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West Coast News

The Humane Society of the United States

HSUS Opens West Coast Regional Office



Fresno Bee

The Navy has obtained permission from the state of California to kill 200 burros such as these on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center. The HSUS West Coast Regional Office has at least temporarily blocked the killing.

Comment: A Question of Values

By Michael D. Smith
Field Representative, West Coast Region

In light of recent events in Idaho (the roundup and sale of wild horses, with permission of the federal government), the U.S. Navy's decision to kill 200 wild and free roaming burros on its Naval Weapons Center at China Lake, Calif., came as no surprise to HSUS investigators. Notified of the Navy's plan in early February, the HSUS's West Coast Regional Office, under the leadership of Regional Director Herb Martin, began a thorough investigation.

According to provisions of the federal Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, feral burros inhabiting "public lands" cannot be destroyed without a complete study having been made of the situation, and written permission having been obtained from the Secretary of the Interior. The Navy, however, interpreted the law as excluding military property.

The commander of the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, therefore, obtained a depredation permit from the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, which is valid until Aug. 26, 1973. This permit gives the Navy authority to shoot 200 wild burros that inhabit the Naval Weapons Center's Mojave "B" Range. The request for the permit was based on the Navy's assertion that the burros were starving to death because of lack of forage.

In early April, Martin and I toured the China Lake center and observed some of the 200 "starving" burros. To our surprise, the entire Mojave "B" Range was covered with a luxuriant ephemeral growth of wild flowers

(Continued on next page.)

To Assist Locals In Four States

The Humane Society of the United States has opened a West Coast Regional Office to serve California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, announced HSUS President John A. Hoyt.

The office is located in Sacramento, Calif., and is headed by Herbert N. Martin, former executive director of the HSUS California Branch, which has been absorbed by the new region.

Primary objectives of the new office, one of four in the United States, are to provide better assistance to state and local humane societies and to carry out HSUS programs in all areas of the nation.



Martin

Regional directors and their staffs will provide counsel and technical assistance to persons interested in organizing humane societies or animal shelters and to societies or shelter personnel interested in improving their operations. They will assist local groups and individuals in convincing municipal officials to adopt adequate animal control programs and regulations.

The regional staff will also implement appropriate aspects of national programs in their regions, including educational and legislative projects. In addition, they will investigate and prosecute major cruelty cases.

(Continued on next page.)

NEW OFFICE *Continued*

"The West Coast Regional Office will give us an opportunity to better serve individuals and organizations on the West Coast," said HSUS President John A. Hoyt, who was instrumental in establishing the regional structure. "Most important, it gives us another link in our efforts to prevent cruelty to animals throughout the United States."



Hoyt

California will go forward with the same dedication and commitment as before."

Martin comes to the regional directorship from 17 years of professional work in all aspects of national, state, and local humane activities.

Working with Martin will be Field Representative Michael D. Smith, who is the former director of serv-



Smith



Drennon

ices for the California Branch, and Education and Information Director Charlene Drennon, who was office manager of the California Branch.

During the first weeks of opera-

Office Address

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office is located in Suite 4, 1713 J St., Sacramento, Ca. 95814. Phone: (916) 447-3295.

tion, the staff has been concentrating on learning the issues that are most crucial to all areas of the four-state region. They have met with the boards of supervisors and administrative staffs of two counties and the humane societies of several other communities to assist in developing improved animal control programs.

"We are available to counsel both governmental and private groups in all aspects of animal control, including building of facilities and establishment of spay and neuter clinics," Martin said. "We will be glad to help anyone, as staff availability permits."

The staff will also investigate and assist in prosecuting cruelty cases, including mistreatment of exotic animals in captivity.

"We very much need the help and encouragement of all humanitarians in California and the rest of the new region," Hoyt said. "We welcome the support of everyone."

Contributions, Bequests

Any persons wanting to contribute to the work and program of the HSUS West Coast Regional Office are asked to send their gifts to: 1713 J St., Sacramento, Ca. 95814. Every dollar received will be used effectively to underwrite the activities of the West Coast Regional Office. Bequests may be drawn in favor of The Humane Society of the United States, 1604 K St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006. If you want your bequest to be used exclusively in anti-cruelty work in the West Coast Region, simply state so in your bequest, and your wishes will be scrupulously carried out. If you now have a will that names the HSUS California Branch as a beneficiary, please change the name to The Humane Society of the United States, 1604 K St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006.

QUESTION OF VALUES *Continued*

and spring grasses. Recent rains had provided the burros with rich desert pasture. As usual, water was readily available, and the burros themselves appeared to be in excellent condition, with several of the jennys (female burros) being heavy with foal.

Talks with Navy personnel confirmed HSUS's belief that there is currently no justification for the destruction of the burros. By the Navy's own admission, the animals are healthy and have enough food and water for the present. In fact, no photographs or other tangible evidence has been offered to substantiate the claim that the burros were ever starving or in need of management by man. Persistent in the desire to kill the burros, however, the Navy refused to cancel the planned slaughter.

