



Australians For Animals

PO Box 673 Byron Bay NSW 2481 Australia Tel: 61 2 6680 3674 Fax: 61 2 6680 3612
Email: suearnold@linknet.com.au Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

MANY MANY MEETINGS.

One of the interest groups the Coalition wants on side is the commercial fishermen working along the west coast of the US.

With their own unique knowledge of the ocean and its inhabitants, and with their political clout, they can be an important ally. The Coalition set up a meeting with the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

It was a great to meet with representatives of the Association and to discover that their head had close links with an Australian lobbyist from the Aussie commercial fishing industry. A few years ago AFA ran a major campaign to stop the erection of huge aquaculture farms in Moreton Bay and thanks to the campaign, we had formed close ties with the industry. The wheel turns!

Robin and Sue had extensive meetings in San Diego with major conservation groups and the International Community Foundation who do amazing work in Baja with communities. The Foundation has given the Coalition unstinting help.

We were able to make contact, through the Foundation, with major Mexican conservation groups and to begin the task of detailing all the threats to Gray Whales along the Baja coastlines.

We met with Professor Steve Palumbi at the Stanford University Laboratory in Monterey. He is an expert on Gray Whale genetics and a valuable ally in the massive effort to get the Gray Whale relisted under the US Endangered Species Act.

Visits to Chambers of Commerce, hospitality organizations, visitors' bureaux – pheww.. what a trip and so much achieved.

Please check out the website and see the list of members, its pretty awesome.

www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org

AFA DOES IT AGAIN! We're making history.

AFA is happy to report that the recent trip to the US and Mexico undertaken by our Co-ordinator was amazingly successful.

The California Gray Whale Coalition, founded by AFA in February last year, now has an Appropriations request on its way through the new Obama Congress.

This request will form part of the Budget appropriations of the new government. It's a request for the sum of \$1.2 million to allow the National Academy of Sciences to undertake a comprehensive survey of all the major threats facing the Gray Whales. A huge breakthrough.

Thanks to the previous meetings Sue Arnold had with staffers from key US Senators in California and the director at Nancy Pelosi's office (Speaker of the House), we were able to pinpoint several Californian congress representatives who might be willing to seek the funding. The Coalition's California Director Robin Mankey, approached the staffers of these congress people seeking their co-operation.

Without the help of a Congress person, the Resolution which the Coalition had managed to get through the California Assembly and Senate would not have progressed. So it was really exciting to learn on our Co-ordinator's arrival in San Francisco, that Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, from Marin County was willing to take up the cause. Even better, an appointment with the Congresswoman herself had been organised for our Co-ordinator's visit! Wow!

Getting to see a member of Congress is a big deal in the US. Lynn Woolsey is one of the most experienced politicians in Washington DC. She is known as the mother of the anti war protest over Iraq and has a great reputation as an advocate for social justice and



Image courtesy of James Dorsey

environmental causes. As well, she sits on the Science Committee in Congress.

Together with Coalition members from Marin County, Marin Humane Society and Ocean Conservation Research, Sue and Robin met with Lynn and her key staffer in Marin. It was an incredible meeting as, without hesitation, she accepted the role of Gray Whale advocate in the new Congress with relish.

No one seemed to care too much that the Founder of the Coalition is an Australian group. In the half hour meeting with Lynn we were able to lay out the major threats facing the Gray Whales and the urgency of taking action.

Not long after the meeting, we were contacted by the key staffer to let us know that an Appropriations request (for funding under the new Federal

Budget) had been tabled. He also informed us if that request was turned down for any reason, then Congresswoman Woolsey would seek legislation to ensure that the National Academy of Sciences could proceed.

The Academy is the most prestigious scientific establishment in the US. This is a big deal. We were anxious to ensure that the National Marine & Fisheries Service (NMFS) who for years have distorted figures, mislead the public and put the Gray Whales at risk, were not responsible for any comprehensive study of major threats.

So in June or July this year, we expect the request will go before the Congress and now the Coalition will work to secure broad based support from the general public.

Mexico and the Gray Whales

Deciding whether to go to Mexico and check out the Gray Whales was not easy. Given the incredible and increasing incidents of drug wars, beheadings, kidnapping and chaos going on, we were uneasy about the trip.

But friends in Baja told us that it was okay to travel to the Laguna San Ignacio and we should have no problems. We didn't, but police were in San Ignacio day and night stopping every vehicle as an assassin was on the loose! San Ignacio is a tiny sleepy Mexican town, not given to a constant police presence.

We arrived at the Laguna with some trepidation, the whale numbers had been so bad last year. This year showed some improvement, thankfully.

