PNRO Fall 2001

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Geese Peace Northwest: Give Geese A Chance

When summer approaches and the days lengthen, Pacific Northwesterners emerge from their homes to appreciate the scenery and wildlife that make our region such an enticing place to live. But as rural habitat shrinks because of soaring human populations and increasing development, this is also the season when people and wildlife often come into conflict.

In the summer of 2000, Canada geese made headlines in the Puget Sound region, earning the fatal reputation of “nuisances.” Park goers and homeowners, frustrated by geese in urban areas and the messy fecal matter the waterfowl leave behind, demanded action. The result? More than 3,000 of these once-revered birds were rounded up and slaughtered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Wildlife Services program. This so-called “solution” to a human—continued on page 2

Canada geese nest once a year in the spring in the Pacific Northwest region. Both the male and female tend the flightless young until mid-summer.

Washington Coast Native Nations Program a Success

In May, PNRO teamed up with The HSUS West Coast Regional Office and Remote Area Medical (RAM) veterinary services to bring spay/neuter clinics to the Quinault and Makah reservations on the coast of Washington State. Over the course of nine days, the RAM team spayed or neutered approximately 260 dogs and cats, and administered vaccinations and medical treatment to more than 100 additional animals.

This year’s program also included a comprehensive humane education program aimed at promoting animal care and protection among the clinic participants and community members. This effort was well received. Local tribal members Dollie Price and Maynard Sampson-Johns were so enamored with the program that they signed on as full-time volunteers for the duration of our stay on the Quinault Reservation. Community members such as Dollie and Maynard soon became adept at talking about dog bite prevention and the importance of spaying and neutering.

“It was a privilege to work closely with the Quinault and Makah reservations on such an exciting and far-reaching program that positively impacts so many lives,” says Stephanie Bell, PNRO program coordinator. “The native nations program literally prevents thousands of unwanted animals from being born into lives of suffering. It also empowers community members like Dollie and Maynard to serve as role models and spread the message of animal protection in their own communities.”

The education program and the large number of animals who were sterilized or received medical care free of charge will have a significant impact in both the Quinault and Makah communities, where financial resources for animals, animal protection education, and access to veterinary clinics are extremely limited. Animal overpopulation is a major concern in both communities, where many animals roam at large, animal/vehicle accidents are frequent, diseases such as mange and distemper are prevalent, and dog bites are common.

PNRO Program Coordinator Stephanie Bell explains the importance of animal vaccinations during a native nations educational event on the Makah reservation.
No Contest for Coyotes

In the weekend of February 17, 2001, the Northcentral Washington chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation sponsored and held a coyote derby, a contest in which the hunter with the most kills wins a prize. This barbaric event was the first of its kind to take place in Washington State. The stated goal of the event was for contestants to kill as many coyotes as possible during the allotted time period. Individuals who killed the most coyotes increased their chances of winning raffle prizes. Unbelievably, the permit for this event was issued by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Participants killed 124 coyotes during the three-day event—50 males and 74 females. The grand-prize winner of the event killed 16 coyotes. The reason for the contest, as put forth by the organizers, was to attempt to decrease the coyote population and reduce coyote predation on deer herds. This rationale is unscientific and disingenuous. There is little, if any, scientific information to show that killing coyotes will boost prey animal populations or that a sustained reduction of coyote numbers can be accomplished randomly. Therefore, a coyote derby is unprofessional and disrespectful treatment of Washington’s wildlife.

Legislative Update

The 2001 Oregon legislative session was truly a milestone for the state’s animals. A record-breaking number of animal-related bills captured the attention of lawmakers, media, and the public. PNRO’s Oregon Program Coordinator Kelly Peterson spent the duration of the session lobbying tirelessly on bills addressing trapping, tundra swans, wolves, farm animals, cougars, elk ranching, and numerous other animal issues. In addition, strengthening Oregon’s anti-cockfighting law was of top priority.

