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# The Animal Companion™

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## On the origin of Darwin in the Galapagos

By **CLAUDIA B. FLISI**  
Contributing Writer

If you are an animal lover, the Galapagos Islands, 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, are heaven on earth. You can have a close encounter – on land or in the water – with wildlife that exists nowhere else on our planet. All the reptiles, half of the plants and 40 percent of the birds seen in the Galapagos are unique to this 13-island archipelago.

Pass within 50 feet of waved albatrosses sitting on their nests, swim with Galapagos turtles and sharks, witness sea lions mating on the beach (completely oblivious to your presence), stand a yard or two from shiny red and green Christmas lizards defending their territory, and watch the world's smallest penguins dive next to your boat.

You observe these wonders under the watchful eye of a local guide who works for Ecuador's National Park Service. The park (encompassing 97 percent of the total land area of the islands) was established in 1959, and in 1961 the Charles Darwin Research Station was created on the island of Santa Cruz (the second largest island in the archipelago). The Research Station trains the guides who work for the Park Service, who in turn educate the 100,000-some tourists who visit the islands each year.

Whether or not you tour the Charles Darwin Research Station, or visit some of the projects being financed by the Charles Darwin Foundation, or pick up a t-shirt with the stolid likeness of Darwin staring back at you, you will hear the name "Charles Darwin" dozens if not hundreds of times during your stay in the Galapagos.

As any biology student knows, Charles Darwin, author of *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, spent five years circling the globe on the surveying vessel, the HMS Beagle, including five seminal weeks around these islands. Although his books were published decades after his visit, the impact of some of the animal adaptations he observed, such as the beaks of finches,



Iguana on the move in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.

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## North Jersey Aquarium Society to hold Super Auction 2006

LYNDHURST, NEW JERSEY – The North Jersey Aquarium Society, one of the largest and longest running tropical fish clubs in the U.S., will hold its annual auction of freshwater fish and aquatic plants Sunday, May 7, at the Meadowlands Environmental Center.

Viewing of fish, plants and dry goods to be auctioned will begin at 11 a.m. The auction will start promptly at noon and continue until all items are sold. Admission and parking are free. There is a bidder registration fee of \$2.

Registration of fish for auction will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. Those interested in submitting fish to be auctioned should read the rules on the club's website, [www.njas.net](http://www.njas.net), where registration forms and directions to the event are also available.

Questions about submitting fish can be addressed to the event chairperson, Frank Policastro at (609) 371-1195.

Marine fish will not be sold at this auction.

Refreshments will be available for sale, including coffee, hot dogs, cake and soda. Memberships for both individuals and families will be available. (Membership is not required to participate in the auction.)



The North Jersey Aquarium Society's goal is to further the interest in the tropical fish hobby. To accomplish this, the club promotes the friendly exchange of aquarium ideas and inventory. NJAS also actively works to educate and support those interested in the tropical fish hobby. Hobbyists of all ages are welcome.

The club's regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at the Meadowlands Environmental Center, located at 2 De Korte Park Plaza in Lyndhurst, accessible from Route 3.

For additional information on this event contact Kevin Carr at (201) 724-9460 or Bob Larsen at (201) 664-0128.

## Sock Hop Bop

CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY – Dust off your poodle skirt or leather jacket and join Save The Animals Rescue Team (S.T.A.R.T.) for its first *50s Sock Hop Dance* to raise money for local animals in need.

The non-profit all volunteer animal rescue organization will hold the event from 4 to 9 p.m., Sunday, May 7 at the Boys and Girls Club. Doors open at 3 p.m. The night will include a hot and cold buffet along with all the beer, wine, and soda you can drink while DJ Rocky spins golden oldies but goodies.

There will be a 50/50 raffle as well as 100 tricky tray prizes, costume contests like "Best Elvis" and free dance lessons. Tickets are \$40 per adult and children 10 and under are \$25 each. [www.start.petfinder.org](http://www.start.petfinder.org) or call (973) 785-1245 voicemail box 3 for more information.

## Class B Dealers a danger to dogs?

By **VERA LAWLOR**  
Contributing Writer

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 88,572 dogs and cats were used in research in 2004. Who supplies these animals?

