Speakers

Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) presents

2022 INTERNATIONAL CAPTIVE WILDLIFE CONFERENCE
Friday-Saturday
November 11-12
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
Carson Barylak, J.D.  
*Campaigns Manager,  
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)*

When Carson was six years old, a neighborhood cat in need of a home adopted her family, instantly becoming a loyal companion — and she has had a soft spot for felines ever since. Little did she know that befriending that tiny stray would ultimately lead her to advocate for and protect some of the world’s largest wild cats and the places they call home. Carson has considerable experience with legislative and regulatory issues affecting wildlife management at the state and federal level. Prior to joining IFAW, she held positions at national and international conservation organizations including the Animal Welfare Institute and Natural Resources Defense Council. Her background in science, understanding of the law, and advocacy experience equipped her to manage IFAW campaigns focused on addressing captive wildlife trade, promoting human-wildlife coexistence, and advancing protections for imperiled species. Carson works to advance IFAW’s U.S. Big Cats policy campaign and spearheads wildlife policy efforts related to trapping and predator control reform. She holds a J.D., B.S. (environmental science) and B.A (chemistry) from Ohio State University, where she was active in advancing sustainability policies.

Sarah Blaine  
*Co-Founder and CEO, Mahouts Elephant Foundation*

Sarah Blaine has been working for over a decade to reform the elephant tourism industry, and is an industry pioneer in developing transformative, community driven solutions for elephants and mahouts. She is passionate about supporting this work with research that can inform future best practices and can be widely communicated. Working in a complex landscape of forests, communities and both wild and captive elephants she has an impeccable reputation of ethical partnerships. Sarah works leading the team on the ground and internationally with industry stakeholders. Her expertise provides valuable insight into the challenges of non-profit management, especially how to lead diverse teams in creating lasting change on the ground for elephants and communities.

Cydnee Bence, J.D.  
*Legal Fellow, Animal Law Division, PETA Foundation*

Cydnee’s journey with animal rights began when she started volunteering with PETA2 as a high-schooler in northern Michigan. She carried this passion into college where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography and Planning, focusing on building plant-based, sustainable food systems. She also received a B.A. in Philosophy and a minor in Legal Studies, focusing on ethics. After college, she moved to Vermont to attend Vermont Law School where she received her J.D., as well as a master’s degree in Environmental Law and Policy, and an LLM in Food and Agriculture, focusing on the regulation of animals used in agriculture, biotechnology, and consumer protection. She now shares her Vermont home with two companion cats, Marty and Ruthie. In her free time, she enjoys painting, cooking new vegan recipes, and playing with her cats.

Scott Blais  
*CEO and Co-founder, Global Sanctuary for Elephants*

Scott Blais, the CEO and co-founder of Global Sanctuary for Elephants, carries a lifetime of experience working for captive elephants. He is an expert in natural habitat elephant sanctuary development and the co-founder of two elephant sanctuaries: the largest in North America – The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, and the only sanctuary for elephants in South America – Elephant Sanctuary Brazil. His ground-breaking work has served to transform how the world views the lives of captive elephants.

Danielle Carnahan, M.S.  
*Independent Researcher*

Danielle Carnahan is an independent Asian elephant researcher with a primary focus on Nepal’s captive elephant population. While completing her master’s degree in conservation medicine from Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, her thesis evaluated complex post-traumatic stress disorder in captive Thai elephants. This project helped shape Danielle’s current research focus on the welfare of bull elephants being managed in unprotected contact environments. Outside of fieldwork, Danielle spends
time spreading awareness on social media and her website, The Call to Conserve, about conscious consumerism in captive wildlife tourism. Danielle is passionate about breaking down the complexities of animals in tourism into exposés and short videos to make the information more widely accessible. She hopes this, paired with her continued research in the field, can contribute to a changing dynamic within captive elephant care in Asia.

Nikita Dhawan  
*Founder, Youth for Animals*  
Nikita Dhawan is a high school student at the American Embassy School in New Delhi. She has always been passionate about animal rights and environmental conservation and is the founder of an animal welfare initiative called “Youth for Animals.” Nikita is leading the organization’s flagship campaign #FreeShankarDelhiZoo to free Shankar, an African elephant languishing in the Delhi Zoo, from his life in solitary captivity. Nikita has filed a legal petition in the Delhi High Court for Shankar’s freedom and has received over 200,000 signatures for her online petition. The campaign has been covered extensively by Indian and International media, including BBC, ABC News, Newsweek, Financial Times, Hindustan Times, Times of India, Indian Express etc. Nikita is a recipient of the prestigious Diana Award and the Youth Award from the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organization (FIAPO). Nikita is also a Youth Ambassador for Born Free Foundation and Earthday.Org and a member of IUCN’s Commission on Education and Communication (CEC).

