

## State releasing numbers of animals destroyed

The Maryland State Department of Agriculture has begun to collect and publish quarterly reports on the number of animals destroyed by public and private animal shelters. This is a new requirement from the state legislature, and is believed to be the first of its kind.

The first press release under the new requirement announced that more than 80% of the 272,000 dogs and cats collected by animal control and humane organizations in Maryland in 1978 were destroyed because no homes could be found for them. Agencies responding to the questionnaire sent out by the state indicated that 80% of their total operating costs were for handling animals that were eventually killed.

State Agriculture Department spokesman Tony Evans has told the press that data collection has been "a difficult project" and points to the dispute among animal welfare advocates over releasing euthanasia figures. Some groups resist publicizing the high numbers of animals euthanized, believing it will result in more pet owners abandoning unwanted animals to the streets instead of taking them to shelters.

However, Phyllis Wright, HSUS Director of Animal Sheltering and Control, considers the new law "an excellent idea. The community cannot deal with a problem it doesn't know exists. Animal facilities that tell the truth about pet overpopulation rather than sugar-coating the problem have a better relationship with the community."

Evans says he will try to improve data collection by visiting the shelters individually. The press releases are sent to 150 news outlets in the state. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is at Parole Plaza Office Bldg., Annapolis, MD 21401. ■

## Workshop

An HSUS Animal Control Workshop will be held June 15-16 in Albany, NY. HSUS workshops feature informative presentations by staff experts in animal sheltering and control. For complete information on the workshop, contact HSUS New England Regional Office, 630 Oakwood Ave., Suite 213, West Hartford, CT 06110, telephone (203)522-4908. ■

## Transporting injured animals

by John E. Tiernan

Tiernan is executive director of the Monterey Co. SPCA, PO Box 3058, Monterey, CA 93940.

Almost daily in our humane/animal control work, we are required to respond to calls regarding injured or sick animals. How we render aid and transport an injured animal can often have much bearing on the ultimate fate of the animal.

We believe that the most important item to use in handling an injured wild or domestic animal is a blanket that is durable and washable -- for example, a military surplus blanket. A blanket can be used in place of a net, a pair of gloves or a stretcher.

An injured animal is normally frightened, and the most docile pet can become aggressive when in pain. If you feel an injured animal may bite, place a blanket over its head to immobilize and calm it. You may want to protect yourself by wearing gloves or placing a cloth or gauze muzzle around the animal's snout. You can also use a rubber tourniquet, which

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

A blanket can help immobilize and calm an injured animal, and a collar put on to secure it.



Monterey County SPCA

will slip on and off easily. (These are available at low cost from medical suppliers -- check your telephone directory yellow pages.) Muzzles are sometimes difficult to apply, however, especially on cats and small or blunt-nosed dogs.

When you are ready to transport the animal, be very cognizant of the type of injury it has sustained. If the animal is unable to stand, it may have a pelvic or spinal injury. Lift the animal carefully, placing one arm between each set of legs while supporting the head and hindquarters to reduce movement of the spine. If two people are present, it is best to move an injured animal on a stretcher or a taut blanket.

Rough handling of an injured animal can worsen its condition. An injured animal, like an injured person, will naturally assume the least painful position. If possible, allow the animal to stay in its chosen position.

The same transporting procedures apply to injured wild animals. Again, a blanket is especially valuable in quieting and transporting these animals. A case in point is a recent incident where two of our officers rescued a coyote in a leghold trap. The only equipment used to retrieve and transport the coyote was a large blanket.

A primary cause of death in injured wild animals, especially birds, is shock. It is imperative to keep these animals warm and calm, and again, a blanket is ideal for this. If we're called regarding an injured deer, our first objective is to secure a blanket around its head, which will calm the animal and allow us to analyze the extent of injury.

You should be prepared to handle emergency situations at any time. Officers' vehicles should be equipped with a blanket, a pair of gloves and a small container such as a cardboard "Porta-Pet" carrier. To be equipped when an emergency arises could mean saving an animal's life. ■