

Domestic Pets

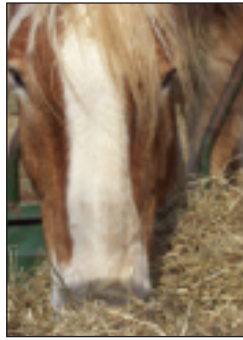
Dog and Cat Fur Prohibition Enforcement Act,
H.R. 891

Pet Safety and Protection Act, H.R. 1280 and S. 714

Farm Animals

American Horse Slaughter
Prevention Act, H.R. 503/S. 311

Downed Animals and Food Safety
Protection Act, H.R. 661/S. 394



Wildlife

Captive Primate Safety Act,
H.R. 2964/S. 1498

Great Cats and Rare Canids Act, H.R. 1464/S. 1033

Haley's Act (to prohibit "contact" with exhibition cats),
H.R. 1947

Inhumane Trapping Prevention Act, H.R. 1691

"To restore the prohibition on the commercial sale
and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros.",
H.R. 249

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Understanding the Root Causes of Animal Cruelty

By Maria Keith

Introduction by Jim Taylor

There are thousands more men and, yes, even some women, just like Michael Vick—people who have abused, tortured and even killed companion animals. Some of them have been caught and punished. Some have been imprisoned for unrelated crimes, while still others continue to carry out their cycle of cruelty. Perhaps, like me, you have also questioned: who are these people that would exact such horrendous cruelty on sentient creatures? And what causes them to commit these acts? These questions do not have any hard and fast—concrete answers. Maria Keith seeks to address these questions with contemporary theories in the following article, "Understanding the Root Causes of Animal Cruelty":

Many of us are well aware of the documented link between animal cruelty/torture and violence against hu-

mans. In essence, people who commit violent crimes against animals often go on to commit violent crimes against humans as well. Although it is a disturbing reality, we can be thankful that in addition to animal welfare advocates, more and more of our nation's law enforcement, judicial, and human welfare systems take this reality seriously.

Accompanying the rise in awareness of the *link* are extensive professional studies of the *causes* or "*roots*" of animal cruelty crimes. Hopefully soon, concerned professionals *and* caring individuals alike will have a greater understanding of how animal cruelty begins and how to combat it. With this in mind, the following are brief summaries of predominant areas of knowledge and theories as to the causes behind intentional animal cruelty/torture by children and adults:

Behavioral/Psychotic Disturbances: Many psychological theories over the years have attempted to explain the possible causes of troubling human behavior that lead to animal cruelty/torture and violence against other humans. Often, considerations are made for extreme emotional/psychological traumas and, in recent decades, much emphasis has been placed on the study of disturbances to biological brain functions and development. Emerging information suggests that underdeveloped and/or improperly functioning parts of the brain related to behaviors, such as impulse control, and specific emotions, such as empathy and anger, may strongly contribute to violent behaviors.

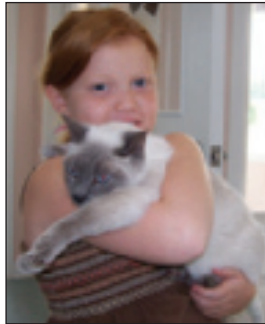
The "Cycle of Violence": Children of violent homes often experience or witness sexual, domestic, or animal abuse, and typically experience a combination of these abuses. Sadly, as many of us know, a significant percentage of child abuse victims go on to become violent abusers themselves. Numerous studies of this "cycle of violence" repeatedly illustrate two predominant roles that animal cruelty plays in the cycle: (1) The adult abuser uses dominance and violence toward animals, typically house pets, as a psychological weapon to manipulate, threaten, control and hurt the human victims; and (2) For many reasons, child abuse victims will often express their intense suffering through real or represented (stories, drawings) cruelty towards the same house pets or other animals. *Sadly, it is when children willfully harm animals that their capacity to empathize is reduced and the cycle of violence—sexual, domestic, and/or animal—may begin again.*



Lack of Connection to Nature: Still regarded as a moderately new field of professional study, “ecopsychology” uses tangible research to examine the relationships between humans and the natural world, and how these relationships influence human behavior towards individual living beings and the planet at large. Among many theories, ecopsychology suggests that people who do not have a relationship with the natural world in some form—even as simple as keeping a house plant—are less likely to understand, relate to, or empathize with animals and their welfare. Simply put, a lack of connection and understanding for other living beings creates a gap in which disregard in attitude and behavior could possibly develop.