Chris Draper, Ph.D.  
*COO, Performing Animal Welfare Society*  
Chris Draper is the chief operating officer for PAWS. He has more than 20 years’ extensive and globally unique experience in the fields of animal welfare science, advocacy, and the management of wild animal sanctuaries. He previously served as Head of Animal Welfare & Captivity at the Born Free Foundation, an international animal welfare and conservation organization, where he was responsible for its captive animal research and advocacy program and its network of animal sanctuaries. He studied zoology and primatology at University College London and later completed a Doctorate at the University of Bristol focused on the implementation of legislation and assessment of animal welfare in zoos. Chris sits on the UK’s Government-advisory Zoos Expert Committee, the UK’s Wild Animal Welfare Committee, and the Accreditation Committee for the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries.
Kate Dylewsky, M.A.
Senior Policy Advisor, Animal Welfare Institute
Kate Dylewsky is the Senior Policy Advisor at the Animal Welfare Institute. She previously worked at Born Free USA, and for the past nine years has lobbied at the federal and state levels on issues pertaining to wildlife. Since joining AWI, she has been closely involved with efforts to protect the Endangered Species Act from Congressional and regulatory assaults, led coalitions advocating for federal bills to protect wild animals in captivity, and partnered with organizations across the country to push state legislation addressing performing exotic animals, wildlife trafficking, and trapping, among other issues. Kate holds a BA from Georgetown University and a Master of Public Administration from American University, and lives in Washington, DC, with her three cats.

Toni Frohoff, Ph.D.
Founder, TerraMar Research
Toni Frohoff is a wildlife behavioral biologist/ethologist and founder of TerraMar Research. She has distinctive research expertise in assessing stress and wellbeing in cetaceans and elephants, both in captivity and in the wild. This includes studying – and addressing – the behavioral, psychological, and societal/cultural health of cetaceans and elephants, often with an emphasis on the impacts of their interaction with humans. As part of her advocacy for elephants, in 2015 she began publicly demonstrating their similarities with orcas, and the plight of both in captivity (“Elephants as “Blackfish Behind Bars”) which she continues with publications in progress. Toni also continues her research on belugas, whales, and orcas who interact with humans and advises on the management of human activity that may impact them. In addition to scientific journals, Toni has co-authored two University-Press books and is working on a third. She has contributed to many others; most recently, a chapter on human-elephant interactions for Routledge University Press. She continues to consult for a variety of private, government, and nonprofit organizations. Toni’s work has contributed to the revision and implementation of management and legislation protecting animals in captivity and in the wild in more than a dozen countries.

Jackie Gai, DVM
Director of Veterinary Services, Performing Animal Welfare Society
Dr. Jackie Gai has been PAWS’ Director of Veterinary Services for the past 21 years, providing expert care with compassion for all of the animals who live at PAWS sanctuaries. Dr. Gai has 33 years of experience caring for a variety of species including elephants, large carnivores, bears, primates, marine mammals, birds, and reptiles in a wide range of settings. She enjoys working with veterinary students, cultivating empathy and a desire to be of service to animals in need. With a strong commitment to community service, Dr. Gai has served on several advisory committees to improve animal welfare. As a member of two veterinary disaster response teams, she has volunteered to help animals harmed by oil spills and wildfires. Dr. Gai is an integral member of PAWS’ management and animal care team, and is forever grateful to PAWS Co-founders Pat Derby and Ed Stewart for opening a much-needed door to enlightenment regarding wild animals in captivity.

