Voice for Animals (VFA) is grass roots, non-profit and no kill organization established in 1987 and originally headquartered in York, Maine.

THE VOICE 2025

President's Message

Dear Friends,

We greet you once again as Voice for Animals celebrates its 38th year of existence! During those years we have always been focused on making the world a better place for animals. Having been a special education teacher all my working years I focus a lot on how education of people in the area can make a difference for the animals living here. Voice for Animals is putting a lot of effort into getting Kind News into as many classrooms in the area as possible and to that end the number increases every year. And this newsletter hopefully provides educational information to the adults who read it but what about the people who don't read it? I have discussed with a shelter director many times recently how we can educate adults so they can provide better care to the animals they love. How can we convince adults that it's important for all their animals to have rabies shots? Some veterinarians don't make it mandatory because they don't want to lose their clients thus leaving it up to the Animal Control Officers (ACOs) in the area to enforce this-an impossible task! How do we convince bright, educated people who care deeply about their animals to learn about the laws relating to them-like leash laws? How can we let people know that laws about dogs are different from laws about cats? All towns must always deal with all dogs but they don't have to deal with cats. Yes, if they are sick or injured but otherwise they have no obligation and they don't have to tell you what they are or are not doing. An exemplary ACO once told me that ferrets have more rights than cats. How do we get people involved with this issue in their town? It is our goal to educate as many people as possible to learn how to give the animals they love the best care possible. If you have thoughts and ideas and would like to enter this discussion contact us at voiceforanimals.1987@gmail.com. And as always, if you are changing addresses please let us know so we can continue to get this newsletter out to you.

For all the animals,

Caryl McIntire Edwards

Never Turn Your Back on an Animal in Need

It was early in 2021, the holiday season had just ended when a wide-eyed young cat wearing a pink collar appeared in the quiet NH neighborhood. Her small round body was clad in a muted blend of beige fur with gray undertones, highlighted with pale tabby stripes in soft yellow and orange patches. She took quick steps on her dainty white feet. Her face was alert, her expression one of concern. The residents seemingly oblivious to her went about their business.

For the first weeks she hid among the older homes, only seven on the small dead end court. Most had been converted into low rent apartments equipped with wooden porches and backyard sheds to hide beneath. The court abutted a large wooded area teeming with wildlife.

She relied upon her resourcefulness and instincts to access a small abandoned garage through a broken window. This served as her home for the next two and a half years.

She was noticed over this period by some of the neighbors as she left her broken down abode and went about her business. Her business often took her into the natural landscape, beyond the tree line.

In time, her collar came off and she blended with some of neighborhood cats. She was often seen with a large gray male who was later described as her boyfriend though he had a home unlike the other cats she had befriended. The next spring she had a small gray kitten with her. She taught him to climb up to the broken window of the garage. The kitten found safety with her for only a few weeks then disappeared before one of the neighbors could catch him.

After a storm hit the area in 2023 and a tree fell on the garage, the owner boarded up the window. It was at this time a couple of the neighbors found her sitting on their steps each day and started feeding her. Though this cat had early exposure to humans, the length of time on her own in survival mode had left her "undersocialized" and she was fearful of her new human friends. She kept coming to eat, favoring one of the houses across from the garage that she had once claimed as her home. It was the home of the neighbor who would eventually help with her rescue.

Early in 2024, this neighbor convinced her husband to put a cat door in their garage. The cat learned that it was a safe place to eat and enjoy the warmth of a space heater during the cold months. A camera was installed and many evenings a small parade of wildlife would follow her in then leave in single file around 5am the next day. That neighbor worked with the cat for a year to win her trust.

She named her Blanche after one of the Golden Girls.Blanche learned her name quickly and soon came running when called, finally allowing her human friend to touch her. The woman knew it was time to find Blanche a home and called her vet for advice

The veterinary practice asked a volunteer from Voice for Animals to contact her and in November 2024 Blanche was taken off the street.

Blanche was actually a spayed cat around 6 yrs old and the gray kitten from 2022 was not her own.

When the neighbor found this out and had a family discussion, one of her adult children remembered that a couple in the apartment house next to them had a young cat and two small dogs.

They were evicted during the Covid pandemic in 2021.

For the first few months in her new home Blanche talked incessantly, not in meows but in trills and vibrations and small yips. The vet attributed this to the nearly four years that she had spent communicating with wildlife.

Blanche has adjusted nicely and after six months she had full roam of the house where she lives with a cat-friendly dog and three other cats, one in particular she has bonded with. Often she can be found basking in the sunroom on the back of the loveseat or in the large outside enclosure with her cat friend Luke, watching the wildlife.

She seems content. Her very favorite place to be though is on her human's lap. Afterthoughts- Blanche was especially resilient in this abandonment scenario. The fact that she was young and healthy, had good instincts and was spayed made all the difference in this outcome.

Most abandoned, domesticated cats fare poorly, particularly unspayed females and elderly cats. In very cold climates it is not uncommon for cats lacking survival skills to succumb to hypothermia. Intact males are also at a disadvantage when fighting over females in heat, often resulting in a high rate of feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) from cat bites with blood exchange.

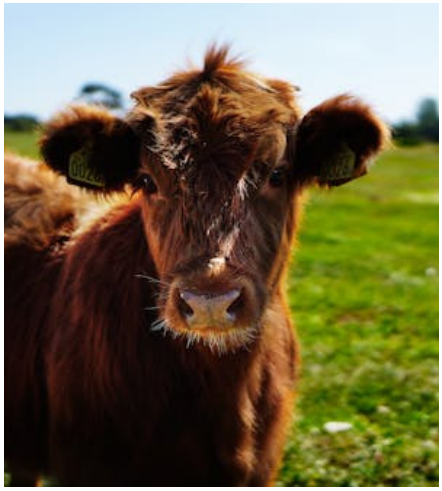
If you must rehome a cat please act responsibly. Have a plan.

