

ARFF news

for the Florida animal advocate

Summer 2009

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Animal Rights Foundation of Florida
1431 North Federal Highway
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304
Phone: (954) 727-ARFF
Fax: (954) 615-5643
E-mail: arff@arff.org



American alligators... threatened species or hunter's prey?

Sadly in Florida, the answer is both.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will again host its barbaric alligator hunt, kicking-off this special permit season on August 15, 2009.

The American alligator is listed as an Appendix II species under an international treaty called CITES. Appendix II lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. This listing provides federal protection for alligators but allows the state to manage and control programs. Permits for trade and hunting in Florida can only be granted if the FWC is satisfied that certain conditions are met, above all that trade and kills will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. Since the alligator is listed by the State of Florida as a Species of Special Concern, they can be legally killed only by individuals with specially issued permits.

Under the guise that money raised by the killing of alligators will benefit the overall population, the state claims that the hunt is justified. However, with a stated goal of the hunt being used to "manage Florida's alligator population for its long-term well-being and the benefits of users," ARFF purports that the FWC is biased toward the so-called "benefits" to hunters. Non-hunters, who constitute the vast majority of Floridians, pull no weight in this process which is clearly geared toward raising money at the expense of alligators.

You Can Help

Join ARFF in protesting the FWC's Alligator Hunt on opening day of the season.

When: Saturday, August 15, 3:00-5:00pm

Where: Belle Glade Marina, 215 Marina Drive, Belle Glade.

Please contact ARFF for rideshare opportunities from Orlando & Fort Lauderdale.

Florida's alligator hunt is barbaric. Alligators are snagged with barbed hooks, pierced with arrows, stabbed with harpoons, and shot with a firearm called a "bangstick." Regulations state that alligators must be killed before being dragged into a boat, but the improper placement of the bangstick frequently renders the alligator only temporarily unconscious. Without having the spinal cord severed and the brain destroyed, the alligator is left to suffer long after being pulled from the water.



There's nothing romantic about horses subjected to intense heat & traffic!

Horses used by the carriage industry in Florida are subjected to blistering heat and humidity, hot pavement and constant exposure to the sun, traffic congestion, exhaust fumes, long hours, inadequate amounts of rest, and little or no water throughout their work days.

Unfortunately, horses pulling heavy carriages are a sad but common sight on St. Augustine's busy streets. Accidents involving horse-drawn carriages occur frequently in St. Augustine and have resulted in injuries to horses and people. The City of St. Augustine has consistently refused to take steps to protect horses forced to pull carriages during the hottest months of the year. ARFF will speak before the City Commission this July to ask the city to enact a ban on horse-drawn carriages. Your letter to the commission in support of ARFF's request will be of significant value!

You Can Help

Please contact Mayor Boles and the St. Augustine City Commission and ask them to prohibit carriage horse rides. Let them know that other Florida cities have similar bans, including Palm Beach, Pompano Beach, Key West and Panama City Beach. If you are a tourist, tell them that you avoid cities that support the exploitation of animals for entertainment. *Contact:*

Mayor Joseph L. Boles & St. Augustine City Commission
P. O. Box 210
St. Augustine, FL 32085-0210
Phone: (904) 825-1005; Fax: (904) 825-1096
E-mail: cosa@ci.st-augustine.fl.us



Illegal in Florida since 1972 — on sale at Gander Mountain in 2009?!

Leghold traps are cruel devices that have changed little since they were invented in the 1800s. An animal stepping on the trap activates a steel spring which triggers the jaws to close and remain closed, cutting through skin, muscles and tendons. Even when used by the most diligent trapper, animals are left to suffer for hours as they frantically struggle to escape.



Eight states have banned or severely restricted the use of leghold traps, but they are still widely used by trappers in other states to catch raccoons, coyotes, bobcats, otters and other fur-bearing animals. In 1972, Florida banned the use of leghold traps without a special permit issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Even with a permit, only padded-jaw/rubber-jawed traps may be used. The mere possession of leghold traps where wildlife might be found is a crime in Florida.