They are sold to the research institutions by two main sources. Class A dealers who breed the animals on their facilities specifically for this purpose and class B dealers who collect animals from a variety of sources. The latter are often sought after by the labs because they sell animals at a cheaper rate than the A dealers. Of the two, it's the class B dealers who most concern animal welfare organizations.

"Time and again we hear of inhumane treatment of animals at Class B dealer facilities," said Stephanie Shain, director of outreach for Companion Animals at the HSUS. "These dealers continue to be a cause for great concern among animal welfare organizations."

So, who exactly are these dealers, and where do they get the animals they sell into research?

They are brokers who get the animals from pounds and shelters, at flea markets and auctions, from newspaper ads, and according to Last Chance for Animals (LCA), many of the dogs come from bunchers, who steal dogs out of backyards or pick

people's pets. Mostly hounds, he said, gentle dogs, house pets with name tags.

Class B dealers, who are regulated under the USDA are supposed to obtain proof of ownership from anyone who sells or surrenders an animal to them. The dealer is also required to keep on file the license plate number and driver's license number of any person who sells an animal to them. Bunchers and dealers, according to the HSUS, have been known to falsify records or fail to keep records at all.

"Whether you have one dog or 100 dogs obtained illegally, it's still too many," Shain said. "Current regulations make it all too easy for Class B dealers to falsify records if they want to. It's not an easy paper trail to follow."

Earlier this year HBO aired a documentary "Dealing Dogs," about the horrible abuses that took place over a six-month period at Martin Creek Kennels in Arkansas. The abuse was caught on film by an LCA undercover investigator who got a job at the kennel. After the documentary, the LCA was inundated with calls from people whose dogs were missing, and one person reported how a friend found her missing dog in a research lab.

"There's this huge underbelly of what happens to animals because we want them for research," said Lisa Beal, Campaign Director for LCA. "Bunchers will steal the dogs right out of backyards or they will watch for ads in the paper that say 'free to good homes,' and then they present themselves as a little old couple looking for a pet."

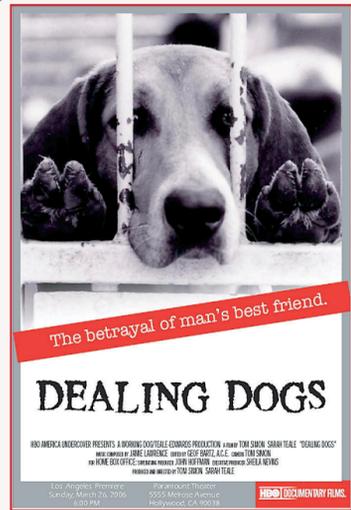
Nearly two million companion animals are stolen each year according to the organization. And, while the HSUS doesn't site exact figures of animal theft, it does believe

dogs are stolen and sold to labs for research. According to the organization, in June 2005, a microchip scan revealed that a dog slated for use in a University of Minnesota research laboratory was actually someone's pet. The dog's name was Echo and he had been stolen two months earlier from a backyard in Arkansas. He had been sold to the university by a Class B dealer from Michigan.

The USDA's 2003 raid on Martin Creek Kennels, conducted after the LCA undercover operation, resulted in the recovery of a dozen animals whose owners were looking for them. Those animal companions were all destined for research labs. By law, unless the animals come from pounds or shelters, the Class B dealer

is obligated to buy animals from individuals who breed and raise the animals on their own properties, or from other dealers who can provide paperwork showing that the animals originated from such a source. However, as was evident in the Martin Creek Kennel documentary, that's not necessarily how class B dealers operate.

For the past 15 years, LCA has worked to shut down class B dealers who sell animals into research. It wasn't until the undercover investigator managed to get inside one of the kennels that the organization was able to present hard evidence of abuse to the USDA. Video footage taken on the inside records dog beatings, shootings, malnourished dogs, dead dogs laying in kennels, dogs swung by the neck and then flung into baths of freezing cold water mixed with a strong solution that stung their eyes. According to the investigator, after being dipped the dogs went into shock and were



them up on the streets.

One former commercial dog trader from the Midwest told an Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) representative that many of the animals he sold to class B dealers were

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