



With no natural predators in Waikiki, pigeons present a costly problem to businesses. A contraceptive-laced food presents a solution.

## Planned Pigeonhood

In Waikiki, the way to population control is through the stomach

**Nets. Spikes. A gel with hot pepper.** The International Market Place in Honolulu's Waikiki had tried them all, and still pedestrians at the open air mall dodged swooping pigeons, while customers dining under sunny skies had their meals ruined by droppings.

So when manager Reid Sasaki heard about OvoControl, a contraceptive-laced food that reduces pigeon numbers by half in a year, he was willing to try it, even if the results wouldn't be immediately evident, and even if he would be among the first adopters in Hawaii.

Encouraged by HSUS Hawaii state director Inga Gibson, in 2011 he invested in \$200 solar-powered automatic feeders and in pellets that treat 100 pigeons for about \$9 a day. In a little over 12 months, the number of pigeons hanging around the stalls of puka shell necklaces, leis, and oil paintings of palm trees and surf decreased by 60 percent.

Now, after getting required permits from the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, OvoControl is on the verge of being adopted by other major businesses in Waikiki, where pigeons flourish around hotel patios, beachside parks, and outdoor buffets, fed by well-meaning tourists who flock to the region's white sands and turquoise waters.

"It's a health problem. ... It's a huge financial burden," says Michael Botha, president of Sandwich Isle Pest Solutions, which is introducing OvoControl to clients in Waikiki, where pigeons rank with bedbugs as an image problem. Businesses are desperate after being cited by the health department or refunding the cost of a dozen pigeon-spoiled meals in a day.

Pigeons on OvoControl lay infertile eggs but continue to roost and nest, keeping other flocks from moving in. Botha notes that it's the only way to manage pigeons in Hawaii, where

the birds normally reproduce four to six times per year and have no natural predators. Adds Erick Wolf, CEO of Innolytics, which developed and markets the contraceptive: "It really doesn't matter how much you trap and poison and shoot. They breed back."

Still, it can be a tough sell, as businesses want immediate results. Waikiki hotels also worry if they invest in the product it will provide a cost-free benefit to neighboring competitors. Since receiving the required EPA registration in 2008, Wolf has sold OvoControl to just 200 sites across the U.S.

Gibson is recruiting other businesses in Waikiki. The HSUS has also created a pledge businesses can make promising to use OvoControl, as well as free signs they can post asking people not to feed birds. "There are so many pigeons, and they get killed in such inhumane ways," Gibson says. "OvoControl is a win-win for all."

— Karen E. Lange

➔ **TO FIND OUT** how to get involved, visit [humansociety.org/pigeons](http://humansociety.org/pigeons).



**QUOTED** “The cruelty ... is astounding, and so it really was important to me to be a part of what The Humane Society is doing,”

notes actor Woody Harrelson, who narrates a new video from The HSUS's Fur-Free Campaign. The piece offers a behind-the-scenes look at where fur for clothing comes from, courtesy of a stuffed toy fox. “The problem in our society today is that we don't see the cause and effect of a lot of things that go on. ... So it's my hope that this video will help at least make people more aware of what goes on in the fur industry. Because I think, generally, at root, people are compassionate. And if they understand some of these things, it might help.” [ON THE IPAD](#) and at [humanesociety.org/videos](http://humanesociety.org/videos): *Watch the video.*

## The Comeback Cat



**Five months after** she was found drinking out of a backyard swimming pool—struggling with mange, parasites, anemia, a low body temperature, and hunger—an orphaned bobcat races back into the Southern California wild (below) following a successful recovery at The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, which is operated in partnership with The HSUS. As detailed in

*All Animals* (“The Healing Ground,” September/October 2012), the then-tiny kitten was nestled into an incubator during her first touch-and-go days at the center, staff hustling to save her after her brother died. She was eventually moved to an outdoor enclosure, where she stayed with seven others until they were all 8 to 10 months old, appropriately wary of humans, and conditioned to a natural setting. “She’s definitely one of the kittens we were all pulling for—and honestly didn’t think she would recover the way that she did,” says center director Ali Crumpacker, who in late November watched her bolt off into a high desert canyon, just beyond the backyard in which she was found.

— *Michael Sharp*



[ON THE IPAD](#): Watch the bobcat dash back into the wild.

## A NEW PASSION FOR FASHION



With parents in the medical field, Nicolle Bajgrowicz thought she would become a doctor. But the biology major soon realized her heart wasn't in medicine and decided to pursue her true passion: fashion design.

That decision was validated in November when Bajgrowicz, a senior at The Art Institute of California–Orange County, took top honors in The HSUS's Cool vs. Cruel fashion design competition. The contest challenges students to create cruelty-free interpretations of designer runway looks that used animal fur. “I knew that fashion is what



I loved to do,” she says, “but I never knew if it was what I was meant to do.”

Bajgrowicz learned about the competition during an “eye-opening” HSUS presentation about the fur industry. Her look in the 2011 contest wasn't quite as successful, she notes: “I did a faux fur vest with a faux fur tube top and faux fur skirt. It was ... faux to the extreme!” Her 2012 entry, a “fun and a little edgy” cocktail dress, was more restrained, with hand-applied beading standing in for the fur epaulets of the runway inspiration look.

