

## Drawing a Bead on Blood Sports Shooting Down Hunters and Tax Cheats



Trophy animals. ©TED SOQUI/CORBIS

In a major victory, nearly 70 percent of Michigan voters rejected a proposal on the November ballot that would have reopened the state to mourning dove hunting. The vote crowned a two-year grassroots campaign by a coalition of humane, conservation, farming, and faith-based groups led by The HSUS.

Special interests including the National Rifle Association, the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, and Safari Club International had previously lobbied hard to overturn Michigan's 100-year-old ban on dove hunting. In 2004, the legislature bowed under the pressure and passed a bill reclassifying mourning doves as game birds. That fall, shooters killed more than 28,000 doves. In response, our coalition volunteers collected 275,000 signatures—73 percent more than needed to place a statewide measure on the ballot.

In Oregon, the canned hunt industry was dealt a setback. The case involved a game farm owner who continued to allow paying customers to shoot confined deer on his property more than seven years after The HSUS successfully urged the state's Fish and Wildlife Commission to ban the hunting of fenced exotic or game animals. After a lengthy court battle, the owner appeared to be winning until we asked the Oregon Supreme Court to consider the issue. In November, the judges ruled in our favor.

Bills to allow canned hunting in Indiana and New Hampshire were also defeated.



New Jersey bear hunt. ©ROBERT SCIARRINO/STAR LEDGER/CORBIS

Internet hunting is another blood sport bereft of skill or challenge. Shooters from anywhere in the country log on to a website, survey live targets, line up their shot, and kill fenced animals by firing remote-controlled guns with the click of a computer mouse. During the year, Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and South Carolina prohibited this inhumane and unsporting practice.

These victories brought the number of states that outlaw Internet hunting to 25. In yet another blow to online shooters, we convinced Internet auction giant eBay to remove all canned hunt auctions from its website, with more than 100 canceled in the first week alone.

We logged another victory in federal court when a district judge declared that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policies opening or expanding sport hunting in 37 national wildlife refuges were unlawful.

Another major blow against egregious hunting practices came when a trophy hunting tax scam was shut down following a two-year HSUS investigation. We revealed that trophy hunters were donating their taxidermy mounts to phony museums and receiving large tax deductions—money used to finance their next big game shooting excursions.

In Congress, The HSUS worked closely with Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) to successfully close the tax code loophole, protecting wildlife around the world and saving American taxpayers an estimated \$49 million over the next decade.



Sen. Charles Grassley and trophy mount. ©TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL

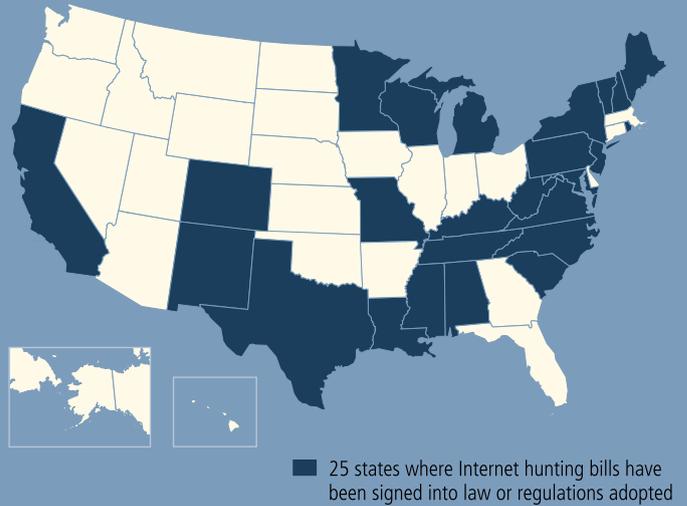
©GLENWOOD JACKSON



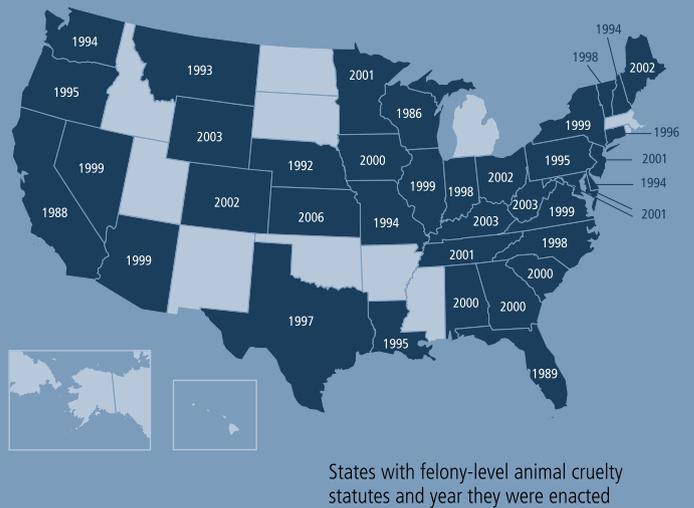
“In just two years, we’ve banned the sick practice of Internet hunting in 25 states. There’s no sport in shooting an animal remotely and we have a 50-state strategy to eradicate this pay-per-view slaughter. I aim to see the day when society uses technological advances to help animals, not to create new ways to harm them.”

