

# Kid's KOrner

## Favorite pets in U.S. are pests or dinner elsewhere

WASHINGTON — Some American dogs and cats have it made, dining on special blends of food spooned from cans and sharing their masters' comfortable beds.

French pets have it even better. Dogs there sometimes accompany their masters to the fanciest restaurants, where they perch on laps and sup from their own dishes.

Every society has its own collective attitude toward animals. One nation's pets are another's pests. Creatures fondled or used for sport in one place are part of the workplace—or the diet—someplace else.

"Probably more people around the world eat dogs than protect them," says Dr. Alan Beck of the Center for Interaction of Animals and Society at the University of Pennsylvania. Even a few cats wind up on the table, especially in Haiti and the Extremadura region of Spain.

### Feline "Vermin"

In Israel, cat lovers are a small minority. "Most Israelis consider cats vermin," says Nina Natelson of Alexandria, Va., who found herself trying to rescue animals during a trip to Israel last fall.

Natelson was haunted by large numbers of starving cats and dogs on the country's beaches and streets. She discovered that although Israelis work hard to protect their wildlife, they give their domestic animals low priority.

Israel's five animal shelters operate with minimal resources. Tensions between Israel and neighboring Arab states are a constant distraction. "An Israeli will say, 'My cousin was killed in

the war last week and my brother was killed this week, and you're worried about a dog?'" Natelson recounts.

She is working with concerned Israelis to raise money for new shelters and to promote humane care of animals, including horses and donkeys used by vendors.

In Latin America, pets are the objects of both affection and drastic eradication measures.

"No matter how humble the household—dirt floor, shacks of tin—they love their pets as much as we do," says John Walsh of Boston, an official of the World Society for Protection of Animals.

### Mass Killings

But rabies control can mean laying out meat laced with strychnine. "I went out with a team in Peru," Walsh says. "Seven men killed 256 dogs in four hours."

Walsh, who has helped write Colombia's animal-protection laws, says that nation's horses are more often workers than pets. Nine thousand horses and burros ply the choked streets of Bogota, the capital, hauling produce and other freight.

In some Latin American cities, stray dogs and cats are picked up, locked together in dirty pens, and sometimes left unfed because of lack of funds.

But in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, no dogs roam the streets. They've been prohibited there for 60 years out of fear of tapeworms.

Health reasons were also cited late last year when authorities in Peking, China, began to club or drown dogs. The animals have been officially banned from Chinese cities since the Com-



Two lucky children, Morgan Jones, 5, left, and her sister, Amanda, 3, play with their pet miniature Appaloosa horses at Kennedale, Texas. One study has found that more than eight out of ten animal-loving Americans have owned a pet at some time. But animals don't fare so well in many other parts of the world, where they are often food.

munists took power in 1949, but some have been kept to guard homes.

The concept of dogs as pets is strange to the Chinese; a foreigner's dog on a leash can evoke curiosity and shrieks of terror. But as part of a meal, a dog can be a treat to Chinese palates.

In the Philippines, where dog meat is considered a delicacy by some, live dogs awaiting sale in markets lie for hours, "painfully trussed—front legs and back—with a can jammed over their muzzles," says Jan Sherlock of the International Fund for Animals.

Responding to protests from animal-rights groups, the

Philippine government has banned the sale of dog meat in metropolitan Manila, although it continues elsewhere.

### Asian Refugee Habits

Americans were confronted by dogs as food during the Vietnam War era of the 1970s, when Southeast Asian refugees began arriving in the United States, many of them in California.

Dr. Calvin Schwabe of the University of California School of Veterinary Medicine thinks Americans should stop treating dogs and cats like sacred cows and start following the Asians and others.

"Thirteen million dogs and cats

are put to sleep each year in this country, and disposing of them is a problem," says Schwabe, who has written a book that includes recipes for dog. "It's perfectly edible meat."

Hardly anyone expects such a radical departure in the foreseeable future. Americans are too emotionally committed to their pets.

