



Animal Rescue & Advocacy in the United States: Home

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Resources on the history, laws, organizations, and data related to animal rescue and welfare in the United States.



Welcome

This guide provides an overview of animal rescue and advocacy in the United States, including key organizations, major legislation, and research resources related to animal welfare. It is designed to help students and researchers explore the history of animal protection efforts and understand current advocacy movements.

Within this guide, you will find information on national rescue organizations, foundational laws such as the Animal Welfare Act and the Endangered Species Act, and data resources that track shelter populations and animal welfare trends.

Major Organizations



American Humane Society

One of the oldest animal welfare organizations in the United States, founded in 1877. American Humane focuses on protecting animals through advocacy, certification programs, and emergency rescue efforts.



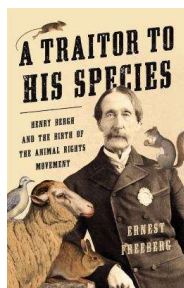
Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

HSUS works to prevent cruelty to animals through public policy, rescue operations, and large-scale advocacy campaigns related to animal protection and welfare.



ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

Books & Background



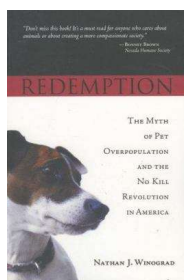
A Traitor to His Species by Ernest Freeberg

ISBN: 9780465093861

Publication Date: 2020-09-22

From an award-winning historian, the outlandish story of the man who gave rights to animals. In Gilded Age

America, people and animals lived cheek-by-jowl in environments that were dirty and dangerous to man and beast alike. The industrial city brought suffering, but it also inspired a compassion for animals that fueled a controversial anti-cruelty movement. From the center of these debates, Henry Bergh launched a shocking campaign to grant rights to animals. *A Traitor to His Species* is revelatory social history, awash with colorful characters. Cheered on by thousands of men and women who joined his cause, Bergh fought with robber barons, Five Points gangs, and legendary impresario P.T. Barnum, as they pushed for new laws to protect trolley horses, livestock, stray dogs, and other animals. Raucous and entertaining, *A Traitor to His Species* tells the story of a remarkable man who gave voice to the voiceless and shaped our modern relationship with animals.



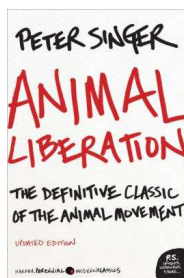
Redemption by Nathan Winograd

ISBN: 9780979074301

Publication Date: 2007-06-10

Redemption is the story of animal sheltering in the United States, a movement that was born of compassion and then lost its way. It

is the story of the 'No Kill' movement, which says we can and must stop the killing. But most of all, it is a story about believing in the community and trusting in the power of compassion.



Animal Liberation by Peter Singer

ISBN: 9780061711305

Publication Date: 2009-02-24

Since its original publication in 1975, this groundbreaking work has awakened millions of people to the existence of "speciesism" our systematic disregard of nonhuman animals inspiring a

Librarian



Jax Skorich

They/Them

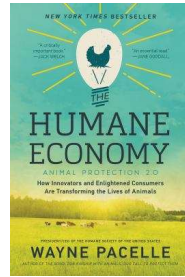


to Animals)
 Founded in 1866, the ASPCA is a major national organization dedicated to animal rescue, adoption programs, anti-cruelty initiatives, and disaster response.



Best Friends Animal Society
 Best Friends Animal Society leads the national No-Kill movement, supporting shelters and communities in efforts to end the euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals.

worldwide movement to transform our attitudes to animals and eliminate the cruelty we inflict on them. In *Animal Liberation*, author Peter Singer exposes the chilling realities of today's "factory farms" and product-testing procedures destroying the spurious justifications behind them, and offering alternatives to what has become a profound environmental and social as well as moral issue. An important and persuasive appeal to conscience, fairness, decency, and justice, it is essential reading for the supporter and the skeptic alike."



The Humane Economy by Wayne

Pacelle

ISBN: 9780062389657

Publication Date: 2017-03-21

A NEW YORK

TIMES, WASHINGTON

POST, and LOS ANGELES

TIMES BESTSELLER "ESSENTIAL READING." -- JANE GOODALL "A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT BOOK." -- JACK WELCH From the leader of the nation's most powerful animal-protection organization comes a frontline account of how conscience and creativity are driving a revolution in American business that is changing forever how we treat animals and create wealth. Wayne Pacelle of the Humane Society of the United States reveals how entrepreneurs, Fortune 500 CEOs, world-class scientists, philanthropists, and a new class of political leaders are driving the burgeoning, unstoppable growth of the "humane economy." Every business grounded on animal exploitation, Pacelle argues, is ripe for disruption. Indeed each one of us is, and will be, touched by this far-reaching transformation in food and agriculture; in the pharmaceutical, chemical, and cosmetics industries; in film, television, and live entertainment; in tourism and wildlife management; in the pet trade for dogs and cats and exotic wildlife; and in fur and leather fashions. Collectively it promises to relieve or end the suffering of billions of creatures, while allowing businesses aligned with the best instincts and values of their customers to flourish. Pacelle shows, for instance, how the cruelties of industrial chicken farming are quickly becoming obsolete with a visit to Hampton Creek, the makers of a plant-based egg substitute and the world's fastest-growing food startup ever. Pacelle also recounts the stories of how established companies



Laws & Policy

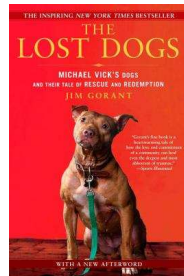


Key Laws & Policy

Animal rescue and advocacy in the United States are shaped by both federal and state law. These policies help define how animals are protected, how rescue work operates, and how welfare standards are enforced.