Gander Mountain is a hunting, fishing, "outdoor lifestyle" superstore with five locations in Florida (Jacksonville, Lake Mary, Ocala, St. Augustine and Palm Beach Gardens). Leghold traps are available for purchase at these Gander Mountain stores (the traps on sale are not padded). The traps are sold next to Havahart live traps, owl decoys and other "pest" control products. Although the sale of these traps is technically not illegal, by offering the traps for sale alongside other, legal wildlife control products, Gander Mountain is sending a message that they are acceptable to use. Customers unaware of Florida law may purchase these traps and use them, therefore committing a crime—and harming wildlife.

You Can Help

Contact Gander Mountain and ask that leghold traps be removed from store shelves in Florida. Although our aim is to prevent the suffering of animals, when you write please focus on the fact that the sale of leghold traps in Florida encourages illegal activity. *Contact:*

David C. Pratt, CEO
Gander Mountain Company
180 East Fifth Street, Suite 1300
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 888-9GANDER

Traps are not sold at Gander Mountain's competitors, such as Dick's Sporting Goods, Bass Pro Shops or Sports Authority.

An ugly side of the Miss Florida USA / Miss Florida Teen USA pageants

Each year the fur industry consumes millions of animals. The vast majority of the animals are raised on factory farms. Rows of tiny wire cages encrusted with dirt, clumps of fur and excrement line these intensive confinement facilities. Inside, thousands of mink, foxes or other animals are imprisoned for their entire lives and denied any opportunity to engage in natural behaviors.

animals are put to death by the cheapest available means, using killing methods designed to preserve the pelt, rather than minimize suffering. No humane slaughter law regulates fur farms. Along with neck snapping, gassing and poisoning, the fur industry refuses to condemn even the cruelest practices, such as electrocution, during which an electrode is inserted into the animal's rectum. This causes the animal to suffer from cardiac arrest. Most horrifically, because no killing method is fool-proof, undercover investigations have documented animals being skinned alive.

No less tragically, other skins used by the fur industry come from animals trapped in the wild. Suffering from excruciating pain, victims may be left to languish for days before a trapper arrives. Once on the scene, trappers often beat or stomp the animals to death. In addition, because traps are indiscriminant, each year thousands of dogs, cats, birds and other animals are crippled or killed by traps.

Due to the inherent cruelty and the overwhelming evidence of abuse in the industry, the fashion world has turned its back on fur. Many top designers, including Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Betsey Johnson and Kenneth Cole have taken a compassionate, fur-free stand.

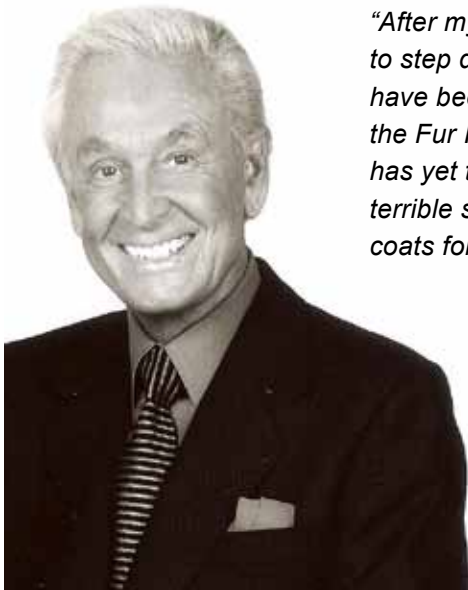
Miss Cruelty USA. The Fur Information Council of America (FICA) is a long-time sponsor of Miss Florida USA and its sister pageant, Miss Florida Teen USA. Sadly, among the prizes for pageant winners are the skins of abused animals. By continuing to associate with FICA, pageant producers are supporting callous and unnecessary cruelty.

You Can Help

You can help ARFF send a message to pageant producers that the ugliness of fur has no place in a pageant.

• **Attend ARFF's demonstration.** On July 18, 2009, ARFF protested the Miss Florida USA pageant finals in Davie, Florida. Pending progress of ARFF's campaign, a demonstration may be held outside of the Miss Florida Teen USA pageant that will take place in October. Please visit www.arff.org or call (954) 727-ARFF for more information on this and other events.