Don't give your cat away to anyone. Screen carefully for a responsible person. Call a cat rescue group for advice. If you plan to surrender your cat to a shelter be mindful that there is often a waiting list so plan accordingly, not waiting until the last minute.

Abandonment is never the answer.

All Farm Animals Matter

Downeast Equine and Large Animal Sanctuary held its annual open house on September 14, 2025, where adults and children truly enjoyed meeting all the animals. They were fascinated by the stories of farm animals overcoming abuse, neglect and difficult situations. All were amazed to learn that large animals are really no different than the cats and dogs they know. All have needs, fears, friendships, and develop personal personalities when they are allowed to do so by the environment they live in. The sanctuary is located in Deblois and can be part of a wonderful trip to the Downeast region but please call for an appointment as most of the animals are able to freely roam the grounds protected by a very conscientious pack of working dogs!



The Open House is also the biggest fundraiser for DELAS and the donations were, and are, most appreciated. It is expensive to run a sanctuary that provides a safe, lifelong home to 35 horses, 1llama, 17 geese, 9 cats, 19 goats, 7 emu, 52 roosters, 29 hens, 5 sheep, 3 steers, 5 turkeys, 7 pigs, 8 peafowl, 20 pigeons, 5 rabbits, 13 dogs, 2 guinea pigs, and 2 parrots. A week ago the Orland sanctuary was able to provide a safe landing for a six year old cow with a nickname of Moo. She was a victim in a cruelty case and had to watch her herd family get loaded and taken away. Moo and another cow, who didn't survive, were injured and left behind but fortunately found a safe landing at a sanctuary. The herd will become part of the food chain but Moo will not. Moo spent months alone during her recovery but was able to join our small vegan family here in Maine where she once again enjoys bovine companionship. On behalf of all animals destined to become food, go vegan! Please.

Christina Perkins, Esq.
Animal Advocate

Live and Let Live Farm Rescue

(This rescue also cares for many farm animals but chose to focus on the dog and cat shelter issues in New Hampshire right now.)

Polka Dot's Plight:

Bureaucratic Missteps Threaten Foster Care Networks' Vital Role

In the heart of America's shelters, where compassion fuels the fight to save animals, a bureaucratic shadow threatens the most vulnerable. Polka Dot, a tan mixed-breed dog, embodies the stakes of this struggle. Rescued from a neglectful situation in Georgia, her scarred body, described by veterinarians as "polka-dotted" from abuse, tells a story of survival. Yet, her journey from a Georgia shelter to a safe haven in New Hampshire reveals both the resilience of animal welfare networks and the dangers posed by misguided policies, like those from the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture (NHDOA). While the NHDOA's recent moves to restrict foster care for pregnant animals ripple across state lines, it's animals like Polka Dot, pregnant, vulnerable, and caught in a web of bureaucracy, who bear the consequences.

Polka Dot's story began when concerned neighbors in Georgia reported her dire conditions. Emaciated and covered in scars, she was confiscated by state officials and placed in a local shelter. There, staff discovered she was pregnant, a condition that sealed her fate under Georgia's strict regulations. In Georgia, pregnant animals cannot be adopted and can only be released to rescues. If local rescues are full, as they often are, these animals face euthanasia. At four weeks into her shelter stay, Polka Dot's time was running out. With no space in Georgia's overcrowded rescues, her hope rested on an extraordinary network of volunteers, including pilots who fly private planes to transport animals across state lines to safety.

This multistate transport network is a lifeline for animals like Polka Dot. Volunteers, driven by compassion, coordinate complex logistics to move animals from high-kill shelters to regions with available foster homes. In Polka Dot's case, a New Hampshire rescue, Live and Let Live Farm Rescue & Sanctuary, offered a safe rescue with intentions of Polka Dot heading into a nurturing and caring foster home just in time, Volunteer co-coordinators arranged with volunteer pilots to fly her safely to NH.

These unsung heroes, using their own planes and resources, navigate weather, fuel costs, and tight schedules to ensure animals reach nurturing environments. For Polka Dot, this meant a quiet foster home where she could safely deliver and nurse her puppies, far from the stress of previous animal cruelty and a crowded and noisy shelter environment. Her story underscores the power of this network, which saves thousands of animals annually by bridging gaps between overburdened shelters and compassionate fosters. Yet, this lifeline is under threat. In New Hampshire, the NHDOA *(New Hampshire Department of Agriculture)*has launched a campaign that jeopardizes pregnant animals like Polka Dot. By attempting to reclassify pregnancy as a non-medical condition, the department seeks to bar pregnant dogs and cats from foster homes, forcing them into shelter kennels ill-equipped for their needs.

The Concord Monitor recently exposed this policy in its September 2025, article, "'What's best for the animal': State claws back foster care, shelters warn of danger to mothers and newborns" (link available at https://www.liveandletlivefarm.org). The article highlighted cases like Sun, a pregnant cat found in the edge of the woods in NH, who was denied foster care and left to welp in a noisy, cramped shelter cage.