Culture, Religion, and the Media: Certainly, various cultural and religious beliefs can directly influence what is considered acceptable treatment of animals. For example, cruel dog-fighting schemes, such as the one Michael Vick has recently pleaded guilty to being involved with, are significantly influenced by culture or tradition. Also, the media often has a powerful influence as well. Be it real news coverage or fictional movies, how animal treatment is depicted by mainstream media sources can affect what general society finds acceptable or not, and what impressionable young minds may choose to imitate.

These theories certainly do not encompass all the many factors that may influence children and adults to act cruelly towards animals. Nor are they simple and isolated from each other—in truth, the causes of animal cruelty and torture are complicated and often overlapping. It will take the strength and efforts of many spheres of our society to ultimately prevent and deter willful animal cruelty.



The Good News: With increased knowledge of the causes of animal cruelty comes the increased knowledge of how to prevent and deter it! We encourage our supporters to learn more, inform your family and friends, and work within your daily lives to end animal suffering.

Please watch for our next edition of the *NHES Journal*, where we will offer information on using humane education to combat animal cruelty and torture, and to promote kindness and respect for all living creatures.

A few resources for more information:

Print

*Children & animals: Exploring the Roots of Kindness & Cruelty** by Frank R. Ascione
Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Readings In Research and Application, edited by Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione

Film*

Animals, Nature, & Religion by Dr. Michael Fox
Protecting The Web by Erik Friedl

Violent Link Task Force Awareness by Jackie Barron and the Violence Link Task Force of Tampa Bay, Florida

Internet

Society & Animals Forum, www.psyeta.org, offering extensive resources to a wide variety of professional research and publications on the human-animal relationship.

International Community for Ecopsychology, www.ecopsychology.org, offering a wide variety of information for this area of study.

*Available through NHES, please contact us at (304) 725-0506, extension 206, for more information.

Paws UP:

NHES Says Thanks!

During the last year, NHES—along with numerous other animal welfare organizations—has voiced support of humane actions worldwide to improve animal welfare. NHES would like to wholeheartedly offer applause and thanks to just a few of the many deserving parties whose humane actions we support:

First, special recognition—**PAWS UP!**—

to Oregon for improving Farm Animal Welfare:

Paws UP! To Oregon for passing S.B. 694 to greatly improve farm pig welfare by restricting the use of sow gestation crates! Though the law does not explicitly ban cruel gestation crates, it ultimately prohibits their use by outlawing farming practices that “confine[s] a pregnant pig for more than 12 hours during any 24-hour period in a manner that prevents the pregnant pig from: (a) Lying down and fully extending its limbs; or (b) Turning around freely.” Gestation crates are so small that farrowing pigs typically cannot stand up or turn around, or even stretch their limbs comfortably. It is our hope that



when 2012 arrives, the year by which all forms of restrictive confinement violating S.B. 694 must be phased-out, farms will have established housing that allows mother pigs not only to move freely, but to also participate in natural behaviors such as rooting and nest building.



Farm pig building a nest.

Domestic Pets—PAWS UP! to:

Colorado state officials for *voting to increase protections within the state's anti-animal cruelty laws*. Among the new provisions, the law now allows inclusion of animals in court-issued protection orders and criminalizes sexual acts with animals.

Virginia Southampton county officials for *voting to ban the use of gas chambers to euthanize domestic pets at local shelters*. Gas chambers cause significant suffering and NHES supports a nationwide movement to ban this archaic method.

Spectrum Brands, Inc. (Rayovak battery products), for *removing its corporate sponsorship of the Iditarod dog-sled race*. Dogs bred and raised for the race are often subject to neglect and cruelty, including harsh training and puppy culling.

Farm Animals—PAWS UP! to:

Supreme Court of India for *ruling to ban the bullfights and bull races held at the annual harvest festivals in Tamil Nadu province*. Spectators of the event have been known to beat the bulls and throw chili powder in the animals' eyes and mouth while trying to snag money and treats tied the bulls' horns.

New Mexico state officials for *voting to ban cockfighting within the state*. Similar to dogfighting schemes, cockfighting causes enormous suffering for sentient beings in which the animals are trained to fight to the death.

Smithfield Pork, Inc. for *announcing its intent to voluntarily phase out the use of sow gestation crates and switch to group housing for farrowing pigs*. Though group housing has its own set of animal welfare concerns, NHES believes rejecting the use of gestation crates is a very positive step away from systematic cruelty and towards improved animal care.

