.)

The HSUS and Animal Shelters

Many people believe that The HSUS is a parent or governing organization for local animal shelters, especially those with the words “humane society” in their name. The HSUS does not operate or oversee animal shelters. Each shelter is an independent organization governed by its own bylaws and board or directors (in the case of private humane organizations) or by local ordinances and officials (in the case of municipal animal care and control agencies).

The HSUS does, however, work closely with animal shelters in a variety of ways. We provide training, guidelines, recommendations, and advice on shelter operations, policies, and procedures. The HSUS also publishes an award-winning bimonthly magazine, *Animal Sheltering* (www.AnimalSheltering.org), which features information about new and innovative programs, materials, and resources. Every year, The HSUS hosts the premier international educational conference and trade show for animal sheltering professionals, Animal Care Expo. The HSUS also seeks to improve the lives of companion animals through legislation and education and by providing assistance directly to pet owners.

ing with your local animal shelter to discuss how you and/or your animal protection club can become involved in one of those programs to help

animals in your community. After your project is over, be sure to let us know about it at humaneteen@nahee.org.

Companion Animals and the Law

Most pet-related laws are enacted at the state, town, or county level. Federal laws address only a small handful of issues facing companion animals and their caregivers. Because pet-related laws vary so widely from state to state and from town to town, we strongly encourage you to learn more about the pet-related laws in your own town, city, county, or state. We have provided suggestions and resources throughout this section to help you do so. With that said, here are some pet-related laws that are typical in many areas of the country.

Licensing Laws and Leash Laws

Virtually all cities and towns require dogs to be licensed, and cat licensing is growing in popularity. To purchase a license, owners must provide proof that their animal has been vaccinated against **rabies**, a deadly disease that can be spread to humans through saliva. Local governments keep records of the animal's home address and license numbers. Besides protecting the public from rabies, licensing can help lost pets be returned quickly to their owners. Many communities have **differential licensing laws**, which charge less for an animal who is spayed or neutered. This serves as an incentive for pet caregivers to have their animals spayed or neutered. Differential licensing laws place the burden of higher fees on those pet caregivers most likely to contribute to stray and unwanted animals and the many animal-control issues related to those problems.



Most towns have leash laws that require dogs to be leashed in public areas. Such laws help make communities safer and more pleasant by preventing dog bite injuries, unwanted approaches by dogs, and dog-related damage to others' property. The laws also save dogs' lives, as free-roaming dogs are more likely to be hit by cars, stolen, or harmed by other animals or cruel people. Like most of the laws discussed in this section, leash laws vary greatly from town to town. Some allow dogs to be off leash while on their owners' property or in dog parks; some allow dogs to be off leash only if they have been well-trained to respond to voice commands. Some leash laws have provisions that require owners to clean up after their dogs in public areas. Although fairly uncommon to date, more leash laws are beginning to address the issue of free-roaming cats. Those laws require that cats be kept on their owners' property and not allowed to roam.

Think About It

What are the benefits of leash and licensing laws to animals? To individual people? To communities?

Explore the Issues

Investigate the pet-related laws in your own state or hometown. You can gather information about laws by visiting your state's official homepage. Type your state's abbreviation into [www.state.\(state abbreviation\).us](http://www.state.(state abbreviation).us). Another excellent resource for investigating your state's laws is www.AnimalLaw.com, which includes a searchable database of all state pet-related laws. To learn about local ordinances in your city or county, contact your local government or animal care and control officer. Laws to research include:

- Does my state allow greyhound racing?
- What are my state's laws regarding pound seizure? (See more about pound seizure on p. 38.)

- What are my state's anti-cruelty laws?
- What pets are legal to own in my state? What animals does my state prohibit people from keeping?
- Are licensing, leashing, or dangerous dogs addressed in my state's laws?
- Are there any laws in my county regarding dog tethering? Free-roaming cats?
- Does my state have any statutes regarding riding or driving horses on public lands?

