

# About Crossings

By George Kun

## **First, it was the ducks.**

Mr. William J. Duckworth, the President of the "International Association for the Well-Being of Ducks" , was reading one day the "Obituaries" section of the "Daily Duckling" newspaper. He was up in arms from indignation. "Too many dead ducks! A total carnage. What the duck is going on here?" he shouted. "We have to protect these beautiful lame birds" he continued saying and got into quick action. The world got the message, and the signs were quickly installed.



## **Then, it was the elephants.**

Mr. Gabriel Oliphant, The President of the "International Organization for the Protection of the World's Pachyderms", was as a child, the target of countless jokes and teasing due to his last name, so close to "Elephant". A good thing come out of it, that Mr. Oliphant become a world class expert on these superb species and later founded a protective organization and was elected its president.

Politics, particularly Asian and African was Mr. Oliphant second great passion and he followed and witnessed the activities of various guerilla factions in the lands of elephants. The fast moving military armoured vehicles caused an unspeakable carnage among those beautiful animals. As a peaceful measure, he initiated and sponsored the installation of the signs, like the one below.



Turtles, while liked by children and adults alike, both as pets and cartoon characters, never got much attention for protection in their natural habitat, since it was assumed that their hard shells would provide adequate protection. That was all true, until aggressive nature lovers and gawkers invaded the turtle lands and were driving recklessly around, taking pictures. After some smaller cars were flipping on their side or ended upside down from riding over large turtles, the public awareness turned to the need of protecting those undeserving drivers, rather than the turtles. Proper signs were posted in those places, too.



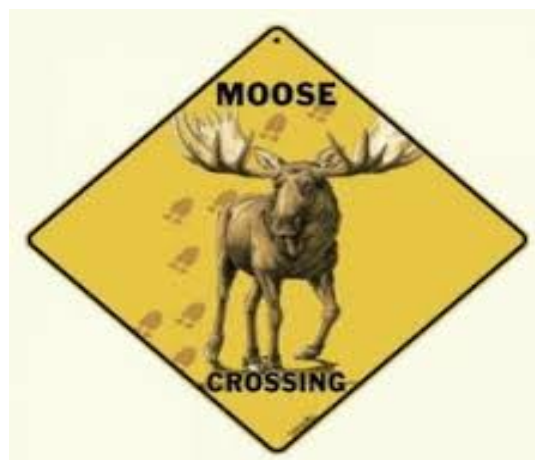
The protection craze picked-up quickly, and people felt that all animals and some people should be protected in some way. The best example is the **Tapir**. Very few people heard of the tapir, even fewer know what it looks like and where do they cross roads. Maybe they just fly over? Some clever diehard zoologist thought that maybe posting tapir crossing signs, would make the literate and publicity loving tapirs read the sign and cross the road where the sign was, so that the dumb tourists can finally see them.



The polar bears are not known for being literate, but are powerful and can be ferocious and dangerous when threatened. The northern hunters and even the occasional tourists know that too, and often would rather not cross their path and stay safely far away from the danger. Signs went up to provide choices between being alert and waiting for the hunt, or turn tail and run as far as necessary.



"Moose Calling" is a favorite pastime for moose hunters, and often, moose in heat take the bait and are rushing towards the sound of hoped for "heat quenching" activity, only to get shot by a life quenching bullet. While moose crossing is anticipated by hunters, it can be a deadly encounter for car drivers on the road, so this sign is very helpful.



There are many more signs for animals and even for children. Children grow, and age, and eventually they become Senior Citizens.

Who really loves Senior Citizens? There is a mixed bag of feelings towards them. Governments probably not, because they draw pensions and burden the health care system. Hospitals? Yes! They bring lots of business. Same for cemeteries.

Small children love Senior Citizens, as long as they take care of them, play with them and always bring sweets and gifts. The children of Senior Citizens are also very loving, mostly when they vacation away from home, and the kids are being looked after. All in all, our society still thinks it's not a bad idea to have the Senior Citizens around, and unharmed. Yes, they are slow, walk with difficulties, don't see or hear too well, but still are our parents or grandparents and deserve to be kept safe, at least from reckless drivers. So there are signs for them too.

