

2023 NEWSLETTER



MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

news

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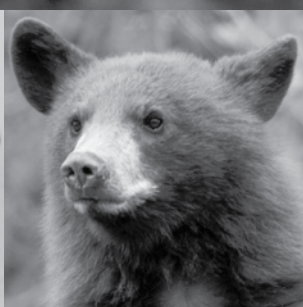
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MFOA Bulletin Board

ALDF Rank's Maine #1

The pre-eminent national legal association for animal protection, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, named Maine #1 in the nation for its animal protection laws. Although Maine's animal welfare laws have been a work in progress by many throughout the years, recent legislation led to its current #1 ranking. In 2019 and 2021, MFOA passed a 'Pet Shop' bill, which will eventually end the sale of puppy-mill dogs and cats in Maine pet shops; a bill that made post-conviction possession of an animal a felony offense; "Franky's Law", a second-in-the-nation 'Courtroom Animal Advocate Program' using volunteer attorneys and Maine law school students; and most recently, a 'Pet Custody' bill that provides a judge with criteria to consider the well-being of a pet dog or cat in a contested divorce proceeding. This is the second year in a row that Maine was ranked #1 by ALDF.



A National Animal Protection Association Formed

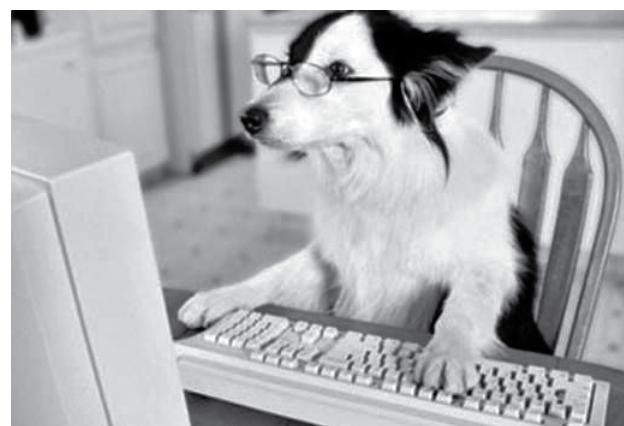
In 2017, MFOA became part of a loose network of state animal protection organizations in the northeast, but the group network never really found traction. Last year, MFOA was approached by a primarily mid-western group of state animal protection organizations to discuss the development of an association of like-minded states. MFOA then invited the original northeastern group to participate, and a formally signed Memorandum of Understanding for a new coalition was signed. The new group is known as the Coalition of State Animals Advocacy Organizations. Currently there are 20 states in the association. In order to maximize their ability to achieve their individual and shared goals, the parties agree that it would be of mutual benefit for the CSAAO to provide networking opportunities to further common goals and to maximize their efforts to improve animal welfare in their home states. MFOA's Robert Fisk, Jr. serves on the Steering Committee.

Surprise Bequeathment

Since MFOA was founded, member Sally Yarnish donated \$15 (minimal amount in 1997 to be a member) every year. She lived by herself in a modest home, attended high school in Mexico, ME and attended her local church. She had no immediate family, generally kept to herself and also apparently followed MFOA. This past winter, tragically, she was hit by a car while crossing the street in her neighborhood and died. Unbeknownst to MFOA, she left her home and estate, which was a sizable amount, to MFOA. Sally's generosity was greatly appreciated by MFOA and we will continue to speak for the animals in her memory.

New MFOA Online Store

We are excited to announce our new MFOA Online Store that will be up and ready next month! Now you can proudly let others know that you value and support the humane treatment of animals. The new online store has some great high quality items to purchase to show that support — shirts, T-shirts, fleeces, jackets, outerwear, caps and bags! All on the new MFOA's Online Store! By purchasing items with our MFOA logo, you will generate interest from others and hopefully, new supporters. The more support we have, the more we can accomplish. An opening announcement will be sent in an Action Alert and posted on www.mfoa.net. You'll also find updates about our new store on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/>



MFOA Hires New Executive Director and Office Manager

Jane Delson, Freeport, Executive Director



Jane brings over 40 years of experience and expertise in corporate communications, public relations, and advertising, including senior management positions in corporate travel, film and entertainment, insurance, and a foundation focused on international biodiversity conservation, global environmental education and animal protection. Her lifetime involvement in animal welfare includes Lipizzaner horse ownership and care and fundraisers for shelters in Maine and Massachusetts.

