

Wild Neighbors

THE HUMANE APPROACH TO LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

John Hadidian

with

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Lauren Nolfo-Clements,
Dave Pauli, and Laura Simon

Illustrations by
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and **Laura Simon** are on the staff of The Humane Society of the United States.

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This book challenges people to enjoy wildlife in its natural beauty and live with it as humanely as possible. Nonetheless, there is always a possibility of injury, even serious injury, when people try to solve wildlife problems. Wild animals can be dangerous if contacted or handled improperly, and the procedures and products used to control wildlife problems humanely can be dangerous if the individual does not take proper precautions. Neither the authors nor The Humane Society of the United States assume any liability for any injury or property damage that may result from the use of this book.

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FOREWORD

Most Americans live in urban or suburban environments, and the wild animals in our communities enrich our lives and represent a vital link to the natural world. Yet, our residential and commercial developments, roads, and modes of transportation often have life-threatening effects on these creatures.

Drivers inadvertently kill countless millions of wild animals on our roads every year. Developers knock down trees and disrupt habitat for wildlife to create more living space for people. People see one product of human architectural ingenuity—the glass-faced home or commercial building—as appealing and elegant, yet the glass can't be seen well by songbirds, and millions of hapless creatures collide with these structures, suffering and dying as a result.

Then there are some people's premeditated decisions to kill wildlife. In communities throughout the nation, people identify native wild animals as interlopers and declare them a "nuisance," conscripting "wildlife removal specialists" to remove the "problem." Removal typically translates into trapping or other types of lethal action. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has strived for years to protect animals who live in our communities, and this lethal "nuisance" trapping is something The HSUS has always decried.

Since *Wild Neighbors* was first published in 1997, much has happened in the rapidly growing field of urban wildlife. Sadly, one of its true pioneers, Guy Hodge, passed away in 1999. Guy, who saw the beauty and importance of every creature, spent his entire professional life with The HSUS, working to ensure peaceful coexistence between humans and wild animals. Guy was a co-editor of the first edition of *Wild Neighbors* and the editor of its predecessor, *A Pocket Guide to the Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities and Towns* (1990). He was one of the very first people in animal protection to advocate for greater attention to what was termed the plight of urban wildlife.

Today, The HSUS promotes coexistence and offers practical solutions to concerned homeowners, developers, and transportation designers who wish to address conflicts with wildlife in a humane and sensitive way. The HSUS has amassed significant capacity to help wildlife in urban areas, especially in the wake of corporate combinations with The Fund for Animals and the Doris Day Animal League, both of which had their own substantive programs to protect urban wildlife. Our Cape Wildlife Center in Massachusetts and our Ramona Wildlife Center in California take in injured and orphaned wild animals to nurse and care for them until they can be set free. Our Urban Wildlife Field Office in Connecticut answers thousands of calls from the public every year, helping to resolve wildlife conflicts in homes or yards. Our Wildlife Land Trust focuses on the need for protection of the land crucial to the survival of wild animals, both endangered and abundant, on small tracts or large. Its goal is to protect properties in all fifty states. Our Urban Wildlife Sanctuary program celebrates the wild creatures who share our backyards. Through an award-winning newsletter, *Urban Wildlife News*, and an honorary certification program, we embrace the concept of sanctuary not only for homeowners' backyards, but also for schools, neighborhoods, even entire communities.

Wild animals are members of our communities. When conflicts arise, we can find ways to resolve them humanely. I urge you to join with The Humane Society of the United States in embracing this opportunity and helping us create a truly humane society. A humane society starts with you.

Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO
The Humane Society of the United States

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