Consider compiling an outline of your state's pet-related laws. Submit it to www.humaneteen.org. We may publish it in a separate section of the website as a reference for other teens. Your outline should include brief explanations of each law, as well as a list of resources (websites, articles, and books) to consult.

Take Action

Perhaps you've been approached by a not-so-friendly dog or witnessed birds in your backyard being stalked by a neighbor's cat. Though pet-related laws exist to help keep communities and animals safe and happy, many people don't follow the laws. In some cases, the reason is ignorance: They are simply unaware of the laws and their important purposes.



Along with your animal protection club, consider launching a campaign to raise awareness of your town's pet-related laws. Topics to investigate include licensing, leash laws, free-roaming cats, and dog tethering.

For information, contact your town or city hall and your local animal shelter or animal

control officer. If you live in a larger city, you may also be able to find information through a simple Internet search.

Once you've done your research, determine how you are going to spread the word. Some ideas

include giving a speech in a general assembly at your school, making public service announcements over your school's PA system or perhaps your local radio station, displaying posters, brochures, and flyers throughout your community, giving presentations to elementary schools in your community, and writing articles or letters to the editor of your local newspaper.

When preparing your campaign, keep these tips in mind:

- Be straightforward. State the law and the reason behind the law.
- Be respectful and upbeat. Stress the benefits to the whole community. Avoid accusatory or overly negative language.
- Include contact and resource information for people who wish to know more about your town's laws.
- Be catchy! Fun slogans and photos will help attract people to your campaign.

Anti-cruelty Laws

All 50 states have anti-cruelty laws. However, the laws differ greatly from state to state, affording animals a varying range of protection. Basically, state laws protect most domestic animals (including pets) from neglect, stating that they are entitled to food, water, and shelter. They also acknowledge that animals should not be abandoned, poisoned, or treated cruelly. Some laws clearly identify what constitutes animal cruelty; others leave that decision up to judges and law enforcement officials.

Thanks to legislative efforts of animal protection groups and well-documented evidence linking animal cruelty with human violence, more than 30 states now classify animal cruelty as a **felony**, a serious criminal offense that may result in imprisonment and heavy fines. Specific felony provisions and



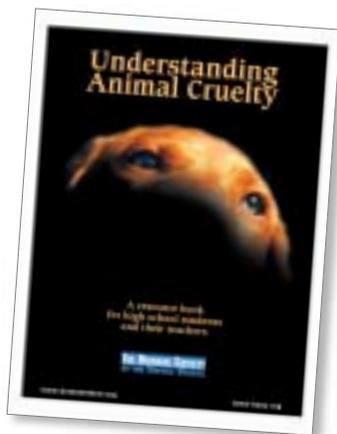
definitions of animal cruelty vary greatly from state to state. Some consider animal cruelty a felony only in cases involving a dog, cat, or other companion animal. Most state anti-cruelty laws do not extend protection to farm animals, wildlife, or animals used in research. Some states impose prison sentences and hefty fines for people convicted of animal cruelty; others fine as little as a few hundred dollars or impose sentences of a few days in jail.

Think About It

- Why, do you think, do most state anti-cruelty laws exclude farm animals? Why are companion animals afforded more protection than other animals?
- Do you think there is more cause for concern if a person deliberately harms a pet dog than a wild animal? Explain your answer.
- List five reasons it is beneficial to have strict laws on ownership of wild animals.

Explore the Issues

• It's hard to believe that anyone would hurt an animal on purpose. Yet across the country, many animals suffer from intentional acts of cruelty, whether they've been beaten, set on fire, hanged, shot, or poisoned. Why do some people hurt animals? Why is animal cruelty a problem for both animals and people? What can you do to stop animal cruelty in your community? For more information about this serious problem, check out *Understanding Animal Cruelty*, a 24-page study and activity guide written especially for teens. *Understanding Animal Cruelty* examines the concepts and causes associated with animal cruelty, state and federal laws that address the mistreatment of animals, and the connection between animal cruelty and domestic violence, child abuse, and other violent behavior. To order, send \$3 to NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423-0362. *Understanding Animal Cruelty* may also be viewed and downloaded in the "Get Into the Issues" section at www.humaneteen.org.



