



TOUGH TIMES FOR TREASURED MANATEES

SPECIES MAY BE REMOVED FROM ENDANGERED LIST // BY TANYA MULFORD

EACH SUMMER, TOURISTS flock to Florida waterways to watch and photograph manatees. The state is chock full of souvenirs devoted to the dark gray, whiskered and pleasingly plump “sea cow”—manatee license plates, manatee plush toys, manatee T-shirts and manatee shot glasses. There’s even a Manatee County.

Among other species, too, the animals appear popular. Biologists have observed alligators giving way to or swimming peacefully past manatees. Sharks have been known to leave them alone as well.

And yet, despite it all, manatees are still struggling to survive. In 2012, a property and boating interest group, resentful of speed limits in coastal bays and rivers, filed a legal petition seeking to have manatees removed from the list of species classified as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The petition pushed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to propose slashing protections for the state’s manatees, who live in estuaries, bays and rivers along the Florida coast. The group claims that manatees are doing well and don’t need the current level of protection. The facts

don’t bear out that claim: After four decades of federal protection, only about 4,830 manatees swim Florida waters.

These gentle giants—manatees can grow up to 10 feet long and 1,000 pounds—have struggled to survive the damaging effects of human activities for centuries, says Sharon Young, HSUS marine issues field director.

Since 1972, the federal Endangered Species Act has required the Fish and Wildlife Service to help manatee populations recover. The agency has placed limits on coastal development, boat speeds and other human activity in areas that are considered critical habitat.

But fishing, boating and construction interests have continually challenged that protection, leaving manatees with limited access to natural springs or other places with warm water. To avoid freezing to death in winter, around 60 percent of Florida manatees now rely on warmer waters near power plants—all of which are slated to be closed in the next 50 years, according to a recent study.



And despite the speed limits, boat strikes remain a lethal threat to the slow-moving animals, killing 73 manatees in 2013, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Young reports that up to 80 percent of manatees bear scars from collisions.

Serious threats continue to emerge, as well. Record-breaking cold snaps and pollution-fed algae blooms (or red tides) contributed to the deaths of 1,600 Florida manatees over the past three years. These algae blooms don't just poison manatees; they also destroy their food. More than 47,000 acres of sea grass beds were killed in the Indian River Lagoon area alone. Water resources may also become scarce: Cattle ranchers recently applied for a permit to pull 1.12 million gallons of water a day near a manatee habitat in the St. John's River region.

With threats to their survival increasing, Young says this is no time for the federal government to cut back on protection. Many agree with her: In the two months after the Fish and Wildlife Service announced its proposal, The HSUS delivered 42,199 written objections from supporters across the country.

Young notes the species is a national treasure protected by federal law and a major tourist draw to a state that depends heavily on tourism. "Somebody in Iowa has just as much at stake as somebody in Florida."

It will be months before the Fish and Wildlife Service announces its decision. If it does side with boating interests, Young says, there will still be time for the American public—during the public comment period that will follow—to once again show its love for the manatee.

+ FOR A LIST of ways you can help manatees, go to humanesociety.org/helpmanatees.



PRESCRIPTION FOR CRUELTY

BY REFUSING DRUGS LIKE PREMARIN, WOMEN CAN END AN INDUSTRY THAT STILL HOLDS THOUSANDS OF MARES CAPTIVE

// BY KAREN E. LANGE

DELILAH, SYDNEY AND BONNIE are older now, in their 20s, so naturally they don't move as well. But the three draft mares living out their final years at Duchess Sanctuary in Oregon have slowed down even more than usual.

Once, for about six months each year during their pregnancies, Delilah, Sydney and Bonnie stood tethered in concrete-floored stalls too narrow to turn around in, hooked to bags to collect their urine at a Canadian "PMU" farm. The Pregnant Mare Urine, which contains estrogen, was used by Pfizer to manufacture a hormone replacement drug called Premarin.

