



# The Wildlife Watch Binocular

PO Box 562, New Paltz, NY 12561

Winter 2013

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## Geesebuster's Eagle Kite Keeps Geese Away

Interview with Rob Guadagna of Geesebusters

By E.M. Fay

When Canada geese fly over a body of water or grassy land, it is natural for them to consider using that area for feeding, nesting, or as a stopping-off point during migration. Geese gravitate to areas where they have landed before, as they are possessed of excellent memories and navigational skills.



As humans take over more and more wild habitats, paving wetlands and building in meadows, Canada geese – like all birds – have had to adjust and find new places to rest, molt, and raise their goslings, such as lakeside developments, golf courses, and parks.

This necessity has brought Canada geese, among other waterfowl, into conflict with people in many communities. Complaining about goose “deposits” on lawns and alleging health risks, some have demanded that

**GEESEBUSTERS**

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## ANIMAL CONSCIOUSNESS RECOGNIZED BY PROMINENT SCIENTISTS

By E.M. Fay



nobelprize.org



Parrotfeather.com

Francis Crick (1916 - 2004) the co-discoverer of DNA, who devoted his later years to studying consciousness, is a Nobel Prize Laureate (1962) for Physiology/Medicine.

The reality of animal sentience has been debated by scientists and philosophers for millennia. Pythagoras believed in the kinship of humans to other animals, a logical precursor to crediting non-humans with consciousness. Plato and Plutarch felt that existential harmony would not be attained if we ate animals. Buddhists and Jains considered animals to be sentient beings, and also refused to exploit them. Voltaire, Shelley, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and G. B. Shaw were all concerned with preventing the suffering of animals. **Today, many people in the scientific community, as well as others whose lifelong observations give them an authoritative and relevant viewpoint, are firmly convinced that most living beings have the ability to think and feel in a complex manner.**

While some skeptics still insist that only Homo sapiens can manage such feats as considering the past, experiencing the present with full cog-

nizance, and planning for the future – i.e., that non-humans do not possess true consciousness – scientific evidence is mounting up to put the lie to that conceited view.

Last July, a group of eminent scientists, including cognitive neuroscientists, neuro-physiologists, neuro-anatomists, neuro-pharmacologists, computational neuroscientists, and physicist Dr. Stephen Hawking, came together for the Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and Non-Human Animals, in Cambridge, England. It culminated with the signing of the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, which states that non-human animals do indeed have consciousness. The statement was signed by Dr. Philip Low, Dr. David Edelman, Dr. Christof Koch, and other prominent attendees. Part of the Declaration states,

***"We declare the following: the ANIMAL CONSCIOUSNESS***

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## GEESEBUSTERS

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municipal authorities "do something" to get rid of the geese.

In many instances, citizens' groups and others have turned to the mis-named branch of the USDA, "Wildlife Services," (WS). **Wildlife Services is in the business of killing wildlife across the country. On their website, they catalogue the estimated number of animals they kill annually. In the case of wild birds, they kill millions, often at the behest of ranchers, who claim their feedlots are contaminated by starlings or other species.** The ranchers contract WS to poison the birds for a fee.

Regarding Canada geese, WS works with game agencies to find clients, and get a contract. Typically, they wait until the geese are molting in late June, when they cannot fly for a period of several weeks. The summer molt takes place during breeding season, so the presence of young goslings makes the geese extra vulnerable. Wildlife Services has zero concern for these families, as they corral all the geese in a given area, contain them in crates, and gas them or send them to slaughter.

There is some hope on the horizon for Canada geese who come in conflict with humans, however. Rob Guadagna, a lifelong bird enthusiast, who has considerable experience raising and caring for wild species, was disgusted by the barbaric treatment our feathered friends received from WS.

In 2003, with a partner, Guadagna designed a device that uses nature's own intelligence to harmlessly dissuade Canada geese and other waterfowl from moving into areas where humans don't want them.

From his years of observing birds and their behavior, Guadagna knew that one thing that invariably discourages virtually any avian species from settling anywhere is the presence of a predatory bird, especially an eagle. Even large birds like geese will shy away from exposing themselves and their young to such a threat.

