

Q&A

IAN HARDING

HE WAS ABOUT 10 YEARS OLD when a ruby-crowned kinglet in a tree near his house caught his eye. Mesmerized, actor Ian Harding followed the bird through the woods and lost his jacket somewhere along the way.

Rather than fess up to his mom, Harding said poachers stole it while he was trying to protect a few elephants. He might have gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for one pesky detail.

Elephants are rather rare in Northern Virginia.

The *Pretty Little Liars* star now knows a lot more about wildlife, especially birds. "My dad definitely instilled in me a desire to go hiking and to go into the woods," Harding says. "One of the reasons I fell in love with birds was because it's kind of a connector to that, to nature."

Harding visited The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, an HSUS affiliate in Ramona, California, last summer and helped release a red-tailed hawk who had recovered from his ailments with fluids, food and rest. "I learned about this wonderful place through The HSUS," he said. "I had been looking for somewhere in Southern California that rehabilitates wildlife, and this is an amazing place that does that."

In this edited interview with *All Animals* deputy editorial director Emily Smith, Harding talked about his love for birds and his two rescued lab-poodle mixes.

WHAT DO YOU FIND FASCINATING ABOUT BIRDS?

It's interesting, because you can't really cuddle birds; there's just something [about them]. They're beautiful, they're different, they're varied in so many ways and you can tell a lot about a landscape by the health of the bird population. And I love the songs they sing.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR DOGS.

Mochi and Bailey are insane—they're wonderful dogs. I had never adopted a dog before. I guess the whole thing about rescuing is there are just so many dogs. I feel like it's an easy way to give back. You have a lifelong friend, and they're wonderful, wonderful animals.

WHAT OTHER ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES ARE CLOSE TO YOUR HEART?

When it comes to animals, there isn't a cause that I'm just like, "Nah." It's not that animals are defenseless—it's that they don't have a voice. Humans do, and rule the planet for the most part, so I'm interested in any cause that gives animals consideration, whether it's the treatment of animals in the food industry or dogfighting.

HOW DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUPPORT THE CAUSES YOU HOLD DEAR?

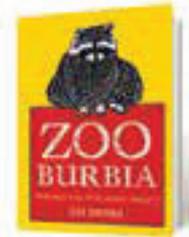
You're in an interesting place as a celebrity—I hate saying that word. I think there's a little bit of a responsibility to do something with it. You don't need to cure cancer—although that's certainly a worthy endeavor. It can be something as simple as raising awareness. You could be the biggest slacker in the world and still repost something. With social media, you can draw attention, you can raise money and you can really push what you want to say more directly than ever before.



Ian Harding releases a hawk at The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center.

WARM, CHARMING and thoughtful, Tai Moses' *Zooburbia: Meditations on the Wild Animals Among Us* draws the reader into other creatures' worlds, channeling the author's experiences to encourage compassion and attention to animals. From an encounter with an octopus in a pet store where she once worked—"I no longer doubted that the being gazing back at me from behind the glass had a mind"—to meetings with the wildlife who inhabit backyards and golf courses, Moses' gift is to show readers that these animals do not belong in private possession. She illustrates why we must respect their wild state, with mindfulness of their experiences, needs and

mysterious inner worlds. And while the book does focus largely upon the wilder creatures among us, our close companions get a soft look as well. The chapter "The Most Beautiful Ugly Dog," about an elderly dog who was repeatedly passed over for adoption at the shelter where Moses volunteered, may bring a lump to your throat.



A HEARTWARMING STORY of hope, faith and friendship, *The Wheelbarrow Puppy Club* enlightens readers of all ages about the plight of street dogs around the world. It follows one pup's journey from a wheelbarrow on a



street corner in Beijing, China, to Washington, D.C. Along the way, the brown-and-white puppy gets a name (Varly), a cozy bed, a yard to play in and—most important—a loving family. Author Christina Valenti, who based the children's story on real-life events, weaves an inspiring tale that helps teach youngsters compassion and perseverance.