Horses' bodies have evolved to always be moving, says Jennifer Kunz, director of operations at Duchess, but these animals could not walk or run or shift positions. The unnatural constant pressure on their front legs, which bear most of a horse's weight, left them with stiff, arthritic joints. Today, staff members at the sanctuary, operated by HSUS affiliate The Fund for Animals, give the animals anti-inflammatories to ease the discomfort and monitor them closely for signs of pain.

In 2008, when 90-plus rescued PMU mares, including these three, arrived at Duchess, the industry appeared to be on its way out. Following the disclosure in 2002 that Premarin increases the risk of cancer, heart attacks and strokes for women, demand for the drug plummeted. There were 50,000 horses kept on Canadian and American PMU farms. Now there are, at most, 4,000.

The industry isn't dying, though; it's just moved overseas, with new farms in China, Kazakhstan and Poland, says Vivian Farrell, founding president of The Horse Fund, a U.S.-based advocacy group. And North American women continue to buy a growing number of PMU products, including Premarin, Prempro, Premphase and a new drug that launched quietly and is set to be promoted this year: Duavee, which is being marketed to menopausal women and people of both sexes who suffer from osteoporosis. The name gives no hint of the suffering at its source.

But U.S. women can put an end to PMU farms, Farrell says, by asking doctors not to prescribe them drugs made with "conjugated equine estrogen." Women in this country still make up 90 percent of the market, she says. Other medications and treatments are available.

Kunz says she's never met a woman who kept taking PMU drugs once she understood the cruelty involved. "If women know, they'll choose something else."



BEAUTIFUL INSPIRATION

REDKEN FOUNDER WAS A POWERFUL FORCE FOR ANIMALS

// BY SARAH KOWALSKI

PAULA KENT MEEHAN left a legacy beyond Redken, the innovative hair care company she cofounded in 1960.

Meehan, who died last year at the age of 82, was passionate about animals and gave generously to many charitable organizations, including The HSUS. Especially dedicated to ending puppy mills, she contributed heavily to that cause and other pet protection initiatives.

In 2002, inspired by the homeless mother dog and puppy she found on the streets of Beverly Hills, Meehan started the non-profit Pet Care Foundation, with the mission of finding homes for cats and dogs in the Los Angeles County shelter system. Bill Crowe, president of the Pet Care Foundation and a friend of Meehan's, says the foundation will continue to carry out the work that was so important to her.

"She felt extremely blessed," Crowe says. "She would always say she was the luckiest person in the world, and I think that she thought it was important to spread that around."

A WINDY CITY WONDER

REMEMBERING CHICAGO'S 'CAT MAN' // BY JULIE FALCONER

AN ARMY VETERAN and lifelong animal lover, Arthur Burrell got started in feline rescue when he took in two tiny kittens he'd found along the west side of Chicago.

He had eight cats at home by the time he met Annette Bellezzo and Kris Badillo, employees with the HSUS Pets for Life program, which helps people and their pets in underserved communities. In one bedroom, he had created a feline playground, fashioning jungle gyms and cat trees from recycled cardboard and rope strung from the ceiling. He made cat beds from boxes and old T-shirts.

Neighbors would often see him wandering the streets late at night, looking for other cats to help. He gave them names like Sparkle Treadwell and Ooka Nooka. In a spiral notebook, he meticulously documented each cat's history and medical issues.

"Everybody in the neighborhood knew him as 'the cat man,'" says his wife, Yolanda Bell. Neighbors would frequently ask for his advice, and over the last two years, Burrell rescued 51 homeless cats and kittens. He was "like a whirlwind," remembers Bellezzo. "He had an infectious, positive attitude about animals." Pets for Life provided him supplies like flea medications, arranged spay/neuter surgeries and found homes for the kittens. In turn, he spread the word about the program.

Never deterred by limited resources, Burrell started sketching out plans in September for a program he called Caring About Felines Everywhere. The CAFE program, he wrote in his notebook, would "get stray cats off the street and get them spayed/neutered." It would share information with people about cat care and help owners in underserved areas with food and veterinary care. It would find homes for friendly strays.

Burrell, who was 57 and suffered from pulmonary disease, died a month later. While he didn't live long enough to make his CAFE program a reality, his wife notes that many in the neighborhood really "started getting into their pets" because of him.

