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Animals Society Institute

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April showers bring.... amphibians! and reptiles! and lots of other wildlife....

Spring is an active season for wildlife. Some wild animals are returning from their winter homes, while others are waking up from hibernation. Either way, they're hungry and ready to mate, so they're moving around.

Given all of this activity, it's no surprise that people see more wildlife in spring - and are tempted to interact with wild animals. Human-animal relationships extend to wildlife and, as with other relationships, there are ups and downs for both parties.

Most of the time, wild animals fare best when they are left alone to be wild. We can appreciate them from a safe distance. That said, humans have altered the natural world quite dramatically, making it tough for some wild animals to go about their business without running into us.

For example, spring rains get amphibians traveling to ponds to mate; drivers should use extreme caution at night and people can help salamanders and frogs to cross roads safely. Turtles will be trying to return to sandy nests to lay eggs, and often encounter roads and other barriers. Drivers should watch for them during the daytime, then stop traffic or help the turtles continue across the road if it's safe to do so.

Some species of amphibians are quite rare, and some species of reptiles are

long-lived and slow-reproducing, so saving individuals (important and rewarding in its own right) can have significant impact on populations. However, if you touch an amphibian or reptile to help the animal cross the road, always wash your hands afterwards as they can carry salmonella.



HAP Corner

Formerly called the Diversion Program, [ASI's Intervention program](#) for people who have harmed animals has a new name - BARK (Behavior, Accountability, Responsibility, and Knowledge): An Intervention Program for Animal Maltreatment Offenders™.

The terminology used when referring to these programs is important. "Diversion" programs can be misunderstood to mean that perpetrators are diverted away from the justice system, while "Intervention" suggests treatment for perpetrators (some of whom may also be incarcerated). "Maltreatment" is comprehensive, to include animal neglect, abuse, and cruelty.

The reasons that people harm animals are complicated, and must be considered in a treatment program to effect change. To expect people to show compassion to animals, they must be treated with compassion and an understanding of the factors that contributed to their behavior. Through ASI's BARK Program, they learn how to do better, as well as how to take responsibility for their own behavior. Meanwhile, others associated with these programs learn about how systemic societal issues must be changed to create more compassionate communities. This is good for the offenders, the program participants, the animals, and society as a whole.

HAS Corner

Thanks to some generous donors, ASI has awarded scholarships to three students for the [Summer Institute for Human-Animal Studies](#) at the University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study. Kris Hiuser, Louise Logan, and Martha Mariana Martin-Yanez are our 2018 Summer Institute scholarship winners. While their areas of study are diverse, these three students share a commitment to advancing our understanding and appreciation of human-animal relationships. They truly reflect the amazing increase in interest in human-animal studies and represent the future of the field. Stay tuned in the coming months for updates from each of the scholars as they prepare to join us at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The New Research Corner section of ASI's website now highlights the latest articles in ASI's journals, [Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science](#) (JAAWS) and [Society & Animals](#). Each of the new article titles is linked to an abstract, as well as information on how to read the full article. We hope that it's easier for readers to quickly access information of interest.

Because HAS scholars come from such diverse fields, they often have a difficult time understanding each other, as language and key theories vary across fields. Therefore, ASI asked HAS scholars to define, in 3-minute long videos, terms that are used within their realm of human-animal studies, but that may be unfamiliar to those outside of their sub-disciplines. This week's video is on "Speciesism" by Peter Singer. [Watch it, and the others, on our website.](#)

Volunteer Spotlight

Natasha Saraf is the creative force behind ASI's beautiful new [Annual Report](#).

Natasha is a huge animal advocate who has a ridiculously unhealthy obsession with animals, everything from beetles and rats, to doggies, deer, whales, you name it. She stopped eating meat 9 years ago because of her love for animals and she sees complete veganism in the near future. Volunteering for ASI is an absolute pleasure and honor for Natasha and she is really thankful that she has a skill that can be useful to organizations like ASI. Natasha loves to volunteer for ASI because she is a strong believer in the positive, loving, and productive relationships between humans and animals, and sees this as a solution for many of the problems we see today. She lives in Toronto with her husband and 2 fur babies, Diego and Dasher. They have a house out in the Ontario countryside as well, with 74 acres of land, and Natasha often dreams of turning the land into an animal rescue and sanctuary. It'll happen, as soon as she wins the lottery! Until then, she will continue to volunteer her time as a graphic designer to ASI and any other animal welfare organizations who need it. Thanks Natasha!



For more information on ASI's springtime activities, [click here.](#)

Happy Spring! Click here to help ASI improve and expand knowledge about human-animal relationships in order to create safer and more compassionate communities for all.



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Animals and Society Institute, 2512 Carpenter Road, Suite 202-A, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-1188

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