As he explained to us, **"It suddenly came to me, the eagle is the best way to control the bird world."**

Guadagna thus created "Geesebusters," a lifelike, three-dimen-

sional eagle figure with a realistic 6 - 7 foot wingspan. Guadagna, or someone trained by him, lays the eagle down in the targeted park or golf course, etc., and lets out 50 - 100 yards of line. The eagle is launched upwards. As the line is let out, it makes a gliding, circular motion, just as a real eagle does when seeking prey. The faux predator can be sent up to a quarter mile in distance. When it descends, the operator makes the eagle rise again moving in any direction. Any birds in the area will see this threat and hightail it out of there.

Although ground-nesting birds like Canada geese and others are alarmed by the sight of a circling eagle, smaller birds such as songbirds will generally hide in trees. Most songbirds will not be bothered by Guadagna's device.

Guadagna has helped farmers on Long Island, where geese would go into a corn field, wiping out acres of existing seed. After Geesebusters arrived, they stayed out, so there was no need to re-seed. Geesebusters also works on the ubiquitous and much-maligned starlings.

The eagle is more effective, more affordable, and far kinder than Wildlife Services' lethal method. **Besides the kit, Guadagna offers training to his clients. Thus, they need buy only once, rather than hiring a lethal contractor every year.**

Guadagna has been interviewed by TIME magazine and others. See a video showing Geesebusters at work:

[www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,30959135001\\_0,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,30959135001_0,00.html)  
[http://www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,30959135001\\_1913192,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,30959135001_1913192,00.html)

Contact: **Robert Guadagna of GEESEBUSTERS** at [geesebusters@gmail.com](mailto:geesebusters@gmail.com)



## EYE ON THE NEWS Israel Bans Many Animal- Tested Products

The Knesset passed a ban on the import, marketing, or sale of certain animal-tested products in 2010, which just went into effect on January 1, 2013.

Cosmetics, personal care products, and detergents that were tested on animals are included in the ban. The European Union set the guidelines for this in 2004. It does make exceptions for goods that are deemed medicinal.

**Animal testing itself for the listed products was banned in Israel in 2007. This new law takes the next logical step. If compassion for animals is the point of such measures, then clearly it makes no sense to buy animal-tested products from other countries.**

Ask your local supermarkets and drugstores to carry cruelty-free brands. Let them know that you and your friends want them to stock products not tested on animals. **Money talks. Make yours speak for those with no voice!**



Sad photo from the Peta webpage: Animal Testing in Depth  
<http://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-experimentation/animal-testing-in-depth.aspx>

## Hooray! The Village of Scarsdale, NY, Changes Course and Votes Not To Kill Geese

Geesebusters may be getting a contract instead of Wildlife Services as the Village of Scarsdale changed course and voted to use non-lethal methods. That occurred a couple of weeks following a public hearing at which many goose protectors spoke against the killing. Thanks to **Humane Westchester, GeesewatchNYC, Wildlife Watch,** and many individuals including residents.

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***absence of a neo-cortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuro-anatomical, neuro-chemical, and neuro-physiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviours. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess substrates.***

This statement strongly repudiates the belief held by René Descartes, the so-called "Father of Modern Philosophy," that animals are not truly conscious, and therefore, humans need not consider their welfare.

Descartes and his followers claimed that animals were simply machines, lacking in mind or emotion, and could not feel. Worse, they thought that it was ridiculous to show them compassion. Tragically for countless animals, this misbegotten philosophy encouraged the practice of vivisection.

**Voltaire was one of many renowned thinkers who were disgusted by Descartes' rationale. He rhetorically asked, "You discover in the animal all the same organs of feeling that are in yourself. Answer me, mechanist, has nature arranged all the means of feeling in this animal so that it may not feel?"**

Wildlife Watch was fortunate to be able to speak with two of the scientists who participated in the Crick Conference. Dr. Christof Koch and Professor David Edelman gave generously of their time to help illuminate the issue of consciousness.

Professor David Edelman earned his Ph.D. in Paleo-Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, held post-doctoral Fellowships in Neuro-Biology, is a past Fellow at the Neurosciences Institute, and is currently a Professor of Neuroscience at Bennington College. As a co-author of the Declaration, he shared some of his thoughts about animal consciousness with Wildlife Watch.

