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ABOUT WAYNE

Few are in a position to speak for the animals like Wayne Pacelle. As President and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, he leads 11 million members and constituents in the mission of celebrating animals and confronting cruelty. [Read more »](#)



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DECEMBER 27, 2011

New Survey of Shelter Leaders Shows Strength and Unity of Animal Movement

The animal welfare movement is growing, diverse, and deeply embedded within mainstream American life and values. It grows dramatically each year, and one [recent study](#) by Tom's of Maine [featured in USA Today](#) found that animal welfare is the number-one cause for volunteerism in America. Although there is no official registry, there are estimated to be as many as 20,000 groups, big and small, engaged in the vital work of sheltering and helping animals and halting cruelty and neglect. There is not a community in America that is not better because of the work of self-sacrificing, other-centered people who drive the work of these humane organizations.

Kathy Milani/The HSUS

At The HSUS, we have known all along that no single group can do it alone, and we recognize the need for pluralism in this work. There's somebody fighting for every kind of creature, and it's an amazing thing. There's a dizzying array of organizations involved in hands-on care work, and there's also crucial work focused on the prevention of cruelty in all of its forms.

The HSUS partners with local animal shelters and rescue groups on a wide range of issues—from [Animal Care Expo](#) and [Animal Sheltering magazine](#) to [The Shelter Pet Project](#) and [animalsheltering.org](#)—and we celebrate their life-saving work in local communities. Not long ago, we commissioned a survey of animal shelter and rescue personnel around the country—most of them CEOs, executive directors, or individuals serving in other leadership positions within their organizations—to hear their thoughts. The survey was conducted between Dec. 7 and 17 by the [Humane Research Council](#), an independent research firm that works with local and national animal protection organizations, and about 300 animal shelter and rescue leaders participated.

Among other findings, the survey confirmed that there is overwhelming agreement among local organizations that they view the humane movement broadly as taking on large-scale cruelties to pets, wildlife, and farm animals. They also value the services that The HSUS provides to local animal shelters and rescue groups, and they see The HSUS as having an important role as a powerful organization battling the root causes of cruelty nationwide. Here is a summary of the survey responses from local shelter and rescue leaders:

Nine in ten respondents (90 percent) say it is “very important” to have national animal welfare organizations working to prevent cruelty and confront national problems. Another 9 percent say it is “somewhat important,” meaning that overall 99 percent think it is important to have national organizations.

A very high 89 percent of respondents (or someone else from their organization) have used at least one HSUS service or program.

Among those who have used The HSUS's services and programs, 59 percent find them “very” valuable and 38 percent say they are “somewhat” valuable; overall, 97 percent think the services and programs are valuable.

Nearly all respondents (96 percent) agree with the statement, “Both local and national organizations are important

parts of the animal welfare community and both are essential to create lasting change for animals.”

A very strong majority of respondents (86 percent) DISAGREES with the statement, “National organizations should scale back their campaigns to combat factory farming, puppy mills, animal fighting, and other cruelties.”

A strong majority of respondents (70 percent) agrees with the statement, “Organizations like the HSUS are a benefit to local animal shelter and rescue groups because of the services and resources that they provide.”

A very strong majority of respondents (86 percent) agrees with the statement, “Organizations like the HSUS are a benefit to local animal shelters and rescue groups because they work on statewide and nationwide policy issues such as puppy mills and dogfighting, which also benefit local groups.”

More than two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) say it is “very important” to have a diversity of groups that make up the animal welfare movement. Another 28 percent say “somewhat important,” meaning that overall 96 percent think it is important to have a diversity of organizations.

More than three-fourths of respondents (79 percent) say it is “very important” that the animal welfare movement has a broad focus including pets, wildlife, and farm animals. Another fifth (20 percent) says “somewhat important,” meaning that overall 99 percent think it is important to have a broad focus.

There are natural divisions and fault lines in any social movement. But what’s remarkable about our cause is the notable unity of purpose—the recognition that all animals matter and the fact that there are so many good works being carried out by so many people committed to getting the job done for animals. We are proud to play our own important role, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with the many individuals and organizations who share our passion for a better lot in life for our animal friends.

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