

ANIMAL ISSUES **DIGEST**

**THE FIGHT TO SAVE
THE ST. MAARTEN
MONKEYS**

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**NEW PUSH TO BAN MINK
FARMING TO PROTECT
PUBLIC HEALTH**

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PLUS

WELCOME HOME, GIZMO!

**BREAKTHROUGH IN WILDLIFE PROTECTION
IN WEST AFRICA**



BORN FREE USA

Keep Wildlife in the Wild®

WELCOME

Peaceful coexistence. These two words describe Born Free USA's highest aim. We strive for a world in which both humans and wild animals thrive – harmoniously sharing our lands and waters. The initiatives that we take on in service to that north star vision.

In this edition, you will read about our efforts to stop the cull of vervet monkeys on the island of St. Maarten, offering non-lethal solutions that will preserve the lives of the monkeys while also reducing their impact on the island's human residents and livelihoods (cover story). We're also sharing news from our activities in West Africa (pages 8 and 9) to fight wildlife trafficking on a regional level – and on

a larger scale, address the extinction crisis. You'll also meet Gizmo (page 5), a monkey who is a victim of the wildlife trade, who will find healing, and eventually, a more peaceful life, at our primate sanctuary.

You are here with us, learning and leading alongside us towards that coexistent future. Every petition that you sign, article that you read, and gift that you give helps drive the change we all seek. As you look to the holidays, consider gifting a symbolic adoption or joining our Women for Wildlife program.

Together, we can slow the extinction crisis through peaceful coexistence, making a difference in the lives of



humans and a world of difference in the lives of our wild neighbors.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Angela Grimes
Chief Executive Officer
Born Free USA

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Animal Issues Digest is published twice per year by Born Free USA to inform and educate our readers about major wildlife issues. Copyright © 2023 by Born Free USA. Complimentary copy available on request. For reprints, and all editorial correspondence, please write to *Animal Issues Digest* editor at info@bornfreeusa.org. To get the latest information on wildlife issues and what you can do to help imperiled wild animals, become a member of Wildlife Alert Team at bornfreeusa.org/newsletters.

We work to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and are able to live their lives according to their needs. We seek to have a positive impact on animals in the wild and protect their ecosystems in perpetuity, for their own intrinsic value and for the critical roles they play within the natural world.

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THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE ST. MAARTEN MONKEYS

In February this year, Born Free USA became aware of news reports of a planned cull of green monkeys on the Dutch island territory of St. Maarten in the Caribbean. While the monkeys are non-native to the island, they were introduced through no fault of their own – likely via import for the pet trade or tourism – and have made their home there for at least 50 years. As often happens when wildlife and humans live in shared environments, human-wildlife conflict can threaten both human and animal communities in different ways. According to reports, farmers on St. Maarten were having crops destroyed by the monkeys and so a local nonprofit was provided with funding from the government to find a solution. Following a deeply flawed impact study, carried out by the local nonprofit, which demonstrated an almost complete lack of understanding of green monkey biology and behavior, it was decided that killing the monkeys was the best way forward.

One of the rallying calls of the nonprofit leading the cull campaign was that the monkey population was set to double within a year – a false claim, and one which would ignite greater concern for local residents who were already worried that numbers were too high. In fact, this level of growth is impossible when taking into account inter-birth intervals, number of monkeys at any one time of breeding age, infant mortality, mate selection, failed pregnancies, and deaths of other

members of the troop from disease, injury, or old age. If the population were capable of doubling year-on-year, the island would currently be home to potentially billions of monkeys if we are to assume a single pair of monkeys as the founding population 50 years ago. In short, the study and subsequent plan were based on false information.