Laws Regarding Exotic Animals as Pets

When it comes to keeping wildlife as pets—including animals such as tigers, bobcats, lions, chimpanzees, rattlesnakes, and crocodiles, among many others—whether it's legal



depends on where you live. Federal laws regulate the importation of exotic animals into the U.S., but they do not address private possession. Many states ban the possession of exotic animals. Others simply require a license or a permit. Additionally, many cities and counties have ordinances that restrict what kinds of animals people can keep.

- You've probably heard of people keeping wild animals such as sugar gliders, prairie dogs, chinchillas, or hedgehogs as pets. But did you know that many other wild animals are kept as well—from rattlesnakes to skunks to crocodiles? Do an Internet search for information about the care of exotic animals. Compare the claims of commercial websites that sell exotic species with the facts and views presented by animal protection groups.



Dangerous Dog Laws

In light of recent dog attacks, some communities are passing ordinances that address "dangerous" (or vicious) dogs. Those laws require people with dangerous dogs (dogs who have been determined to be dangerous by a court of law) to take certain precautions to protect others. For example, a dog who has been determined to be dangerous may be required to wear a muzzle in public. His caregiver

may have to buy liability insurance that would pay for dog-bite related injuries.

Other communities are expressing interest in laws that would prohibit people from owning certain breeds of dogs, particularly pit bulls and Rottweilers. Such ordinances, they believe, will help keep their citizens safer from dog bites and maulings. Likewise, some landlords do not allow renters with certain dog breeds. And insurance companies are known to refuse to issue or renew homeowners' policies to people who own specific dog breeds. Many animal protection organizations, including The HSUS, oppose breed-specific dog laws and policies, because dogs who belong to so-called "dangerous breeds" can and do make loving, faithful companions. Such laws, they say, penalize those people who take good care of their dogs and discriminate against individual dogs who may not pose a threat to a community. Those laws also ignore the fact that other dog breeds may be considered dangerous as well. Instead, the most effective laws are those that place the legal responsibility for a dog's actions on the owner.

Explore the Issues

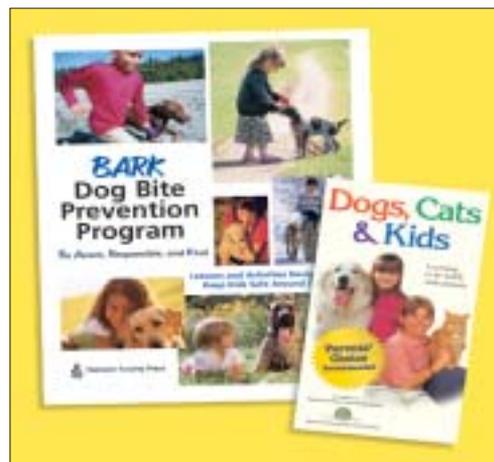
Diane Whipple, a lacrosse coach from San Francisco, California, was mauled to death in her apartment building by her neighbors' two Presa Canario dogs. The case attracted national media attention and highlighted the serious problem of dog attacks. Research the case online. Could responsible dog ownership have prevented the attack from occurring? What was the outcome of the trial? Do you think that the dogs' owners received a fair sentence? Why or why not?

Take Action

Looking for a project that will allow you to get involved with local schoolchildren and help animals at the same time? Consider implementing the BARK (Be Aware, Responsible, and Kind) Dog Bite Prevention Program in an elementary school near you. With the BARK Dog Bite Prevention Program, you or your animal protection club can help keep kids safe around dogs, reduce the number of dog-bite-related injuries in your community, and positively enhance the bond between people and dogs. Developed by The HSUS's youth education divi-

sion, BARK is the only program of its kind that's been *proven* effective in teaching elementary-school students how to behave safely around dogs.