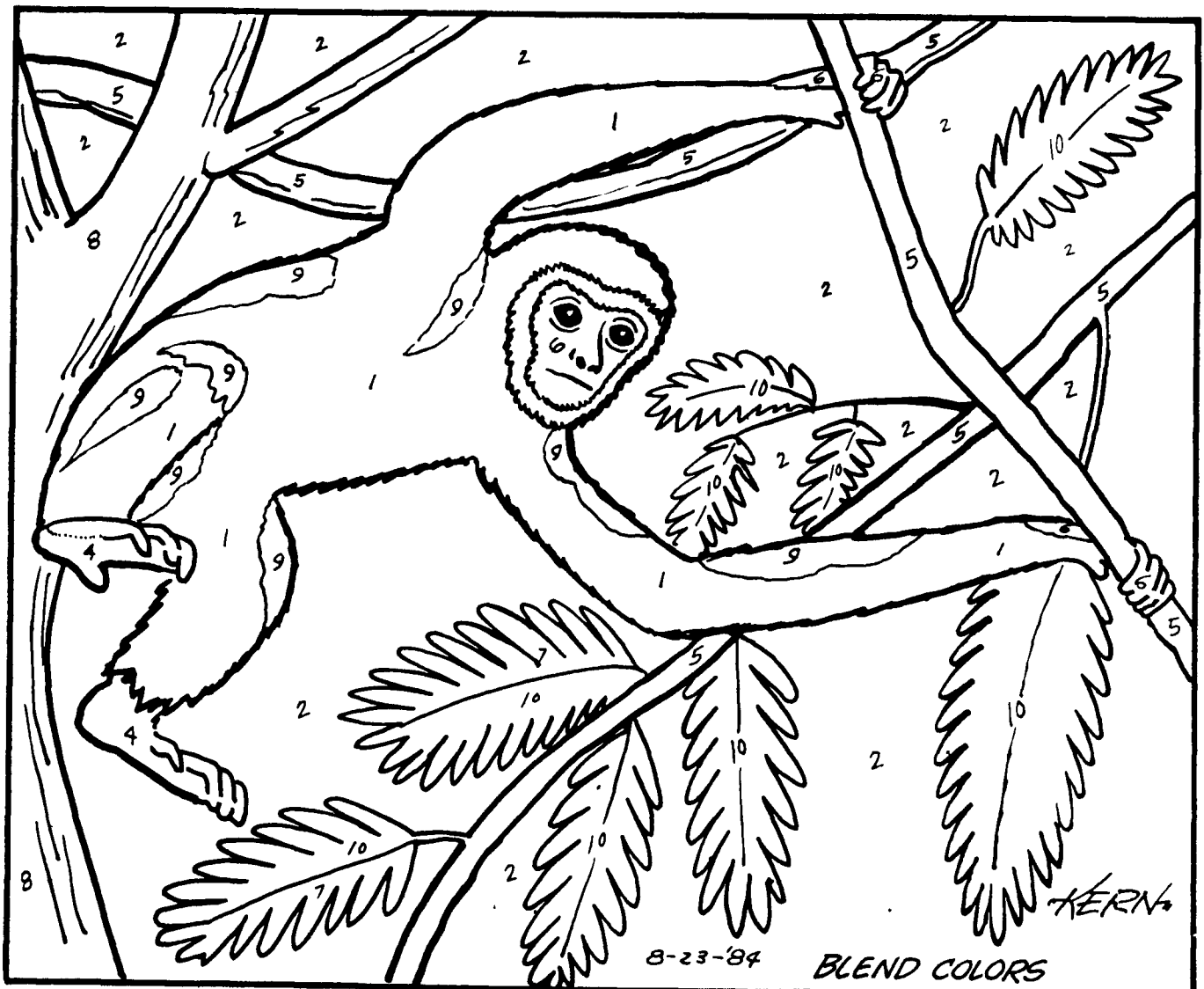
Behind laboratory doors, hundreds of thousands of dogs and cats, mostly from pounds, are sacrificed yearly in scientific experiments. But when the public learned that the Defense Department was planning to shoot dogs,

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**GIBBONS:** THEY ARE SMALL APES WITH LONG ARMS AND NO TAIL. IT IS ONE OF THE ANTHROPOID OR MANLIKE APES, WHICH ALSO INCLUDE GORILLAS, CHIPANZEES, AND ORANG-UTANS. THE GIBBON IS ABOUT THREE FEET TALL. IT IS THE SMALLEST AND LEAST MANLIKE OF THE ANTHROPOIDS.



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