A coalition of 75 animal welfare and primate experts – comprising individuals and organizations – reached out to the St. Maarten government to offer assistance in designing and developing a humane

sterilization program to avoid the planned killing. Unfortunately, this offer went unanswered, and reports began to come back to us that the killing had begun. We continued to seek contact with the government and the nonprofit responsible for the culling plan but were stonewalled by both. We launched a public petition in an attempt to draw attention to the issue and encourage engagement, but still, we were ignored.

continued on page 10



NEW PUSH TO BAN MINK FARMING TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

In June, we saw the long-awaited introduction of the Mink VIRUS Act by Congressman Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13) in the House of Representatives. The bill, if implemented, would end the farming of mink for their fur across the nation, thus protecting animal welfare and human health. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, mink farms were incubation sites for the virus, with evidence of COVID passing from mink to humans, and vice versa. This resulted in some countries taking swift action to ban, or promise to ban, mink farming in the interests of curbing the spread of COVID. The U.S. was not one of those countries, and to date, has taken no action to restrict or prohibit the operation of mink farms, despite known risks and the fur industry's history of cruel treatment of animals in the name of outdated fashion trends.

In addition to COVID transmission, reports over the last year have shown that the highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) has mutated and spread to mink on fur farms in Spain, with health experts warning we may be on the brink of a new pandemic. Rep. Espaillat's bill would remove the danger posed by mink farming by shutting down the industry in the United States.

The bill includes a buy-out program for current mink farmers to ensure that livelihoods are protected. The buy-out would be contingent on the farmers moving away from fur farming and branching into different industries. In this way, this bill is not only beneficial to the animals and the health of the wider population, but also provides opportunities for those still clinging onto this dying

practice, which is falling in popularity and profits every year.

In the days prior to writing, Sweden has proposed a similar bill to ban fur farming and buy out existing farmers. We hope that our efforts here in the U.S. and those around the world signal an end to the suffering of mink in fur farms once and for all.

You can support the campaign by writing to your representative and asking them to co-sponsor the bill at bit.ly/minkvirusacthouseaction.

TO DATE, THE U.S. HAS TAKEN NO ACTION TO RESTRICT OR PROHIBIT THE OPERATION OF MINK FARMS, DESPITE KNOWN RISKS AND THE FUR INDUSTRY'S HISTORY OF CRUEL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN THE NAME OF OUTDATED FASHION TRENDS.



WELCOME HOME, GIZMO!

Gizmo, a vervet monkey kept as a pet in Wisconsin, got a new life with us this summer. Gizmo had been kept as a pet since he was a baby, and now an adolescent of seven years old, his aggression was becoming too much to handle. The final straw, which his former owner describes as “the worst day of her life,” was when Gizmo attacked a family member, resulting in the need for hospitalization and 18 stitches to the man’s face and head. This incident helped Gizmo’s owner understand that her home was not the right place for Gizmo and she contacted Born Free USA asking us to provide suitable lifetime home for him. We were happy to oblige.

And so, on the morning of August 13, Gizmo and our Programs Director, Liz, embarked on a 1,400 mile, 24-hour journey to bring Gizmo to his forever home at our primate sanctuary. Following a health check, which showed Gizmo to be in fine health, he was moved into a spacious enclosure adjoining those where other vervets live. This was likely the first time he had seen another vervet monkey

afternoons as the Texas sun reached its peak, when he would relax in his cool sleeping box or sit under his mister and enjoy the sensation of water sprinkling on his fur.

Now out of his quarantine period, we are introducing Gizmo to the other monkeys – a slow process that will be led by his comfort levels and reactions to his new monkey friends. In time, we hope that all of our resident vervets – currently 10 individuals – will be able to live together in one of our large open top enclosures. We look forward to updating you on Gizmo’s progress as time goes on.



since he was taken from his mother as a baby. He showed great interest in the other monkeys and our caregivers, and he quickly settled into a routine of active mornings climbing, exploring, and playing in his new home, and quieter



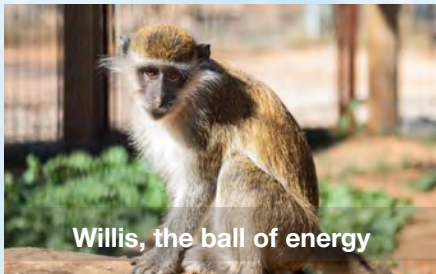
SHOW YOU CARE WITH

Give your loved ones a gift that really makes a difference this holiday season!