Perhaps nowhere was MFOA in more need of improvement than its operational system and ability to market itself. Jane immediately recognized those needs and made changes that have helped build a foundation in which MFOA can grow in all capacities. Her professional, genuine, articulate, and diplomatic manner has increased both internal and external stakeholder buy-in, publicity and corporate goodwill. She has seamlessly connected the founder's creativity and leadership and the new office manager's execution skill sets to facilitate major and multiple improvements. She will continue to collaborate with the Board in strategically moving MFOA forward in increasing its scope, effectiveness, and influence.

Maggie Wood, Brunswick, Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator



Maggie comes to MFOA with a strong background in environmental studies and a Master of Law in Environmental Law & Policy with a focus on animal welfare. She began as an intern with the Maine Audubon Society focusing on public outreach, writing and communications. A minor at Colby-Sawyer College in business administration has resulted in work experiences expanding her administrative capabilities. A horse lover, Maggie has managed an equine care facility and worked at a mustang rescue.

As Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, Maggie is responsible for many of MFOA's administrative functions and the new operating system. She has proven to be a natural on the new system and its many capacities to increase and improve MFOA'S database, accounting, fundraising, programs, marketing, and volunteer and donor support. Beyond that, she also responds to all calls/emails, handles the Facebook account and assists on Action Alerts, and will lead the revamping of the Volunteer Program. Maggie also serves as Treasurer on the Board of Directors.

MFOA Volunteer Program

Watch this Spring for MFOA's newest program initiative. With a new office manager, MFOA will be re-introducing its volunteer program with a new and better format to help our supporters become more active members of the MFOA team. If you have wanted to help animals in need, we will have the ways and hows. More details in the coming months - check www.mfoa.net.



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We make it easy for you to take action and help animals. Get on MFOA's ACTION ALERT Updates list. Send us your email address at info@mfoa.net



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MFOA Legislation

"An Act To Ban The Hunting of Animals in an Enclosed Area"

Sponsor: Sen. Ben Chipman, Portland



Canned hunting ranches provide non-native animals such as elk, red deer, fallow deer, bison, and wild boar, to often inexperienced hunters who are guaranteed a kill within fenced in acreage. The majority of hunters consider them unethical, void of chase and a threat to the image of hunting in Maine. An unnecessarily inhumane practice by 'trophy' hunters and a bloodsport that has no place in Maine, it is a dying industry that never caught on in New England.

This is not an economic issue, as canned hunting is not a major source of income for any of the current ranches. They have revenue from deer farms and/or guiding services for hunting multiple species. Facilities also have revenue in lodging, meals, butchering and taxidermy, specialized guiding, fishing, moose and bird photography trips, snowmobiling, etc. This proposed legislation provides a two-year phase out period.

The bill takes a stand on a particular type of activity, which the vast majority of the public and hunters oppose. See page 5 for MFOA's Fact Sheet on this legislation.

"An Act Protecting Abandoned or Unclaimed Animals in Vacant Properties"

Sponsor: Rep. Jan Dodge, Belfast



In June 2020, 27-year-old Matthew Meisner was tragically murdered in Tempe, AZ, leaving three senior cats in his apartment. At the time, AZ law stated if the tenant cannot be found, the landlord cannot enter an apartment for 15 days. Because animals are considered "property" it would be 15 days before the landlord could enter the apartment and rescue the cats. Matthew's cousin, Meg Epstein of Phoenix, recognized the ambiguity and became the driving force to successfully have the statute changed. MFOA is introducing similar legislation.

This bill requires a tenant to designate an authorized person to retrieve an animal in the event of the tenant's death, incapacitation, or abandonment. The bill also explains when a landlord should subsequently release the animal to an animal shelter, animal control officer, or police officer.