For Polka Dot, such a policy could have been deadly. Pregnant animals require specialized care, proper nutrition, reduced stress, and close monitoring, best provided in foster homes. Veterinary science confirms pregnancy is a medical condition, with risks like dystonia or malnutrition threatening mothers and their litters. Shelters, often stretched thin with space and resources, struggle to provide this care, and space constraints frequently lead to eu-

thanasia for pregnant animals. The NHDOA's policy, rooted in baseless claims, dismisses these realities. The department suggests, without evidence, that shelters and rescues misuse foster homes to "increase facility capacity" rather than to save lives. This accusation ignores the realities of animal welfare. Foster homes are not mere extensions of shelters; they are sanctuaries where animals like Polka Dot receive one-on-one attention, socialization, and care that shelters, with limited staff and resources, cannot provide. For pregnant animals, foster homes reduce stress, which is critical for healthy deliveries. Studies show that high stress in shelters can lead to complications, weaker litters, and higher disease susceptibility, especially for newborns vulnerable to illnesses like parvovirus or upper respiratory infections. By restricting foster care, the NHDOA condemns animals to environments where their survival and that of their unborn is at risk.

Polka Dot's scars tell a story of past cruelty, but her journey to a foster home speaks to human kindness. After her rescue and completing her medical needs and requirements, she was flown 1,000 miles by volunteer pilots who donate their time and aircraft to transport animals. These flights, often coordinated through organizations like Pilots N Paws, and Seuk's Army, involve meticulous planning, checking weather, securing landing permissions, and ensuring animals are comfortable. For Polka Dot, the flight meant escaping a death sentence. In New Hampshire, her foster home provides a warm bed, nutritious food, and the calm she needs to prepare for motherhood. Her puppies, to be born in a caring and safe environment, will have a chance at life and then to socially prepare for adoption, a future that would have been impossible without the transport network and foster care system.

The NHDOA's policy threatens to unravel this system. By redefining pregnancy to exclude it from foster care eligibility, the department bypasses New Hampshire's laws and rules, which allow animals with medical needs like pregnancy to be placed in foster homes. This move lacks legislative approval, raising questions about its legality. More importantly, it ignores the moral imperative to protect vulnerable animals. Shelters across the country rely on foster networks to save animals like Polka Dot, especially when local resources are strained. In Georgia, where Polka Dot faced euthanasia, the lack of foster space is a daily reality. New Hampshire's willingness to accept out-of-state animals has long been a beacon of hope, but the NHDOA's actions could dim that light, leaving animals to suffer or die in overcrowded shelters. The broader implications are chilling. The NHDOA's claim that shelters import animals to "stay afloat" misrepresents the mission of rescues, which prioritize saving lives over arbitrary borders. Polka Dot's rescue was not about "capacity" but about compassion. The department's suggestion that successful spay and neuter programs reduce the need for fosters ignores the ongoing crisisin states like Georgia, where overpopulation and limited resources persist. By attacking foster care, the NHDOA undermines the national network that saved Polka Dot, threatening the delicate balance of transport and foster systems that give animals a second chance. For animals, the consequences are stark. Picture a pregnant dog like Polka Dot, heavy with puppies, confined to a shelter kennel. The noise, the lack of space, and the absence of individualized care increase her stress, risking her health and her litter's survival. Newborns in shelters face heightened risks of disease. Foster homes, with their quiet environments and attentive caregivers, mitigate these risks, offering mothers like Polka Dot the best chance to deliver healthy babies. Denying them this care is not just a policy failure; it's a betrayal of the animals we've pledged to protect.

Polka Dot's story is a testament to what's possible when compassion drives action. From Georgia's shelter to New Hampshire rescue's foster home, her journey was made possible by a network of volunteers, neighbors who reported her abuse, shelter staff who cared for her, pilots who flew her to safety, and willing rescues and fosters who opened their hearts and homes.

This network, replicated across the country, saves countless animals each year. Yet, policies like the NHDOA's threaten to dismantle it, leaving animals to face uncertainty or worse. For every Polka Dot who makes it, countless others wait, their fates hanging on the whims of bureaucracy. As a nation, we must champion the systems that save animals like Polka Dot and Sun. The transport network, with its volunteer pilots and dedicated rescuers, is a model of what compassion can achieve. Foster homes are not just a stopgap; they are a lifeline, ensuring that pregnant animals receive the care they need to thrive. NHDOA's overreach, with its baseless assumptions and disregard for animal welfare, endangers this system. We cannot let bureaucracy triumph over compassion. Polka Dot's scars remind us of the cruelty animals endure; her survival reminds us of the hope we can offer. Let's protect the networks that give animals like her a chance at life. You can find links to Concord Monitor articles and more information on the Bureaucratic over reach at the website: Liveandletlivefarm.org

Karen Dowling Yeaton
Concerned Citizen, Animal Advocate, and Volunteer at Live and Let Live Farm Rescue in Chichester NH

The Vegan Corner

Try these recipes for delicious, cruelty free Holiday cooking.

Rise and Shine Tofu Scramble

1 pkg firm tofu, drained and pressed
2 Tbs cooking oil
Heat oil in frying pan and crumble tofu into it.
Cook on medium heat for 3-4 min.
Add 1 Tbs black salt (Kala Namak) for eggy flavor.
Add the following seasonings which can be combined beforehand:
1 Tbs nutritional yeast
1 tsp onion powder
1/8 tsp turmeric (for color)
1/8 tsp white pepper (opt)
Gently mix into the crumbled tofu and
cook over medium heat for 10 minutes.
Add 1 Tbs dijon mustard and
3 Tbs plant milk and cook a little longer.
Sprinkle with 1 1/2 tsp black salt.

Enjoy!
Note:
This recipe was formulated by a single dad in the UK, raising his 3 boys on a plant-based diet. He settled on this, his 10th version.

