

Lakeside Friends OF THE Animals A.C.

[HOME](#) | [WHO & WHY](#) | [PROGRAMS](#) | [HOW TO HELP](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

CELEBRATE WORLD ANIMAL DAY - OCTOBER 4, 2008

By LFA Board Member Henri Loridans

In 1931 ecologists meeting in Florence, Italy named October 4 as World Animal Day to bring attention to endangered species. This date was chosen to coincide with the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron Saint of animals. St. Francis was referred to by the skeptic Bertrand Russell as "One of the most lovable men known to history." Celebration of WAD has grown beyond the blessing of animals in churches and synagogues. Lay groups all over the world now pay homage to the animal kingdom on the fourth of October. I quote the Mission Statement of WAD as:

- To celebrate animal life in all its forms
- To celebrate humankind's relationship with the animal kingdom
- To acknowledge the diverse roles that animals play in our lives. From being our companions, supporting and helping us, to bringing a sense of wonder to our lives
- To acknowledge and be thankful for the way in which animals enrich our lives

All humankind should appreciate the fascinating panoply of the myriad species of fauna on this earth. It is not only animal rights and ecological groups that should take pleasure in observing and studying our cousins who evolved (or were created) into different genres, from the bacteria in our stomachs that are essential to our digestive process, to the mighty whale and elephant, it would be dreary to contemplate forests and gardens and parks without deer and squirrels and raccoons. Waterways without fish and mollusks and crustaceans would be boring. The heavens with no hummingbirds or butterflies or soaring eagles would be as exciting as mashed potatoes.

I must admit that I do not see how the cootie and the tapeworm fit into the grand scheme of things, but then I am not a biologist. I have not been able to determine why two big, bright yellow butterflies can fly around each other for hours in my garden. It cannot be that I have earned such a blessing by living an exemplary life.

Domesticated animals have a more practical benefit. Whether by divine providence or some more secular process, they furnish us with meat and leather and eggs, transportation and companionship. The many dogs I have owned from childhood to retirement have given me devotion and affection that I do not deserve. I could come home in a foul mood and act badly toward my pets. The next morning Bowser or Phideaux would always greet me with a wagging tail and soulful, adoring look. I never had to beg forgiveness.

There are many individuals and groups in Chapala that year 'round devote time and money to make things better for animals. Stray and unwanted dogs and cats are taken in, spayed and neutered, and put up for adoptions. Injured and diseased pets are treated. Wounded wild animals are doctored, and then released.

On the fourth of October, if you do not participate in one of the rites where animals are blessed, at least take time to contemplate what animals mean to us, and how bleak this world would be without them. Sit in your patio and contemplate the honeybee as it pollinates your flower blossoms. Study the swallow as it builds its nest from mud and twigs. Try to understand how a small spider can design and spin his gossamer web. Give your parakeet some extra seeds, a few extra rubs for your autocratic cat and take a long walk with your dog. Saint Francis will smile on you.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK: LFA buys feline leukemia testing kits for shelter facilities.