Although it is illegal to fight roosters for entertainment or illegal gambling purposes in Oregon, it is still legal to raise, sell, and possess birds for fighting. This gaping loophole severely undermines the ability of officials to enforce the state law; since cockfighters can elude prosecution simply by claiming they are raising fighting birds for shipment to states where the practice is still legal. As a result, although cockfighting is technically banned in Oregon, this barbaric “sport” is still all too common. In early May, the House overwhelmingly approved H.B. 2930, which increased penalties for cockfighting and banned possession of birds and implements for fighting purposes. Unfortunately, a Senate version of the bill with a similar level of support was stymied by committee. A vote of the House, Mollala Sen. Roger Bayler. PNRO’s Kelly Peterson worked around the clock to keep this important continued on page 3

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created problem does nothing to remedy the situation. In fact, removing birds from the rooftops simply opens up areas to other Canada geese. Indeed, this summer saw geese congregating in the same locations from which they were removed last year, and USDA officials again moved in to round up and slaughter thousands more geese.

The Puget Sound’s moderate climate, abundance of water bodies, and acres of waterfront lawns are a virtual goose nirvana. Unless we alter our strategy, we will continue to have conflicts with geese—no matter how many birds we kill. But there is a greater long-term solution. The HSUS does not believe that it is effective. The HSUS does not believe that it is effective.

Last spring, in an effort to provide humane, non-lethal alternatives to those dealing with Canada goose conflicts, PNRO launched a program called GeesePeace Northwest. Modeled after the successful GeesePeace program on the East Coast, this effort offers communities an opportunity to stabilize and reduce Canada goose populations by using humane tactics that include egg collecting, border collies who scare geese away from “hot spots,” and habitat modification.

In the first effort of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, GeesePeace Northwest trained 60 volunteers to search for, identify, and humanely control Canada goose eggs (lightly coating goose eggs with corn oil arrests development of the eggs, thereby reducing immediate population growth). Recently, 30 volunteers from Klamath Falls and Medford, Ore., were trained in the same methodology. A second method of reducing their number is available—one that’s worked well elsewhere—what are we teaching our children if we continue to rely on the lethal option?

PNRO will work to expand the GeesePeace Northwest program throughout the Puget Sound region. We will continue to challenge parks departments and communities to forsake slaughter and opt for more effective and responsible approaches to managing conflicts with Canada geese. You can help too. Contact your local parks department to express your disapproval of lethal methods for Canada goose control. Ask them to implement the GeesePeace model instead.

Reflect for a moment...

How can I help animals and receive income and tax savings at the same time?

By making a planned giving gift to The Humane Society of the United States, you can assure that animals will receive the protection they need while providing significant tax savings and income to yourself. Setting The HSUS as a beneficiary of your estate, insurance, or retirement plan will provide lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for future tasks. We will be happy to send our latest information on planned giving and our programs to help animals.

Mail this response in the envelope enclosed or send directly to The Humane Society of the United States, PNRO, 5250 University Way NE, Ste 201, Seattle, WA 98105

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Washington Trappers Sore Losers at the Ballot Box

On November 7, 2001, Washington (voters passed Initiative I-713 [I-713]), which banned the use of body-1 gripping animal traps—steel-jawed leghold traps, padded leghold traps, Conibear traps, and leg and neck snares—as well as various types of poisons (Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide). As a result, thousands of animals will now be spared the agony of being caught and killed in barbaric traps. Less than three months after the election, fur trappers wasted no time in filing a lawsuit in an attempt to undo the voters’ will. In the two years prior to passage of I-713, recreational and commercial trappers in Washington State killed more than 35,000 wild animals, including otters, hawks, hares, minks, and coyotes. That’s more than 35,000 animals who struggled and suffered prolonged, painful deaths after being caught in traps. In reality, the number of trapped animals was even higher. False traps are indiscriminate. They kill land mines, severely injuring and killing thousands of “non-target” animals, including family pets, songbirds, and even threatened and endangered species.

I-713 qualified for the ballot with an all-volunteer signature gathering effort and passed with a 56 percent majority vote. Nevertheless, trappers sought to overturn this popular citizens’ initiative in order to protect their unsavory hobby. We are happy to report that on July 13, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Richard Strophi dismissed the lawsuit that sought to overturn I-713. “The trappers failed in the court of public opinion, and now they failed in the courts. It is a victory for the wildlife and people of Washington State,” said PNRO Director Lisa Wathne.