The BARK program consists of a 25-minute video and a fun, easy-to-use, 31-page activity book of lessons, reproducible worksheets, and coloring pages designed to teach kids how to avoid being bitten. You and your club mem-



bers can take turns leading classrooms through the entertaining, informative lessons and answering questions about safety around dogs. It's a great project you can do for your health/physical education or social studies class. The complete BARK Dog Bite Prevention Program costs \$23.95 and may be ordered online at www.nahee.org/shoppingcart/ or by sending a check or money order to NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423-0362.

Pound Seizure Laws

Most states allow animal shelters to turn over their unclaimed animals to medical schools and research laboratories for scientific experiments. Some states even *require* it. This practice is called **pound seizure**.

Humane organizations oppose pound seizure laws for numerous reasons. Such laws, they say, destroy the trust between animal shelters and communities who believe that animals relinquished there will either be adopted or humanely killed. Out of guilt or fear that their animals may undergo painful experiments, people may be reluctant to surrender their animals, even if they are unable to provide adequate care for the pets themselves. Additionally, it has been argued that pets seized from shelters do not make appropriate research subjects, since they are often of unknown heritage and may be coping with existing diseases or behavior problems

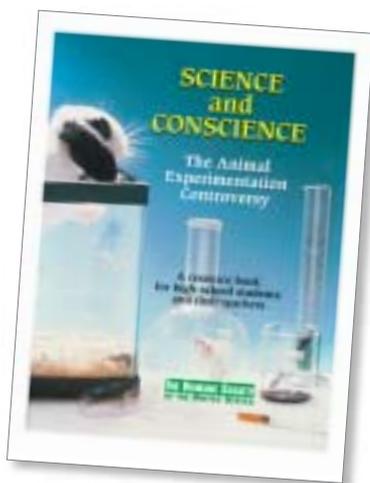
that could complicate research. In some states, pound seizure is against the law.

Think About It

Do you think it is acceptable for companion animals to be used in research? Do you think there is a difference between using former pets and dogs who have been raised to be sold into research? What about strays who may or may not have been part of a family at one time? Explain your answer.

Explore the Issues

Interested in learning more about pound seizure and animal research? Check out *Science and Conscience: The Animal Experimentation Controversy*, a study and activity guide for high-school students and their teachers. Major topics include the history of and current trends in animal experimentation, the use of animals in education, biomedical research, and product testing, and the development of laws, alternatives, and other initiatives to improve standards for animal care and scientific research alike. You can view and download the guide for free at www.humaneteen.org. Click on “Science and Conscience” under “Get Into the Issues.” To purchase a copy of *Science and Conscience*, send \$3 to NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Hadam, CT 06423-0362. You may also order online at www.nahee.org/shoppingcart/.



Take Action

Pound seizure is banned in more than a dozen states. Learn more about this controversial practice and how you can help stop pound seizure in states where it is still allowed. Visit www.banpoundseizure.org.

Federal Laws Regarding Companion Animals

Animal Welfare Act

Passed in 1966 and amended several times since,

the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is a set of laws that govern the treatment of animals in research, testing, experimentation, exhibition, and entertainment. Regarding companion animals, the AWA addresses several serious problems facing companion animals. Here are some of the AWA's major pet-related points.

- The AWA prohibits sponsoring or exhibiting animals in fighting ventures (e.g., dogfighting) and the transport of animals across state lines for such purposes.
- According to the AWA, the Secretary of Agriculture issues licenses and maintains records on animal dealers and exhibitors, including dog breeders with four or more breeding females. Under the USDA, inspectors are responsible for ensuring that breeders (i.e., puppy mill operators) provide adequate care for their animals.
- The AWA seeks to prevent the sale or use of stolen pets for medical research.
- The AWA outlines housing and husbandry standards for animals in research laboratories, some of whom are animals commonly kept as pets, such as cats, dogs, and rabbits. Interestingly, the AWA does not extend protection to birds, mice, or rats—animals who are kept as pets but are also frequent research subjects.

