WCRO Fall 1997
Your Help Needed To Pass Initiatives for Animals

Help Ban Steel Jaw Leghold Trapping in Nevada

As you may recall from the Spring WCRO Regional News, The HSUS and other state and national humane and environmental organizations announced the launching of a ballot initiative in 1998 to ban the steel jaw leghold trap. Each year in the United States, these cruel and indiscriminate traps injure and kill millions of nontarget animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, squirrels, and other animals. Your help is still needed to gather signatures to end commercial and sport trapping. Please fill out and send in the coupon on page 5 of this newsletter to help.

Signature-Gatherers Urgently Needed in California

Protect Pets And Wildlife (PROPAW) is the campaign to place a landmark wildlife protection measure on the November 1998 ballot in California. The campaign is in full swing, but we urgently need volunteers to help gather the remaining signatures before the end of the year. With recent HSUS-supported victories in Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington, we have every reason to believe that California voters will give us another major victory for animals in 1998!

By collecting more than 650,000 signatures, volunteers can ensure that California voters will have a chance to outlaw the use of steel jaw leghold traps and body-gripping traps for fur taking or for recreational use. If successful, the measure will also ban the sale of pelts taken with any body-gripping traps (conibear, snare, or leghold), and it will prohibit the use of certain poisons for killing any animal. While steel jaw leghold traps will be banned outright, conibear traps and snares would still be permitted for animal damage control purposes.

If you are a California voter not currently involved in PROPAW, please complete the coupon on page 5 and return it to our office as soon as possible. You will receive an official signature-gathering packet with instructions on how to hook up with others in your area who are already working on the campaign. PROPAW can also be contacted via the Internet at propaw@ix.netcom.com.

Beavers like the one shown in the photo to the right, above, and bobcats are among the many animals who suffer from the use of steel jaw leghold traps. Voters in California and Nevada have the opportunity to join citizens in other states who have already outlawed these cruel devices. See page 5 for coupons you can return to help achieve a victory for animals.
WCRO Assists in Horse Neglect Cases in California and Oregon

This past March, the Placer County District Attorney’s Office charged Edwin Frank Netthorpe of Loomis, California, with three felony counts and one misdemeanor count of cruelty to animals. The charges came after Placer County animal control officers found 12 dead ponies, an emaciated ewe with a new lamb, and 113 live Shetland ponies in two of Netthorpe’s pastures. The ewe was in such poor condition that assisting veterinarians recommended immediate euthanasia, while many of the ponies were ill or suffering from malnourishment. Staff from WCRO and El Dorado County Animal Control responded to requests for help and assisted Placer County officials with the removal and transport of 65 ponies and the lamb. In June, Netthorpe was found guilty of one felony and three counts of cruelty. He was sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay $30,000 in restitution.

Responding to pleas for financial assistance from law enforcement officials in Vale, Oregon, The HSUS contributed money to the Malheur County Horse Fund after officials seized 39 horses who were suffering from neglect in August of 1996. Two other horses with broken legs were euthanized by a veterinarian assisting in the case. The fund was established by the Malheur County District Attorney to help defray expenses associated with feed and veterinary care in similar cases. Jan David Bevans, Carl Arthur Bevans, and Eva Major have each been charged with 10 counts of animal neglect in the first degree and 50 counts of animal neglect in the second degree. While the criminal cases are pending, civil hearings regarding the fate of the seized horses were held in March of this year. As a result of those hearings, the owner forfeited the horses, who are all now healthy and have been adopted to loving homes.

Animal Fighting Courses Attract Record Numbers

Cockfighters and dogfights have another reason to be nervous these days. The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) last fall, nearly 400 officers representing local humane societies, animal control departments, and law enforcement agencies in California have successfully completed courses instructed by WCRO Director Eric Sakach. Most recently 200 officers representing 36 law enforcement agencies in southern California attended courses that were co-sponsored by the City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Regulation. “So far we’re very encouraged by the interest shown on the part of police, sheriffs’ departments, and prosecutors wanting to combat illegal blood sports,” said Sakach. “Some police officers have remarked that the course is among the best training they’ve received.” More courses are being scheduled throughout the region for the remainder of the year.

See You in San Diego for Expo ’98

The premiere trade show for animal care and control professionals will be held February 18-21 in San Diego, California, at the Town and Country Hotel. Animal Care Expo is the perfect place to attend seminars on topics of interest to you, try out new products and equipment, and meet others in the field who share your commitment to helping animals. Don’t miss this terrific opportunity. Call (800) 248-EXPO for more information and a registration packet.

Volunteers Needed in California To Gather Signatures for 1998 Ballot Initiative To Ban Steel Jaw Leghold Trapping!