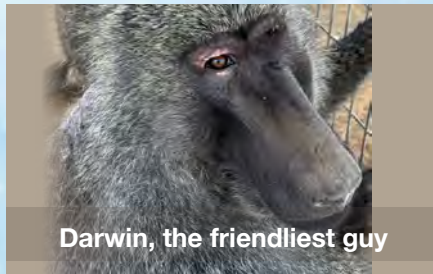


There are so many special monkeys at the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary who need your support. For only \$1 per week (\$52 per year), you can help provide nutritious food, shelter, toys, loving care, and veterinary treatment to monkeys who have a second chance because of you. Monkey adoption packages come with a stunning photo of your adopted monkey along with his or her biography, a personalized certificate of adoption, and a huggable plush toy.

Make a Difference for A Rescued Monkey...



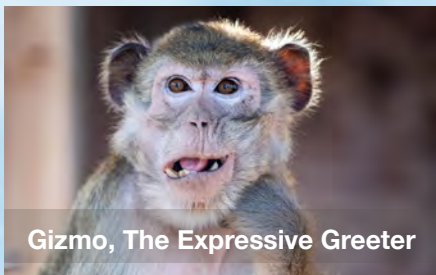
Willis, the ball of energy



Darwin, the friendliest guy



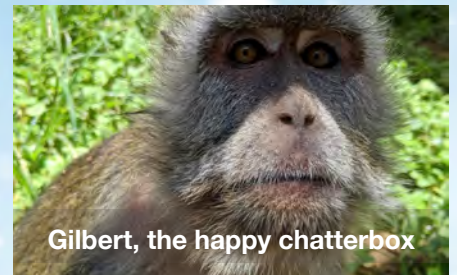
Kiki, Miss Independent



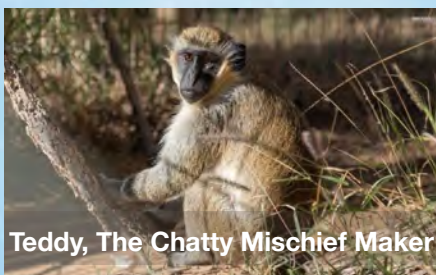
Gizmo, The Expressive Greeter



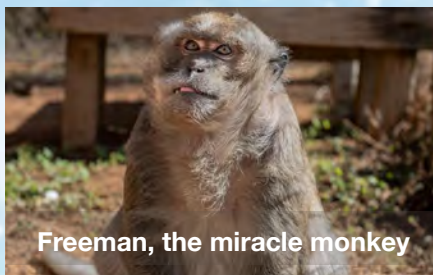
Billie, The Gentle foodie



Gilbert, the happy chatterbox



Teddy, The Chatty Mischief Maker



Freeman, the miracle monkey



Dawkins, the aloof giant

Go to bornfreeusa.org/adopt

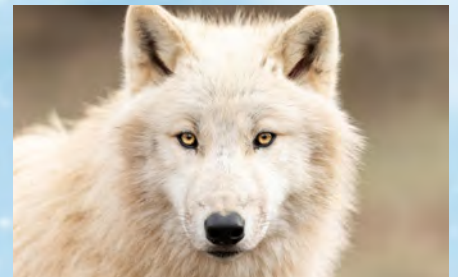
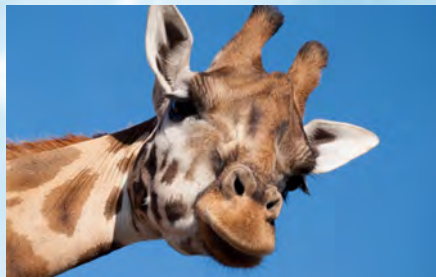
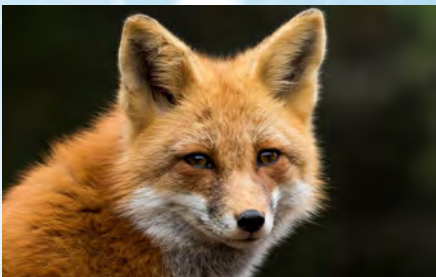
AN ADOPTION GIFT!