"An Act To Protect the Victims of Animal Cruelty and to Provide Restitution for Their Care"

Sponsor: Rep. Vicki Doudera, Camden



This bill mandates that a person adjudicated as having violated the laws against cruelty to animals must forfeit ownership of the animal(s) involved in the violation and repay the cost of caring for the animal(s). This bill also mandates that a defendant convicted of a Class C or Class D crime of cruelty to animals must forfeit ownership of the animal(s) involved in the crime and repay the cost of caring for the animal(s). It also implements a post-adjudication and post-conviction ban on owning or possessing an animal.

MFOA and the State Animal Welfare Program Team Up!

MFOA recently passed Franky's Law, which is called a "Courtroom Animal Advocate Program" (CAAP). Under this legislation, a judge presiding over an animal abuse case involving a dog or cat has the option of appointing a volunteer - either a supervised law student or an attorney - to work with the court to advocate for the animal in the interest of justice. Low priority animal cruelty cases that are often dismissed or pled out can now be adjudicated.

New Maine Animal Welfare Program Director, Ronda Steciuk, reached out to MFOA about the program to assist the AWP with its animal cruelty case load. "It is the Animal Welfare Program's intent to request these appointments, moving forward to assist in seeking justice for the animals involved in these cases, encourage the proper movement of cases through the system, and present information and recommendations to the Court, which it may not fully consider under the current system."

An advocate will work at the court's direction and may monitor the case; consult with individuals; perform legal research; submit written recommendations in briefs to the court; attend hearings; and/or in sentencing, ownership and restitution issues.

This type of collaboration puts an impetus into the program and immediately assists the state Animal Welfare Program in being able to adjudicate more animal cruelty cases properly.

Why Canned Hunting Should be Banned in Maine

- Non-native animals such as elk, red deer, fallow deer, bison, and wild boar are domestically raised, and have lost much of their instinctive fear of humans. Guides often assist mostly out-of-state 'trophy' hunters' in fenced acreage, thereby manipulating the odds against the animal, to ensure the hunters success with an often "no kill, no bill" guarantee.

- The majority of hunters, as well as respected national hunting groups, are against these operations and consider them unethical, void of fair chase traditions, and a threat to the image of Maine hunting. It is morally and ethically wrong to enclose animals and charge fees to kill them.

- These facilities are not subject to wildlife laws. Customers are most likely inexperienced weekend hunters who do not have to have a license or gun handling experience. There is no age limit or bag limit. You can hunt year-round, even on Sundays, which is illegal in Maine for licensed hunters. Clearly a hunting outlier.

- Twenty years ago there were 11 such operations; today there are six. It is essentially a small, declining industry that never caught on. In 2007, the Dept. of Agriculture reported only a total of 192 animals "harvested." MFOA's request for current data is pending.

- Canned hunting is not the primary source of income for these ranches. All ranches have deer farms and/or guiding services for hunting multiple species. Facilities also make revenue in lodging, meals, butchering and taxidermy, specialized guiding, fishing, moose and bird photography trips, snowmobiling, canoeing, etc.

- Historic precedent and recent case law refute that this is a property rights argument. We have laws protecting us from people who do not adhere to a core of ethics established by society. The same values can be used in accepting whether or not this activity is morally and ethically acceptable just like banning dog fighting and Sunday hunting. Property owners have multiple alternatives for their property that are acceptable to societal norms.

- The kill can be unnecessarily inhumane. True hunters take pride in the chase and the skill to drop the animal with one clean shot. These hunters are often inexperienced, therefore increasing the unlikelihood of a clean kill. In many cases, the animals are repeatedly body wounded with bullets or arrows, bleeding out in pain, either by inaccuracy and/or the shooter not wanting to damage the 'trophy' head. This is seen by a broad spectrum of hunters and non-hunters as unnecessarily inhumane and a bloodsport that has no place in Maine.

- Canned hunting only began in Maine in the 1990s, and was a controversial issue in the legislature in 1999, 2003 and 2009. Owners knew it was risky venture. They still have multiple opportunities to create a more acceptable and profitable business model, including moving more into non-consumptive activities as mentioned previously, which many already provide. This is not an anti-business bill, but an opportunity to be more financially viable in the future. One example, outside of enhancing existing revenue streams, is Hindsite Hunt Preserve, that in 2016 closed the hunting ranch and converted the property into a successful medical marijuana business.