The HSUS petitioned the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Navy to terminate China Lake's "depopulation activities," until a complete environmental impact study and other tests had been conducted. HSUS asked the base commander to delay any action until results of such tests were obtained. HSUS also asked the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture to revoke the Navy's permit until such time as the questions of legality and jurisdiction had been cleared up. Almost immediately that department's Control and Eradication Div. advised the HSUS that it had no intention of revoking the permit to kill the burros.

Supporting the HSUS's position that the burros (which, technically, are protected by California law), should not be harmed, State Assemblyman Ray Gonzales of Bakersfield issued a formal protest to China Lake's base commander. In a telegram to Admiral Suerstadt, Assemblyman Gonzales said, "I wish to express the dismay of myself and a number of my constituents over the proposed slaughter of the wild burros at China Lake. If the controversy is not solved, I will introduce legislation to protect the burros."

This, plus the outcry of an enraged public, has caused the Navy to temporarily forestall its plan pending

further consideration of the matter. This change in sentiment was verified by Under Secretary of the Navy Joseph A. Grimes, Jr., who advised HSUS: "The Naval Weapons Center will discuss and evaluate all aspects and alternatives with agencies involved in wildlife management, with a view of providing a solution to the problem other than eliminating the animals."

HSUS's investigation has turned up a number of interesting points not widely known to the general public. For example: The Navy has routinely slaughtered hundreds of wild burros at the Mojave "B" Range for the last several years, while publicly conceding that the animals in no way affect military operations. In his book **Wild Burro Rescue**, Robert Leslie mentions several instances of feral burros being machine-gunned down by government aircraft, poisoned, trapped, etc. Yet, not one photograph or other shred of tangible evidence has been presented that would prove these shy creatures to be the definite cause of any problem on military land.

The U.S. Park Service has similarly slaughtered wild burros without just cause. The entire eastern portion of Death Valley, once prime habitat for descendants of Death Valley Scotty's pack animals, is now conspicuously devoid of feral burros. Plans to "depopulate" the rest of Death Valley are being carried out right now, in spite of state and federal legislation protecting these living symbols of the Old West!

Officials at China Lake say the burros eat too much and are, thus, adversely affecting native wildlife in the area. As the burro is technically not identified as "native wildlife," they feel justified in requesting its removal. The truth is that the "native wildlife" with which the burros may possibly compete consist of game birds that were imported into the area from India in 1932 by the California Dept. of Fish and Game.

Another interested party, the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) says the burros eat too much, and, thereby, prevent the regrowth of important desert vegetation. The

HSUS Membership

Persons currently members of the former HSUS California Branch are automatically members of the HSUS nationally. While the new West Coast Regional Office will not issue membership cards separately from those issued by national HSUS, membership renewals may be sent either to the HSUS West Coast Regional Office, 1713 J St., Sacramento, Ca. 95814, or HSUS, 1604 K St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006.

truth is that this year BLM has issued permits for the grazing of over 2,400 head of privately owned cattle on the weapons center land. Not enough forage? For whom?

The Dept. of Fish and Game says the burro competes heavily with other species of wildlife in the area. We are already aware of the argument presented by the Navy in behalf of game birds. However, there is another species of wildlife that seems to take precedent over all others, not only in California, but in western states from New Mexico all the way up the Canadian border. Which species? The answer to that simple question is apparently the key to the whole bloody question of burro "management."

Under state and federal law, feral burros are classified as a non-game animal; they cannot be hunted. They serve no purpose other than an occasional pet or pack animal. They

Garden Grove Center Under New Auspices

The Garden Grove Animal Care and Humane Education Center, a project of the former HSUS California Branch, will now be known as the Golden State Humane Society.

"While this project is no longer officially a part of the HSUS program in California, we wish the new Golden State Humane Society much success in this effort," HSUS President John A. Hoyt said. "We are grateful to have had a part in having given birth to this new venture."

cannot (legally) be used as pet food. Their heads cannot adorn the wall of someone's den. Their skin cannot cover a floor in front of a fireplace. Game animals, such as bighorn sheep, for example, are quite a different story. While not much good to eat, their horns and hides are much sought after by trophy hunters. States that offer bighorn trophy hunting are able to make a handsome profit on the sale of licenses, especially to out-of-state hunters. So much so that they are trying to increase the size of bighorn populations within their respective states, through transplants to different areas, thus "increasing the market," so to speak. California would like to enter this lucrative market of recreational bighorn hunting.

As part of an agreement between the Depts. of Fish and Game of California, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico, bighorn sheep herds are being established in areas that appear to offer prime "sheep habitat." Some 100 of these areas have been established by BLM as probable habitat zones. Animals have been imported from Canada and Mexico as a part of this plan.

Enter the feral donkey. As nature would have it, burro and bighorn sheep habitat are very similar. So, simple logic has dictated to the Depts. of Fish and Game that, if the bighorn sheep is to fully proliferate and thus offer good hunting to sportsmen, then natural competitors such as the feral burro must be eliminated. Step by step, this planned mayhem is taking place. China Lake is only a part of that program.

