

# Humane Society International **Extending** Our Global Reach

Cruelty to animals has no national boundaries—but neither does compassion. Coordinating the work of The HSUS abroad, Humane Society International tackled the worst in 2009 while promoting the best in humans' relationships with animals.

More than any other global animal protection organization, HSI took on a broad range of animal abuses. We exposed the horrors of the Canadian seal hunt for the fifth year in a row and watched seal pelt prices plummet in the face of increasing worldwide opposition to the slaughter. We created economic incentives for communities to conserve local wildlife and habitats. Behind the scenes, we continued our work as a recognized force for animal protection in international treaties and negotiations. We taught animal handling techniques and trade law enforcement to government representatives, customs and border officials, and environmental police. At the grassroots level, we empowered local groups to grow in size and impact.

We also worked to show that cruelty isn't culturally relative. In Mexico, ex-matador Álvaro Múnera joined our

campaign to end bullfighting, a blood sport that's "condemned to disappear," says the one-time champion. "I feel like it's my job to accelerate the process." In Taiwan, we promoted humane alternatives to a Buddhist tradition that lets loose 200 million wild-caught or captive-bred animals every year in ceremonies intended to symbolize kindness to other creatures. In truth, the practice causes enormous animal suffering and disrupts native ecosystems.

By building partnerships with local advocates like Rahul Sehgal of India, we're strengthening our collective voice for all creatures. Now director of HSI India, Sehgal has been helping launch high-volume sterilization programs for street dogs in Ethiopia, Bhutan, and Nepal. "It's very empowering," he says, "because I'm able to affect the lives of many more times the number of animals as before."





## Protecting Domestic Animals

For the estimated 400 million dogs who live on the fringes of the world's cities, suburbs, and rural villages, HSI is promising a better future: animal control through high-volume spay/neuter rather than by more traditional methods that include poisoning, shooting, drowning, and clubbing.

In 2009, we launched the first-ever countrywide street dog initiative with the goal of sterilizing 50,000 animals in the Himalayan mountain kingdom of Bhutan, where so many dogs roam free that tourists pack earplugs so they can sleep through the all-night barking and howling.

We also brought sterilization programs to other continents and helped local advocates tackle the barriers to humane street dog management. Meanwhile, we taught 227 vets from developing nations to perform spay/neuter surgeries—something most of them never learned in school.

Our programs helped raise animals' status and give hope to people who have long despaired of their suffering. At an HSI spay/neuter clinic in remote Patagonia, a woman began to cry when she arrived to pick up her dog from surgery. Previously, she'd thought her only option was to drown the dog's litters. "The puppies shouldn't suffer," she told an HSI staff member. Then she spread the good news about the service to all her neighbors.

## Halting the Spread of Factory Farming

As Western diets become increasingly popular in developing nations, factory-style agricultural practices are also proliferating. In India, more than 200 million hens confined in battery cages produce 80 percent of the country's eggs. But consumers still believe their eggs are "coming from some chicken running around in a village," says HSI campaigns manager Chetana Mirle.



Hens are free from cages at this facility in Brazil, one of many countries where HSI works with local organizations to push for higher animal welfare standards.

A 2009 HSI advertising campaign sought to change this impression, exposing the cruelties inherent to industrialized egg and chicken production. The ad hit video screens in 475 fast food restaurants, food courts, health clinics, and other locations around Delhi. We also helped mobilize a grassroots army to speak out against factory farming and secured the adoption of cage-free purchasing policies by two major retailers.

We worked with scientists, opinion leaders, and global decision-makers to educate the public about the health threats and environmental dangers of industrialized animal agribusiness. At the Copenhagen climate talks, we highlighted the role of factory farming in global warming. "People know the polar bears are having a rough time because of climate change," says Mirle, "but that the solution also lies in our relationship with animals—that's what we need to bring attention to."



## Saving Sharks from Attack

Each year, millions of sharks are targeted for their fins, which are sliced off and saved for use in soup before fishermen throw the bleeding animals back into the water. Shark finning has exacerbated the dramatic decline in shark populations in recent decades, and HSI is leading efforts against the practice. Our volunteers organized Chinese New Year celebrations in major cities, educating consumers about the origins of shark fin soup in an attempt to reduce demand for this cruel fare. We also worked to bring national and international restrictions on shark finning, including in the U.S., where a bill is advancing through Congress.



Seals targeted in Canada's annual commercial slaughter have virtually no means of escape. To pressure the country to end the killing, more than 5,000 food-related businesses and 600,000 individuals have joined the HSI-led boycott of Canadian seafood.

## Helping Wildlife Worldwide

Each year, an HSI team travels to Canadian waters to document the shooting and clubbing of tens of thousands of days-old seals. The scene is almost too brutal to stomach, the death toll unfathomable.

But the world has taken notice, and the seal hunt is on its last legs. In May 2009, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to ban the sale of seal products, closing the industry's largest remaining market. Canadian Sen. Mac Harb introduced the first bill in his country's history to end the bloodbath, and he urged the government to redirect the money spent subsidizing the hunt to helping sealers start ecotourism businesses. He's listening to the will of the people, he says: Hundreds of thousands have expressed support for his position.

HSI worked in other arenas in 2009 to protect the world's wildlife, gathering support for proposals to prohibit or curb the international trade of several species, from Porbeagle sharks to Central American tree frogs. In our fight against the exotic pet trade, we helped Moroccan officials combat smuggling in wild-caught Barbary macaques—an illegal activity so extensive that the animals are now considered threatened.

## Creating Sustainable Solutions

Propagating trees might not seem like an animal welfare priority, but when those plants will provide a living for subsistence farmers and habitat for up to 120 species, their value becomes apparent. In 2009, HSI taught Nicaraguan and Costa Rican farmers better cultivation methods for the trees that produce cacao, an ingredient in chocolate. In school workshops, we brought the message to the next generation of growers, teaching children about fruit bats, sloths, howler monkeys, squirrels, and other animals who make their home in the canopy.

Providing training and seed money, HSI helps communities build thriving tourism businesses that celebrate and protect wildlife, whether it's sea turtles in Costa Rica, dolphins in the Dominican Republic, jaguars in Guatemala, or pink boa constrictors in Honduras. These programs bring humane, sustainable alternatives to hunting or selling animals, cutting down trees for sale, or clearing land for agriculture.



**2009 Impact:** 27 member nations of the European Union ban trade in seal products / 5,000+ food-related businesses and 600,000 individuals participate in Protect Seals campaign's boycott of Canadian seafood / 50,000 dogs in Bhutan to be helped by first-ever countrywide sterilization program / 475 fast food restaurants, health clinics, and other locations in Delhi showcase our ads against factory farming / 2 major retailers in India adopt cage-free practices / 227 veterinarians trained to perform spay/neuter surgeries / 343 people trained in enforcement of international wildlife laws