



September 13, 2007

Stefen Jacoby, President and CEO
Volkswagen of America
3800 Hamlin Rd.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326-2829

VIA FACSIMILE: 248-754-4930

Dear Mr. Jacoby:

I am writing on behalf of California-based In Defense of Animals, an international animal protection organization. First, we would like to congratulate you on your new position. Your first week on the job has most likely been intense as you make weighty decisions in order to turn around the decline of your company's sales in North America, and we wish you the best in this endeavor. **But we must ask that you take a few moments to read this letter and act quickly to gain assurances from the Volkswagen Foundation (VolkswagenStiftung) that it will stop funding lethal experiments on animals.**

A bird-loving public will not be pleased to learn that, funded by Volkswagen, experimenters at the University of Oldenburg killed 30 garden warblers and 10 zebra finches to study migration. The wild-caught birds were put in an observation cage inside the laboratory and, after nightfall, as the birds displayed "migratory restlessness," experimenters removed them from the cage, killed them, and cut out their retinas. The other warblers were kept in constant light and were killed even though they exhibited no "migratory restlessness." The zebra finches were all killed as "nonmigratory controls." The retinas of the warblers kept in constant light and the zebra finches were cut out as well.

In another recent study funded by Volkswagen, garden warblers and European robins, Britain's national bird, were captured in the wild and caged – a terrifying experience in and of itself. Some of these traumatized birds had tight-fitting caps glued over one eye to see if the migration urge was altered. All of the birds, including canaries and zebra finches, were killed by the experimenters and "their brains were rapidly dissected," according to the published paper titled, "Night-vision brain area in migratory songbirds."

A visit to the website of the VolkswagenStiftung enumerates many commendable projects funded by your company's foundation--but lethal experiments on animals are probably in progress right now and may be even more heinous than the migration experiments mentioned above.

We believe that Volkswagen can use its immense assets (2.3 billion Euros) humanely and still profit by investing in initiatives such as those it is funding in the humanities, philosophy, chemistry, and human rights, but that it must banish from its portfolio those projects that cause the suffering and death of animals. **A good place to start would be to assure the public that no more songbirds will be killed with Volkswagen money.**

We consider this a matter of urgency and hope that you make this a priority. We would be so happy to help Volkswagen regain some ground in the United States marketplace by spreading the word that it is a humane and responsible company. May we please hear from you by September 20? I can be reached at 757-480-4613. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Sweetland
Director of Research & Investigations