Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program to be Launched

GLRO is launching an exciting collaborative program to sterilize pets in Ohio's Appalachian region. GLRO will coordinate a remote program that sets up large-scale spay/neuter clinics in community centers such as fire houses and auditoriums, where pet owners in Ohio's Appalachian counties can easily bring their animals for sterilization at low or no cost. Our partners in this program will be Remote Area Medical (RAM), a volunteer veterinary medical corps, and participants from various organizations that are formally organizing under the name Southeastern Ohio Humane Organizations (SOHO). RAM will coordinate the medical aspects and SOHO will provide local logistical support, such as finding appropriate sites where clinics can be held and housing the volunteer veterinarians.

GLRO was recently notified that we continued on page 3

Living in Harmony with Canada Geese

The beauty of Canada geese is unmistakable. Their haunting calls and distinctive flying formations signal the change of seasons. People all over the Great Lakes region enjoy the heartwarming sight of the lifelong mates carefully herding their downy families in the spring. Yet these wild neighbors are increasingly viewed and treated as nuisances. In places such as Ohio, state wildlife agencies have instituted goose round-ups when adults have molted and babies are not yet able to fly. The frightened animals are corralled and sent to commercial slaughterhouses, on the pretext of providing meat to food banks. The round-ups continue even though the question has been raised as to the fitness of the meat for human consumption because of the feeding habits of the birds, who prefer lawns lush from heavy fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide applications. When geese are not slaughtered, they are transported out of the area to provide hunting opportunities in other states as they attempt to fly back home. Only a handful of places around the country are attempting to address the conflicts between humans and Canada geese with positive long-term goose management programs that build positive community spirit (see companion article page 2).

Why have goose problems become pronounced in recent years? The Canada goose was nearly extirpated in the Great Lakes region states by the early 1900s. State wildlife agencies reintroduced geese as a potential game species from remnant populations in Minnesota and Canada during the mid-to-late 20th century. Humans have significantly altered the natural landscape in ways that have attracted and maintained large numbers of Canada geese in suburban and urban settings. Geese graze on grass, but they need water for safety during the molt and before their young can fly. Instead of migrating north in the summer months, the reintroduced geese tend to stay on golf courses, lakeside subdivisions, and large urban parks year-round. And since the long-lived birds usually return to nest on the sites where they were hatched, their populations in the cities and towns of the northern and central United States continue to grow.

Geese and their eggs and nests are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In some states, such as Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has handed the responsibility for Canada goose management to the state wildlife agencies. While this can be good in places such as Michigan, where the state is moving ahead on creative humane programs in urban areas, it can also be bad in places such as continued on page 3...
A Humane Toolkit for Goose Management

A combination of techniques may be required to mitigate problems between humans and Canada geese. Landowners must evaluate their sites to develop an effective management plan. Small landowners will need different techniques from larger sites with extensive or long-term dilemmas.

Site Evaluation

Some questions to ask include: How large is the site? Where are the conflicts occurring between geese and humans? What are those conflicts? Do the geese walk or fly to the site? How many geese use the site at different times of the year? Do geese nest on the site?

Community Involvement

Who are the stakeholders for the site? How can they be gathered together to discuss and develop an effective management plan? GLRO can provide information to all parties concerning goose biology, humane management techniques, human health concerns (souls unwarrented), and community involvement programs.

Humane Toolkit

● Chemical repellents: Two chemical repellents, methyl anthranilate and anthraquinone, have been registered for use with Canada geese. Both have proven effective in controlled situations. They are either sprayed on lawns to which they give an unpleasant taste, or applied as a fog to move large flocks of geese. The expense and timing of the use of these products should be considered, and each is most effective when used in conjunction with other techniques.

● Harassment: These techniques also work best when combined with other approaches and when replications, and varied regularly. Repelling: Migrating tape, balloons, scarecrows, pyrotechnics, and decoys are available commercially. Properly trained dogs can provide more concentrated pressure on geese before nesting and after the molting season. Dogs may be available through local service contracts with professional handlers.

