



Photos top to bottom: Gene Baur and friends, Farm Sanctuary, New York; Moss, Sanctuary Kyoto, Japan; Dr. Biruté Galdikas and friend, Kalimantan, Borneo; La Mare Auzou, Foundation Brigitte Bardot, France

## THE GLOBAL SANCTUARY MOVEMENT

By Michael Tobias and Jane Gray Morrison

It is easily 90 degrees with near 100 percent humidity in the late afternoon heat of tropical peat swamps in Borneo. In the company of Dr. Biruté Galdikas, we move between research camps across the 960,000 acres of protected orangutan habitat within Tanjung Puting National Park, a sanctuary established by Indonesian authorities in 1988 and co-managed by Dr. Galdikas, the park's preeminent advocate and designer.

President of Orangutan Foundation International and a scientist/animal rights activist steeped in Gandhian non-violence, Dr. Galdikas has spent more than 35 years helping orangutans – whose individual lives and populations are at great risk – and she and her staff provide a lifeline that has saved these remarkable animals from near extinction.

Like so many of those in the sanctuary movement worldwide, Dr. Galdikas is a profoundly spiritual and generous ambassador for individuals of other species. This renaissance of compassion demonstrated by her example, and that of others like Farm Sanctuary's Co-founder Gene Baur, is what we endeavor to portray in our new Dancing Star Foundation book, *Sanctuary: Global Oases of Innocence*.

In twenty countries we strived to document and shed light on those ecological and animal rights luminaries who are working assiduously to save fellow creatures and their habitat: from cheetahs in South Africa; wild dogs in Namibia; a vegetarian tribe in Southern India and all the wondrous creatures with whom they cohabit the Nilgiri Blue Mountains (tigers, Asian elephants, Nilgiri Black Langurs, rare orchids and impatiens flowers); to remarkable seabirds from Alaska to the Farallon Islands off the coast of California; Iberian wolves and donkeys in Portugal; French geese whose salvation has long been championed by Brigitte Bardot; jaguars in Suriname; brown bears in Holland; farm animals and wild forest creatures in Austria; Arabian oryx in the Emirates; Egyptian vultures breeding on the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean; endangered moss species in the temple courtyards of Kyoto; butterflies in Malaysia; and domesticated cows, pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens at Farm Sanctuary in the U.S. under the enlightened stewardship of Gene Baur and team.

Some of the sanctuaries featured in our book are national parks and internationally contiguous preserves, such as Wrangell-St. Elias/Kluane National Park, the largest such park in North America, encompassing both the U.S. and Canada. Elsewhere, as with Central Park in Manhattan, a sanctuary that sees at least 25 million visitors each year, the 270-odd bird species and 172 known insect species that call the park home are supported by no more than 843 acres. In the case of the Island of Socotra, in southern Yemen, all her 3,625 square miles are currently under consideration as a Natural World Heritage Site. For thousands of years, the Socotri mountain people have embraced ecological sustainability which has proven key to their survival.

In Austria, the remarkable Michael Aufhauser created Gut Aiderbichl, a true oasis of compassion for cows, foxes, dogs, cats, chickens, horses, pigs, cows, donkeys ... and people. Gut Aiderbichl has since expanded throughout Austria and Germany. Michael's original sanctuary – near the heart of Salzburg – is home to more than 1,000 rescued animals. When Michael negotiated the release of all the beagles from a chemical company after their use for product testing, there was concern among some European animal rights groups that negotiation was not appropriate. But Aufhauser is a pragmatist who feels differently, as does Snoopy, one of his rescued beagles, who now runs and plays excitedly in confirmation of the fact that he has



Bhutanese dog with Brokpa, Bhutan



La Mare Auzou, Foundation Brigitte Bardot, France



Michael Aufhauser and friends, Gut Aiderbichl, Germany, photo courtesy of Gut Aiderbichl

been given a second chance. Michael, looking at Snoopy as living proof of the positive outcome of his methodology, said: "I am not concerned about my image. We cannot afford egos."

In Suriname, Dr. Russell Mittermeier, President of Conservation International and a man who has probably saved more precious biodiversity worldwide than any single individual, led us into the heart of the greatest intact tropical rainforest left on earth: the Central Suriname Nature Reserve where he did his field research on primates for his Ph.D. while at Harvard. Mittermeier's long-term commitment to this remarkable country has resulted in one of the most outstanding examples of global conservation anywhere. Chief Ashonko Alalparoo, head of the 800 member Trio tribe living just south of the Nature Reserve, told us "Russell is a man who helps others." Such biophilia-in-action, the compassion born of deep empathy that we believe is hardwired into humanity, has been active in our species for thousands of years.

Emblematic of this compassion and the sanctuary movement is Farm Sanctuary in upstate New York and northern California. When we visited during the summer of 2007 to profile Gene Baur and his colleagues' superb work for our book, *Sanctuary*, we were not adequately prepared for the intense outpouring of emotions we experienced in the presence of some of Farm Sanctuary's most charismatic residents. Among others, we met Charlotte (the all-time pleasure-seeking pig), Phyllis (a wise, softly-spoken chicken), Grace (a brilliantly inquisitive sheep), Snowflake (the movie star hen), Hannah, Gideon, Isaiah, and Chicky (the totality

of turkeys), Linda (an understated, contemplative cow), and Dagwood (the genius among rabbits). Our memories are rich with Farm Sanctuary's pastures of great spirits. They remind us of what's biologically at stake in the 21st century and incite a kind of sacred riot in our hearts that bids us to do everything we can, every waking moment, to alleviate suffering in this world and join forces with others to help re-establish the preeminence and inviolability of life on earth. That is the core value inherent to the sanctuary movement.

*Michael Tobias is president and Jane Gray Morrison is executive vice president of Dancing Star Foundation. Both visited Farm Sanctuary in upstate New York and northern California in June 2007.*

**For information about purchasing Sanctuary: Global Oases of Innocence, go to [counciloakbooks.com](http://counciloakbooks.com).**

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Marieta Van der Merwe and friend, Harnas Sanctuary, Namibia



Professor Fonseca, Grupo Lobo, Portugal