Give a gift that gives back!

With our symbolic wildlife adoptions, rather than sponsoring an individual animal, you will be making a difference for an entire species! For just \$1 per week (\$52 per year), you can support Born Free USA's work to protect your or a loved one's favorite animal. Choose from nine species of wildlife who are currently in need of protection or adopt them all! Wildlife adoption packages come with a photo of your chosen species in the wild, a fun factsheet, a personalized certificate of adoption, and an adorable plush toy.



Keep Wildlife in the Wild.



Or scan the QR code



BREAKTHROUGH IN WILDLIFE PROTECTION IN WEST AFRICA

Pervasive and escalating illegal trade in wild animals and plants is threatening the long-term survival of thousands of species globally. With vital ecosystems and the well-being of millions at stake, wildlife crime has emerged as the fourth largest illegal trade globally, posing a significant threat to economic security.

In the fight against this detrimental trend, Born Free USA has been providing technical expertise to West African countries in their fight against wildlife crime for seven years. By focusing on the development and enhancement of policies and laws, Born Free ensures that combating wildlife crime is embedded into national priorities at the highest levels.

At the heart of this work, Born Free helped create and implement National Wildlife Crime Strategies, a mandatory component under the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime. As a trusted convener, Born Free has so far facilitated needs assessment workshops in eight of the 15 countries of West Africa (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Niger, Togo, Gambia, and Guinea). These workshops create the basis for each country to define their national vision and objectives for their strategies.

Celebrating a significant milestone, Born Free USA is thrilled to announce that Niger has successfully validated its National Wildlife Crime Strategy this year. Joining Nigeria, which achieved this feat in 2022, Niger becomes one of the pioneering nations in the region taking crucial steps towards the comprehensive eradication of wildlife crime in West Africa.

The validation of strategies is a beacon of hope for the region of West Africa, home to precious flora and fauna on the brink of extinction. Born Free USA thanks the West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) Project and the Enhancing Wildlife Law Enforcement Capacity in West Africa program of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) for their vital financial and technical support that make this regional intervention possible

“By 2030, wildlife crime and associated threats, as well as the spread of zoonoses, are significantly reduced in Niger, in order to improve biodiversity conservation for the well-being and socio-economic development of populations.”

— The vision of the Niger National Wildlife Crime Strategy.



SUPPORTING WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WILDLIFE CRIME

Born Free USA is a key partner to all 15 West African countries in implementing the mandatory regional West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime. As a critical first step, Born Free is training newly established Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Forces in the countries that have established them.

Training these task forces marks the initial crucial stride towards enhancing their capability to combat mass extinction and prevent the exploitation of animals within one of the world's most biodiverse regions. In August 2023, Born Free USA was pleased to facilitate the first Basic Intelligence Training in Abuja, Nigeria. The training provided participants from Ghana and Nigeria with skills such as:

- How to source and generate intelligence;
- How to process, collate, analyze, and disseminate intelligence;
- Understanding data security and criminal profiling techniques.

This was the first of many trainings that these task forces across West Africa will receive. By the end of the training program, they will be fully equipped to tackle the ruthless criminals determined to destroy West Africa's wildlife and natural resources with impunity.

Inter-Regional Meeting

From July 10-14, 2023, Born Free USA facilitated an inter-regional meeting in Ivory Coast on strengthening wildlife law enforcement cooperation between West and Central Africa.

The meeting provided a forum for criminal investigators and case managers from Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Cameroon to discuss transnational wildlife trafficking intelligence, challenges, and best

Born Free USA is an implementing partner for the following two programs:

- The Enhancing Wildlife Law Enforcement Capacity in West Africa program of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)
- The USAID West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) program

practices. The meeting also identified ways to enhance regional cooperation to combat wildlife crime. Born Free USA was very pleased to learn that participants felt this meeting was an essential step in the right direction towards ensuring nations in West and Central Africa can collaborate on future inter-regional initiatives to combat wildlife crime. We will keep you posted on progress!



