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'World Animal Day' is celebrated each year on October 4th. On this day, animal life in all its forms is celebrated, and special events are planned in locations worldwide. Many churches throughout the world observe the Sunday closest to October 4 (which will be October 3 in 2010) with a Blessing for the Animals. The holiday began in Florence, Italy in 1931 at a convention of ecologists. Their intention was to highlight the plight of endangered species. October 4th was originally chosen for World Animal Day because it is the feast day of Francis of Assisi, a nature lover and patron saint of animals and the environment.

In New York City on October 4th, and throughout the month of October -- which is World Animal Month -- Pedicabs will traverse New York City's highest traffic areas featuring provocative ads of endangered species (see one of the ads above) that the Arlington, Va.-based global environmental organization, RARE (www.RareConservation.org), works every day of the year to protect. Wild postings of large "Animals don't need to evolve. We do"-themed ads featuring a host of threatened species will also be widely distributed throughout New York City, and are expected to get extensive viral internet pick-up. (Note: All of the ads will be posted online shortly and will be available upon request.)

The ads were created by DIGO (www.digobrands.com), advertising, design and digital Agency for a Social World, which Fast Company recently cited as one of the 10 "Foremost World-Changing Agencies."

Just a few of Rare's other special events and campaigns around the world in October (World Animal Month) are:

- On October 17 the 3rd Annual Ko'ko Road Race will take place in Guam, to highlight the plight of the country's near-extinct territorial bird (the Guam Rail or Ko'ko). One of Rare's partners for this exciting event will be Adidas of Japan.
- RARE is running a Pride campaign in Mongolia to save the Taimen (world's largest salmon); they will increase the number of fishers who catch and release taimen back into the river by 15% by October 2010.
- By October 2010, 90% of villagers in the Yunnan Province's Baima will know that the Yunnan Golden Monkey is a precious species; 90% will know that fuelwood threatens the monkey, and will know the benefits of alternative resources: The local residents will be enabled to adopt fuel efficient solar water heaters, thus reducing the amount of trees logged for firewood.

More About World Animal Day: World Animal Day has now gone far beyond being the celebration of a Christian saint and is observed today by animal lovers and stewards of all beliefs, nationalities and backgrounds. The official World Animal Day website (www.worldanimalday.org.uk) was launched in the UK on October 4, 2003, encouraging people to commemorate their care and respect for animals, and to celebrate humankind's special relationship with the animal kingdom. One aim is to help improve standards of animal welfare and protection of their ever-diminishing habitats.

Since its declaration, the holiday has grown to encompass all kinds of animal life. Animal blessings have been held in churches, synagogues, and by independent Animal Chaplains in parks and fields. Animal rescue shelters hold fundraising events and open adoption days, wildlife groups organize information displays, schools undertake animal-related project work and individuals and groups donate to animal welfare charities. In 2009, over 80 countries were involved, with a vast array of events from small grassroots groups to high-end galas and award ceremonies.

About Rare: RARE is the leader in social and behavioral change for conservation -- with a successful track record in more than 50 countries to date. The non-profit, based in Arlington, Virginia, trains and supports leaders from the world's top environmental organizations, local grassroots groups, and governments.

Rare's campaigns have influenced more than 6.8 million people living in over 2,400 remote communities.

Many of the world's largest conservation groups, as well as nations in the developing world, have requested Rare's services to help build stronger local community support for their work. They include The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, Birdlife International, National Audubon Society, the United Nations Environment Programme, the national governments of China, Mexico, Peru, Indonesia, and many others. Learn more at www.rareconservation.org or www.rareplanet.com.

Rare has been cited as one of Fast Company magazine's Top Social Entrepreneurs four years in a row.