Diana Goodrich, M.S.
Co-Director, Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest; Public Affairs Committee Chair, North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA)
Diana Goodrich began a career focused on captive chimpanzees at Central Washington University. There she worked with Washoe Chimpanzee and her family while earning a master’s degree in psychology. She spent three years as a caregiver and executive assistant for the Fauna Foundation, a sanctuary in Canada for chimpanzees and other animals. After earning a second master’s degree in Animals and Public Policy from Tufts University, she held the position of outreach coordinator for Tribe of Heart, a nonprofit animal advocacy-focused film production company. She has been with Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest (CSNW) since 2008, shortly before the first group of chimpanzees arrived. In addition to overseeing fundraising and communications as the Co-Director at CSNW, Diana serves as the public affairs committee chairperson for the North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) and has been an active member on the fundraising committee for the Chimpanzees in Need Campaign that was formed to find homes and raise funds for 42 chimpanzees who remained at California’s Wildlife Waystation when its closure was announced.
Bob Jacobs, Ph.D.
Professor of Neuroscience,
Colorado College
Bob Jacobs received his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics at UCLA, where he worked with John Schumann and Arnold B. Scheibel. He has lived for extended periods of time in Germany, Japan, and China. He joined Colorado College in 1993 and developed the Neuroscience major in 1996. His research interests include language acquisition, non-human animal communication, cognitive neuroethology, and comparative neuroanatomy. In the last decade, he has been conducting collaborative quantitative neuromorphological research on several more exotic mammalian species, including African elephant, humpback whale, hippopotamus, giraffe, manatee, cheetah, clouded leopard, lion, zebra, and Siberian tiger. Bob was the first researcher to document the morphology of neurons in the cerebral cortex of many of these species. He was also recently featured in the National Geographic documentary, *Mind of a Giant*, which examined the neurocognitive abilities of elephants. Last year, he and several colleagues published a major review paper entitled “Putative neural consequences of captivity for elephants and cetaceans,” which underscored the negative effects of captivity on the brain.

Steve Koyle
Founder, President and CEO, Elephant Care Unchained
Stephen Koyle has spent more than 35 years caring for animals. He has spent the last 21 years specializing in elephant care. Steve has become a globally recognized elephant care professional and very well respected for his knowledge of target training using positive reinforcement, designing facilities that support elephant health and specializing in proper elephant footcare. In July 2016, he established the nonprofit organization Elephant Care Unchained, a 501c3 organization dedicated to eliminating cruelty and improving elephant welfare in their native countries. Since then, Steve has helped elephants in six countries, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. His passion and work ethic have driven him to form Elephant Care Unchained. Steve’s original conception of Elephant Care Unchained was born in early 2013, when he made his first trip to India as a skilled volunteer helping an organization in northern India. It was there that he learned about the cruel treatment of elephants in their native countries. The brutality that elephants endure daily was something Steve felt compelled to address. It was after this eye-opening experience Steve decided to commit his life to improving elephants lives globally.

Carrie LeBlanc, M.A.
Founder and Executive Director,
CompassionWorks International
As the Founder and Executive Director of CompassionWorks International, Carrie works diligently to improve and enhance the techniques and strategies in the animal advocacy movement. Her leadership has led to the demise of several circuses and exotic animal performances and has helped to change hearts and minds with regard to issues of exotic and domestic animal abuse including trophy hunting and the rodeo. Prior to founding CWI, Carrie worked with many notable organizations including Mercy For Animals, Compassion Over Killing, and FARM. Carrie holds a bachelor’s degree in cultural anthropology and a master’s degree in art history, both from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and is a published art historian. She currently lives in Henderson, Nevada where she enjoys spending time with her husband and her canine companion, Bambi.

Keith Lindsay, Ph.D.
Collaborating Researcher,
Amboseli Trust for Elephants and Amboseli Elephant Research Project
Keith Lindsay is a Canadian-British conservation biologist and environmental consultant based in Oxford, UK, with some 45 years of professional experience. His expertise includes biodiversity research and conservation, community-based natural resource management, and policy/institutional analysis in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Keith’s life-long involvement with elephants began in 1977 with the Amboseli Elephant Research Project (AERP) in southern Kenya, which is now in its 50th year. He undertook MSc and Ph.D. research projects on feeding ecology and population demography up to the mid-1980s and has remained a Collaborating Researcher with AERP since then. His professional work has included elephant-focused assignments in southern Africa (Botswana, South Africa), Central Africa (region-wide), West Africa (Mali) and East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania). Broader concerns include the trade in ivory and live elephants under the Convention on the International Trade in
Endangered Species (CITES) and the welfare of captive elephants in North America, Europe and Japan.