- **Animal Welfare Act (1966):** The main federal law regulating the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers.
- **Endangered Species Act (1973):** Protects threatened and endangered species and the habitats they depend on.
- **PETS Act (2006):** Requires emergency planning for household pets and service animals during disasters.
- **State Anti-Cruelty Laws:** State laws

are joining in this economic transformation: from Petco and PetSmart, which have turned the conventional pet store model on its head by forswearing puppy mill suppliers in favor of shelter dogs; to John Paul Mitchell Systems, the Body Shop, and Lush, which use safe ingredients instead of animal tests for their cosmetics; to major food retailers like Whole Foods, Chipotle, and even Costco and Walmart, which are embracing animal welfare standards that are one by one unwinding the horrors of the factory farm. The Humane Economy is a clarion call to business leaders and to the world's growing animal protection movement; it is equally a warning to the static thinking of animal-use industries and their apologists: "Here, in this humane economy," Pacelle argues, "human ingenuity meets human virtue, and we discover at last that we can have it both ways -- a better world for us and for animals, too."



The Lost Dogs by Jim Gorant
ISBN: 9781592406678

Publication Date: 2011-09-06

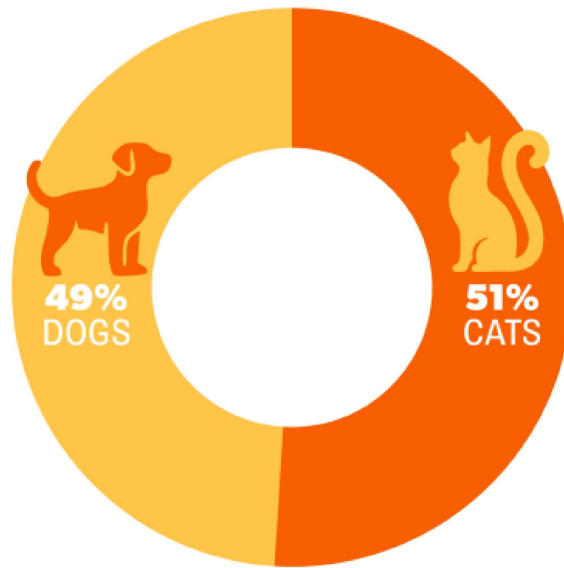
The bestselling story of survival and our powerful bond with man's best friend, in the aftermath of the nation's most notorious animal cruelty case.

Featuring a new Afterword with updates on the Vick dogs. Animal lovers and sports fans were shocked when the story broke about NFL player Michael Vick's brutal dog-fighting operation. But what became of the fifty-one dogs who survived? As acclaimed writer Jim Gorant reveals, their story is the truly newsworthy aspect of this case. *The Lost Dogs* traces the effort to bring Vick to justice and turns the spotlight on these infamous pit bulls, which were saved from euthanasia by an outpouring of public appeals coupled with a court order that Vick pay nearly a million dollars in "restitution" to the dogs. As an ASPCA-led team evaluated each one, they found a few hardened fighters, but most were lovable, friendly creatures desperate for compassion. In *The Lost Dogs*, we meet these amazing animals, many of whom now live in loving homes and work in therapy programs. *The Lost Dogs* exposes the terrible practice of dog fighting and shows us that even after being subjected to heartbreaking abuse, above all, a dog still wants to be man's best friend.



address abuse,
neglect,
abandonment,
and animal
fighting.

Data & Statistics



Shelter Animals Count: Data Dashboards

A national database with dashboards and reports that track intake, outcomes, and sheltering trends. This is probably your strongest data source for the guide.



Best Friends Animal Society: Animal Shelter Statistics Dashboard

Useful for exploring progress toward no-kill and shelter-level trends across the United States.

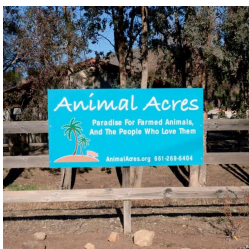
Advocacy Groups



Animal Legal Defense Fund
 Focuses on protecting animals through the legal system, including litigation, legislation, and legal education. This is a strong resource if someone wants to explore the policy and legal advocacy side of animal welfare.



Alley Cat Allies
 Alley Cat Allies A leading advocacy organization focused on humane policies for cats, especially community cats, and well known for promoting trap-neuter-return (TNR) and practical cat care resources.



Farm Sanctuary
 A nonprofit that combines rescue, sanctuary, education, and advocacy, with a particular emphasis on farm animal welfare and institutional reform.

Videos

Bring...



Over ...



How ...



Deeper Dive



The Founding of the...

Humane Reform Expands...



New York Post

Bergh felt animal rights would only be achieved through brutal repercussions and was in favor of harsh punishments to anyone who abused animals.

The Evolution of Animal Rescue Advocacy in the United States

This timeline explores the historical development of animal rescue advocacy in the United States, from the founding of early anti-cruelty organizations in the 19th century to modern data-driven shelter reform and AI-assisted adoption

TimelineJS



The Founding of the ASPCA