St. Maarten Monkey Cover Story (Continued)

Finally, thanks to the hard work of colleagues at the Dania Beach Vervet Project, we were able to secure a meeting with a local agricultural group, made up of those farmers concerned about the monkeys. This meeting


will be carried out in the coming weeks from the time of writing and we sincerely hope that this will be the first step towards a dialogue to save the monkeys' lives. We remain at the ready to provide expertise and direct support to the St. Maarten government in collaboration for a humane solution to the monkey problem. Our proposal includes the carrying out of a meaningful impact assessment as a first step, followed by the development and execution of the most effective and humane plan possible to that will allow the monkeys and humans of St. Maarten peacefully coexist.

In addition to the St. Maarten monkeys, we received news in early September that Antigua, another Caribbean country, was planning its own monkey cull for similar reasons cited by St. Maarten. We plan to reach out to the Antiguan authorities to offer similar support in halting the cull and discussing humane alternatives. In the meantime, you can support the campaign by signing our petition to the government of St. Maarten, asking them to engage with us in dialogue in the interests of both monkey and human residents of the island.



OUR PROPOSAL INCLUDES THE CARRYING OUT OF A MEANINGFUL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AS A FIRST STEP, FOLLOWED BY THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND HUMANE PLAN POSSIBLE.

GIVE THE GIFT OF COMPASSION



Donate today to conserve wildlife
and care for animals in need.

Visit bornfreeusa.org/donate
or use the attached envelope.

COMING SOON: DOCUMENTARY ON THE BRUTAL IMPACT OF TRAPPING



Bruce the Great Pyrenees lost his leg to a trap in 2023.

Born Free USA has been campaigning against trapping for decades by fighting for federal anti-trapping legislation, monitoring nation-wide trapping incidents with our Trapping Incidents Database, conducting under-cover investigations on the trapping lines, and publishing reports summarizing the cruelty associated with these indiscriminate devices.

To increase awareness and support for The Refuge from Cruel Trapping

Act, a bill recently reintroduced to Congress that would protect thousands of animals from being trapped within our National Wildlife Refuge System, we are creating a short documentary that intertwines sobering trapping statistics with the touching stories of non-target animals (told through their rescuers and owners), who experienced harrowing encounters with traps; in some cases, detailing accounts of those who narrowly escaped death.

Our documentary will feature voices from various backgrounds, including wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, companion animal ownership, veterinary medicine, recipients from Born Free USA's own Trapping Victims' Fund, and even those previously involved in the trapping industry themselves. Stay tuned for the upcoming release of our trapping victims documentary, which will shed light on this antiquated, unregulated, and inhumane practice!

OCEANS AWAY FROM HOME: FIGHTING FOR FISH

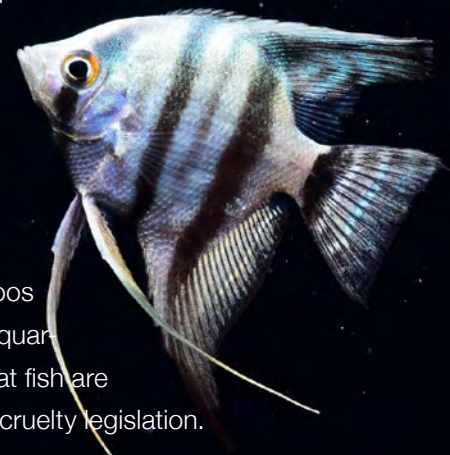
Our latest report, *Oceans Away from Home: The Suffering of Fish in Captivity*, explores the widespread, but seldom acknowledged, conservation and welfare issues associated with keeping fish in captivity.

Using evidence from investigations at three popular U.S. aquariums, the report delves into the depletion of wild fish populations to feed the demand for the private fish trade; analyzes the shortcomings of zoos in protecting fish welfare and conservation; and argues for more comprehensive protection of the thousands of fish species that fall victim to the private fish trade every day.