• **Speak up for animals abused by the fur industry!** Recently, Bob Barker, famed animal rights activist, long-time ARFF supporter and former host of the national Miss USA competition, expressed his disappointment with Miss Florida USA's continued support of the fur industry in a letter sent to pageant producers. In his letter Barker stated,



"After my requests to discontinue the use of fur prizes were ignored, I was forced to step down from my position with the Miss USA Pageant. To my disappointment, I have been informed by ARFF that Miss Florida USA continues to be sponsored by the Fur Information Council of America. It saddens me greatly to know that Miss USA has yet to shed the cruel fur industry from its otherwise beautiful pageantry. What a terrible shame it is that Miss USA and all affiliated pageants have not recognized fur coats for what they are – the stolen skins of ruthlessly tortured animals."

Please take a minute to tell Tel-Air Interests, producer of the pageants, that an end to their relationship with the Fur Information Council of America would benefit the pageant's reputation. **Contact:**

Grant & Mary Lou Gravitt, Producers
Miss Florida USA / Miss Florida Teen USA
2040 Sherman Street
Hollywood, FL 33020
Phone: (954) 924-4949; Fax: (954) 924-4980
E-mail: telair@aol.com



ARFF needs your help to protect Muscovy ducks!

Florida is experiencing a population boom of Muscovy ducks and ARFF is increasingly called on to rescue injured birds or to resolve conflicts between those who enjoy the birds and those who view them as a nuisance. These birds are often the target of animal abuse and recently two ducks in Fort Lauderdale were actually shot with arrows and left to die. While this represents an exceptional event, many communities throughout Florida have resorted to hiring trappers to round up the ducks and kill them.

However, Florida communities now have the option to use a safe and humane tool to help control the burgeoning numbers of Muscovy ducks. Analogous to spaying and neutering dogs and cats, the recent development of OvoControl G, an oral contraceptive, is a significant innovation for the management of urban fowl. Unfortunately, the current registration of OvoControl G as a "Restricted Use Pesticide" hinders the availability and utility of the new product for use by ARFF.

You Can Help

Please contact your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative and urge them to contact the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Pesticide Division to encourage them to revise the labeling of OvoControl G to include an exception for use of the drug by ARFF. If the EPA allows an exception for the controlled use of the product by ARFF, we will be able to work with cities to help control populations of Muscovy ducks, thereby alleviating many problematic issues faced by communities around the state of Florida. *Contact:*

Senator Mel Martinez
356 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-3041
Web form: martinez.senate.gov/public/?p=EmailSenatorMartinez

Senator Bill Nelson
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5274
Web form: billnelson.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm

U.S. Representative _____
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

*To find your U.S. Representative, go to <http://www.house.gov> and fill in your nine-digit zip code in the box at the top left corner. If you do not have internet access, please contact ARFF for help in determining who your U.S. Representative is and how to contact him or her: (954) 727-ARFF.



Help ARFF get iguanas out of South Florida pet stores

At PETCO stores in South Florida, young iguanas can be purchased for less than \$20. (PetSmart, its superstore competitor, does not sell iguanas.) Due to their low cost and small size, iguanas are often purchased by individuals who lack the knowledge and resources to properly care for them. Unfortunately, once these reptiles become too large or expensive to care for, they are often abandoned or released into the wild. Iguanas are able to thrive in South Florida's subtropical climate. These feral populations sometimes present unwelcome challenges for homeowners and as a result the reptiles are often cruelly mistreated. As one of Florida's leading retailers of pet products, PETCO is in a position to positively impact the growing problem of feral iguanas. Ask PETCO to discontinue the sale of iguanas at its stores in South Florida. *Contact:*

Jim Myers, CEO
PETCO
9125 Rehco Road
San Diego, CA 92121
Phone: (888) 824-7257

Please be polite when writing. PETCO is well-known for its efforts to address the dog and cat overpopulation problem by partnering with local shelters. In addition, in response to concerns raised by animal advocates, PETCO ended the sale of large birds and the company will phase-out rabbit sales in 2009.



Tell Broward County public schools to expel the circus

For-profit circus promoters are committed to luring schoolchildren with field trips, ticket giveaways and other promotions. ARFF addressed the Broward County School Board at their June meeting and called for the establishment of a district-wide policy prohibiting affiliations with animal circuses at all Broward schools.

During the presentation, ARFF Project Coordinator Amanda Burk showed undercover video footage from circus animal training and left the Board with a comprehensive packet of additional information, including a long list of Animal Welfare Act violations incurred by the Ringling Bros. Circus. Amanda made it clear that animals in the circus are used to sell tickets, not to teach a greater appreciation of nature. Instead, animal acts teach kids that chaining, caging, whipping, beating and humiliating animals are acceptable, and set an inappropriate example of humankind's responsibility toward animals.