The prize includes \$1,000 and an internship with fur-free designer Victoria Bartlett. But the message behind her winning look is just as important to Bajgrowicz, a dog lover who volunteers with a pit bull rescue group.

“It is the right and responsible way to design. ... [Fashion] can still be luxurious and high end without hurting an animal.”

— *Arna Cohen*



## Ashley Mauceri

MANAGER,  
ANIMAL CRUELTY RESPONSE

**EARLY INSPIRATION:** As a college sophomore, Mauceri attended an HSUS workshop on the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence. “I was moved by the large amount of human need in this world, and it struck me as obviously connected to this huge world of animals in need. I wanted to find a way to work on both of those issues.” While pursuing her master’s in sociology, she completed a summer internship with The HSUS, which led to what she calls her “dream job” in 2007. Today, she spends much of her time responding to 200-plus animal cruelty tips a month. Hoarding situations. Puppy mills. Roadside zoos. “Every type of animal cruelty, we get it,” she says.

**LIVES ON THE LINE:** While hearing about the worst in human-animal relations, Mauceri also sees the best. “People care about animals. Whether they’re in rural Kentucky or urban Michigan, they care enough to find us.” Some calls trigger a deployment of the HSUS Animal Rescue Team. But many situations just need an assist, like providing authorities with sample search warrants for cruelty cases or finding a veterinarian to assess the animals’ condition. “I think people feel a lot more comfortable talking to me,” Mauceri says. “A lot of the places we’re getting calls from are these really small communities where if Mr. Smith calls the police, the entire community knows about it.”

“Every type of animal cruelty, we get it.”

**EMPOWERING THE ENFORCERS:** When she contacts law enforcement agencies, Mauceri’s goal is to remove barriers that prevent animals from being rescued. “I’m not just calling to say, ‘We’ve gotten reports about a puppy mill down the street—what are you going to do about it?’ But it’s, ‘We’ve gotten complaints, we believe there are violations, and how can I help you?’ And that’s a really wonderful part of my job because it really empowers law enforcement to do the right thing.” As word spreads, more agencies are reaching out to The HSUS. Mauceri’s response to them: “If animals are suffering, we can make it very easy for your agency.”

**DO THE RIGHT THING:** A New York City resident called in 2011 to report a dog who was locked in a shed, barking frantically, with no signs that anyone was caring for him. Local authorities said it would take 48 hours to respond, and the caller worried the pup wouldn’t last that long. Mauceri encouraged her to push for immediate action. “She walked down to the police department, and she stood there until someone would talk with her,” Mauceri says. “They ended up going out and unbolting the door, and there was this terrified skinny little boxer in this feces-covered pen.” Afterwards, the tipster thanked Mauceri for giving her the courage to do the right thing. “I’ll never forget that,” says Mauceri, who keeps the pup’s picture in her cubicle “to remind me that when I feel like we’re hitting dead ends, there’s an animal out there who needs us.”

— Julie Falconer

ON THE iPad: Watch a video of Mauceri’s work.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

**Manufacturers have agreed** to add a bittering agent to antifreeze sold in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to prevent animals and children from ingesting the toxic, sweet-tasting liquid. Previously, the bitter flavor was added only in the 17 states where legislation required it. The ethylene glycol in antifreeze is so lethal that one teaspoon can kill a cat; an estimated 1,400 children, tens of thousands of pets, and untold numbers of wild animals are poisoned by antifreeze each year. “We applaud them for taking this important step to help protect our pets, kids, and wildlife in every state,” says Sara Amundson, executive director of the Humane Society Legislative Fund, an HSUS affiliate that helped pass state legislation and negotiate the agreement.

**Faced with intense** international criticism, South Korea has abandoned plans to kill whales for “scientific research” via a loophole in the International Whaling Commission’s ban on commercial hunting. An online protest petition triggered more than 100,000 emails in three weeks, prompting South Korea to announce that it would instead use nonlethal methods to conduct research. Japan exploits the loophole to kill hundreds of whales every year, selling the meat on the open market.

**The U.S. Navy announced** in November that advances in technology will allow unmanned underwater vehicles to take over the duties of its 24 mine-detecting dolphins beginning in 2017. The Navy currently uses 80 dolphins for defense tasks that include detecting mines, patrolling for enemy divers, and retrieving objects from the ocean floor. “We look forward to the day when technology finally replaces any military need for these intelligent, sensitive animals,” says HSUS marine mammal scientist Naomi Rose.



## All in for Olive Ridleys

*HSI initiative protects India's vulnerable sea turtles*

**A pack of jackals** paced Pir Jahania beach on a starless night last spring. Some 15 feet away, Rahul Sehgal stood waiting with a Humane Society International colleague and volunteers from a nearby fishing community.

Eventually, both groups would turn their attention to a single olive ridley sea turtle, climbing her way out of the Bay of Bengal along India's eastern shoreline.

There in the darkness, she laid 105 eggs in the sand. "It was incredible," says Sehgal, director of HSI/Asia.