Rice Paper Bacon

Take 6 round sheets of rice paper and double them up into 3 sheets.
Soak each double sheet in a shallow bowl or tray of warm water for 3-5 minutes to soften before adding it to the following marinade:
Thoroughly mix all marinade ingredients.
3 Tbs soy sauce
2 Tbs neutral cooking oil
2 Tbs nutritional yeast
1 Tbs maple syrup
2 tsp smoked paprika
1/2 tsp liquid smoke
Add softened rice paper rounds (2 at a time) into the marinade for at least 5 minutes.
Carefully remove the first double round from the marinade and lay on a flat surface protected by a sheet of parchment paper with an equal sized paper towel under it (or a cutting board but that could get messy).
Take a roller type pizza cutter or sharp knife and cut into bacon sized strips then cook over medium heat in a lightly oiled pan turning each piece gently after 2-3 minutes. As the strips cook they firm up quickly and are easier to keep their form when handling. Take care not to overcook.
You can cook each batch while the next batch is in the marinade.
Store in refrigerator for up to a week.

French Toast

Take 4-6 slices of stale bread
Soak in the following mixture on both sides:
1 c plant milk
2 Tbs all purpose flour
1 Tbs sugar
1 Tbs nutritional yeast
1 tsp cinnamon
Cook in lightly greased frying pan on top of stove flipping as needed.
Top with plant-based margarine and maple syrup or agave nectar.

Easy Muffins

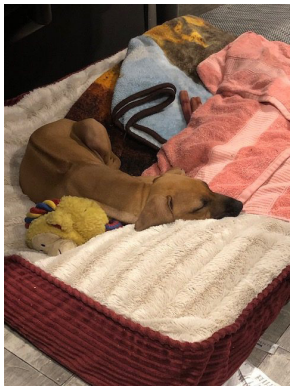
Combine dry ingredients:
1 1/2 c all purpose flour
1/2 c sugar
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
Combine wet ingredients:
3/4 c plant milk
1/4 c neutral cooking oil
1/4 c apple sauce
Lemon zest (opt.)
Stir dry ingredients into wet and mix gently but well.
Add-ins of choice:
•blueberries (fresh or frozen)
•chopped apples
•pineapple pieces w/shredded coconut
•strawberry pieces (fresh or frozen)
Bake in a lightly greased muffin tin at 400°F for 25-30 min.

Yogurt parfait

3/4 c non-dairy vanilla yogurt
1 Tbs smooth peanut butter
3 Tbs vegan chocolate chips
1/4 c lightly salted peanuts
Stir peanut butter into yogurt until well blended.
Mix in chocolate chips and peanuts.

Honoring the Mirror offered by Your Animal Companions

by Michele Lowry | Sep 12, 2025 | Intuitive Telepathy



Today's the day you are bringing home a new animal companion. You have been so excited for this addition to your family. There is often a beautiful heart connection or knowing. "This is the one!" No shadow of a doubt!

There is a reflection between you, something you recognize in the other, a feeling or memory. And they land in your heart. This mirror between you begins the journey of developing the relationship that drew you together. These animals have an incredible ability to truly see us – our moods, our actions, our emotions – and they hear our words. Even if they arrive fearful, confused and non interactive, there is something that the Universe aligned that can now be explored.

I have come to believe that our spoken word is recognized by them, they certainly know simple words used repetitively to mean the same thing. 'Walk', 'Treat', 'Car Ride', and people's names. So much so that often people spell the word because of the reaction from their animal companion. I have learned and experienced my own words coincide with my minds vision and the emotion that accompanies it.

And their deep sense of wisdom which is undeniable when we are present to sense it, brings a language felt by the heart and Soul, unspoken yet resonates deeply.

I met Danielle McKinnon at a NHSPCA Gallery Fundraiser a few years ago. She had described the connection between vision and words. She explained how we can send mixed messages. Our mind can be showing images of the dog on the couch and yet our voice is asking them to get off the couch. I was so intrigued I had to go home and try it out.

While my dog Dasher was exploring the woods next to my house, I stood quietly, closed my eyes and imagined him standing in front of me. I was calling him back telepathically. I opened my eyes and there he was, ready and waiting for me to share what was next for the day. It seemed so simple, yet I was able to make the comparison from the past as Dasher often went in to the woods and my voice was never quite enough to encourage his return.

This one moment changed and developed our relationship quite profoundly into one of feel and quiet conversation. He was teaching me to open my telepathic abilities. With his response to my telepathic request, I could experience how it felt.

I have experienced many ways animals are sentient beings and telepathic by nature. The animals continue to show me that telepathy and emotions ARE their language and I have been improving my abilities to communicate through vision and emotions ever since. How do I practice this?

- I sit quietly and open my heart by bringing awareness to my breath.
- Breathing consciously in and out, even saying to myself "I breathe in, I breathe out"
- I extend the feeling through my feet to the Earth.
- I release thought as I focus on my breath only, sometimes to quiet my mind I will have a crystal, or bracelet in my hand to 'give my mind a job to do'
- I open to the peacefulness of the present moment.

When I practice this outside in Nature, I keep my eyes open to witness my surroundings. Sometimes I see colors emanating from the tree tops. Other times I feel the wind blowing a little stronger and experience bathing in the breeze.

Then I blend the presence into the realm of our animal companions. Watching them in the woods, or placing a hand gently on Maui (my dog) or Sunshine (my miniature horse). I have witnessed them support me when I am sad, challenged, frustrated, happy, joyful and content. They have shown up in different ways to reflect what they see in me. Their behaviors change, they may go from being still and quiet to being in my face demanding attention. When I have been willing to look at myself first, I can clearly recognize that my mood and emotions are being brought to my attention.