The AWA does not cover pet stores or small, private breeders. Currently, it also allows anyone who breeds dogs (no matter how many they have) to be exempted from license and inspection under the AWA as long as they are selling the animals directly to the public themselves. While this makes sense for small breeders who are keeping their dogs in their homes as part of the family, it is unfair to allow individuals who may have several hundred dogs to operate without any oversight at all. Several animal protection groups are trying to convince the government to correct this inconsistency. For updates, visit the Doris Day Animal League website at www.ddal.org.

Explore the Issues

Read the Animal Welfare Act at www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/awicregs.htm and select one of the companion animal related issues it addresses. Using the Internet and library sources, investigate how well

that law is enforced. When you've completed your research, write a brief overview of what you've uncovered and send it to humaneteen@nahee.org.

Horse Protection Act



In 1970, Congress enacted the Horse Protection Act (HPA) to ban the practice of soring (see

"A Sore Subject" on p. 20). This federal law makes soring a criminal offense. The USDA is the government agency charged with enforcing the Horse Protection Act. Despite 30 years of government regulation and intervention, soring still occurs in riding competitions. The difference is that trainers go to great efforts to conceal soring in order to escape detection by inspectors. When the HPA was enacted in 1970, a ceiling on its funding was set at \$500,000. Congress has never funded the HPA even to that level. As a result, the USDA has never had enough funding to ensure proper enforcement of the HPA. To learn more about the HPA and read the act in its entirety, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/hpainfo.html.

Explore the Issues

Pets for Life

focuses on companion animals in the U.S. When it comes to legislation, how do other countries treat pets? For a history or geography report, research another country's companion animal laws. You may wish to narrow your area of concentration to a specific topic, such as animal cruelty laws, exotic animals as pets, or dangerous dog laws.



What's in a Word?

Under current laws, animals are considered property. If someone hurts or kills your pet, you would most likely only receive the cost of veterinary bills or the amount you paid for the animal. A group in Denver, Colorado, is seeking to elevate the status of companion animals from property to "companion." Colorado is one of several states that allows people to leave money and property to pets in their wills.



In several cities, including Boulder, CO, Amherst, MA, and Berkeley, CA, as well as in the state of Rhode Island, people who have pets are now called "guardians" instead of "owners." Although this change does not alter companion animals' legal status, proponents of the new language believe it will help move people away from the idea that animals are property to do with as we wish. To keep current on the legal status of animals and pet-related laws, check In Defense of Animals' Guardian Program at www.guardiancampaign.com.

Think About It

Under most current laws, if someone suspects his pet suffered or died as a result of a veterinarian's error or negligence, he can file a malpractice lawsuit. In most courts, however, the maximum amount of money he could expect is the cost of the veterinary procedure and the cost of buying a new pet. With a few exceptions, courts do not generally award damages for a pet's sentimental value to his caregivers. If companion animals' legal status changes, how might that change decisions in veterinary malpractice suits? Should people be allowed to sue veterinarians for unlimited sums if their pet dies or suffers under treatment? Why or why not?

Be a Best Friend

Throughout this guide, we've focused on issues surrounding pets and animal shelters and suggested ways you can help animals in your community. Here are some more ways you can make a difference for companion animals.

Get the facts before getting a pet. Too many pets are relinquished because their owners were unprepared or unwilling to make a lifetime commitment. Before you bring home a pet, research information on the animals' life span and requirements for shelter, food, exercise, training, grooming, and veterinary care. Be sure that you have the time, money, and desire to properly care for the pet every day for his or her entire life. Take into account life changes that may affect your ability to care for a pet, such as going away to college, moving, or getting a new job.