**We asked Dr. Edelman if the belief that non-human animals possess consciousness pre-dated his neurological research.**

"Yes, it was a gut feeling and belief that this was the case with lots of animals. Not just the observations one makes as a pet owner, but more generally as an observer through live and direct contact or by other means. The behavior of animals, the kinds of interaction and problem-solving they engage in – **I had a pretty strong feeling about animal consciousness existing in a variety of species for many years before I thought about it scientifically.**"

Dr. Christof Koch had collaborated with the late Nobel laureate Francis Crick. Dr. Koch has been on the faculty at California Institute of Technology for 27 years, currently serving as the Troendle Professor of Cognitive and Behavioral Biology. He is now the Chief Scientific Officer at the Allen Institute for Brain Science. His M.S. in physics is from the University of Tübingen; Ph.D. from the Max-Planck-Institut für Biologische Kybernetik.

As to how he came to his own conclusion about consciousness in non-human animals, Dr. Koch said that it was based on theoretical ideas and experimental evidence that show the complexity of animals' behavior and nervous systems. **"There is no reason to deny consciousness to animals other than people."** Regarding personal experience, he said, "I am both a scientist and a human. I grew up with dogs and I love them. I have been a vegetarian for a number of years because of the insight that mammals are conscious beings and I did not want them to be raised under atrocious conditions and then killed for their flesh."

He stressed that it is not only mammals - pets such as cats and dogs, dolphins, monkeys and others - who have conscious states, but non-mammalian species as well. Birds, and cephalopods such as the octopus, are some of the species with this capability. "Humans are more conscious than others as our brains are more complex, but we all share the sights and sounds, joys and pleasures of life."

He continued: **"We should share this planet with an awareness that there are other conscious creatures. Most people don't have direct, personal experience with many kinds**

**of animals, but we should not discount them just because they don't look or act like us."**

The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness completely refutes the position of Descartes and others with similar callous, ill-informed beliefs regarding animals. While many researchers agree with the findings of the Crick Conference, the Declaration has yet to be acknowledged universally.

Asked if he hopes that it will make a difference to attitudes both inside and outside the scientific community, Dr. Edelman said, "Yes. I would hope it does. In many ways we are preaching to the choir, but there are certainly plenty of intelligent lay-people who understand, too. **We've seen a variety of reactions to the Declaration, including some who thought we were simply restating the obvious.** People's attitudes vary. As humans we have feelings about what we observe, but in science you have to investigate. The whole point is to make observations about how things work. Consciousness is probably the most complex process that any brain is capable of understanding. As a scientist, if I am interested in consciousness I am obligated to find out what is going on with people and animals. **If I make the argument that animals are conscious, I can't just say, 'It looks like what we see in humans.' You have to dig deeper and devote yourself to bringing together different strands of evidence from anatomy, behavior, neuro-physiology – all the major evidential strands that you weave together for whatever animal you are considering."**

**Dr. Koch also hoped that the Crick Conference might help change attitudes. "I very much hope that people will become more conscious of the fact that we are but one of many species that share life, pain, and joy."**

Scientific evidence may give more credence to what we feel instinctively: in this case, the ability of animals to think. Kim Bartlett, writing in Animal People, noted the findings of the Crick Conference represent "The most overlooked victory for animals of 2012." <http://www.animalpeoplenews.org/>. What should have been trumpeted far and wide as a significant development did not receive the mainstream atten-

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# CATSKILL GAME FARM AUCTION RESCUES 7 YEARS LATER

## Max passed away January 1, 2013.

Wildlife Watch, with the financial support of so many caring donors, and generous grants from **Animal Welfare Trust** and **United Animal Nations**, was able to rescue seven large cats from the Catskill Game Farm auction. Max was among them. Fortunately, they all went to **The Wildcat Sanctuary** in Sandstone, MN. Since December 2006, Max lived there with the other cougars, Mia and



Matty. They were called the "3 M's."

Their keeper, Trista Campbell, wrote: "He provided his girls with the best thing he could, a connection to one another. One they can continue to build as he did

for them. And to us humans, he left great memories and yet another cat to deeply miss. Please come back often, Max, and observe those in

Cougar Cove from your favorite resting spot, beneath the dogwood bush."

For Max's complete obituary, please visit:  
[http://www.wildcatsanctuary.org/max\\_cougar\\_memorial](http://www.wildcatsanctuary.org/max_cougar_memorial)

For the history of his rescue, please visit:  
<http://wildwatch.org/Binocular/bino09/binocular02.07.pdf>  
and

<http://wildwatch.org/Binocular/bino08/binocular11-06.pdf>

[Note: The original article talks about two cougars, Mia and Matty, but Max was included in the rescue at the last minute as they were all departing NY for their trip to Minnesota!]