When I then take steps to soften, laugh, meditate, step outside on to the earth to reset myself, the way the animal has shown up immediately changes and they take a deep breath and relax.

Echoe, my mentor and guide for 21 years here on Earth, and continues now from Spirit would recognize my energy when I was playing and replaying a situation over and over in my mind. He could feel my upset and concern and honestly it felt like it was getting boring to him, even though it was consuming my every thought. He would say "How much energy do you want to put in to that?"

His words would stop me in my tracks, my mind would calm and I would begin laughing. The realization of how much effort I was focusing on a situation that I was trying to fix in my mind, was ridiculous and exhausting.

So, I invite you to take a look at yourself when your animal companions have shifted their behavior, or are being more demanding, or are encouraging you to get off your phone or computer. Take a moment to notice what they are seeing in you, and see if by taking 5 minutes to do mindful breathing, or get yourself a glass of water, a snack will create a change in you. Then witness the ripple effect as that energy shift in you becomes a reflection in them.

When I honor the mirror and embrace the love before me, it immediately shifts my focus and I begin to feel more peaceful. I begin to smile and say thank you with such deep gratitude. I know this is their willingness to show up for me and remind me how to walk in peace. It is for me to respond with the same love.

Michele Lowrey
Nikoe Natural Therapies Therapies -nikoetherapies@proton.me

Michele is an Animal Intuitive and Soul Expansion Facilitator.

With over 2 decades of dedicated discovery, Michele brings a profound passion to support others. From behavior to toxicity, trauma, to senior life care, transition and Spiritual connection, Michele has experienced first-hand the teachings from all the animals she has had the honor to meet.

Her deep rooted desire to share how we are all innate, unique and wise beings, has included facilitating channeled workshops to support people's journey and open the pathway to animal communication.

A New Effort

Hello everyone! I normally write to tell you about the psychic readings I've done on rescued animals but today I'm going to start by sharing my fostering journey. Towards the end of May we received a text from my neighbor who happens to be a dear friend and local veterinarian asking if we knew of anyone willing to foster a mama Chihuahua terrier mix and the six puppies that were born that morning. Initially I said absolutely not, knowing that I had biceps repair surgery in five weeks but after being told we really only needed to care for mama dog and she'd do the rest, we raised our hands. The first few days were uneventful but on day three the mom went from being hand fed to lunging out of her safe enclosure and her pups, biting me, my wife and finally the vet. We were then raising six puppies and it was a full time job. We did feedings using syringes, helped stimulate them to go to the bathroom, crawling into bed exhausted during the night visits and groggily navigating our days. Syringes were replaced with tiny bottles then to mash and eventually on to solid food. They outgrew the kiddy pool, then the enclosure and finally they navigated into a room we had repurposed with a whelping box and all their toys. Let me tell you, it was an adventure!!! As I type this two of the "littles" are running by my feet and a third was adopted by my in-laws. Scout was matched with a perfect family and we love receiving photos of him on their boat, at the kids' football games and out and about in town. Ruby hit the lottery, as well, and has a family that dresses her in the cutest outfits and bling. Sandy Lou was the hardest to say goodbye to because she was the sweetest little girl we had ever met but she needed a quieter house than we could provide. I failed to mention we started with three six year old labs and have upgraded to a five dog house. What were we thinking?! What I learned from this experience has been profound. It really does take a village. My wife and I are more competent and we truly worked as a team, divvying up the day and night shifts, taking them out every time they woke up, potty training them and watching them grow into loving little pups! It was also a reminder that not all dogs are treated with love and kindness. The momma had been rescued from an unfortunate situation and we've since learned that she didn't give a warning before attacking because she may have been repeatedly shocked into submission by a collar. If there was ever a case of nurture over nature, we've shown that it is possible to help them feel safe and loved. We were also surrounded by such a wonderful community of helpers from the shelter staff to the friends who stepped up when we needed help. Learning to ask for help was a new approach for us, so this was a lesson bigger than simply (there's nothing simple about it) raising puppies. My shoulder is healed, the pack is settled and it's given me a greater appreciation for everyone who works to keep the animals safe. I will continue to give them a voice and advocate for their care through my role as an animal communicator, I will say that although it was a rewarding and one of the most exhausting experiences I've had, we've decided to let the others sign up next time. The mother found a home, as well, one where her behavior because of cruelty could be changed because of trust and love.

Sara Moore
Psychic for People and Pets
North Conway, NH
www.enlightenedhorizons.com

VFA Silent Fireworks

Below is further information on silent fireworks, a topic we've been writing about here for quite some time.
China makes most of the fireworks for countries, including us, and has for centuries. While totally silent fireworks do not exist, those which are very low in noise do. In this country Massachusetts has a ban on summer fireworks and what they do use are professionally manufactured for special events. Illinois, Vermont, and California have restrictions such as using only sparklers and fountains. Hawaii, Nevada and Wyoming give each county the authority to set its own fireworks regulations. "Silent fireworks" reduce the noise by 90%. Italy requires all fireworks used to be "silent." While Greece, Great Britain and Denmark are increasingly using the silent type.
Some of companies that produce them are Silent Knight

(Lee Family Fireworks
(https://leefamilyfirework.com) and
Phantom Fireworks: America's #1 Fireworks Retailer (https://phantomfireworks.com)