In the past, in far too many cases, that nest would promptly become dinner for those waiting jackals, or for feral pigs, or stray dogs. But HSI—in partnership with Action for Protection of Wild Animals—is working to protect the species, now classified as "vulnerable" because of nest preda-

tion, habitat disturbance, and deadly fishing nets.

HSI's work that spring night was part of an initiative that enlists out-of-season fishermen and other volunteers to help patrol beaches, monitor nests, transport eggs to hatcheries, and carry hatchlings back toward the water. Over a single month last year, they helped deliver nearly 8,000 safely to the bay.

Now in its second year, the project has organized about a dozen volunteers at three target beaches, part of vital habitat in India's state of Odisha where nearly 150,000 olive ridley turtles dig their nests each December through February. Future goals include engaging children, upgrading equipment, reinforcing hatchery fencing, and possibly addressing the stray dog component with spay/neuter initiatives.

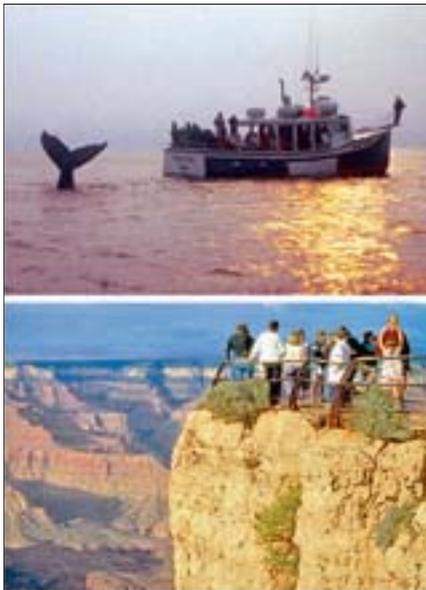
"That is the essential key to success for any conservation activity: Until you enlist the local community that actually interacts with the wildlife, nothing is going to work out," says HSI's Soham Mukherjee. "And that's why we're really, really happy we're getting really, really good support from the community."  
— Michael Sharp

**721,177**

**THAT'S HOW MANY FISH AND INVERTEBRATES** commercial aquarium collectors reported taking from Hawaii's reefs in

just one year—2011—according to an October lawsuit filed on behalf of The HSUS and other groups against the state Department of Land and Natural Resources. The actual number is probably at least 1.4 million, says diver Rene Umberger, who has been researching the issue ("Trouble in Paradise," January/February 2011). The HSUS brought the suit after it was revealed that Hawaii sidestepped its own environmental laws and issued collection permits without assessing the impact on the state's vulnerable reefs. If successful, the suit could rein in Hawaii's aquarium trade—something the state legislature has so far failed to do.





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**UPDATE**

Right now, you can fly to Africa, shoot a lion, and bring back the head or skin to the United States ("Last Chance for Lions," May/June 2011). It's legal even though a recent study says wild lion numbers have fallen more than half over the last 30 years. There are only about 32,000 left. In November, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, responding to a petition from The HSUS and other groups, said it will consider listing lions as endangered. That would outlaw the import of hunting trophies and halt a flow of body parts that cost the lives of at least 3,600 lions between 1999 and 2008. The agency's verdict is expected in 2014.



## HEAD OF THE CLASS

Innovative tank helps studies while sparing lives

**Every year**, millions of wild animals are collected, killed, and preserved in alcohol for scientific studies in U.S. colleges, universities, high schools, and even middle schools. Many are used for simple identification lessons and then discarded.

The practice has never sat well with Mike Howell. Not as a graduate student at the University of Alabama, where students once beached hundreds of juvenile bowfin fish before dumping them into buckets of formaldehyde. And not as a biology professor at Samford University, where despite misgivings he used the old teaching method himself, until a student spoke up.

"I wanted to study living things and here you are killing things," the student told Howell. "Biology shouldn't be this way."

Haunted by those words, Howell developed an alternative way to study a fish's colors, which fade after death, and other identification marks.

Patented in 1991, the lightweight, v-shaped Teaching-Photographic Tank can be carried into the field and filled with water. Fish settle into the narrow bottom and throw their fins and rays up, offering students a moment to snap photos and take notes before the fish and other animals—from salamanders and small snakes to frogs and spiders—are released.

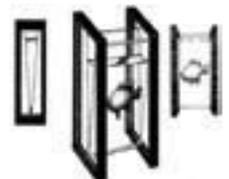
Former student Drew Hataway remembers the positive impact of seeing live animals versus rooms of rotting fish at other universities: "[Students] love collecting live species and seeing how gorgeous some of these fish are." Hataway now uses the tank himself as an assistant professor at Samford.

The T-P Tank also presents a broader message, says Humane Society University's Jonathan Balcombe, who's helped promote it: "If we sit down and get creative, we can come up with better ways to study."

— Ruthanne Johnson



The T-P Tank allows students to photograph and study live fish and other animals up close before setting them free.



LION: JAMES URBACH/PURESTOCK/ALAMY; BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: FRANCESCA GROS; SHANNON JORDAN