There was not a huge increase in numbers but more mothers and calves and more sexual activity than last year. But its clear from the Mexican authorities annual count that the increase is slight and there's no way the Gray whales are out of danger.

It was just sensational to go out on the smooth waters of the Laguna in this incredible desert wilderness (its part of the Vizcaino World Heritage Reserve) and play with these whales. They love being touched and stroked.

Please go to the website of the California Gray Whale Coalition www.californiagraywhalecoalition.org and see the video of Sue's journey to San Ignacio a few weeks ago. We think you will love the footage of these majestic whales.

News from scientists who are looking at the rapidly melting Arctic are predicting that the sea ice will disappear in a few years and seawater temperature is rising. These factors do not augur well for the Gray Whales.



At the Laguna, Sue had a meeting with many of the Mexican whale watching operators whose co-operatives own the land. It wasn't an easy meeting because of the language difficulties but the spirit of co-operation was inspiring.

The Gray Whale Coalition now has many Mexican organizations on board. Mexico is suffering immense poverty and keeping the whale

industry alive is very important.

Oh, on the way back from the Laguna, we heard about a young honeymoon couple not far from where we stayed a few nights before, had been held up with shotguns on the road.

Their car, clothes, passports, and money all taken and they were left on the road.

Not an easy country at the moment.

The dreadful Victorian bushfires.

Like most people, all of us are distraught over the appalling death toll of the Victorian bushfires. Millions of native wildlife and birds have died, incinerated in the fierce tempest.

AFA has given two substantial donations to Wildlife Victoria and to the Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter. Southern Ash is where Sam, the now world famous koala, is being looked after along with 60 other burned and injured koalas. That's the last count we heard but the numbers could still be rising.

Colleen Wood, who runs the shelter, has been working day and night since the fires. She has a small team of volunteers and the work these guys have undertaken is nothing short of angelic. Colleen desperately wants to create a purpose built unit for burned animals as bushfires are becoming commonplace in Victoria and there's no facility to deal with this trauma.

AFA would like to continue helping Colleen and the koalas.

We recommend that you send a donation to **Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter, PO Box 13, Rawson, 3825 Victoria.** Our preference is always to help grass roots, on the ground, doing the job first hand shelters.

AFA has also offered to fund a koala conference in Lismore as the situation on the mid and Far North Coast is at crisis levels with disease, habitat loss, development, dogs and cars taking an awful toll.

It was our intention to give Friends of the Koala in Lismore the profits from the day and to help in finding donors to build a

badly needed koala hospital. As long time AFA supporters know, the koala has been the focus of the charity for many years and we made history by listing them under the US Endangered Species Act.

But I regret to say that AFA had to pull out of the proposal because of the problems we experienced with the Lismore group. Communication and the idea of working together to a common goal are ideals which do not come easily to many carer groups.

We know the NSW government is constantly frustrated by the veritable brick wall of non co-operation and territorial claims



of many of the rescue organizations, whether they be land or marine based.

AFA will keep on the job with koalas, now more than ever. There is action we can take in the US under the Endangered Species Act. The charity usually works best on these kinds of projects with the help of scientists, researchers and lawyers. That way there's no people, turf, ego angst.

Solomon Dolphins get a hearing with Australasian Zoos.

Out of the blue, a few months ago, an invitation arrived in the office to submit papers for consideration at the forthcoming Australasian Zoo & Aquaria Association (ARAZPA) annual conference at the SeaWorld Resort on the Gold Coast.

As AFA has never been invited to submit a paper to any small or large zoo functions in our 29 years of operation, the opportunity seemed to good to miss. Our Co-ordinator decided to focus on the Solomon dolphin trade which continues unabated. She duly submitted an abstract and waited for the anticipated refusal.

Imagine her surprise when an email arrived whilst she was overseas saying the proposed paper would be accepted and Sue was invited to speak at the five day conference!

So on March 26, our Co-ordinator delivered a straight down the line paper on the dirty dolphin trade not just in the Solomons but also Japan. She asked the assembled audience, who represent the ethical and responsible zoo industry, to join forces with responsible environmental organizations in stopping the trade.

In spite of voicing AFA's complete opposition to allowing dolphins and sharks to be kept in captivity and exhibited, Sue had an overwhelming ovation at the end of her talk. Many people came up to her after the talk to express their support and to acknowledge her courage in standing up in front of such an audience. AFA was the only activist environmental organization invited. So our Co-ordinator was, in fact, the only activist at the five day conference.