Spay or neuter your cat or dog to help prevent pet overpopulation. Contrary to popular belief, spaying and neutering do not cause pets to become lazy or overweight. Those problems are caused by too much food and too little exercise. Spaying and neutering offer significant health benefits to pets by reducing their risk of some kinds of cancer. And sterilized dogs are less likely to bite than dogs who have not been spayed or neutered. If you or your family cannot afford to sterilize your pet, contact your local humane society or animal shelter or check with www.pets911.com for referrals to low-cost spay/neuter clinics.

Train your pet. Pets who have been properly socialized and trained are welcome members of society, not nuisances or public health threats. Remember, behavior problems are a leading cause of pet relinquishment, and virtually all of the pets surrendered to shelters never received behavior training.



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Have your cat and dog wear a collar and identification (ID) tags. Nobody intends for pets to

become lost, but unfortunately, animals sometimes have a way of getting loose. If your pet is lost, ID tags increase the likelihood of him or her being returned safely. Consider having your pet implanted with a microchip that contains a unique ID number. Painless and fairly inexpensive, micro-chipping is gaining more popularity in the U.S.

Follow local licensing laws.

Licensing laws protect animals and the communities they live in by requiring that all vaccinations are current. (Rabies, for example, may be spread from animals to people, so this vaccination is especially important.) Licensing laws also enable pets to be returned home in the event that they get lost. If your town does not require your pet to be licensed, be sure that he or she is current on vaccinations and wears a collar and ID tag.



Take pets to annual veterinary checkups and keep their vaccinations up-to-date.

Bring your pet to the veterinarian

for a checkup as soon as possible after bringing him or her home. To preserve your pet's good health, maintain a rigorous schedule of veterinary care. If you or your family cannot afford your pet's yearly exams or vaccinations, contact your local animal shelter to see if they offer low-cost veterinary care. Your veterinarian may also be willing to offer reduced rates or payment plans.

Walk your dog on a leash and keep your cat indoors. Pets allowed to roam face many dangers, including cars, cruel people, wild animals, and diseases. They may also be a danger or a nuisance to

communities, by biting people, damaging property, or causing traffic accidents when people swerve to avoid hitting them.

Consider your local animal shelter a first source for adding a new pet to your family. Animal shelters have a wide variety of animals up for adoption, from purebred pups to cats to guinea pigs. Don't assume that you won't find the pet you're looking



for—ask! By adopting a pet from a shelter, you'll gain a new best friend *and* possibly save an animal's life. Breed placement groups are also good places to search for purebred cats and dogs. If

you're looking for a horse, equine rescue groups often have horses up for adoption.

Make an emergency plan for your pet. Discuss with your family how you will care for your pet in

the event of a disaster. Make arrangements to keep your pet with you. If it isn't safe for you to stay at home, it won't be safe for animals, either. Prepare an emergency kit for your pet. For a list of emergency pet-care kit items, visit www.hsus.org.

Want to adopt a pet? Check www.petfinder.org.

Never purchase a puppy from a pet store.

Almost all puppies in pet stores come from puppy mills. Speak with pet store managers or send letters that politely explain the problems with puppy mills and why you will not patronize pet stores that sell puppies. The HSUS regularly receives calls from well-intentioned pet caregivers who purchased a dog at a pet store. Customers are often told by pet-store staff that the puppies were not purchased from puppy



What to Do If You Suspect Animal Cruelty

Mistreatment of animals is a concern, because it is wrong to cause another living creature unnecessary pain or suffering. Intentional cruelty is particularly disturbing because of what it signals about the person inflicting it: He or she needs help. People who are cruel to animals may well have suffered (or be suffering from) abuse themselves, or they may behave violently toward other people. That's why it's extremely important that you report any animal cruelty you hear of, witness, or suspect. Here's how:

- 1) Get the facts.** Write down the date, time, location, and any details you can remember, including descriptions of the people or animals involved. If someone else also witnessed the act, ask for that person's name and contact information in case officials need more witnesses. Photographs and videotapes are also helpful, if it is possible (and safe) for you to take them.
- 2) Get help.** Don't handle something as serious as animal cruelty alone. Ask your parents, school counselor, a teacher, or any other adult you trust to help you report your case.
- 3) Get on the phone.** Contact your local humane society, animal shelter, sheriff's department, or animal control officer. You can find this information in your telephone directory. Be sure to provide all the information you have gathered. Be aware that your complaint will be taken more seriously if you are willing to provide your name and contact information. However, if you are reporting a friend, neighbor, or family member and feel uncomfortable giving your name, you may make complaints anonymously. It is better to make an anonymous report than none at all.