Our report highlights the particularly harmful practice of touch tanks, which operate outside of existing animal welfare legal and regulatory protections. Touch tanks pose significant risks to human and animal health and safety due

to the possibility of zoonotic disease transmission and disregard for high stress levels caused by repeated physical interactions with humans, which allow little to no opportunity for the fish to escape and increase the likelihood of animal susceptibility to injury and disease.

To prevent irreversible wild population depletion and end the cycle of unnecessary suffering for fish in captivity, we urge zoos to immediately halt the wild capture of fish from their natural habitats, we ask zoos to ban touch tanks from aquariums, and we advocate that fish are included in federal animal cruelty legislation.



To become directly involved in our efforts to end the suffering of fish in captivity, pledge to say “no” to visiting aquariums and sign our petition bit.ly/azatouchtanks to the AZA to ban touch tanks in their facilities

ESA LISTING NEEDED TO PROTECT MACAQUE SPECIES FROM THE LABORATORY TRADE

A petition penned by scientists at PETA and supported by Born Free USA is calling upon the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the long-tailed and pig-tailed macaque under the Endangered Species Act in a bid to protect these monkeys from extraction from the wild for use in U.S. laboratories.

The petition follows in the wake of the ongoing investigation surrounding 1,200 juvenile long-tailed macaques allegedly imported illegally into the U.S. by laboratory giant, Charles River Laboratories. Allegations suggest that Cambodian officials may have falsified documents, claiming that the monkeys were captive bred, when in fact they were taken from their life in the wild. Born Free has

offered to work with government officials to try and provide sanctuary to as many of the monkeys as possible, dependent on the availability of funding for their lifetime care. In the meantime, it is vital that we implement the strongest legal protections possible for these vulnerable animals. The long-tailed macaque was recently listed as endangered by conservation body, IUCN, so in the interests of species conservation and the welfare of individual monkeys, the success of this petition is paramount.

Please add your name to our petition today to demand that the USFWS take immediate action to protect these vulnerable monkeys at bit.ly/macaquepetition.



Get animal news, actions, victories, and more straight to your email inbox as a member of Born Free USA's Wildlife Alert Team! Join today at bornfreeusa.org/newsletters

MONKEY RESCUE UPDATE: LYLA!

Lyla was rescued back in February this year from one of the worst situations our team has seen. Housed for seven years in a tiny, filthy, dog crate, the monkey we met on the day we brought her home was terrified and showing disturbing stereotypical behaviors indicative of extreme stress.

In the months that followed, we saw little Lyla grow in confidence and her health improve as she put weight on her skinny frame, gained healthy color in her face, and received the medication for her previously undiagnosed heart condition. We have made gentle attempts to introduce her to other monkeys, but have not yet found quite the right fit.



In the meantime, she has built strong bonds with some of her caregivers – showing strong preferences for some people, who she will “defend” from others. If anyone comes too close to her favorite human friends, Lyla will bark at them loudly and flap her ears in anger!

We look forward to seeing Lyla lose her interest in people as she learns to truly bond with other monkeys in the coming months.

A TRIBUTE TO BROOK ASHLEY



We thank Brook Ashley for her many years of service on the Born Free USA Board of Directors. Her leadership has helped make a more compassionate world for wild animals!

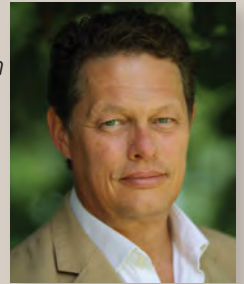
“Brook’s carefully considered advice and great experience will be greatly missed, as will her loyalty and support over



so many years. But beyond that, it is her personal compassion and deep interest in wild creatures and wild places that will stay in my memory. I have been lucky enough to know her for more than 60 years and have always admired her selfless and generous approach to life in all its forms. Thank you with all my heart for your dedication and friendship.”

— Dame Virginia McKenna,
Born Free Co-Founder.

“Brook is exactly the kind of person that the Board of a non-profit organization like Born Free USA needs. Selfless,



considerate, compassionate – not only towards the animals who have not voice, but to the people who face a relentless uphill battle to create a kinder world for all. Quiet, softly spoken, but full of determination and gentle strength, Brook made her mark.”