Trish London, DVM, CVA
Founder, Elephant Wellness Project

Dr. Trish London began working with elephants 25 years ago as the first intern at The Elephant Sanctuary. She graduated from the University of Georgia Veterinary School and did an internship at Chiang Mai University in Thailand. She worked in emergency medicine for 10 years in Portland Oregon and became certified in veterinary acupuncture. In 2016, Trish began traveling and working at a variety of elephant facilities and with veterinarians throughout SE Asia in Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In November of 2019 she became a consulting veterinarian with the Global Sanctuary for Elephants in Brazil. She helped with the transport of Lady, Bambi and Pocha, and Guillermina from zoo to sanctuary. When not at the sanctuary, Trish consults remotely about the elephants and other animals. She also consults with Elephant Valley Project in Cambodia, with their 12 retired elephants. She was an instructor for the Ecology and Conservation of South East Asian Elephants Course with School for Field Studies in Cambodia in 2019 and 2022, and an instructor for the Elephant Management and Medicine Course with Loop Abroad in Thailand in 2018. In 2020, Trish founded the non-profit Asian Elephant Wellness Project. The project helps create collaborations between organizations and facilities that work with Asian elephants. The first project was the building of a retirement home for two previously working old elephants in Nepal.

Lori Marino, Ph.D.
Founder and President, Whale Sanctuary Project; Executive Director, Kimmela Center for Scholarship-based Animal Advocacy

Lori Marino, Ph.D., is a neuroscientist and expert in animal behavior, intelligence, and self-awareness who was on the faculty of Emory University. She is the founder and President of the Whale Sanctuary Project and Executive Director of The Kimmela Center for Scholarship-based Animal Advocacy. Lori’s scientific work focuses on the evolution of the brain and intelligence in dolphins and whales (as well as primates and farmed animals), and on the effects of captivity on wildlife. She has published over 140 peer-reviewed scientific papers, book chapters, and magazine articles. In 2001 she co-authored a groundbreaking study demonstrating the first conclusive evidence for mirror self-recognition in dolphins. Lori also works at the intersection of science and animal law and policy, having been an expert witness and advisor for several legal efforts for animal rights and protection, including the Nonhuman Rights Project and the Canadian Senate Bill S203, a bill that passed in 2019 banning the keeping and breeding of dolphins and whales for entertainment in Canada. She has appeared in several films and television programs, including the 2013 documentary Blackfish, about orca captivity, Long Gone Wild, the 2019 documentary on marine mammal captivity, and the 2021 film Seaspiracy.

Rachel Mathews, J.D.
Clinical Instructor – Animal Law & Policy Clinic, Harvard Law School

Rachel Mathews is an animal rights attorney, activist, and Clinical Instructor in the Animal Law & Policy Clinic at Harvard Law School. She previously served as Director of Captive Animal Law Enforcement at the PETA Foundation, where she helped build a team of lawyers, veterinarians, captive wildlife specialists, and other professionals to fight industries that exploit wild animals for entertainment. There, her advocacy focused on elephants and other animals exploited in circuses and traveling animal acts, and her many victories included prompting animal circuses to shut down or go animal-free, championing California’s Circus Cruelty Prevention Act, and securing the seizure of Nosey the elephant from a traveling circus in rural Alabama.

Emily McCormack
Animal Curator, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Emily McCormack is the Animal Curator at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, a non-profit sanctuary that provides a permanent home for about 100 big cats and bears. Since 1992, TCWR has aided law enforcement and the court system in rescuing over 500 animals nationwide, providing them with lifelong care. Originally from upstate New York, Emily attended the State University of New York at Oswego where she obtained
her Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology. For more than 23 years, Emily has participated in national rescues, including recent federal confiscations by the USDA and US Department of Justice. Along with her Curator duties, Emily manages TCWR’s reputable internship program, completed by more than 350 graduates who have successfully obtained animal care careers. Due to the enormity of the big cat crisis in the U.S., it has become Emily’s lifelong goal and passion to make a difference in hopes that one day sanctuaries will no longer be needed. Emily serves as Vice Chair of the Steering Committee for the Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance, of which TCWR is a founding member. She is also a member of the BEAR Alliance, comprised of colleagues who monitor bears in need of rescue in the U.S.