- Proposed legislation provides a two-year phase out period to help mitigate any financial loss and provide time to sell the remaining animals and reconfigure fencing for their existing deer farm or to sell to dog kennels, commercial fencing contractors, prisons, farms or as scrap metal.

- Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife professionals contend that the non-native animals are captive. Thus, instead of being a wild species, the animals should be regarded as domestic — like cattle — and therefore, licensed by the Dept. of Agriculture, a responsibility of the Department which is also inconsistent to its mission.

(Canned Hunting continues on page 7)

Ban Canned Hunts



*Canned hunts take place on fenced-in property where high paying customers enter to kill captive animals.

*There is no sportsmanship or skill involved in canned hunts, and no chance at all of a fair chase.

*Nine canned hunting areas exist in Maine today.

Contact Maine Friends of Animals for more information or to get involved in the campaign to ban canned hunting.

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Silence is the Voice of Complicity - Speak up for Animals
visit <http://www.mfoa.net> or call (207) 781-2187

BDN BDN Op-Ed

Maine animal protection organizations warned 'Right to Food' referendum a mistake!

The predictable fallout from Maine's right to food constitutional amendment

by Opinion Contributor June 12, 2022

Before the ink has barely dried, an ill-conceived piece of legislation and referendum is being used to try and overturn Maine's ban on Sunday hunting. The recent lawsuit to allow Sunday hunting is based on the new right-to-food constitutional amendment that voters passed last November. It is remarkable how this even came to pass.

Although groups like the Maine Farm Bureau, the Maine Municipal Association and Maine Veterinary Medical Association spoke against the referendum, only one national and three Maine-based animal-protection organizations sounded the alarms that the referendum was too broad and even deceptively vague, and what that could mean. How would "the unalienable constitutional right to harvest food" affect and restrict local ordinances, animal welfare laws, environment and food safety, and enforcement of wildlife limits? Was any serious thought given to the unintended consequences? The latter played out a lot faster and with more impact than expected. The supposed innocuous referendum could now be the vehicle to Sunday hunting with funding from out-of-state hunters like a group with ties to Ted Nugent. How did this happen?

The amendment was very poorly crafted legislation. The conundrum with Question 3 was its vague language, which raised more questions than it answered. Generally, poorly written legislation can kill a bill before it gets started. Even so, if left to the Legislature, it could have been better defined and perhaps made workable, but our Legislature dropped the ball. Now, unfortunately, it seems only lawyers will benefit as the right-to-food amendment is defined as it makes its way through the court system.



Illustration Credit: George Danby/BDN

A similar bill failed twice before in the Legislature, so why did over two-thirds of the Legislature — Democrats and Republicans alike — feel the need to pass it along to the public this time? Why the drastic measure? A constitutional amendment is serious legislative business, meant to address an important public issue. Where is the compelling issue? And it even begets "a solution looking for a problem." The right-to-food amendment, well-meaning as it may be, is clearly not about hunger, and it is important to note that no other state in the country has felt a need for such an amendment. Our elected officials failed in their job by putting it on the November ballot instead of working it more through

committee, where its weaknesses could have been corrected. Few expected the Legislature to vote the way it did. With only a few months before Election Day, it was impossible to build a campaign necessary to defeat it, especially in an off-year election when the voters are typically less engaged.

The opposition simply did not have the time to amass the resources needed to conduct a campaign to educate the public and deconstruct the amendment arguments. It was a feel good measure, perfectly written as such as a referendum question. It was a perfect storm for an ill-conceived

idea that will likely become a contentious Maine law for years to come.

The right-to-food amendment was not only unnecessary, it was defective, vague, misleading even in its title, failed to consider the unintended consequences and provided no sense of real need, especially to amend our state Constitution. The Legislature, instead of executing its responsibility to pass thoughtful legislation, provided Maine voters little time or recourse to properly understand and defeat an extremely flawed referendum.