Bringing Kindness to the Seacoast

Partnering up to deliver lessons in kindness is nothing new to the Kind News Magazine team, but the rewards of excited children and grateful teachers never grow old. This school year, VFA has ramped up their impact by expanding their Kind News reach. VFA started bringing Kind News to schools along Maine and New Hampshire's Seacoast area in 2018 with 11 classrooms. Energized by teacher feedback, its classroom list steadily grew each year, from 16 the second year to 115 last year. This year, it's ramped up Kind News distribution to 132 classrooms, reaching over 3,600 children! VFA President Caryl McIntire Edwards says, "As a retired teacher I have come to realize that the more students receive Kind News in their classrooms, the more likely they are to become compassionate adults, making compassionate decisions about all the animals they encounter." "We're grateful for Voice for Animals' longtime partnership and dedication to helping children grow their empathy and respect for animals," says RedRover's Vice President of Operations and Education, Karly Noel. "Caryl is a non-stop advocate for humane education, and has even shared her dog Sheldon's inspiring rescue story with the Kind News staff. We look forward to the reception of the magazine in these new classrooms!"

Heidi Colonna
Kind News Editor

Dear Voice for Animals,
The students at Rollinsford Grade School are so grateful for your generous donation of Kind News. We are excited to use this awesome resource with our kids to spark discussions and encourage empathy and kindness.

Warmly,
Caroline Carrel
RGS Librarian

Dear Voice for Animals,
Thank you for your most generous donation of Kind News subscriptions to our kindergarten classrooms. It is a nice supplement to our "Be Good People" curriculum (or really quick lessons-so this makes it nicer for the students!).Your kindness in sharing this is greatly appreciated!

Warmly,
Sherrie Brown and the FGH
K-Team!

River Valley Animal Advocates
PO Box 628
Canton,ME 04221

Hi to Our Friends from Voice for Animals,

Thank you again for including the River Valley Animal Advocates group in your wonderful yearly newsletter! It does not seem possible that another year has rolled around for your newsletter. Congratulations for being such a long term animal rescue group and all the wonderful things you have been able to achieve. Voice for Animals has definitely been an inspiration for our rescue group and without it the River Valley Animal Advocates would not exist. My name is Becky McDonald and I am the President of the RVAA. I joined the Voice for Animals group in 2001 shortly after the bombing in New York City. I was looking for a purpose for my life, and the Voice group and Caryl Edwards helped me to find it! The River Valley Animal Advocates was officially formed in 2009. We achieved our 501 (c)(3) status in Feb. 2010 and paid for it with change cans that we had put out in our local towns from the Voice for Animals group. There was a tremendous need in this area with several hundred cats being euthanized every year. We are basically working in Oxford County with Rumford/Mexico being our largest towns. We are now in our 16th year, and our major focus has been from the start to help spay/neuter/ shots/medical needs of cats in our area. Many thanks to the Voice for Animals group and to let you all know how the ripple effect of your support has helped us to help the animals in our area. The cats being euthanized locally are now few to none.

Don McLean, DVM and Martha have come from Norway to Canton almost every two weeks to hold spay/neuter clinics. The clinic has multi-use as Dr. Don also sees some cats and dogs that need shots or checkups. We were able to do over 100 spay/neuters this year before Dr. Don had to leave us to take care of some family issues out in Oregon. Unfortunately he will be tied up until December so we probably won't be able to do more spay/neuters this year. We also have been able to get vouchers from the Fix-Me project that are just a God-send in this area. 90% of the people that call for help are low income/elderly/or disabled. From the start that is the population that we have made a priority. Feral or street cats have also been top of the list for spay/neuter/veterinary care. As we also transport cats to and from care, all the people with no transportation are cared for with sometimes door to door pick ups and deliveries home. The RVAA has helped over 2,800+ cats reducing the number of cats being born (possibly 500,000 yearly).

As we can't be doing spay/neuter we have started a new project. Last October we started putting animal food in our small local food bank. We have already given out over a ton of dry food, and the food disappears every week! I had no idea there was such a great need, but we plan to continue and enlarge our animal food project. I realize that food banks can't spend their money for animals but of course I see animals as family members. The people and their animals getting food are very appreciative. It also helps some people to continue to keep their pets and not have to surrender them to shelters.

Thank you again for your interest in our group and all your help to get us started. Hope you have a wonderful new year and thank you so much for all the Voice for Animals has done and continues to do to help the animals.

Becky McDonald
President, RVAA

Shelter Partners and Rescue Russell County, Phenix, Arizona (Phenix is how it is spelled.)

We started Shelter and Rescue Partners to help rescues and shelters receive the donations they need safely and effectively. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, our mission is to support animal rescues by providing trustworthy fundraising solutions and preventing scammers from stealing funds meant for animals in need. We use social media to bring awareness and gather donations for at-risk shelter animals — but too often, scammers pretend to represent rescues and divert those donations. To fight this, we've partnered with an app that helps verify and create a safe place for animals who are at risk of being euthanized due to space or behavior issues. Many of these dogs simply struggle in stressful shelter environments but blossom once they feel safe, loved, and secure. We want to give them that chance — a place to decompress, heal, and prepare for adoption. Together, we're building a bridge between compassion, technology, and second chances.

Cara L. Kopec

(Cara is a volunteer with this organization. She used to live in South Berwick and many people in the area know her. Many times a day she posts pictures of animals needing rescue.)

State Wildlife Action Plan

The State of Maine just submitted its DRAFT State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for review! Maine's Plan provides a blueprint for proactively conserving fish and wildlife to help prevent species from becoming endangered. First created in 2005, the Plan is updated every 10 years to periodically evaluate the health of wildlife populations and identify conservation opportunities. The 2025 Plan sets the framework for conserving Maine's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and their habitats over the next 10 years. With 721 species identified as SGCN – including 301 plants for the first time this year – there's a lot of work to do! The SWAP lists SGCN and habitats, identifies threats to those species and habitats, and establishes conservation actions that can be used to address the threats. And there are a lot of threats, and a lot of conservation actions to choose from!