— Will Travers OBE, Born Free USA
Co-Founder and Board Member.

CREATE A LASTING IMPACT

WITH ELSA'S LEGACY CIRCLE

The story of Born Free is a powerful one of hope and freedom; one that began with the captivating story of Elsa the lioness in Africa and has since evolved into a force for animals in need right here in the United States. Elsa's image serves as a poignant reminder that every individual on this planet is unique, and that each person, including yourself, plays a pivotal role in contributing to and shaping the future of wildlife conservation.

Your support matters, and together, we have the power to create a brighter future for both wild animals and the rescued monkeys that call our sanctuary home. We invite you to consider including Born Free USA in your will or estate plan. Your contribution and legacy will positively impact the individual lives of wild animals for years to come.

Born Free USA offers complimentary resources online to help you plan your legacy through our partnership with FreeWill. To learn more visit bornfreeusa.org/planned-giving. If you would like to receive more information or have questions, please contact Wendy Coonrod at wendy@bornfreeusa.org.



Elsa's Legacy Circle Spotlight: Elaine Livesey-Fassel

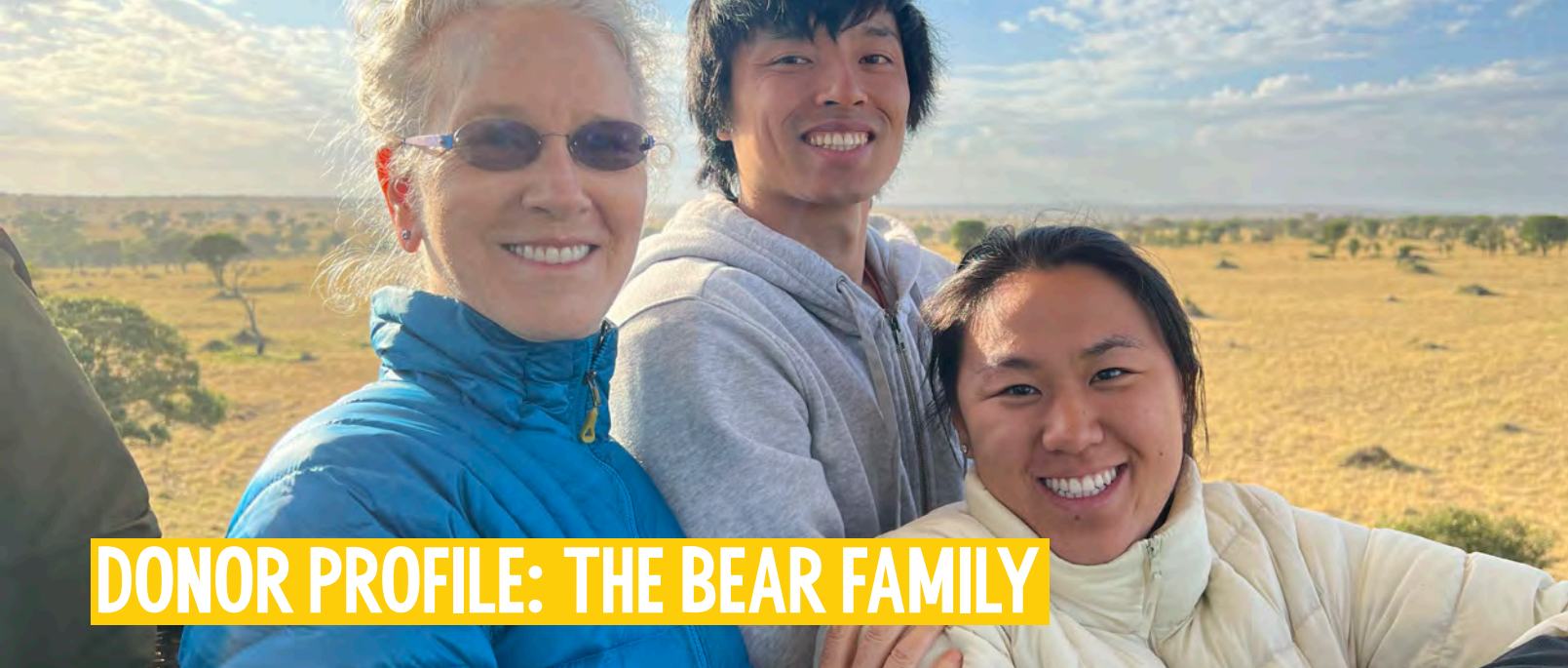
"This animal advocate has been active for some 50 years and is proud to belong to several worthy organizations that do exemplary work to bring the concerns of animals domestic and wild to public consciousness. Unless the general public is informed of the great harms our species is doing to the various eco-systems of land, sea, and air, and the many animals whose habitats in which they exist, how can we ever expect to make those who exploit and extract to the expense of those habitats change those harmful behaviors?"