## IN MEMORY OF BOOM BOOM: 1971- March 22, 2012 A DEEP CONNECTION

BY JOANNE CRONAN-HAMOY OF SPRING FARM CARES

On October 18, 2006, the day of the cruel auction that preceded the permanent closing of the Catskill Game Farm (a private zoo in NY), animal protectors came from across the country, as did many more animal exploiters looking for cost-effective purchases of animals to be used for human food, snake food, canned hunt trophies, zoos, breeding, animal products, and so on. Emotions ran like a roller coaster. Okay one minute, sick in the stomach the next. Worried, angered, depressed and tearful was how my day panned out.

While I was there, I had some unusual personal encounters. One



Prayeri Harrison @ Out of Africa Wildlife Park

intense moment came when I quietly walked over to the rhino enclosure. I wept, looking at how dismal their

enclosures were. Wet, muddy, rusty, old and neglected. I could see the misery in their eyes. "Boom Boom" and "Jack" had lived there for a long time and had become accustomed to the routine, but I felt they suspected this day was going to be different.

Boom Boom wandered over to see what I was doing. I talked to him quietly and wondered what would be his fate. I will never forget the look on his face as he stared at me. I swear he knew I was concerned. That moment

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tion it deserved.

**Please inform your local and national newspapers about this important Declaration. Only when a broad spectrum of people recognizes other animals' capacity for thinking and feeling is there a chance that humans' treatment of non-humans will improve significantly.**

The entire Declaration may be read at the Francis Crick Memorial Conference website: <http://fcmconference.org>



Bravo, Dr. Crick!

## EYE ON THE NEWS BULLFIGHTING IS BACK!



As reported in a previous issue of the Binocular, Catalonia, the famed northeastern region of Spain – and a prime tourist destination – enacted a forward-thinking ban on bull fighting.

In an unfortunate turn of events, an

attempt is being made in Spain to enshrine the barbarism of bullfighting as an essential part of the country's cultural heritage.

The Spanish Parliament is now considering granting special status to the "sport," as an "asset of cultural interest." A vote is expected later this year.

You can register your protest at:

*Embassy of Spain, Phone: 202-452-0100 Email: emb.washington@maec.es*

Read more at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/11/bullfighting-spanish-heritage-petition?INTCMP=SRCH>

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is etched in my memory forever.

As the day went on, the bidding continued. Noisy crowds led by barking auctioneers moved past enclosures with animals who had lived there for years. Each time an animal protector won, I breathed a sigh of relief. They weren't measuring the worth of the animal by how much their body parts would bring in. When the rhino bids ended, Boom Boom's made me sick inside. I remember the guy who "won" Boom Boom like it was yesterday. I remember his gray baseball cap with something embroidered on it that gave me the creeps. I heard him talking about what Boom Boom was in for. Then I heard haggling, someone on the other end trying to work out a deal to get Boom Boom.

The cost of this creature went up significantly, as did the trailer that went with him.

**Within minutes word went out that Mark Ecko, the clothing designer, was the one who bought Boom Boom from the auction winner who was a canned hunt operator from Texas. If not, Boom Boom would have become a prized trophy for someone's wall.** I thank Mr. Ecko for saving this gentle giant. That was the last I heard for awhile, but the memory of Boom Boom continued to haunt me. I couldn't forget him and always wondered what happened and where he was. I knew that Jack, the other rhino, had gone to a place called Wildlife Safari, in Winston, Oregon. He would be safe.

As the months went by, I went about my usual business and scheduled my vacation with a friend. We planned to fly to Phoenix, rent a car, and explore. **The route we were drawn to went through a place called Camp Verde, outside of Sedona. Unbeknown to us, that was exactly where Boom Boom had been moved to. I learned this just days before I was flying out.** I managed to get ahold of "Out of Africa Wildlife Park," and explained what had happened over the last few months. They thought it would be awesome for me to have a reunion with Boom Boom, and I was thrilled. I felt that the bond we had was time-



Boom Boom in his new home at Out of Africa

less, unconditional and emotionally deep, and that it was no accident that I was to travel there.