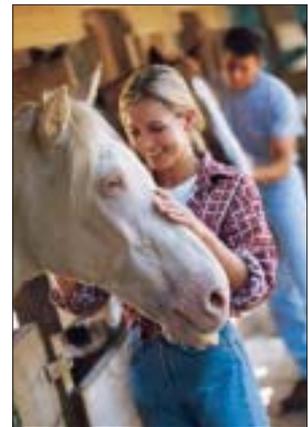
For more information about animal cruelty and its connection to human violence, see www.hsus.org/firststrike. There, you'll find suggestions for ways you can educate community members about this important connection.

mills. Because “puppy mill” is not a legal term and may be defined differently by different people, it is unlikely the store could ever successfully be prosecuted for the statement.

Don’t leave a pet alone in a hot car. Temperatures inside parked cars can reach deadly levels in a matter of minutes, even with the window cracked open. On warm days, leave your pet at home. If you see a pet locked in a hot car, try to locate his or her owner. If you can’t find the owner, call the police. Your quick action could save an animal’s life.

Don’t let dogs ride in the back of a pickup truck. They may be injured or killed if the truck stops or turns suddenly. If a dog falls from a truck bed, he may cause a traffic accident when vehicles swerve to avoid hitting him.

Help your local animal shelter. Suggestions for volunteer work at animal shelters can be found throughout this booklet in the “Take Action” sections. For more ideas, give your local shelter a call and find out how you can be of the most help. Keep in mind that some shelters’ insurance policies prohibit minors from working directly with animals. If that’s the case, there are still many other ways you



or your animal protection club can help, from fundraising to implementing a public awareness campaign in your community.

Speak up for animals. Write letters about companion animal issues for your school newspaper or to the editor of your local newspaper. Make sure your information is accurate and your writing is polite and respectful. Your points will be taken more seriously. School projects and presentations are also excellent ways to spread the word about animal protection issues.

Start a club. As any activist can tell you, there’s power in numbers. Consider forming an animal protection club at your school. For tips on how to start a club and make it successful, see “Start a Club” at www.humaneteen.org.

Continue learning about companion animals, issues facing them, and how you can help. A list of excellent resources follows.



RESOURCES

INTERNET

American Animal Hospital Association,
www.healthypet.com

American Association of Equine Practitioners,
www.aep.org

American Humane Association,
www.americanhumane.org



American Kennel Club,
www.akc.org

American Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals, www.asPCA.org

American Veterinary Medical
Association, www.avma.org

AnimalConcerns.org,
www.animalconcerns.netforchange.com

Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights,
www.aVar.org

Delta Society, www.deltasociety.org

Doris Day Animal Foundation, www.ddal.org

The Humane Society of the United States,
www.hsus.org

HumaneTeen, www.humaneteen.org

The Latham Foundation, www.Latham.org

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, www.msPCA.org

National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy,
www.petpopulation.org

North American Police Work Dog Association,
www.napwda.org

Pets911, www.pets911.com

Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy,
www.tufts.edu

Working Dogs, www.workingdogs.com

BOOKS & JOURNALS

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association,

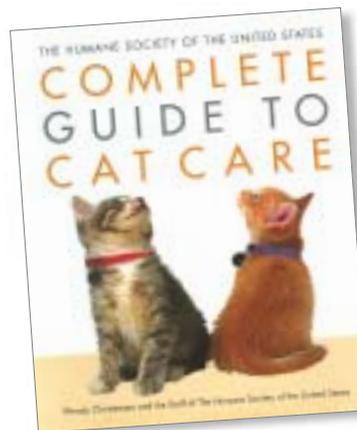
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*Between Pets
and People:
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Coppinger, Raymond, and Lorna Coppinger. *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001.