Born Free is one such remarkable group, which casts light on the darkness of wild animals such as lions, tigers, and many more who are currently stressed to the breaking point as corporations attempt to take over their habitats for commercial product use. Many of these exotic creatures are captured for exploitation in circus and zoo environments and are forced into unnatural behaviors for public exhibition, live exceedingly stressful lives, and die deprived of all the freedoms to which they should have been born.

Born Free is also attempting to end the trophy hunting of exotic animals, such as elephants, rhinos, lions, et al., Born Free investigates these harmful situations and institutions and supports releasing these captives from them and finding them sanctuary. This is challenging work I highly support and have since I first learned of it."

— Elaine Livesey-Fassel, Elsa's Legacy Circle Supporter





DONOR PROFILE: THE BEAR FAMILY

Some stories are too good not to share. How the Bear family came to partner with Born Free USA – and what our work together means to all of us – is one such tale.

It all began in April 2019, when Eric Bear opened his email one morning to find a very unexpected message from Dr. Liz Tyson, Director of Born Free USA’s primate sanctuary. The message read:

Dear Mr. Bear and All at MONKEYmedia,

I hope you don’t mind me reaching out out of the blue, but I came across MONKEYmedia in some internet research and noticed that you are based in Austin, TX. I don’t know if you know this but the largest monkey sanctuary in the United States is

based just down the road from you, in between San Antonio and Laredo. I know a lot of your work considers interaction so I wanted to say “hi” from one group of monkeys to another (!) and see if you might be interested in making a connection with us?

Eric, who was born in a year of the monkey and has a deep affinity with primates, was intrigued. Not only was the company he and his partner, Janna, co-founded in 1994 named after our closest cousins, but Eric has incorporated quadruped movement practice into his homework as an actor in film and television. Think *Planet of the Apes*. He literally ambles around hike and bike trails on all fours. And, because of human actors like Eric using performance capture technology, animals no longer need to be exploited to make emotionally compelling movies.



Janna and Eric accepted Dr. Tyson’s invitation and a partnership was born. Through the years, the whole family got involved. With their grown children, Steven and Pema, the four Bears have all given time and treasure to help care for the hundreds of monkeys in our protection.

Continue reading about how the Bear family has partnered with Born Free USA at bit.ly/bearfamilydonorprofile.

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OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP WILDLIFE

You can make a positive impact for wildlife and the monkeys at our primate sanctuary when you join Women for Wildlife. Your membership donation of \$500 or more will support specific projects to help wildlife and the monkeys at our sanctuary.

If you're ready to join or would like to gift a membership to someone special in your life, please visit bornfreeusa.org/womenforwildlife. You may also include your donation in the enclosed envelope with this magazine. Please remember to include "Women for Wildlife" in the check memo.

"Joining Women for Wildlife has enabled me to contribute to a cause I love in a meaningful way. As a busy professional with limited vacation time, I am not able to volunteer or provide hands-on help. I searched for opportunities that were more than just anonymously donating money. With Women for Wildlife, I've met the team and I know they value me and my input. This is a real chance to see the results of your contribution to better the lives of animals."

- Erika Agnew