China Lake offers the ideal location for a matrix herd of bighorn sheep from which other herds could be developed in California. The general public, and, therefore, hunters and poachers could be kept away from such a herd, as China Lake is a high security area heavily patrolled by military guards.

It is more than a little ironic that wild burros are being slaughtered in order that bighorn sheep can be cultivated, in order that they, in turn, can be slaughtered. Perhaps it's a Question of Values.

West Coast Legislation

(Abbreviations: SB=Senate Bill;
AB=Assembly Bill; HB=House Bill.)

California

Penal Code Revision (SB 39, Grunsky): Judiciary Comm.

Experimentation in Public Schools (SB 112, Rodda)—prohibits experiments on animals in secondary schools: signed by Governor on June 1.

Exotic Animals (SB 187, Moscone)—prohibits importation and sale of exotic mammals: passed Natural Resources Comm.; pending in Finance Comm.

Spay Incentive (SB 335, Nejedly)—provides \$7 license fee for unspayed dogs and cats, \$3.50 for spayed: passed Local Government Comm.; pending in Finance Comm.

Citation Authority (SB 499, Gregorio)—gives animal control citation authority to employees of humane groups providing municipal animal control service: Judiciary Comm.

Ban on Sale of Cat or Dog Skin (SB 766, Roberti; AB 461, Boatwright)—prohibits killing any dog or cat for purpose of selling skin: Senate Judiciary Comm., House Ways and Means Comm.

Legalize Dog Racing (AB 70, Powers)—authorizes greyhound racing (which HSUS opposes) in state: Government Organization Comm.

Pet Birth Control (AB 77, Cullen)—gives \$50,000 to University of California for research of ingested type contraceptive (no longer stipulates that money is to be raised by a tax on pet food): passed Agriculture Comm.; pending Ways and Means Comm.

Spay Clinic Financing (AB 1056, Arnett)—would provide \$3 million to set up low-cost municipal spay clinics: pending Task Force Study Comm.

Animal Control Commission (AB 2100, Arnett)—sets standards, establishes Commission on Animal Care and Control, creates Animal Control Officers' Training Fund: Criminal Justice Comm., to be heard in August.

Veterinary Assistants (AB 2101, Arnett)—provides licensing and regulation of veterinary assistants: pending, Task Force Study Comm.

Breeders Licensing (AB 2271, Berman)—creates Animal Breeders' License Board: held until completion of Task Force Study Comm. report.

Abolition of Bounties (AB 2405, Boatwright): passed Natural Resources Comm.

Fox Protection (AB 2406, Boatwright)—bans taking of foxes for profit: pending Natural Resources Comm.

Nevada

Restriction on Running at Large (SB 529)—authorizes county commissioners to enact and enforce ordinances licensing dogs and prohibiting animals from running at large: signed into law, effective since March.

Fish and Game Authority (AB 466)—permits Fish and Game Dept. to protect property threatened by any wildlife species: signed into law, effective July 1.

Multiple Humane Societies (AB 533)—permits more than one humane society in a county: signed into law, effective July 1.

Oregon

Cockfighting (SB 201, Fadeley et al.)—bans and provides penalties for promoting animal fights: Agriculture Comm.

Cruelty Code Revision (SB 212, Browne et al.)—redefines cruelty, at request of Oregon Humane Society.

Steer Busting (SB 213, Browne)—defines torture in animal cruelty statutes to include steer busting: Agriculture Comm.

Police Power (SB 223, Howard et al.)—takes police power from attorney general's office and gives humane officers status of peace officers: Agriculture Comm.

Spaying Incentive (HB 2167, Densmore)—allows exemption on personal state income tax up to \$100 for spaying dogs and cats.

Steel Jaw Trap Ban (HB 2544, Willits): tabled.

Bounty Repeal (HB 2593, Whiting).

State Pet Animal Control Act (HB 2734)—creates state advisory committee: Agriculture and Natural Resources Comm.

Dog Control (HB 2783, Patterson)—designates certain dogs as nuisances and establishes dog control violations; sets up Dog License Fund for emergency care; authorizes owner of livestock killed by dogs to bring action against dog owner for double damages: Agriculture Comm.

Endangered Species (HB 2811, Whiting)—bans importation and sale of certain endangered species.

Bounties on Predators (HB 2812, Whiting et al.)—authorizes Director of Agriculture to establish bounties for predatory animals in areas where they threaten livestock or crops.

Washington

Revision of Cruelty Law (SB 2554, Murray, Metcalf)—to revise state laws on prevention of cruelty to animals.

Ban on Steer Busting (SB 2545, Scott, Francis).

Ban on Steel Jaw Trap (HB 701, Rable, Nelson).

Ban on Wild Animal Skins (HB 439, Bluechel).

HSUS West Coast Regional Office
1713 J St., Sacramento, Ca. 95814

I enclose \$_____ to support continuing programs to combat cruelty in the West Coast Region.

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