"He was so happy before he died," Bell remembers, "because he thought he was really going to get a chance to do something" for the cats. It's pretty clear he already had.



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF PET CARE FOUNDATION; NICOLE MARIE THOMAS



INNER LIVES

// BY JONATHAN BALCOMBE

ANIMALS SOMETIMES show their emotions quite clearly: Picture a dog who's just been informed it's walk time or a cat reacting to a territory intruder.

But some feelings are subtle and harder to detect. For instance, might animals experience optimism or pessimism?

In one experiment, animals are trained to associate one cue with a treat and another cue with something less positive (or unpleasant). They are then presented with ambiguous (intermediate) cues. The prediction is that an animal who's feeling optimistic will approach the ambiguous cue, whereas a pessimistic animal will avoid it.

In one study, starlings learned that dishes with white lids contained tasty mealworms but dark gray lids indicated bitter worms. Presented with dishes with lids of lighter shades of gray, starlings housed in large, enriched aviaries flipped the lids and sampled the worms, whereas birds kept in small, barren cages rarely did so. Researchers concluded that enriched starlings have a sunnier view of life. Studies of hens, pigs, sheep, dogs, rats and even honeybees show similar results.

A recent study of 18 goats living at a sanctuary compared nine goats who had been abused earlier in life with nine goats who had never been abused. Both groups showed the same optimism responses to an ambiguous cue. Intriguingly, though, the five female goats who had been rescued from abusive situations showed more optimism than the other 13 goats. The researchers concluded that "these females could be experiencing long-term optimistic bias triggered by release from stress."

Happy goats, perhaps? Studies like these show that animals aren't just alive—they have a quality of life.

Jonathan Balcombe is director of animal sentience for the Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy.

MARK SIMMONDS

HSI SENIOR MARINE SCIENTIST
// BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

ROOTS BY THE SEA: Mark Simmonds was about 14 years old, walking along the beach with his Great Dane, Blue, when he discovered a beautiful, but obviously sick, black and white bird. "It had a little patch of oil on its bright white chest," he remembers.

The bird turned out to be a razorbill, the closest living relative of the great auk, a penguin-like seabird who became extinct in the mid-19th century. He took it to a nearby wildlife rescue center, where the bird was later euthanized because it had ingested some of the oil. "The experience was very formative," he says. "It only took this little spot of oil to kill this fantastic marine animal."

SCIENCE MATTERS: As a marine biologist and environmental scientist, now based in Bath, England, Simmonds has spent much of his career looking at the factors threatening marine mammals in the modern world: chemical pollution,



marine noise and debris, fishing activities and climate change.

He has written or co-written more than 200 scientific articles and taken part in gatherings of the International Whaling Commission and conventions on endangered and migratory species. It is in part because of the work of scientists like Simmonds that the IWC has broadened its focus to include environmental threats and solutions, such as stopping the input of plastics into the ocean and freeing whales trapped in lost nets.

He's successfully pushed for increased protections of whales and dolphins, and he's helped highlight the need for conservationists to consider the social biology of cetaceans. For example, whales and dolphins pass down survival skills—such as how to find migratory routes and foraging grounds—by learning from each other rather than genetically. Therefore, even a single animal killed or purposefully removed from the environment can create a devastating loss.

Marine noise was a largely unrecognized threat until studies began to show the connection between some strandings and loud underwater noises. Simmonds helped investigate this. "One thing that eventually came through was that whales were being forced up from deep dives faster than their physiology could withstand. Basically, they were suffering from something very similar to the bends."

IN THE COMPANY OF ROYALS: In 2013, Queen Elizabeth II awarded Simmonds the title of Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his work in marine mammal conservation and environmental sciences. The OBE is part of a division of a British order of chivalry that includes knighthood.

At Buckingham Palace, Prince Charles presided over the investiture. "When I entered the palace ballroom and crossed to the stage, I pretty much forgot all I was meant to do. But Prince Charles was very kind and clearly forgave my stutters. It was all rather breathtaking, very splendid and somewhat unreal."