"Out of Africa Wildlife Park" arranged for an interview with Channel 3 in Phoenix and a few local newspapers. I showed up, met the owners, Dean and Prayeri Harrison who gave me a VIP personal tour of the entire park, and a special pewter rhino key chain that bore the name of Boom Boom, which I will always treasure. The place was beautiful and full of dry, honey colored hills drenched in sunshine. It was spacious, made with a lot of love, and people who cared about this guy like he was a son! As they announced we were getting closer to Boom Boom's place, I was nervous and excited. It was huge and elaborate. This rhino made the long journey to Arizona from New York just months earlier.

As we turned around the bend, I got off the tram car. I waited until they could get Boom Boom out of his enclosure. In front of TV cameras, I kind of



Joanne and Boom Boom Reconnect

gently collapsed and in a heavy emotional toll that finally caught up with me, **I cried as I watched this white rhino named Boom Boom come out like a little kid busting out of a candy store. He was so happy. His old bones were now warm and dry, his entire being was totally different. He was living a new life full of doting people who adored him.** He

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## FOLLOW-UP OF SEVERAL OTHER CATSKILL GAME FARM RESCUES

BY LINDA BRINK

The lone **Patagonian cavy** went to **NEEWS**

[http://www.fosterparrots.com/fosterparrots/New\\_England\\_Exotic\\_Wildlife\\_Sanctuary.html](http://www.fosterparrots.com/fosterparrots/New_England_Exotic_Wildlife_Sanctuary.html),

but sadly recently passed away—  
an old boy. We found him a companion at the Vernon auction, Daisy—a real femme fatale, let me tell you—and for a few years, both cavies lived the dream life.



Patagonian cavy

We still have **Oliver the Goffin**—still so wild at heart. He has a companion, Mr. Ellie—a wild-caught Amazon. They chose each other, and live together quite happily. They have moved to **NEEWS—Marc Johnson's and Karen Windsor's sanctuary in Rhode Island.**

The **Moluccan cockatoo, Brandy**, did not thrive in the home of the rescuer who bought him at auction, and was eventually surrendered to **A Helping Wing**, <http://www.ahelpingwing.org/> a parrot adoption organization in Blairstown, NJ. He was there for about two years and then adopted to a home in Maryland, where he has another Moluccan companion. Things are much better for him now.

The **porcupines** are still at **NEEWS.**



Some of the **Pets Alive pot belly pigs** were from the CGF auction and later went to the **Tusk and Bristle.**

**Linda Brink is Director of Sunnyskies Bird & Animal Sanctuary** <http://sunnyskiesbirdsanctuary.org>

*Wildlife Watch is providing websites so that you can make donations to these extraordinary sanctuaries and rescuers. Obviously, the financial burden of such operations is huge. As you can imagine, many sanctuaries are at capacity, so please do not be put off if they can not accept more animals. Your contributions will help them to maintain the facilities and animals who are there, and possibly expand their facilities in the future.*



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was finally so spoiled he had several mud holes to rest in on dozens of acres.

After the interview, I got up close and personal. I brushed him and stroked his massive horn, rubbed around his eyes and gave him handfuls of sweet hay. This was a day I would remember forever. His long journey would finally bring tired Boom Boom "home" to spend the best part of his life in this new adventure. His eyes lit up and you knew this rhino was content, happy, pampered and most importantly loved by his new family of friends.

I kept in contact with Out of Africa, and got their e-newsletters that told of Boom Boom's adventures. ...

until this summer, I opened up their e-mail to read about a memorial statue for Boom Boom. What? I didn't understand this at first and scrolled down to read about his passing as it stated: "Our famous

**Southern White Rhino, "Boom Boom, died on March 22nd at the age of forty-one after losing his battle with cancer."**

Although the Catskill Game Farm Auction was a dreadful experience, many animals were able to get a second shot at having a safe and happy life. For all of us, our beloved Boom Boom will always be a great story of compassion.

I am aware that some people felt he should have been returned to his native habitat, but they don't understand the danger, or the fact that his habitat likely no longer exists. **Boom Boom had his chance to enjoy the warmth and sunshine of the American Southwest for the past six years. He was safe and loved, appreciated and protected. He brought so much joy to everyone he met. He taught, he healed people, he connected to them, and he left a legacy.** The Park has put up a permanent memorial in his honor.

He was a gentle giant and very lucky, as he died with his **horn intact.** THAT alone says a lot.



