The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them by Wayne Pacelle

A fascinating exploration of humanity's eternal bond with animals, and an urgent call to answer the needs of millions of at-risk creatures.

A landmark work, The Bond is the passionate, insightful, and comprehensive examination of our special connection to all creatures, written by one of America’s most important champions of animal welfare. Wayne Pacelle, the president of the Humane Society of the United States, unveils the deep links of the human-animal bond, as well as the conflicting impulses that have led us to betray this bond through widespread and systemic cruelty to animals.

Pacelle begins by exploring the biological and historical underpinnings of the human-animal bond and reveals our newfound understanding of animals, including their remarkable emotional and cognitive capacities. In the book's second section, Pacelle shows how the bond has been disastrously broken. He takes readers to a slaughter plant shuttered for inhumane practices, as well as the enormous egg factory farms of California. We visit Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas to speak with NFL star Michael Vick, then serving his sentence for dogfighting. Pacelle paints a portrait of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and highlights the heroic actions of residents and volunteers to reunite pets with their owners. Pacelle's narrative also leads the reader to remote locations in which conflicts over the killing of wildlife continue to play out—from the fields outside of Yellowstone National Park where bison are slaughtered with the encouragement of federal authorities, to the ice floes of Atlantic Canada where seal nurseries turn into killing fields.

In its final section, The Bond takes on the arguments of opponents and critics of animal protection and spotlights the groups and industries standing in the way of progress—from the National Rifle Association and
agribusiness organizations like the American Farm Bureau, to surprising adversaries like the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Kennel Club. Ultimately, Pacelle points the way to a new, humane economy—one not built on extraction, suffering, and killing, but on the celebration, stewardship, and care of animals.

An eye-opening must-read, The Bond reminds us that animals are at the center of our lives, they are not just a backdrop. How we treat them is one of the great themes of the human story.

My Personal Review:
Frankly, this is an amazing book.

The Bond focuses on the relationship between humans and animals, both the good that results from encouraging that connection, and the devastating damage caused by its suppression. The scope of the book and the research that went into it is impressive. Each chapter explores pivotal issues in animal welfare from a first-person perspective, from the slaughter of Alaskan wolves to the slaughter of Canadian seals, from the puppy mills of Missouri to the rescue of pets in Louisiana, from the sanctuary of Black Beauty Ranch to the butchery of horses in slaughterhouses. Seen through Wayne Pacelles eyes, the events, the people, and the animals take on a new depth.

By itself, Pacelles recounting of these key issues would be a fascinating read. But woven carefully through each chapter is that theme of the human-animal bond, like a silver thread in a tapestry. When you look at each topic from a distance, in isolation, that thread is nearly imperceptible... but up close you cant help but see the gleam of it woven through every issue.

The intricacy of that weaving is what transforms Pacelles book into a profoundly insightful look at our relationship with animals.

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