Some of the threats are very species specific – like White-Nose Syndrome in bats – others are more general to whole groups of species or to habitats – like the threats that a changing climate brings. Similarly, conservation actions can be very narrow or broad, and this time around the SWAP focuses on actions that can benefit whole habitats and suites of species rather than just individual SGCN, in order to get the most out of limited conservation funds.

All told, there were nearly 1300 conservation actions identified – some best handled by natural resource agencies like surveys and habitat management, but many are best addressed by outside organizations, and others need individuals to do their part. Land trusts can conserve important habitats, educators can share information on Best Management Practices, and foresters can follow guidelines for maintaining high quality habitats. As individuals, we can work together to address the spread of invasive species, improve habitat connectivity, and reduce the use of pesticides. We can plant native species in our gardens for the insects and birds that rely on them, we can put up signs to reduce turtle roadkill, and we can protect vernal pools in our neighborhoods.

The final approved State Wildlife Action Plan will be available on the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website in the new year, but it's never too soon to start addressing the threats to Maine's wildlife. Thank you for your help!

Next year look for more information on preventing roadkills.

Sarah Haggerty
Maine Audubon Society
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The 132nd Maine Legislature

The 132nd Maine Legislature convened on December 4, 2024 and adjourned June 25, 2025. During that time the Legislature considered almost two thousand bills.

As expected, the 132nd Legislative Session was not good news for animals. For example, bills that would have curtailed year-round hunting of coyotes, outlawed coyote killing contests, reduced the use of lead ammunition, and tapped down pet fees in rental housing failed to pass.

There was some good news. For example, the passage of LD 1771 An Act to Strengthen Oversight of Kennels by Changing the Licensing Authority Also positive was the passage of LD 528 An Act to Address the Rise in Rabies in Animals by Appointing Certified Rabies Vaccine Administrators. Both bills were champion by the Animal Welfare Advisory Council.

More than 200 bills are being carried over to the next session along with 150 bills that were passed but not yet funded. One of the carryover bills is LD 820 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish the Right to Hunt and Fish.

In the next session Maine Animal Coalition will keep an eye on the Right to Hunt resolution and any new bills that are may be introduced. For example, LR 2692 An Act Banning the Sale of Cell Cultured Meat. Fortunately, next session is for carryover bills and emergency bills. A ban on cell cultured meat is unlikely to be viewed as an emergency by the legislature's selection committee.

Beth Gallie
Maine Animal Coalition
142 High Street, Portland, Maine 04101

News from the New Hampshire Animal Rights League (NHARL)

A highlight of this fall was NHARL's support for efforts to prohibit "wanton waste" in wildlife hunting — where animals, most often coyotes, are killed and discarded without use. Although legislation did not pass, the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department stepped in and proposed a rule banning the practice, signaling real progress toward ending wildlife-killing contests in the state.

A major focus of our current work is eliminating dangerous rodenticides that poison not only rodents but also the predators who eat them — including hawks, owls, and foxes. NHARL joined Rodenticide Free NH, a new coalition dedicated to education and policy reform aimed at removing these toxic products from the landscape. Legislation is expected in the upcoming session.

Vegan outreach remains a cornerstone of our mission. This past year, we emphasized exposing the harsh realities of the dairy industry while encouraging empathy for all animals. At many of our public events — often those centered around dogs — we invited animal lovers to extend that same compassion to farmed animals, using interactive activities and thought-provoking videos.

A particularly heartwarming new initiative was our Turtle Brigade. On Mother's Day, volunteers across the region installed "Turtle Crossing" signs to remind drivers to slow down and watch for nesting turtles. We chose Mother's Day intentionally, honoring these resilient and devoted mothers. Plans are already underway to expand the program in 2026.

In May, NHARL also brought the nationally recognized Vegan Chef Challenge to Manchester. Participating restaurants created up to three new vegan menu items throughout the month, while diners sampled and voted for their favorites. The event received a major boost from WMUR's NH Chronicle, which helped attract new diners curious to explore plant-based cuisine.

A bill to ban puppy mills was submitted two years ago and failed to pass. Nothing has been submitted since.
NARL holds demonstrations against puppy mills throughout the year. At some point a bill to prevent puppy mill animals from being sold in the state will become law.

As the year draws to a close, we're hosting two Thanksgiving-themed gatherings — a free vegan potluck and a catered vegan Thanksgiving celebration. Looking ahead to 2026, in addition to pursuing a rodenticide ban, we will support legislation to end pig scrambles — events that teach children to treat intelligent, playful pigs as objects to be chased and captured. We hope New Hampshire lawmakers will agree that it's time to retire this inhumane practice once and for all.

Joan O'Brien, President
New Hampshire Animal Rights League

New Hampshire

New Hampshire recently lost a lot of its funding but it's trying to move forward in spite of the loss.
Since we are still working out some of the plans and systems, the best way for someone to inquire with us about participating in NHDART will be on our website at nhhumane.org/DART.
We are aligning with the protocols of other New England DART efforts with strategic collaboration at alignment with the Red Cross. The current drafted language for preparing for emergencies is as follows:
New Hampshire Disaster Animal Response Team (NH-DART)
Follow these quick steps to keep pets safe before, during, and after a disaster:

1. Keep ID and Records Ready

- •Vaccination and vet records in a waterproof folder or on your phone.
- •Collar, current ID tag, microchip up to date.
- •Recent photo of you with your pet as initial proof of connection to the animal.