Les O’Brien
Palladium Elephant Consulting (Canada)
Les O’Brien’s career has spanned more than 25 years in a variety of roles including elephant management within captivity, consulting, research, behavioral management, foot care, travel guide, author and international speaker. Working on four continents as an independent consultant, Les is an advocate against elephants in zoos and focuses his time educating people on the consequences of captivity, offering captive elephants support to help behavioral self-healing, and studying both Asian and African elephants in their countries of origin. Offering professional support in a variety of capacities and as an international speaker and trainer, Les has openly opposed the importation of free-ranging elephants to zoos.

Brittany Peet, J.D.
General Counsel for Captive Animal Law Enforcement – PETA Foundation
Brittany Peet is General Counsel for Captive Animal Law Enforcement for the PETA Foundation. Peet, an attorney, works on behalf of animals held captive by roadside zoos, traveling shows, and the film and television industries through legal and regulatory actions and public advocacy campaigns. She testified in Joe Exotic’s federal trial, and she was part of the legal team that secured the landmark legal ruling holding that big cat cub petting violates the federal Endangered Species Act. Peet also negotiates and coordinates wild and exotic animal rescues for PETA and has overseen the rescues of hundreds of animals including 400 chinchillas, 78 bears, 75 big cats, and 21 chimpanzees.

David M. Peña-Guzmán, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, San Francisco State University
David M. Peña-Guzmán is associate professor of Humanities at San Francisco State University. He specializes in animal studies, the philosophy of consciousness, European philosophy, and social theory. He is the author of *When Animals Dream: The Hidden World of Animal Consciousness* (Princeton University Press, 2022) and one of the co-authors of *Chimpanzee Rights: The Philosophers’ Brief* (Routledge, 2018). He is also the cohost of the popular philosophy podcast *Overthink*.

Heather Rally, DVM
Supervising Veterinarian for Captive Animal Law Enforcement, PETA Foundation
Dr. Heather Rally is the Supervising Veterinarian for Captive Animal Law Enforcement at the PETA Foundation. In that position she leads investigative and enforcement actions in cases of abuse of animals in roadside zoos, circuses, and other captive-animal exhibits in the United States. Dr. Rally has specific training in marine mammal medicine and serves on the Advisory Committee of the Whale Sanctuary Project and the Aegean Marine Life Sanctuary. Dr. Rally’s involvement in the undercover investigation and law enforcement bust of The Hump restaurant in Santa Monica for serving endangered whale meat was featured in the acclaimed documentary *Racing Extinction*, which highlighted her work as a lead investigator into wildlife crime and trafficking across the globe. Dr. Rally teaches courses on Animal Welfare Law and Animal Ethics and Conservation as adjunct faculty at Vermont Law School and has published scholarship in areas of animal and environmental law, marine wildlife conservation, and captive animal welfare.
Sarah Rogers, J.D.
Litigation Fellow, Animal Legal Defense Fund
As a Litigation Fellow at the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Sarah Rogers works with the Litigation Program to develop creative strategies to advance the interests and welfare of animals through the legal system. Sarah earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism with a minor in Photography from Loyola University Chicago. She earned a J.D. and a Certificate in Animal Law from Lewis & Clark Law School. Located in Portland, Oregon, Sarah shares her home with her spouse and companion cat, Kurdt. Outside of work, Sarah enjoys singing, playing the ukulele, watching documentaries, exploring new places, and sampling Portland’s vegan cuisine with her spouse.

Naomi A. Rose, Ph.D.
Marine Mammal Scientist, Animal Welfare Institute
Naomi Rose is the marine mammal scientist for the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) in Washington, DC. She campaigns internationally to end cetacean live capture, trade, and commercial display, and to improve captive marine mammal welfare. She has been a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Scientific Committee since 2000, where she participates in the subcommittees on environmental concerns, small cetaceans, and whale watching. Dr. Rose is also AWI’s representative on a coalition of non-profit organizations devoted to defending and strengthening the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act. She has testified before the U.S. Congress four times, at the Canadian Parliament, and at several federal and state legislative and regulatory hearings. She gave a TedX Talk in Bend, Oregon, in April 2015 on captive orca welfare. She received a Ph.D. in biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1992, where her dissertation examined the social dynamics of free-ranging male orcas. Dr. Rose has worked in the marine mammal advocacy field for almost 30 years.