What came out of the conference loud and strong was a very distinct impression that the zoo and aquarium industry needs to become allies of the animal rights, animal welfare and conservation movement. The industry is doing some amazing research and supporting in a big way programs like the Orangutan refuge in Indonesia.



It's pretty clear that things are changing in the zoo industry as well with cages disappearing, an emphasis on natural behavioural needs and animal welfare. Some of the research being undertaken in captive breeding programs, such as the Tasmanian Devil, may ensure that the species will survive in the wild. Animals are being bred and they are being released into the wild.

It was also pretty incredible to discover that in fact it was Trevor Long, Director of Operations at SeaWorld who was responsible for giving AFA a platform. Given that it wasn't all that long ago that AFA was organising demos in front of SeaWorld over the capturing of wild dolphins (which has long since stopped), and not so long ago over the keeping of sharks in captivity, his invitation was very much appreciated by AFA.

So too was Trevor's words of support for the work of the charity in his introduction as Chair of the session when Sue spoke.

The lesson is all this is that we need to sit down and talk to each other. As Sue says, there wasn't a single soul in the room who would support cruelty to dolphins. In many respects, zoos are the natural allies of the conservation movement as they are playing a critical role in

saving many species from extinction.

No, AFA does not support the keeping of wild animals in cages. We're not too happy when they're taken out of their natural environment. But given the horrendous impact of climate change on so many species, zoos may well turn out to be the keepers of species.

The charity will be asking

ARAZPA to express its concern over the dolphin trade in the Solomons to the relevant Federal Government Ministers. And we will work to continue a relationship and dialogue.

Not long ago, our Co-ordinator met with our colleague, Mark Berman from Earth Island Institute, in Brisbane. He had just come back from a brief visit to the Solomons with the news that the Government has given the go-ahead for the export of 100 dolphins a year.

As always, its impossible to get to see the dolphins in captivity – thugs prevent any inspections. We know dolphins are held in primitive pens just behind the Prime Minister's residence which backs to the sea.

The only way this dreadful trade is stopped will be when there is no demand from industry.

AFA wrote to Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, complaining about the lack of any action as promised by the Canberra bureaucrats. It took nearly three months to get a response which was pathetic.

AFA thinks it would be a great idea if Peter goes back to Midnight Oil and sings. He certainly is a disappointment as the Environment Minister.

WHALES AND THE IWC.

There's a dirty deal going on behind the scenes which will see Japan given the go-ahead to begin coastal whaling in return for a nominal reduction of whales killed in the Antarctic.

Unfortunately, the signs from the new Obama Administration are not convincing in terms of any dramatic shift in policy from the Bush years when we saw the US whale conservation policy all but vanish.

Nor is AFA convinced that the Rudd government will do anything of substance to stop Japan's obscene whaling. The issue is about trade. AFA

has been singing the same song for the last five years or so. The charity has consulted with some expert trade lawyers in Melbourne and the US. We expect to have some opinions before the IWC meeting.

The trouble is that no one wants to know. And on it goes.

**For the Animals,
Sue Arnold & Friends.**

An Amazing Cat Tale Sue's Story.

Lefty, the 16 year old Burmese who has been a family member since he was a small kitten, disappeared - like 3 months ago- and we all thought he was dead.



When my son Luke and his partner Becky moved from the farm to a house they had bought which required extensive renovations before they moved in, I volunteered to take Lefty back to my house. Becky was heavily pregnant and Lefty hated being shut in a room in the rented house – he was pretty distressed at moving from his home after living on the farm for the last 16 years.

He stayed with us for about three months. Obviously enjoying himself with the kittens, Lefty got major attention from everyone and lots of his favourite food. He was even allowed to sleep on the bed with the other cats and had special privileges befitting his age.

One night Luke came round and offered to take Lefty back to the newly not quite finished renovated house. By this time the baby had arrived and things were still pretty hectic. So I offered to keep Lefty for a few more weeks. We both remember that Lefty was in the kitchen listening intently to the conversation.

A couple of days later, Lefty disappeared. He just never came home for dinner, it was like he vanished into thin air. We searched high and low for him, for weeks, calling, walking far and wide desperate to find him.

About two months later, after I had been away for a couple of weeks, my husband told me he'd seen a yellow cat outside the garage. He called out to him thinking it was Lefty but the cat had run off.

About three months later, my son Matthew, Norm and I were on our

way out to dinner. It was dark but as we drove down the road, suddenly there's a yellow cat racing in front of the car, clearly frightened by the lights. I asked Norm to stop the car and I called out

'Lefty'- ' Lefty', the cat turned his head but kept running and disappeared down a drain on the side of the road.