—Michael Markarian, Executive Vice President, External Affairs

### Internet Hunting Bans



### States with Felony-Level Animal Cruelty Statutes



## Cruelty as Spectacle and Entertainment

They're euphemistically called tournaments, roundups, and shoots. The quarry is any creature who can be dispatched in large enough numbers to entertain those who enjoy killing animals—many they regard as “vermin”—on a grand scale.

A century ago, wealthy safari-goers in Africa and Asia laid waste to vast numbers of big game. In the United States, market hunters all but wiped out bison on the Great Plains and succeeded with the passenger pigeon. Today's popular targets include snakes, pigeons, prairie dogs, coyotes, and sharks—even pen-raised game birds. Vice President Dick Cheney drew widespread criticism at a Pennsylvania canned hunt when he and a small group of friends shot 417 pheasants released in front of their guns like so many live skeet. After lunch, his party killed hundreds of mallard ducks.

The fact that these animal massacres are legal doesn't stop The HSUS from trying to halt them. In 2006, we campaigned hard at some of the 20 shark tournaments and 25 rattlesnake roundups we knew about to increase public awareness. Sharks, a keystone species, are under enormous pressure worldwide from finning and fishing, and their senseless slaughter and mutilation in contests only encourages utter disregard for their lives.

In rattlesnake roundups, contestants spray gasoline into the snakes' hiding places and use poles tipped with fish hooks to extract them. Roundups end with grotesque scenes of torment and public slaughter.

At prairie dog contests, shooters blast away as the animals pop out of their burrows, killing them by the hundreds in their vast colonies. A planned Wyoming hunt on federal land was halted by the government after we complained about its cruelty and its ecologically reckless nature.

The HSUS returned last year to Pennsylvania, location of the infamous Hegin's live pigeon shoot that The Fund for Animals successfully ended in 1999. Our new campaign resulted in cancellation of another pigeon derby in Lackawanna County in which 15,000 birds were scheduled for live target practice.

In Oxford, North Carolina, our team gathered evidence to support an injunction to ban a five-day shoot at the private Dogwood Gun Club that killed an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 birds. The future of this event, which draws shooters from around the country, remains in legal limbo, but The HSUS plans to return each year until the massacre is ended.



Tiger shark caught at a Martha's Vineyard tournament.

## History of State Ballot Initiative Wins

1990	Calif.	Bans cougar hunting
1992	Colo.	Bans spring, bait, and hound hunting of black bears
1994	Ariz.	Bans steel-jaw and other traps on public lands
1994	Ore.	Bans bear baiting, cougar hunting with hounds
1996	Alaska	Restricts airborne wolf and fox hunting
1996	Calif.	Defeats cougar hunting resumption
1996	Colo.	Restricts steel-jaw and other traps
1996	Mass.	Restricts steel-jaw traps, hound hunting of bears and bobcats
1996	Ore.	Defeats resumption of bear baiting, hound hunting of bears and cougars
1996	Wash.	Bans bear baiting, hound hunting of bears, cougars, bobcats
1998	Ariz.	Bans cockfighting
1998	Calif.	Bans cruel and indiscriminate traps and poisons; bans horse slaughter
1998	Colo.	Defeats uniform livestock rules; regulates hog factories
1998	Mo.	Bans cockfighting
2000	Ala.	Defeats bill to ban wildlife ballot issues; prohibits airborne land-and-shoot wolf hunting
2000	Ariz.	Defeats bill to require two-thirds majority on wildlife ballot issues
2000	Mont.	Bans new game farm licenses
2000	Wash.	Restricts steel-jaw and other traps
2002	Ariz.	Defeats expansion of greyhound racing gambling
2002	Fla.	Bans hog gestation crates
2002	Ga.	Permits specialty spay/neuter license plates
2002	Okla.	Bans cockfighting; defeats signature requirement for animal issues
2006	Ariz.	Bans hog gestation crates and veal calf crates
2006	Mich.	Bans mourning dove hunting