WASTE OF LIFE AND TAX DOLLARS

The following type of activity may be happening in your county: Dean Lawrence, President of Nevada County Humane Society, and Karen Rosenberg, Editor of Western Slopes Connection newspaper, were outraged at their tax money being wasted on trapping programs that are ineffective, cruel, and unnecessary. They decided to amass facts and figures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife trapping reports. They reviewed these records for 1975 and then went to the Nevada County Board of Supervisors to testify the program should be discontinued. They found that in 1975, $35,000 was spent on losses which totaled only $17,889. Not only was twice the amount of money spent, but over half of it (according to the trappers’ own reports) went to exterminate skunks and raccoons to make the world safe for chickens whose owners hadn’t built “varmint-proof” chicken coops. According to Rosenberg’s testimony before the Board of Supervisors, one case was a woman who lost $13.00 worth of fowl and had the trapper out forty-five times. Another man lost $3.50 in chickens and called the trapper out twenty-nine times. But what about the claim these programs are needed to control rabid animals? Ms. Rosenberg said, “According to the California Health Department there have only been 2.5 cases of rabid animals per year confirmed for Nevada County.”

IS THE PROGRAM CRUEL? The Nevada County citizens found the steeljaw trap was used seven out of ten times by one trapper and nine out of ten by another. Such traps have been outlawed by a number of other counties. Do steeljaw traps catch non-target animals? According to Rosenberg’s findings 23 dogs, 2 house cats, 1 burro and a goat had all been cruelly caught in these traps. How effective is a county trapping program? Studies have shown that heavy trapping pressure in a given area actually stimulates the coyote to reproduce at an earlier age, and perhaps bear larger litters, which helps explain why coyotes still abound despite decades of bounty hunting and millions of tax dollars spent. A recent study by Longhurst and Connolly at U.C. Davis concluded that no significant impact on coyote population in a given area can be achieved unless 75% of the coyotes’ population is eliminated every year for 50 years. Although the Nevada County Board of Supervisors unanimously refused to listen to Lawrence and Rosenberg’s pleas, they don’t plan to leave it at that. Dean Lawrence is a past member of the Board of Supervisors and former County Counsel. In 1977 Ms. Rosenberg found, interestingly enough, that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has closed its trapping records to public view using the Privacy Act as the excuse. The HSUS applauds these humanitarians’ efforts and has offered to help in their fight. If you have information about trapping in your county, send it in. The HSUS-WCRO is compiling information to be used to outlaw the steeljaw trap.

As We Go To Press...

Dean Lawrence and Karen Rosenberg, as taxpayers are filing suit against the county of Nevada with reference to the trapping contract and The Humane Society of the United States has joined the suit as first plaintiff.
CROSSBOW HUNTING PROPOSAL-KILLED

On May 27, 1977 Eric Sakach, Field Representative for The HSUS-WCRO testified at a California Fish and Game Commission meeting, against a proposal to legalize use of the crossbow to kill large and small animals. Upon learning of the proposal, the WCRO alerted other animal welfare groups in the state. Mail-grams and letters of protest were sent to the Commissioners by the WCRO, humane organizations, humanitarians and law-enforcement agencies. Mr. Sakach testified that such a proposal would only encourage poaching and add one more cruel weapon to the arsenal now used against wildlife. The proposal was not approved, crossbows remain illegal.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

CALIFORNIA
Governor Brown vetoed the sea turtle bill. Had this bill passed it would have opened up a whole industry based on turtle meat and products. Euthanasia bill AB 1501 is dead. A Senate committee plans an initiative on the June 78 ballot to outlaw decompression chambers. Assemblyman Chappie’s AB 417 passed assembly. It is now before the Senate Agriculture Committee. It would recognize freeze branding as legal. AB 946 removing the cock’s comb presumption from the code was signed into law (Chapter 307). In the past, if a cock’s comb was clipped, it was considered prima facie evidence of intent to fight cocks. Assemblyman Chimbo’s AB 584 allowing a mule racing pilot project is on third reading in the Senate. Robert’s SB 490 preventing intentional cruelty in the killing of animals in making movies is now in the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The Senate Transportation Committee has Senator Carpenter’s SB 925, which states a driver who hits an animal must stop and report it to a humane society or animal control agency. AB 1527, Chimbo, would change the structure of animal control by allowing animal control districts.

OREGON
The Oregon House passed a bill, HB 2345, cracking down on dogfighting and cockfighting. HB 2928 will change the provision for appointment of humane officers.

WASHINGTON STATE
State passed a law allowing humane societies to use sodium pentobarbital for euthanasia.

BLOODLESS BULLFIGHTS IN CALIFORNIA

Promoters of so-called bloodless bullfights are seeking to use a loophole in the California Penal Code to popularize bullfighting in this state. Although officially prohibited by law in 1975, an archaic exemption remains under penal code section 597m, which reads: “which reads: held in connection with religious celebration or exemption remains under penal code section 597m, officially prohibited by law in 1975, an archaic prohibiting bloodless bullfights, contests or exhibitions religious can get this provision off offering its assistance, the scales will be tipped on California, which were held by ropes. Although this event was Cockfighting—A Crackdown

The Humane Society of the United States-West Coast Regional Office has offered its assistance to law enforcement agencies investigating cockfighting. With- in the last few months, the WCRD has received numerous requests for help from district attorneys and law enforcement agencies involved in such cases. Unfortunately, many times the cases are so weak that the charges are dropped. The WCRO is hoping that by offering its assistance, the scales will be tipped on cockfighters and there will be more convictions and higher penalties.
You Can Fight Trapping

HSUS has produced an Awareness Kit on Cruelties of Trapping to help individuals and organizations desiring to conduct anti-trapping campaigns in their states and communities. Each kit contains the following items:

- 10 buttons—“Don’t Get Wrapped in a Fur That’s Been Trapped”
- 10 bumper stickers with same slogan
- 10 posters of two bobcats in trap with slogan “Fashion Doesn’t Justify This Cruelty. Don’t Wear Fur.”
- 10 handout flyers with same slogan
- 6 additional copies of report on trapping (HSUS special)
- 2 newspaper ads aimed at banning the steeljaw trap
- 2 sets repro photos for newspaper articles
- 2 sets public service scripts for radio
- 1 set sample letters to the editor
- 1 “Posted, No Trapping” sign
- 1 model state law to ban the steeljaw trap
- 1 petition for obtaining pledges to not wear fur

Each set $4.50. Prices for additional quantities of individual items included in kit. When using HSUS return envelope, specify how many kits.

1977 HSUS ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO

OCTOBER 13-16 1977
at VACATION VILLAGE

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Dr. Michael Fox, Roger Caras, Dr. John C. Lilly

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Workshops by nationally known humanitarians;
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REGISTRATION:
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TO RESERVE:
Send your check to HSUS, 2100 L St., NW
Washington D.C. 20037

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:
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Mission Beach, San Diego, California
714/274-4630

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office serves California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. Requests for assistance should be addressed to Charlene Drennon, West Coast Regional Director, 1713 J St., Suite 4, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916-447-3295). All contributions made to the HSUS West Coast Regional Office will be used for regional purposes and are tax-deductible.