SUCCESSFUL SESSION ENDS IN CONGRESS

In the final days of the 102nd Congress, three landmark animal-protection bills were passed, making this one of The HSUS's most successful legislative sessions.

The International Dolphin Protection Act (P.L. 102–523), sponsored by Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts and vigorously supported by The HSUS, was signed on October 26. After twenty years of controversy, the U.S. government, animal-protection and conservation groups, and key foreign countries finally worked out an international agreement that we hope will end the intentional slaughter of dolphins.

Now the U.S. State Department must seek agreements with additional nations for a five-year international moratorium on the harvesting of tuna using purse-seine nets set over schools of dolphins, beginning March 1, 1994. Countries that are currently being embargoed by the United States under the Marine Mammal Protection Act can have the embargo lifted if they commit to (1) implementing the moratorium; (2) allowing impartial observers on vessels that now purse-seine for tuna; and (3) reducing dolphin deaths prior to the moratorium. If a nation breaks the agreement, the United States could impose a new embargo.

The October 5 passage of the Wild Bird Conservation Act (P.L. 102–440), also sponsored by Representative Studds, represents the culmination of four years of negotiations between The HSUS, other animal-protection and environmental organizations, ornithological societies, the pet industry, and bird breeders. The legislation establishes (1) an immediate moratorium on the importation of the most threatened bird species; (2) an import ban one year after enactment of the bill on all bird species listed under appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (or CITES); and (3) a ban on the importation of other bird species if there is sufficient evidence that continued trade is imperiling bird populations.

HSUS field investigations, the establishment of a wild-bird rehabilitation center in Honduras by Humane Society International, and HSUS lobbying were instrumental in passage of the bill.

Congress approved the Driftnet Moratorium Enforcement Act (P.L. 102–587) on October 4. This bill, sponsored by Representative Studds and Sen. Bob Packwood of Oregon, implements the U.N. resolution calling for a global moratorium on the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas by December 31, 1992. Nations continuing to use driftnets will be denied access to U.S. ports and face an embargo of their fish, and possibly non-fish, products.

Although the Department of Defense (DOD) uses more animals for research than any other government agency and many such animals are covered under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), the DOD is not subject to review by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which enforces the AWA. HSUS recommendations for a DOD report on all of its research performed on live animals and for a study of such programs by the General Accounting Office were incorporated into the House Armed Services Committee's report for the DOD authorization bill.

The Animal Enterprise Protection Act (P.L. 102–346), which makes it a federal crime to trespass or destroy materials at facilities that engage in animal research, was signed on August 26. Although The HSUS does not condone vandalism, arson, or any type of violence, the initial bill was so broad that it would have impeded legitimate investigations of potential violations of animal-protection laws and deterred whistleblowers from reporting such violations. The HSUS brought these issues to the attention of the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees, and the final version is responsive to our concerns.

Unfortunately, in August the U.S. Department of the Interior denied a 1989 petition filed by The HSUS and others to upgrade the African elephant from threatened to endangered status under the Endangered Species Act, despite evidence of small populations and habitat destruction. The HSUS will continue to emphasize that overwhelming evidence warrants the listing of the African elephant as endangered and press for further protection of this beleaguered species.

THANK YOU!

The HSUS thanks Rep. Charles Bennett of Florida for his support of animal-protection legislation, particularly large-scale driftnets on the high seas. Representative Bennett is retiring after forty-four years in Congress. We wish also to thank Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, for his work in protecting dolphins and wild birds, and Rep. Ronald Dellums of California, for his efforts to protect animals in military experiments.