You can find the article about Boom Boom's memorial service at the web site:

<http://www.dcourier.com/main.asp?SectionID=74&SubSectionID=114&ArticleID=108309>

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**Joanne Cronan-Hamoy**, Education Director - **Spring Farm CARES Animal Sanctuary** Clinton, New York  
<http://www.springfarmcares.org/>

## WILDLIFE WATCH NEEDS YOU!

Wildlife Watch needs your help more than ever to continue providing our vital services for helping injured and orphaned wildlife. In addition to our national hotline, Wildlife Watch lobbies for wildlife protection bills, does pick-ups locally, and contributes to the local rehabbers for their care of the babies we bring to them. Through our publication, the **Wildlife Watch Binocular**, Wildlife Watch emphasizes the unique spirit of individual animals and promotes wildlife watching as a means of spiritually and ethically relating to other beings, and as an enhancement of our life enjoyment.

**Will you become a part of our team?**

**YES**

<http://wildwatch.org/join/join.htm>

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We welcome letters/articles/photos for consideration.

Contributions are tax-deductible.

## EYE ON THE NEWS

### SOUTH AFRICAN RHINOCEROSSES HORNS SAWN OFF - CRUELLY LEFT TO DIE



South African rhinoceroses are being shot to immobilize them... then their horns are cruelly sawn off. **Unlike antlers on deer, which seasonally shed, horns are an integral part of the body of a rhinoceros, providing personal identity and self-protection.** Consider the terrible suffering caused to the rhinoceroses by cutting off their horns. Yet, that is what is happening to them. Rhinos are left alive to die, writhing in pain sometimes for days. Rhinoceros horns have been

used for millennia in China and other Asian nations in many "products," including bowls, dagger handles, ornaments, and especially, in powdered form, in a variety of medicines – it is cruelly ironic that one of the purported medicinal uses is to promote "harmony and balance" in the life of the human who takes it.

Thousands upon thousands of rhinoceroses have been slain for human "sport" and profit. They are now an endangered species in the wild. If they are living on "farms," they may be exploited for their bodies.

International law and strong, enforceable sanctions must put a stop to this nightmare. Wildlife Watch asks that everyone lobby their elected representatives, and insist that our government refuse to do business with South Africa or any other nations that allow this cruelty.

Read story at:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/world/africa/ruthless-smuggling-rings-put-rhinos-in-the-cross-hairs.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/world/africa/ruthless-smuggling-rings-put-rhinos-in-the-cross-hairs.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

# EYE ON THE NEWS

## WISDOM, BELIEVED WORLD'S OLDEST ALBATROSS, IS A NEW MOM!

By E.M. FAY

The albatross is a remarkable bird in more than one way. Leaving aside the spectral figure that haunted the guilt-ridden Ancient Mariner in Coleridge's famous poem, these seabirds have several amazing qualities: Albatrosses are among the largest of flying birds, with the Great Albatross the largest of all birds alive today, having a wingspan of up to twelve feet. Fantastic flyers, they can stay aloft for hours at a time, navigating air currents efficiently, beating their wings only occasionally, thus traversing great distances with a minimum of effort. One member of the genus, the Wandering Albatross, spends most of his or her life in the air, landing only to feed and breed.

A female member of the species, named Wisdom by those who study her, has just made some intriguing news. **At age 62, she is the oldest-known wild bird in the world, yet she has become a mother again. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, she hatched a healthy chick at her home in the Midway Islands.**

Wisdom is a Laysan Albatross, and this species does not normally live much beyond 30 years. But perhaps being a prolific mother is especially good for Wisdom's longevity, for she is estimated to have hatched about 35 chicks over her lifetime. She also regularly flies around the Pacific Ocean, like birds half her age, say the scientists who have studied her, logging up to 50,000 miles per year by their reckoning.

Threats to albatrosses' existence are, as with most species, caused by humans. Pollution, over-fishing by man, hunting, and introduced species that eat their eggs, are all taking a toll on the worldwide albatross population.

Let us hope that Wisdom's story is not unique, and that her hardiness will be imparted to her young, allowing this wonderful species to survive.