Jan Schmidt-Burbach, Ph.D.
Head of Wildlife and Animal Welfare Research, World Animal Protection
Dr. Jan Schmidt-Burbach is an experienced wildlife veterinarian, working as Head of Wildlife and Animal Welfare Research for World Animal Protection. He conducted his Ph.D. on captive Asian elephants and later specialised in animal welfare and the impacts of the wildlife trade. Having been based in Asia for over 10 years, he has led on one of the largest studies on the trade and welfare conditions of captive elephants used in tourism in Asia, published in the report “Elephants – Not Commodities.” But his work also includes a range of issues revolving around the trade in wild animals, such as curbing the global trade with bear bile from Vietnam, China and South Korea; researching Asian wildlife markets and related public health risks; rehabilitating wildlife victims of the illegal trade; and exposing unsustainable and inhumane practices through commodification of wild animals. Having regularly been exposed to the victims in this trade, he calls for an end of the commercial trade in wild animals in order to protect animals, public health and our environment. Recent published papers include “Trading Tactics: Time to Rethink the Global Trade in Wildlife” and “Commercial trade in wild animals: Examining the use of the IUCN Red List and CITES Appendices as the basis for corporate policies.”

Ed Stewart
President and CEO, Performing Animal Welfare Society
Ed Stewart co-founded the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in 1984 to advocate and provide sanctuary for abandoned, abused and retired performing animals and victims of the exotic animal trade. Stewart and PAWS co-founder the late Pat Derby established the nation’s first elephant sanctuary in Galt, California, in 1986. Ed oversees all aspects of the organization including PAWS’ three California sanctuaries, the largest being the 2,300-acre natural habitat ARK 2000 refuge where the organization currently cares for elephants, big cats, and bears. Ed is recognized for his expertise in the management and care of wild animals, and for his innovative habitat designs at ARK 2000. He regularly consults for organizations around the world on wild animal rescues and habitat design, and he has worked in range countries on projects aimed at mitigating human-elephant conflict. Ed serves
on the Director’s Advisory Committee on the Humane Care and Treatment of Wild Animals for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Advisory Committee for the Whale Sanctuary Project, and the Detroit Zoological Society’s Center for Zoo Animal Welfare.

Duncan Strauss
Radio Show Host, Talking Animals
Duncan Strauss is the host of Talking Animals, a radio show about animals and animal issues he launched in Southern California in June of 2003, now airing Wednesday mornings on WMNF, an NPR affiliate in Tampa, Florida. Past guests include Jane Goodall, Alec Baldwin, Temple Grandin, Ed Stewart, Pat Derby, Cynthia Moss, Carl Safina, Lily Tomlin, and a sizable number of the speakers at this conference. A longtime print journalist as well, Strauss has been published in The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Rolling Stone, and other periodicals. He and his family share their Jupiter Farms, Florida, home with a dog, three cats, and an assortment of horses who visit from next door. He spends each day talking to those animals, and maintains they talk right back to him, a claim as yet unverified by credible sources. Information about Talking Animals – including audio archives of every show, and podcasts of many – can be found at http://www.talkinganimals.net.

Liz Tyson-Griffin, Ph.D.
Programs Director, Born Free USA
Dr. Liz Tyson is Born Free USA’s programs director. She has helped animals across the globe. She helped to establish the very first locally run sterilization program for street dogs in the Middle East; worked with indigenous communities in the Colombian Amazon to end the hunting of wild primates; ran a U.K. charity campaigning to end the exploitation of animals in circuses and zoos; and helped design a new rehabilitation complex for rescued monkeys at Ensessa Kotteh, Born Free’s sanctuary in Ethiopia. In 2018, she earned her doctorate in animal welfare law. In 2020, Liz published Licensing Laws and Animal Welfare: The Legal Protection of Wild Animals, with Palgrave MacMillan/Springer Nature. The book outlines the findings of her doctoral research, which is the most comprehensive study of the legal protection of wild animals in English zoos carried out to date. A new book, From Harm to Healing, coauthored by Liz and Spanish visual artist, Ruth Montiel Arias, explores the stories of some of the residents of the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary, and will be published by Lantern Books in 2024.