Defending I-713 from additional legal and legislative challenges will be PNRO’s top priority. We will also work to ensure implementation of the initiative, which includes educating communities about effective, non-lethal solutions to wildlife conflicts.
Director's Report

By Lisa Wathne
Director of the Pacific Northwest Regional Office

Who Are We? Pacific Northwest Regional Office Staff

It is my great pleasure to serve as director of The HSUS’s new Pacific Northwest Regional Office. I’d like to begin my ongoing correspondence with you by introducing the PNRO staff and myself. I have worked for the past two years as The HSUS’s Washington State legislative field representative. Prior to that I worked for King County (Washington) Animal Control for four-and-a-half years, where I created, implemented, and oversaw the agency’s first shelter adoption program. I also spent seven years at the Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in its animal advocacy department. I have worked on a variety of animal advocacy campaigns, including 1-655, the successful 1996 ballot initiative that banned bear baiting and hound hunting of bears, cougars, and bobcats in Washington State, as well as the anti-trapping initiative that passed last fall. I helped to pass the Pasado Law, making intentional cruelty to animals a Class C felony in Washington State. And I coordinated HSUS activities at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Summit in November of 1999.

Stephanie Bell joins our office as the Washington State program coordinator. She worked for five years as a travel writer and wrote quarterly newsletters for the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Stephanie also worked for PAWS in its companion animal shelter and its animal advocacy department, where she helped conduct puppy mill investigations, as well as other animal welfare and advocacy campaigns. In addition, she worked for PetShelter Network, a Web site promoting shelter animal adoptions.

Kelly Peterson will serve as the Oregon State program coordinator. Most recently, Kelly served as the campaign manager for Measure 97, the Oregon anti-trapping initiative. She has worked in the animal protection community for many years, including as HSUS’s Oregon statewide coordinator, co-founder and organizer of the Humane Oregon Political Action Committee; and as a fundraiser for the Sierra Club and Oregon’s Water Watch.

Stephanie, Kelly, and I share a deep commitment to the respectful and humane treatment of all animals. We hope you’ll join our efforts as we work on behalf of the animals of Washington and Oregon, and we invite you to contact us with your comments, concerns, thoughts, and ideas.

PNRO staff from left: Director Lisa Wathne, Oregon State Program Coordinator Kelly Peterson, and Washington State Program Coordinator Stephanie Bell.

Contacting HSUS

Write:
HSUS Pacific Northwest Regional Office
5200 University Way, NE, Ste. 201
Seattle, WA 98105

Call:
206-526-0949

Fax:
206-526-0989

E-Mail:
pnro@hsus.org

Promoting the protection of all animals

Save This Date!

When: May 29–June 1, 2002
Where: Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas
Why: The HSUS National Conference on Animals in Disasters. You’ll meet hundreds of people involved with caring for animals in disasters: emergency management personnel, animal shelter staff, community volunteers, and more. You’ll gain valuable information about disaster planning, preparedness, and response as well as important hands-on training and much, much more. For more information, contact Andy Adams at 301-258-3063.

The PNRO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Pacific Northwest Regional Office, 5200 University Way, NE, Ste. 201, Seattle, WA 98105; 206-526-0949. Lisa Wathne, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays. © 2001 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved. A copy of the latest financial information filed by The HSUS may be obtained by contacting The HSUS, Office of the Treasurer, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-452-1100; or in Washington, The Charities Division, Office of the Secretary of State, State of Washington, Olympia, WA 98504-0422, or by calling 1-800-332-4483. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by any state.

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continued from “Legislation,” page 3 legislation moving. Despite incredible efforts from powerful legislators, law enforcement officers, activists, the media, the governor’s office, and even from business lobbyists, Sen. Beyrer stalled all anti-cockfighting legislation.

The loss was very disappointing, but awareness of this issue is now at an all-time high, and momentum continues to build. PNRO will continue to work diligently on this issue during the next session of the Oregon Legislature. The HSUS would like to thank House Judiciary Committee Chairman Max Williams for his leadership in championing this legislation.