Between August and December of 1997, we need to gather 650,000 signatures. If you are willing to volunteer time to collect signatures, please fill in and return this coupon to the HSUS West Coast Regional Office, and we will contact you with more details.

Volunteers Needed in Nevada To Gather Signatures for 1998 Ballot Initiative To Ban Steel Jaw Leghold Trapping!

Between August and December of 1997, we need to gather 65,000 signatures. If you are willing to volunteer time to collect signatures, please fill in and return this coupon to the HSUS West Coast Regional Office, and we will contact you with more details.

Reflect for a moment...

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

By making a planned 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. Naming The HSUS as a beneficiary of your estate or trust demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for future tasks. We will be happy to send our latest information on planning giving and our programs to help animals.

Attention, California and Nevada Residents

If you live in California or Nevada and would like to help collect signatures for our upcoming ballot initiatives (see article on page 1), please fill in the coupon for your state and return it in the envelope provided to the HSUS West Coast Office. Feel free to copy these coupons to distribute to others.
The existence of wildlife enriches our lives and provides us with a sense of awe, wonder, and the opportunity to learn. As we become more urban, wild animals provide a vital link to our natural world. However, where wild animals and people coexist, conflicts seem to be inevitable. Whether it's too many pigeons near an apartment complex, geese taking up permanent residence on a golf course, or coyotes prowling a suburban neighborhood, conflicts are sure to increase as urbanization spreads over the countryside.

For too long, the so-called "solutions" to real or perceived problems with urban wildlife have simply been to kill the offending animals. Last May, The HSUS presented "Wild Neighbors: Humane Approaches To Living With Wildlife," a seminar designed to provide professionals with information on humane and effective alternative methods of resolving conflicts with wildlife. Sponsored by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control at the Los Angeles Arboretum, the seminar was attended by more than 60 park rangers, animal damage control personnel, animal control officers, wildlife rehabilitators, and others. Moderated by WCRO Director Eric Sakash, the seminar featured talks by nationally recognized experts including Dr. John Hadidian, HSUS director of urban wildlife protection; Dr. Donald Burton, veterinarian and wildlife expert; wildlife damage control authority Guy Hodge, HSUS director of data and information services; and Rex Baker, professor of pest management and agricultural regulatory programs at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona.

National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week

November 2-8, 1997, is National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week, which was created to recognize the indispensable role shelters play in maintaining the safety and health of a community. Have you visited your local shelter recently? You may be surprised by the diversity of its programs and people—social workers, attorneys, accountants, homemakers, men and women, young and old, are all engaged in the work of shelters nationwide. Join us in making a special effort during National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week to pay tribute to your animal shelter staff. Give your shelter a donation. Find out if it needs volunteers. Sometimes shelters need help in making lost and found calls, assisting the public, walking dogs, or grooming cats. Other times, they may need donations of old towels or sheets to use for the animals' bedding. Whatever the level of involvement with your shelter, it will not go unappreciated—especially by the animals. For more information on National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week please contact WCRO.

When Euthanasia of Wildlife is Necessary...

It is important that wild animals who must be euthanized receive the most humane deaths possible. In July, The HSUS presented a workshop for wildlife rehabilitators, wildlife managers, veterinarians, and other professionals faced with euthanizing wild animals who are found suffering from critical injuries or life-threatening illnesses. Hosted by the Marin Humane Society in Novato, California, instructors provided attendees with a comprehensive overview of methods of euthanasia that are acceptable for mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, using simulated euthanasia procedures.

Legislative Update

Following is an update on legislative activity and a list of bills that need your support. HSUS staff are constantly in contact with state legislative offices and local activists to help pass humane legislation and to stop bills considered inhumane. We cannot guarantee that The HSUS position on the bills will remain as reported here, as bills may be unfavorably amended. For up-to-the-minute information and to learn how you can become more involved in your state's legislative process, write or call the West Coast Regional Office.

California

A.B. 21, by Assemblyman Keith Olberg, would allow any person or company that obtains an incidental take permit from the federal government to bypass the stricter California Endangered Species Act. Incidental take permits allow holders to kill animals otherwise protected. HSUS position: Oppose

A.B. 68, by Assemblywoman Valerie Brown, will repeal the 45-year-old attorney general's opinion that pets adopted or sold through animal shelters are taxable. Currently, taxes are assessed on any fee associated with adopting a pet, including donations, spay/neuter deposits, health exams, microchipping, disease testing, and deworming. This bill, sponsored by the Board of Equalization and The HSUS, was held in committee and needs your urgent support. A.B. 68 has been turned into a two-year bill in order to keep it from being killed. Unless a favorable vote occurs in December, shelter animals will continue to be taxed. Please contact your state assembly member and Chairwoman Carol Migden and urge them to support A.B. 68. Send your letter to The Honorable ______, California State Assembly, P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0001, HSUS position: Support

A.B. 716 introduced by Assemblyman Dick Floyd would revise the current definition of poultry to include gamefowl. Oppose A.B. 716.