Wildlife—PAWS UP! to:

The Alaska Zoo for *releasing Maggie the elephant to the ARK 2000 animal sanctuary of California (operated by the Performing Animals Welfare Society)*. Maggie had lived alone for many years at The Alaska Zoo, and due to the harsh winter weather common to the state, she often spent several weeks out of the year inside a concrete building. NHES is sincerely grateful The Alaska Zoo has released Maggie to a humane facility where she can enjoy a more natural and appropriate setting *and* (if she chooses), the companionship of other elephants!

National Marine Fisheries Service for *proposing to classify the Cook Inlet Belugas whales as "endangered" under the federal Endangered Species Act*. The whale species is at-risk of going extinct within the next 100 years if steadfast and meaningful actions are not taken to ensure protections.

U.S. District Court Judge Florence-Marie Cooper for *ruling to bar the U.S. Navy from using sonar blasts in an environmentally sensitive ocean area off the coast of Southern California*. Irreparable harm may have come to five species of endangered whales and nearly twenty-five other species of marine mammals living in the ocean waters where the sonar blasts were proposed to take place.

NHES Education Actions:

Cool To Care Camp

During the last weeks of June and July 2007, NHES held its 4th annual Cool to Care Camps! With the goal of instilling kindness to animals, NHES hosted campers from ages 9-13 for a week each of fun humane activities at our NHES office and affiliate facility, the Briggs Animal Adoption Center (BAAC).



Horses "Sunni" and "Shangi" enjoy apple slices and gentle pets from the campers.



Visiting guest speakers and animals to the camps included a local chapter of Guiding Eyes for the Blind with Labrador in-training, the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center with several wildlife friends, a BAAC supporter with several companion horses, Bob Pyle—vegetarian musician, BAAC Master Dog Trainer with BAAC dogs, and John Streeter with his companion therapy-dog.



Campers perform a live PSA on "Animal Care" with assistance from BAAC canine, Banner.

Among various games and activities, the campers enjoyed touring the BAAC facility, playing "Farm Animal Jeopardy", learning puppetry, and receiving a demonstration on canine obedience training. Humane-themed crafts and projects for the weeks included bird feeders, pet disaster preparedness kits, farm animal educational posters, wildlife dioramas and animal songs!

Finally, at the end of these very busy weeks, the campers demonstrated their animal knowledge to parents, friends and facility staff with many entertaining and educational skits! ***NHES applauds all the campers for their wonderful skits and we thank all the guests for their participation in the camps!***

Summer Presentations

As expected, requests for educational presentations tend to slow in the summer months while schools are on break and many families go on vacation. Nonetheless, the Education Department was busy in early August providing presentations to children ages 3-15 years on the importance of humane and responsible pet care and proper animal greeting. The children greatly enjoyed playing the "mystery pet item" game in which they retrieved "secret" objects from a brightly-decorated box and shared with their peers the importance of the animal care item. Also, several BAAC dogs participated in the presentations to assist with proper animal greeting and enjoyed an afternoon out with some great "petters"!

Humane Education Conference

NHES staff member Maria Keith attended an April 2007 conference on animal cruelty and humane education

sponsored by the ASPCA and the New York-based, Green Chimneys residential treatment center for children. "Empathy, Animals, and Nature: Brain, Behavior and Beyond" featured numerous animal welfare professionals, psychologists, and other guest-speakers presenting on a wide range of topics that explored the roots of animal cruelty and discussed how humane education can address these issues effectively. The conference included a tour of the Green Chimneys facility, which is internationally-renowned for its animal-assisted therapy and intervention programs for "challenged" youth.

International Concerns:

Overseas Live Export is Cruel

Despite years of growing international protest, the Australian government continues to allow the cruel live export of its country's sheep and cattle herds. Shipments typically have hundreds and even thousands of sheep and cattle jam-packed on ocean vessels that take an average of several days to weeks to reach their destination. During the stressful voyage, the animals are exposed to extreme weather conditions and often lack proper food, water, medical care and living quarters. Just this last August, Australian officials revealed the details of five investigations into 2006 live export shipments in which a little over 2,000 animals died during transport.

Further, animals transported from Australia to overseas countries are subject to cruel treatment and slaughter upon arrival. Many of the receiving countries, primarily in the Middle East and South East Asia, have significantly less and/or weaker animal welfare statutes compared to Australian standards, and some do not have any guidelines at all. Typical slaughter methods would directly violate Australia's own animal welfare laws, yet the country continues to allow shipment of live sheep and cattle to merciless deaths.

NHES supports a ban on the Australian live animal export trade and has written Australian officials repeatedly urging their support of a ban as well. We are grateful Australian leaders have made efforts in the last year to improve and enforce transport standards, and to urge foreign countries to improve animal welfare laws and slaughter standards; however, thousands of live animals continue to suffer each year as long as the industry exists.