MI Program Aids Geese, Humans

In the spring of 1998, The HSUS and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) jointly launched the Michigan Canada Goose Egg Replacement Study. Now in its fourth year, the study is showing some surprising and encouraging results. Participants are satisfied with egg replacement on their sites. Many are beginning to report reduced numbers of geese and fewer human conflicts with geese. Residents statewide are asking MDNR to expand the program to address “hotspots” in their towns. And Michigan is receiving requests from across the country for information on the egg replacement study. From a small beginning of only 38 sites, the program has expanded to 123 sites within a three-county area. In four short years, permitholders, contractors, and trained volunteers have removed 11,572 eggs from 2,336 nests, thus preventing the birth and subsequent reproduction of thousands of Canada geese for years to come. Public tolerance and appreciation for addressing conflicts with Canada geese is growing. Working together is working better than working separately. As a community, we can solve these problems cooperatively and humanely.

Want to keep updated on Michigan’s wildlife management issues, contact the landowner and your community organization to help. You can also visit www.michigan.gov/wildlife and provide your feedback on the program. We will be working to raise funds for continuing support. RAM veterinarians and volunteers provide their services for free, but SOHO may charge a small fee to cover such costs as advertising, travel, and providing food for volunteers.

Cheryl Demetrakis, vice president of Belmont County Animal Rescue League (BCARL), and SOHO member, brimmed with excitement when she imagined how this program would enable BCARL to “better serve a segment of their community that has previously been almost impossible to help.” She feels this will be a “major accomplishment” personally and organizationally. Demetrakis is not alone. The Appalachian Project offers hope that we can look forward to a new approach to a long-standing problem in this region. The Appalachian Spay/Neuter Project grew out of another program The GLRO has been involved with over the past two years. Project Outreach, also funded by The Scott Trust, focuses on Ohio counties plagued by high poverty and unemployment rates. This financial climate translates into inadequate county support for dog control programs, as well as scarce financial support for private humane societies. In May, GLRO staff visited with dog wardens and humane society directors from counties involved in Project Outreach. Many of the rural counties in Southeastern Ohio rely on a single dog warden to handle all dog-related issues.
Director's Report

Legislative Update

Indiana Animal Shelters Get Access to Tranquilizers

A new law in Indiana, which became effective July 1, enables humane societies and animal control agencies to apply for a permit from the state board of pharmacy enabling them to purchase two of the best animal tranquilizers directly from the manufacturers. The law is a huge step forward for the many small animal shelters in Indiana whose staffs will now be able to acquire the best drugs for handling difficult animals humanely. Ohio, Michigan, and West Virginia need similar laws.

West Virginia Bans Shooting in Animal Shelters

It may be hard to believe that unwanted pets are still being routinely killed by gunshot in a handful of places in the Great Lakes region. The HSUS does not recognize shooting as a humane form of euthanasia except under emergency situations in the field, such as when transport of a critically injured animal would cause the animal extreme suffering. Yet over the past year, our office received recurring reports of shooting in animal shelters in a few counties in West Virginia. Media exposure and public outcry resulted in legislative attention on a bill spearheaded by the West Virginia Federation of Humane Organizations. The law, which went into effect on July 6, specifies injection as the preferred method of euthanasia for animal shelters, refers to the procedures approved by The HSUS, and limits shooting to emergency situations only. This type of legislation is needed in the other three states of the Great Lakes region to protect shelter animals from inhumane death.

The new law also provides the courts the option of requiring owners of animals confiscated in cruelty cases to post a bond to provide for the costs of caring for the animal(s) during the trial. This language will help animal shelters that house large numbers of cruelty case animals for extensive periods of time, frequently a costly undertaking.

Want to be alerted to important animal legislation in your state? Send us your e-mail address or phone and fax numbers to be included on GLRO's alert list.

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, call 301-258-3063.

By Sandy Rowland
Director of the Great Lakes Regional Office

Caring Beyond Your Own Backyard

The Appalachian Spay/Neuter Project developed because of the significant needs of animals in Ohio's Appalachian region. Small humane societies, most without a shelter of their own, often consist of a handful of devoted volunteers who frequently use personal funds to help as many animals as possible. Economic reality limits membership and financial support that is more accessible in other areas of the state. Dog control programs are often county government's lowest priority. Many county facilities are inadequate and difficult to maintain, some offering nothing more than chain-link pens in buildings lacking basic utilities.

Project Outreach and the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Project have reconfirmed GLRO's commitment to our Appalachian region. As a member of The HSUS you can be proud that this office is addressing needs of animals in that area. If you would like to make a personal contribution to this program, please do so by indicating that you want your contribution to go toward the Appalachian Project. Your dollars will help animals and people who are so much in need of services.

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Promoting the protection of all animals