In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poignant poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (published, 1798) the albatross is both a real bird, who saved a ship full of sailors' lives by showing them a safe passage towards home, and a symbol meant to awaken human conscience, when its spirit returns to haunt the mariner who ungratefully shot the bird dead: "With his cruel bow he laid full low The harmless Albatross." More than ever these days it seems, mankind needs reminding to show appreciation and respect for our winged friends. To quote near the end of the poem:



*He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.  
He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God Who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.*

More at:

<http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/02/12/worlds-oldest-wild-bird-stumps-scientists-by-giving-birth-at-age-62/#ixzz2KuRBsDpx>

## Let's Go Wildlife Watching

If you are now inspired to see an albatross in person, so to speak, or to visit Wisdom and her young one, then you will have to travel to the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. Even from the Hawaiian Islands, it is quite a trip, and the website warns that access is going to be limited in 2013. Definitely contact the FWS before heading over there. Their website highlights a visit in January, 2013, by Dr. Sylvia Earle and Wyland the artist. It says, "Dr. Earle is recognized as one of the world's most acclaimed oceanographers and was named *Time* magazine's first 'Hero for the Planet'. Wyland is a globally renowned marine life artist whose work is at the forefront of marine conservation."



**Although hunting is sadly permitted on many National Wildlife Refuges, it is fortunately prohibited in Midway. Perhaps that is in part what Dr. Earle was referring to when she said that Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge should be a "model for the world."**

<http://www.fws.gov/midway/recreation.html>  
<http://www.fws.gov/midway/whatsnew.html>

## R.O.C.K. - Rehabbers Offer Care and Kindness

Wildlife Watch honors those noble souls who dedicate their lives to helping wild animals. We urge you to support your local and not-so-local centers, and also the dedicated individuals who do wildlife rehabilitation.

*Here are a few to know about:*

**Wildlife Rescue, Inc.** in Monkton, MD visit: [www.wildliferescueinc.org](http://www.wildliferescueinc.org)

**Beavers, Wetlands, and Wildlife** [www.beaversww.org](http://www.beaversww.org) Contact them for their excellent newsletter **Beaversprite**.

**Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Center** <http://www.fffwildlifecenter.com/> Founder and rehabilitator Missy Runyan never turns down a call, we are so impressed with her dedicated spirit and oversized, compassionate heart.





**NEED HELP FOR  
INJURED OR  
ORPHANED WILDLIFE?  
CALL THE WILDLIFE  
WATCH HOTLINE!  
1-877-WILDHELP  
(1-877-945-3435)**

Wildlife Watch maintains current lists of wildlife rehabilitators around the country. Our hotline helps us to help hundreds of people and animals annually.

Please help us by becoming a Wildlife Watch member for \$25 annually and please make an additional contribution for the R.O.C.K. Project that will be put into a fund and used to help a rehabber help wild animals. R.O.C.K. Project funds will be distributed at our discretion up to the amount available.

You can contribute by PayPal by clicking here

[www.wildwatch.org/join/contrib.htm](http://www.wildwatch.org/join/contrib.htm)

✓ Contribute by phone with a credit card. 845-256-1400

✓ Contribute by mail: Wildlife Watch, P.O. Box 562, New Paltz, NY 12561

## EYE ON THE NEWS

# UK Poised To Remove Big Cats From Circuses



whip and a chair right up to superstars like

Siegfried and Roy, who live with, pamper, and purportedly love their enormous feline co-stars, lions and tigers have been a favorite showstopper for centuries.

That is why it is such a pleasant surprise to learn that in Britain, as of last month, big cats will no longer be featured in circuses. Animal rights campaigners are hoping this signals the end of using any wild animal in UK circuses.

The Labour government of several years ago promised to outlaw the use of big cats; now, the coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have fulfilled their predecessors' pledge, although the legislation has not yet gone through Parliament.

The RSPCA, which has long fought to prohibit animals from circuses, has scientific research showing that circus life has a harmful effect on many species.

Happily, recent trends in circuses favor artistic human acts, Cirque du Soleil being a prime example. **Humans have the right to express themselves with acrobatics or in any other fashion. We do not have the right to force non-humans to do so.** Let's hope the big cat ban in the UK will inspire similar action in other nations, including the U.S.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/10/circuses-remove-big-cats>

From the smallest of monkeys and dogs right up to full-grown bears and elephants, "performing" animals have been a part of circuses since the heyday of the Roman Empire. **Unfortunately, few circus-goers neither knew nor cared about what it took to get the animals to "entertain" them.**

While there were certainly some trainers who used both carrot and stick techniques to teach unnatural behaviors to animals, the stick method was all too common, and outright cruelty was employed a great deal of the time. Not to mention the inherent cruelty in keeping a wild animal in captivity in the first place.

**One of the mainstays of most circuses of any size has always been the big cat show. From the stereotypical macho man with a**