Below: Fowl used for cockpitfighting need your help. California’s A.B. 716 would revise the current definition of poultry to include gamefowl. Oppose A.B. 716.

Washington

Thanks to Gov. John Kitzhaber for vetoing H.B. 2870, which would have subsidized the privately owned dog-racing industry to the tune of $4.8 million. Gov. Kitzhaber deserves praise for not contributing tax dollars to the cruel and unviable business of dog racing.

Oregon

Thanks to Gov. John Kitzhaber for vetoing H.B. 2870, which would have subsidized the privately owned dog-racing industry to the tune of $4.8 million. Gov. Kitzhaber deserves praise for not contributing tax dollars to the cruel and unviable business of dog racing.

Nevada

Praise is due Gov. Bob Miller for vetoing S.B. 127, a guileful attempt to put hunters, trappers, and anglers in control of Nevada’s wildlife management programs. The bill would have taken away the governor’s control over who sits on the nine-member Nevada Wildlife Commission.

S.B. 310, introduced by Sen. Ernest Alder, requires all animals adopted from shelters to be spayed or neutered within 30 days (or up to six months for juvenile animals). Twenty-two other states already have similar spay/neuter laws. This bill was signed into law in July.

S.B. 298, introduced by Sen. Dina Titus, would have banned the cruel practice of intentionally tripping a horse for sport or entertainment. However, Chairman of the Senate Natural Resources Committee Dean Rhodes refused to consider the bill.

Other

S.B. 78, introduced by Sen. Mike Thompson, will extend existing provisions that allow taxpayers to contribute portions of their state income taxes to the Rare and Endangered Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species Account in the Fish and Game Preservation Fund. HSUS position: Support

S.B. 80, introduced by Sen. Quentin Kopp, will allow any registered veterinary technician to purchase sodium pentobarbital for euthanasia. Currently, shelters must go through a licensed veterinarian to purchase sodium pentobarbital, which is the drug used to provide the most humane death possible for animals who must be euthanized. HSUS position: Support
First Strike—Working Together Against Violence

I recently heard from a district attorney who was filing felony charges against two teenagers. According to police accounts and witnesses, the two had gone to a public park with a bag. In a sickening display, they proceeded to use the animal as a living baseball, laughing about it all the while. That is, until they were arrested. One of the youths asked, “What’s the big deal? People kill cats all the time!” The victim of this cruel and senseless act of violence did not survive. Because you may have assumed that both the miscreants are boys, I should mention that one is a female. Both teens, I was informed, come from middle-class families. As youths entering the juvenile justice system, their names and records will not become public information.

After I offered the DA our assistance and provided her office with additional resources, the words the teen had said kept troubling me. “People kill cats all the time!” It wasn’t hard to see a chilling progression of insensitivity: People kill cats all the time . . . people kill animals all the time . . . people kill all the time. Violence against animals and people is all around us. Even if we haven’t actually witnessed an act of violence, we’re confronted with the images and effects of it daily in the news. And those are just the cases that are reported. Violence has become one of the defining characteristics of our age.

That’s why I feel so strongly about our newly launched First Strike campaign. The HSUS is accelerating efforts to educate the public as well as animal protection, law enforcement, human services, and education professionals about the undeniable connection between animal abuse and human violence. Stacks of cruelty cases and voluminous research illustrate the importance of collaboration among animal protection organizations and other emergency responders. The First Strike campaign is a multi-year plan designed to address the animal/human violence connection on a national front, while assisting local agencies with their own anti-violence efforts. As part of the campaign, The HSUS recently sponsored a national public opinion poll. The Penn and Schoen survey results emphasized that Americans take animal cruelty very seriously and are supportive of anti-violence initiatives.

The First Strike campaign kicked off with a two-day symposium at The HSUS Annual Conference, September 9–10. But you can become involved now in this important effort. The HSUS has produced a First Strike campaign kit. The kit contains fact sheets created for animal shelter personnel, law enforcement representatives and prosecutors, human service workers, educators, and parents with answers on why animal cruelty is a concern and what can be done to intervene and prevent future violence. The packet provides guidance on where to locate existing anti-violence coalitions and how to organize an anti-violence coalition from the ground up. A special, toll-free number has been established for The HSUS’s First Strike campaign. For an anti-violence coalition packet, Penn and Schoen survey information, or general First Strike information, please call toll free (888) 213-0956.

WCRO is planning a series of First Strike symposia in major cities in our region in 1998, and we will keep you advised of details.