Mike Webber
Producer/Director, NightFly Entertainment
Mike Webber is a motion picture producer/director who has produced numerous films for studios such as 20th Century Fox and Lionsgate. Webber is also an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose film The Elephant in the Living Room received the highest praise by top critics, won 5 Best Documentary Awards, and premiered in the U.S. as the #1 independent film in the country. His 2022 investigative film, The Conservation Game, recently released in the U.S., won a Social Justice Award and Best Director Award. Four years in the making, the expose sent shock waves through the animal entertainment industry and is attributed to the swift demise of several of the world’s most famous celebrity conservationists. Mike has been the featured guest on countless television and radio talk shows, and he was the subject of an ABC 20/20 special. His films have been featured in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Hollywood Reporter, Variety, The Hill, Politico, The Wrap, The Washington Post, Newsweek, Deadline, People, Entertainment Weekly, and many more. Mike has become known for his contribution to animal advocacy causes. He is winner of the coveted Genesis Award from the Humane Society of the United States, was the keynote speaker for the Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance and is an outspoken advocate in Washington D.C. for animal protection legislation.

Steven M. Wise, J.D.
Founder and President, Nonhuman Rights Project
Steven M. Wise began his mission to gain rights for nonhuman animals in 1985. He holds a J.D. from Boston University Law School and a B.S. in chemistry from the College of William and Mary. He has practiced animal protection law for four decades and is admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. Professor Wise taught the first class in “Animal Rights Law” at the Harvard Law School and has taught “Animal Rights Jurisprudence” at the Stanford Law School, as well as the University of Miami, St. Thomas, and John Marshall Law Schools, and is currently teaching “Animal Rights
Jurisprudence” at the Lewis and Clark Law School and Vermont Law School. He is the author of four books: “Rattling the Cage – Toward Legal Rights for Animals”; “Drawing the Line – Science and the Case for Animal Rights”; “Though the Heavens May Fall – The Landmark Trial That Led to the End of Human Slavery”; and “An American Trilogy – Death, Slavery, and Dominion Along the Banks of the Cape Fear River.” His TEDTALK from the TED 2015 Conference in Vancouver, Canada was released in May of 2015 and has over one million views.

Gert Zagler, MBA
Volunteer Campaigns Assistant, Zoocheck
Gert Zagler is the Volunteer Campaigns Assistant with Zoocheck in Canada. She also serves on the Advisory Board for the Global Sanctuary for Elephants. Gert has been involved in legislative and advocacy efforts for animals for over a decade, initially focusing her efforts on Lucy, the sole elephant at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. She joined forces with Zoocheck as a volunteer in 2008 to support their Save Lucy campaign and since that time has contributed to a number of other initiatives. She was part of a small, dedicated team that worked extensively on the campaign for elephants Toka, Thika and Iringa that resulted in their move from the Toronto Zoo to PAWS’ ARK 2000 sanctuary in 2013. Gert currently works as a Director with the Government of Canada and possesses an MBA from Queen’s University.

SPECIAL BOOK SIGNING

Colleen Plumb, MFA
Photographer
Colleen Plumb makes photographs, videos, and installations investigating contradictory and exploitative relationships between humans and nonhuman animals. Her work explores the way animals in captivity function as symbols of persistent colonial thinking, that a striving for human domination over nature has been normalized, and that consumption masks as curiosity. Plumb’s work sheds light on abnormal behaviors of captive animals in order to bring attention to implicit values of society as a whole, particularly those that perpetuate power imbalance and tyranny of artifice. One of her recent projects, Invisible Visible, reflects upon the industrial food system and meatpacking industry through the bones and bodies of chickens. Plumb’s work is held in several permanent collections and has been widely exhibited. She has written for the Center for Humans and Nature, an organization dedicated to exploring and promoting human responsibilities in relation to nature, and was a contributor to their book, City Creatures (University of Chicago Press). Her first photography monograph, Animals Are Outside Today (Radius Books, 2011) critically documents ambivalent dispositions towards animals. Her focus for more than two decades has been an inquiry into a society whose appetite for animals, whether in flesh or in reproduction, with admiration or obsession, is voracious. Plumb’s recent photography book, Thirty Times a Minute (Radius Books, 2020), examines the plight of captive elephants, with contributing essays by Marc Bekoff, Julia Cooke, Catherine Doyle, Hope Ferdowsian, M.D., Linda Hogan, Les O’Brien, Joyce Poole & Peter Granli, Steven M. Wise, and Mandy-Suzanne Wong. Plumb’s work has appeared in Orion Magazine, LitHub, Psychology Today, Virginia Quarterly Review, The Village Voice, Blow Photo Magazine, New York Times LENS, Time Lightbox, Oxford American, and Photo District News. Plumb lives in Chicago and has taught photography and video at Columbia College Chicago since 1999.

Current as of 10.7.2022. Subject to change.