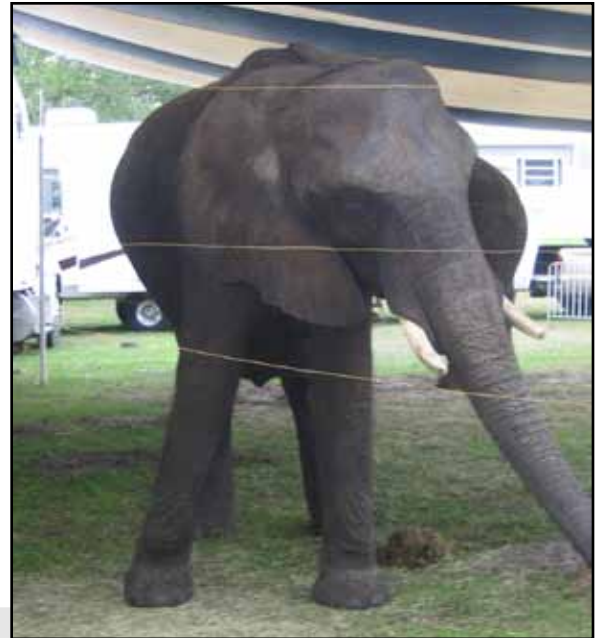
You Can Help

Broward County Public Schools have the opportunity to act responsibly by adopting a policy not to support circuses with animal acts, but we need your help! Please contact the School Board and express your strong concern regarding the mental and physical toll of circus life for animals, as well as the safety risks—such as rampages, attacks and disease—to children in this environment. *Contact:*

James Notter, Superintendent
Broward County Public Schools
Phone: (754) 321-2600
E-mail: supt_notter@browardschools.com

Maureen S. Dinnen, Chair
Broward County School Board
Phone: (754) 321-2003
E-mail: mdinnen@browardschools.com

Jennifer L. Gottlieb, Vice Chair
Broward County School Board
Phone: (754) 321-2008
E-mail: jennifer.gottlieb@browardschools.com



Elephant at a circus in Fort Lauderdale

mailing address for all:

Broward County Public Schools
600 SE Third Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Robin Bartleman
Phone: (754) 321-2009
E-mail: rbartleman@browardschools.com

Broward residents: If you are a resident of Broward County, please contact the school officials above and the School Board representative from your district below. Contact ARFF if you do not know what district you live in.

Beverly A. Gallagher (District 2)
Phone: (754) 321-2002
E-mail: bgallagher@browardschools.com

Benjamin J. Williams (District 5)
Phone: (754) 321-2005
E-mail: ruth.lutz@browardschools.com

Dr. Robert D. Parks (District 7)
Phone: (754) 321-2007
E-mail: marcia.simmons@browardschools.com

Ann Murray (District 1)
Phone: (754) 321-2001
E-mail: ann.murray@browardschools.com

Stephanie A. Kraft (District 4)
Phone: (754) 321-2004
E-mail: skraft@browardschools.com

Phyllis C. Hope (District 6)
Phone: (754) 321-2006
E-mail: phyllis.hope@browardschools.com

Get involved in the process. ARFF is looking for parents and children in Broward County who may be interested in getting more involved in this campaign by attending a Board meeting or helping with outreach and other activities. If you are interested, please e-mail Amanda@arff.org or call (954) 727-ARFF, ext. 242.

Michelle Ellis and Sarah Vietro at ARFF's youth rodeo protest.
(photo: Carline Jean/Sun Sentinel)



Calling all youth!

Whether it's protesting rodeo cruelty or distributing flyers outside of a KFC, you can make a difference! You are the future. It is up to you to make the change you wish to see. Below are some ideas to get you started:

- Contact ARFF to schedule a free, fun-filled presentation at your school or camp. Contact james@arff.org.
- Do you like spreading the word about animal rights? Help ARFF to distribute leaflets at your camp, school and throughout your community.
- Create your own animal rights flyers/posters and place them at your school or other community organizations. Contact ARFF for ideas and suggestions.
- Join ARFF to protest against circuses, rodeos and other acts of animal abuse.
- Sign up for ARFF's Action Alerts (visit www.arff.org) to learn about our campaigns and how you can help.