No, its not Lefty says Matthew - echoed by Norm. that's a young cat blah blah. But I wasn't happy and that night in bed I vowed to feed the cat whoever he is. Next morning, on my way back from the beach I see the cat sunning himself on top of the drain. I stopped and the cat stayed long enough for me to realise it was Lefty. No mistake. I got out and called him but he wouldn't come and I couldn't see any sign of him in the drain which had a pretty narrow opening.

An old guy walking his dog walked past and said he has seen the cat last week up a nearby hill and thought it was a wild cat.

So Matthew and I raced back to the house and left food on the floor of the drain which we could just manage to reach with our arms. And water. We kept searching for Lefty but no luck. That afternoon we went down to put more food there and all the food we left has gone which was great.

I called Becky and asked her to tell Luke who is working 60 hours a week. We pondered how on earth we would ever get Lefty but Luke was confident Lefty will come to him. After all, it's his cat. So he arrived that evening, just before a

massive rainstorm and we went down to the drain, Becky, Luke and me and baby. Luke got down on his stomach and calls " Lefty Lefty" and we heard a faint miaow.. And wow, Luke manages to actually grab the cat and drag him out .

Oh my, the poor old cat is covered in ticks.. Paralysis ticks. We raced home, I called the emergency vet as it was the weekend ; we rushed Lefty to the vet hospital. Lefty was skin and bone. His fur dank, he was in terrible condition and we pulled about 30 ticks off him. The vet was confident that Lefty would live.

He put Lefty on a drip for 24 hours to rehydrate him and then started a diet of solid food. Lefty went home to Luke, Becky and the baby and began eating marathon meals. He was so weak he could barely stand but somehow managed to down around ten small meals a day. The vet said it would take months to recover from the ordeal.

His paws showed signs of considerable damage. But if he had tried to go back to the farm it would have been impossible because of the highway, bridges and other obstacles. We had no idea how he, a domestic house cat, had managed to survive as a feral all those months. He was never a bird killer and we think he must have lived off cockroaches, skinks and small lizards.

We're all gobsmacked by the miracle of finding him and the amazing set of circumstances that allowed me to find him. Norm and I drive down the road every day, day after day. We never saw a cat anywhere. Lefty survived ticks, heavy duty traffic day after day, starvation, thirst, fear, who knows what. It was pretty clear he wouldn't have survived another week in the wild, the timing was nothing short of extraordinary.

I got down on my knees and gave thanks to the Creator God and the angels for allowing me to find Lefty before it was too late and he died a lonely horrible death.

So please pray that my old brave pussy cat survives for a few years surrounded by love and lots of food. No one can explain why he left but he must have had his own reasons.

Lefty is now fully recovered. He likes staying outside all day even in the rain when he sits under a tree. He is very happy to be back with Luke and is extremely curious about the baby. We were all so puzzled by his disappearance we asked Allan Lunare, an Animal Communicator to speak to Lefty and see what our old cat had to say about why he wandered off.

Lefty Speaks...

Allan Lunare is an Animal Communicator based in Northern N.S.W.

It is often said that cats choose their owners rather than their owners choosing them. After speaking directly with Lefty as part of my work communicating with animals, a whole new window on 'who chooses who' is opened up.

Prior to Lefty's disappearance there was much disruption for him as his 'family' of Luke and Becky settled into a their new home. As there was a bit of work to do on the new house Luke thought it would be less disruptive for Lefty to stay with his mother for a little while. Lefty, however, had other plans and promptly took matters into his own paws!

When I asked Lefty about his decision to leave somewhere safe and comfortable he said simply, "I wasn't in the right place with the right people."

Of what occurred during his time being homeless he said, "I wandered. I journeyed."

When I asked him if he could tell me more about his time in the wilds he replied, "Only that this was my will. I could have willed to leave but this was not my agreement."

When he says 'leave' here I feel he is referring to leaving as in passing over. He is also giving us an insight not only into his determination but also to his loyalty. When referring to 'my agreement' Lefty is talking about his spiritual connection to Luke and his need to honor this.

He takes his role of guardian very seriously, as evidenced by the way he risked his life to find a way back to his 'right people'. Note that it was Luke who was able to pull Lefty from the drain once he was discovered there. The symbology here is very precise. They each help one another.

In retrospect Luke recalls a look that Lefty gave him while in his mother's kitchen that was definitely trying to tell him something. Maybe it was that no matter how hectic and stressful things may get, it is our relationships of love that matter the most.

Allan is available for both distant and personal readings with all types of animals.

He can be contacted on 0432 047 432 or via email at fishriddle@hotmail.com.