

Opinion: 10 things to help you help animals in CT on World Animal Day

Animals add so much to our lives



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PUBLISHED: October 4, 2024 at 5:00 a.m.

According to an aphorism attributed to the French literary figure Anatole France, “Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.” I am reminded of Monsieur France’s words because October 4 is World Animal Day, and their sentiment could not be more fitting.

Launched in 1925 as an international day of action and awareness, World Animal Day celebrates the many ways animals enrich our lives and reminds us to treat them with kindness and respect. The animals we share our homes with give us so much joy, and I believe they make us better humans, for who among us would not wish to be the person whom their dog, cat, rabbit or other pet thinks we are?

And yet humanity’s relationship with other species is probably best described as complicated. There are those animals we bond with and heap our affection on; we call them pets, companion animals, or even refer to them as our “kids.” There are wild animals we admire from afar, in awe of their beauty and strength. And there are those animals we use for a wide variety of purposes, such as food, entertainment, research, and labor.

I’m guessing those of us who live with companion animals will already be giving them some extra love and attention today. But there are so many other meaningful things we can do to help animals.

Here are just 10:

1. Make sure your companion animals’ health is up to date with vet checkups and vaccinations, that they are microchipped, and that they are spayed or neutered.
2. If you don’t already live with an animal, learn about the needs of dogs, cats, or rabbits, and then adopt one or two from a shelter or animal-rescue organization.
3. Volunteer at a shelter, sanctuary, or rescue group. These organizations rely on volunteers to walk dogs, clean cages, help keep animals socialized, and much more.
4. Foster a dog, cat, or rabbit. You’ll help save a life by improving an animal’s social skills, which increases their chance of getting adopted, and by opening space at the shelter so that more animals can be taken in.
5. Go vegan. Not eating animals may be the most meaningful thing you could do for them.
6. Appreciate wildlife, but don’t feed them. Human food is unhealthy for ducks, geese, squirrels, deer, and other wild animals.
7. Report animal abuse or neglect. [Animal abuse](#) is not only cruel, but it’s a sign that other forms of abuse, such as domestic violence, could be occurring. If you observe animal cruelty—if you witness an animal being beaten, for instance, or you see too many animals living on one property—contact your local animal control agency.
8. Educate the children in your life about being kind to animals. Teach them to respect wildlife by observing and not chasing or taunting animals.
9. Organize a cleanup. Whether it’s in your neighborhood, in a nearby park, or even along the ocean, picking up trash not only helps keep your community clean but helps keep wildlife and other animals healthy and even saves their lives.
10. Create an oasis for animals. Fill your yard, deck, patio, or balcony with sources of food and water. These can include bird feeders, bird baths, water dishes, and native plants and flowers. Such a wildlife haven will be much appreciated by local birds and bees, migrating butterflies, and hundreds of other creatures.

Animals add so much to our lives. They fill our world with beauty and bring joy to our homes. Treating them with kindness costs us nothing.

Mark Hawthorne serves on the board of the rabbit rescue nonprofit [Save the Buns](#), based in Stafford Springs, and is the author of “The Way of the Rabbit.”