Curtis, Patricia. *The Indoor Cat*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1997.

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dations. Washington, DC: Humane Society Press, 2002.

JOURNALS

Anthrozoös, the journal of the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ). Ordering information available at www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CCAB/anthro~1.htm.

Society and Animals, the journal of human-animal studies published by Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PSYETA). Articles and ordering information available at www.psyeta.org/sa.

Notes



Notes



Notes



Notes



Notes



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Dear Reader:

Please take a few moments to complete the brief questionnaire below. Your input will help us improve our publications and will be useful in developing new materials.

For each question, please check one answer.

I believe this study and activity guide was effective at helping me learn more about companion animals. strongly agree agree disagree

I believe this study and activity guide was effective at teaching me about the humane treatment of companion animals. strongly agree agree disagree

After reading this study and activity guide, I am more likely to undertake an activity that will help companion animals. strongly agree agree disagree

Were there any sections that you thought could be improved? Explain.

Please identify which sections or activities you found most informative or useful.

Additional comments

I would be interested in learning about other humane education materials.
Please send a **FREE** catalog.

Name and address _____

Mail to NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423, or fax (860) 434-9579. You may also e-mail your answers and opinions to humaneteen@nahee.org. Please be sure to specify that you are speaking about *Pets for Life*.



Teach Kids to Care About Animals

From greyhound racing and circuses to puppy mills, dogfighting, and mistreatment of companion animals, animal suffering is all too common in our society. Yet so many of the causes of animal abuse can be reduced through **humane education** that teaches children how to make better choices for animals. You or your animal protection club can reach elementary-school kids through NAHEE's Adopt-a-Classroom program. When you adopt a class, each child in that classroom receives his or her own copy of *KIND* (Kids In Nature's Defense) *News*, an award-winning newspaper for kids from kindergarten through grade 6. It features articles, puzzles, projects, and celebrity interviews that teach children compassion and respect for people, animals, and the environment.

A subscription to *KIND News* costs just \$30 and includes 32 copies of the newspaper and a teacher's guide each month of the school year, September through May. Your adopted classroom's teacher will also receive *KIND Teacher*, an annual resource book of fun, reproducible worksheets—plus *KIND* ID cards for students, a classroom poster, and a *KIND* Calendar for the whole school year. Through our Adopt-a-Classroom program, you

can provide a subscription to *KIND News* as a gift for a child or teacher—and when you do, you receive credit on every monthly bundle of *KIND News*!

To learn more, please visit www.nahee.org. To view samples of *KIND News*, go to www.kindnews.org and click "About *KIND News*."



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Please mail this form to: *KIND News*, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423-0362. Make checks payable to *KIND News*.



How Else Can You Make a Difference for All Animals?



Become a member of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization. Membership costs \$25 per year.

By joining The HSUS, you can stay on top of pending laws, issues, and progress in animal protection and environmental matters. You'll receive *All Animals*, a quarterly magazine that will keep you posted on a variety of animal-related news. You can also be a part of the Action Alert Team (at no extra cost!) and receive *Humane Activist*, a bimonthly publication for grassroots activists.

To become a member of The HSUS, fill out the form on the right and send it with a check for \$25 made payable to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037, or join online at www.hsus.org/membership.

HSUS Membership Application

- Yes, I wish to become a member of The Humane Society of the United States and receive *All Animals*. My \$25 is enclosed.
- Yes, I also want to join the Action Alert Team, at no additional cost, and receive *Humane Activist*. Send me the next issues as soon as possible! (You must join The HSUS in order to sign up for the Action Alert Team.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

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