2. Have Carriers and Leashes Ready

- •One leash or carrier per pet, labeled with your contact info.
- •Use sturdy, secure equipment and pack a muzzle if needed.

3. Build a Pet "Go Kit"

- •3 days of food, water, meds, comfort items.
- •Waste bags, litter, wipes, vet contact info.

4. Plan Ahead

- •Know pet-friendly shelters or hotels.
- •Never leave pets behind when evacuating.
- •Set up a buddy system with neighbors.

5. During and After

- •Bring pets indoors early, keep them close.
- •Follow shelter staff directions.
- •Watch for stress/injury when returning home.

More coming soon at nhhumane.org/DART.
NH-DART works in partnership with New Hampshire Humane Society and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Charles Stanton
Chief Executive Officer,New Hampshire Humane Society
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Animals and Disaster Maine

York County EMA has made changes to their Special Teams. They have merged their County Animal Response Team under their newly formed, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Part of York County CERT's mission is to provide disaster support to animals before, during, and after incidents. As we get ready for the winter season, we remind residents of all counties in Maine to make a plan for their pets:

- ❄ Know the hazards
- ❄ Understand what hazards exist where you live and what your risk is
- ❄ Know what conditions they bring and how to respond to each hazard to keep your family and pets safe
- ❄ Make a kit
- ❄ Have everything you need for your pets to stay safe and comfortable for at least 3-7 days
- ❄ Keep it in a waterproof, easy-to-transport container
- ❄ Consider needs for sheltering-in-place vs. evacuation
- ❄ Examples: Food, water, bowls, leash, collar/ID tag, carrier, toys, bedding, cleaning supplies, litterbox, meds, first aid kit, picture of you and your pet together, vet records
- ❄ Make sure to inventory and rotate items at least every 6 months
- ❄ Have a plan
- ❄ Write down and/or discuss what you will do in the event of an emergency
- ❄ Include: How you will communicate and receive information, what to do if you need to evacuate, what you need to do if you need to shelter-in-place or go to a shelter
- ❄ Don't forget important contact information and pet-friendly shelter and hotel information
- ❄ Practice your plan
- ❄ Stay informed
- ❄ Know where to get emergency information and pet safety information
- ❄ Know who your local EMA Director is
- ❄ Sign up for alerts and warnings
- ❄ Visit local website and social media
- ❄ Get involved
- ❄ Take pet preparedness trainings
- ❄ Volunteer at your local shelter
- ❄ Attend meetings

For more information about disaster planning, pet preparedness, or about York County Emergency Management Agency, please visit: yorkcountymaine.gov/ema and follow the agency on Facebook, X, and Instagram: @yorkcountyema.

Megan Arsenault
Deputy Director
York County Emergency Management

Maine Shelters Stretched Thin as Needs Rise

A recent MetLife survey found that 1 in 5 pet owners carry at least $2,000 in pet debt, and 1 in 7 struggle to meet their own needs while trying to care for a pet. Rover.com estimates that the lifetime cost of care now tops $35,000 for a dog and $32,000 for a cat.

If you are reading this, you likely have at least one companion animal, so this will come as no surprise to you. Since 2014, veterinary costs have risen over 60%, fueled by pandemic pet demand and a national shortage of veterinarians. Food and cat litter prices have skyrocketed and the tough economic situation offers no relief in sight.

The study goes on to note that nearly a quarter of Americans fear they'll soon be priced out of pet ownership, and some say their current pet may be their last. Animal shelters across the country, and right here in Maine, are seeing this play out in real-time- adoptions are down, animals are staying in the shelter for longer periods (especially large dogs) and there is an uptick in surrender requests, more commonly related to housing challenges and veterinary costs.

Increasing length of stay in the shelter is a serious issue. No shelter is a wonderful environment for long-term housing of animals, no matter how hard we work to provide mental enrichment and exemplary care. Shelters are stressful, and we see increasing stress, behavioral issues, increased stress-related illnesses and mental deterioration the longer animals are housed in kennels and cages. We creatively utilize foster homes to give animals a break from the shelter environment. If you are not in a position to donate financially to your local shelter, consider fostering- supplies are provided and it really does make a huge difference!

What are shelters to do? Need is up and donations are down. Many shelters are finding ways to help struggling families to keep the pets they love, rather than having to surrender them for rehoming. At the Greater Androscoggin Humane Society, we have a very busy weekly pet food pantry, support other food pantries like Meals on Wheels with donated pet food, and hold a monthly low-cost and free vaccine clinic for dogs and cats. We are working to grow our low-cost community spay/neuter offerings and we provide a Safe Keeping foster program for folks needing temporary care for pets when they are in the hospital or other short-term crisis situation. All these combined do not address all the need, but they certainly make a difference in our community.

Shelters, rescues, trap/neuter/return groups and animal control are working together where we can, to help support animals in our community, recognizing that no one organization can do it all alone. Maine Humane (formerly the Maine Federation of Humane Societies) has launched a new program where Greater Good and Chewy pet food and supply donations are brought to Maine by the truckload, with a hub system of groups to pick up and distribute across Maine. This food is dedicated to pet food pantries, and helps to fill the need in rural and urban areas across our state. We have to get creative. We have to work collaboratively. We have to bring forward our best ideas, and not be afraid to try them out. Together we can address today's challenges and keep saving the lives of the most vulnerable.

Katie Lisnik, Director
Greater Androscoggin Humane Society

VOICE FOR ANIMALS

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