About the Editor
Robert Fisk Jr. is the Founder and President of Maine Friends of Animals in Falmouth.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We want to thank those who have contributed financially to Maine Friends of Animals. We could not list all our donors in the space allowed, but all donations large and small are most appreciated, and are used entirely to make the lives of Maine's animals better. MFOA is a 501 c3 non-profit and your donation is tax deductible. A special thank you to our major donors.

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BECOME A MFOA PROTECTOR!

In celebration of our 25 years of being Maine's voice for animals, Maine Friends of Animals has created the MFOA Protectors.

- This new fundraising program is designed for committed supporters to provide focus to specific goals. Become a part of a team of fellow protectors, and by doing so, increase MFOA's capacities to combat animal abuse, neglect, cruelty, and suffering in Maine.
- A monthly donation, large or small, will provide a predictable income pledge which will help us plan and budget according to your specific interest(s). It's a quick, easy and modern way to make your contribution for a more humane Maine,

through your credit/debit card or bank account. It will also eliminate renewal notices and save on mailing and costly fundraising expenses. Please consider joining our new community of animal protection supporters.

Visit our website today and help us be a voice for the animals in Maine for another 25 years. Be a part of Maine's largest and leading protection organization and join us in fighting against the injustices and suffering many animals still endure. Please consider being a MFOA Protector and make a difference year-round with your donation.



Support MFOA



Continued from page 5 (Why Canned Hunting Should be Banned in Maine)

■ Twenty states have taken action against canned hunting; most are in a few states, with Texas having half of them. A Field & Stream poll revealed that just 12% of its readers approved of the practice. This activity was denounced by the Izaak Walton League and the Boone & Crocket Club, as well as by several prominent Maine leaders during the 2009 legislation, including then Governor John Baldacci, IF&W Committee Chair Matt Dunlop, IF&W Commissioner Lee Perry and SAM Director George Smith.

■ Eighteen states with active hunting ranches have documented chronic wasting disease, which can be deadly to Maine native deer species. Outbreaks can be caused by the mingling of captive and wild animals.

■ This bill is not anti-hunting legislation, nor some animal rights agenda to end hunting. It is, quite simply, a bill that takes a moral stand on a particular type of activity which the vast majority of the public and hunters oppose. Proponents of this legislation are against egregious forms of animal abuse. Captive hunting falls into that category.



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Creating a will or trust is something many people put off until later in life, but in truth, directing your assets - whether modest or significant — is an expression of love for the people and causes you care most about and it is not complicated nor costly.

After providing for your loved ones, you can easily offer continued support for the cause you believe in, like MFOA. There are multiple ways you can bequeath your varied assets from real estate to the residue of your estate. For more information, click on the 'Support' button on the MFOA website and scroll down to Estate Planning, or contact us at info@info.net or 207-781-2187. You can be assured your commitment to animals becomes a living legacy that will help sustain MFOA's mission to make Maine a more humane state.



Help Pass MFOA Legislation

- Know talking points for the bill. See www.mfoa.net
- Share information on your social media
- Write a letter-to-the-editor in local newspapers (250 words)
- Use similar letter to write / email your State Representative and Senator
- Be concise, state the bill name and LD#, what the bill will do, and briefly why you want him/her to support its passage.
- Once the bill gets out of committee, email your State Representative and Senator and remind them of your earlier letter / email and urge support
- Write and submit testimony for the public hearing
- Speak at the public hearing (see www.mfoa.net - MFOA in Action - Activism and Programs)



Musings of a 25-year Supporter

"If you were a critter, how would you like to be treated? Summer, fall, winter, spring how would you like to be treated? In addition, if someone took your voice away, how would you like being: abused, neglected, abandoned, poached, experimented on, black marketed, stolen, put in a ring and forced to fight, steal leghold trapped, shot for fur left all alone to die, put in a cage and smuggled to God knows where?

And how would you feel about all of this even with a voice, let alone no voice. No voice, no lawyer to argue your case, no advocate. Except individual people or groups of people who have a passion for critters and are willing to sacrifice their time, talents, energy, and money to be their voice, their advocate."

Rev. Thomas F. Potter
Jefferson, ME

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