Have an idea on how to stop animal abuse? Contact ARFF. Together we can make a difference! Zip us an email or give us a call today: (954) 727-ARFF or arff@arff.org. Thank you!

Exciting new opportunity to volunteer for ARFF!

Have you witnessed animal cruelty in your neighborhood? Are there animal rights issues you would like to see addressed? ARFF would like to empower you to take action!

For increased coverage for animals and animal rights issues in the State of Florida, ARFF is beginning to interview for volunteer District Coordinators (DCs) in Florida counties and cities. The DCs will be the local liaisons for ARFF in their hometowns and will act on behalf of ARFF to network, table, leaflet, educate, inform and protest.

Applicants for volunteer DC positions should have exceptional organizational skills, knowledge of animal rights issues in Florida and an understanding of ARFF's campaigns. The ability to work well with others, to communicate with volunteers and media, and to reliably engage in protests and AR activism are required.

If you would like to apply to be the volunteer DC in your community, please contact ARFF's Managing Director, Melissa Gates: melissa@arff.org. Applications should include the name of your hometown, your contact information and a cover letter addressing the skills you possess that would make you an excellent candidate to represent ARFF. You may also wish to outline any relevant experience you have with animal rights activism and volunteer coordination, as well as any significant areas of interest particular to your city or county that you would like to help ARFF work on.

Thank you for considering this important volunteer opportunity that will help ARFF reach thousands of more people!

ARFF in the media: Spring 2009

An ARFF spokesperson was featured in stories in the Orlando Sentinel and Miami Herald about a young girl who was killed by a "pet" python — ARFF's protest of the "Rodeo for Youth" in Davie was covered by the Sun-Sentinel — A Tampa Tribune article about the June meeting of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission noted ARFF's testimony about the need to strengthen captive wildlife regulations — ARFF's Campaigns Coordinator was quoted in a Gainesville Sun story about the cruel killing of chickens during a FFA program at Hawthorne High School — ARFF's demonstration against a live lobster crane game at a Royal Palm Beach restaurant was covered by the Palm Beach Post, Miami Herald, Lakeland Ledger, WPBF Ch. 25 and WPTV Ch. 5; ARFF's Managing Director was interviewed during the Dick Farrel Show on WPBR 1340 AM — A feature article about dog racing in Broward/Palm Beach New Times noted ARFF's concerns about the welfare of racing greyhounds — ARFF's Campaigns Coordinator was featured in an article in the Palm Beach Post about iguanas — ARFF's disappointment at the recapture of a monkey who had escaped from the circus was noted in articles in the Orlando Sentinel and Daily Commercial — An ARFF Coordinator was quoted in a story on WESH Ch. 2 about the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act — ARFF's objections to the National Elephant Center were featured in an article in the Fort Pierce Tribune — ARFF's protest of the Sunshine Stampede gay rodeo was covered by Broward/Palm Beach New Times and South Florida Blade.

Letters to the Editor

Congratulations to Keith Berger, Laura Guttridge, Vera Kramer and Bryan Wilson for letters published in the Sun Sentinel, Palm Beach Post, Vero Beach Press Journal, St. Augustine Record and Seminole Chronicle. *Did you have a letter published in your local newspaper? Please let ARFF know!*



Visit ARFF online:

www.arff.org

VegSouthFlorida.com

blog.animalrightsflorida.org

MySpace.com/animalrightsflorida

memorials & accolades

In honor of Nanci Alexander's birthday,
from Greg Bare, Shawn Raval, Jeremy
Shock, and Jodi & Logan Smith

In honor of Carla & Bryan Wilson,
"great people," from Marilyn Weaver

In memory of Kutosha, June
13, 1998-November 8, 2005, from
Karen Lynn Maciag



Mail to:

Animal Rights Foundation of Florida
1431 N. Federal Highway
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304

Questions? Phone: (954) 727-ARFF E-mail: arff@arff.org

The Animal Rights Foundation of Florida is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of: *(contributions are tax-deductible)*

☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Join our e-mail list! E-mail is the best way for us to reach our members with notices of upcoming events and urgent action items.

I have a particular interest or strength in: _____

Please charge the above amount to my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

ARFF Coordinator Bryan Wilson at a demonstration in St. Augustine.



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Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304

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