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HSUS Helps in Katrina’s Wake

As the National Guard entered New Orleans to quell civil disorder coming in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, members of the HSUS National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) worked their way into the nearly obliterated regions of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. The situation could not have been more urgent in both areas, with reports of animals locked in homes, kennels, veterinary clinics, and other locations. It was a race against time for our first responders on the ground.

Dozens of HSUS relief workers extended their reach into devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, working to establish pet-friendly shelters, coordinating animal relief activities with local partners in both government and the nonprofit sector, and improvising solutions to a host of animal-related emergencies.

Phones began ringing at The HSUS almost as soon as Katrina struck. The HSUS moved quickly to set up a dedicated Disaster Call Center at its headquarters in

An airboat moves down a flooded New Orleans street September 5 with animal rescue workers, a rifle-toting guard, and several rescued dogs. With thousands of stranded pets in the city, HSUS rescuers were frantically trying to reach as many animals as they could.

HSUS Exposes Vermont Coyote Kill

Vermont is typically considered a progressive state, but a regressive activity—coyote contest hunts—has put a serious blemish on this reputation. These events harken back to the days of bounty hunters. This year’s Howlin’ Hills hunt, based in Whiting, awarded $20 for each of the 46 coyotes killed, as well as additional cash prizes for the “top 10 heaviest coyotes” and the “lightest coyote taken each day.” The grand prize was a trip to a canned hunting facility, where hunters pay for a guaranteed kill of a captive animal who cannot escape.

No self-respecting hunter would participate in activities as egregious as canned hunts or contest kills. Because coyotes sometimes kill deer fawns, they are frequent scapegoats of frustrated hunters, regardless of their actual impact on deer populations. Though such frustration may make coyotes easy targets, it does not warrant the kind of wholesale, unregulated slaughter inherent in killing contests. Large-scale slaughters are not even effective—removing coyotes can actually result in a population rebound because surviving coyotes may produce more pups—earning their reputation as wily, adaptable animals.

A grassroots group called Vermonters for Safe Hunting and Wildlife Diversity (VSHWD) contacted NERO when members learned about the hunt. A letter from The HSUS to Gov. Jim Douglas asking him to use his influence to stop the Howlin’ Hills event went unanswered, so we sent a videographer to document this senseless slaughter. Since another hunt is planned for this winter, we will continue to collaborate with VSHWD on ways to put an end to it.

In addition, The HSUS is working with VSHWD to create a “Contest Kills 101” action plan that will guide interested parties in addressing contest hunts in their area. The HSUS will also produce a packet that provides examples of humane fundraising ideas for small communities.

We’d like to hear about your experiences with contest hunts to add your information to our database and help work on humane alternatives. Please contact Kristin Leppert at kleppert@hsus.org or 301-721-6417.
RAVS’s New England Debut

For one week in August, the Whiting Community Centers—located in Maine near the easternmost point of the United States—transformed into a high-volume spay/neuter clinic. HSUS’s Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) sponsored the event in cooperation with a local animal group. By the time the last patient was discharged, approximately 270 animals had been surgically sterilized over the course of five days. RAVS’s goal is to provide free veterinary services to low-income pet owners in rural, underserved communities. The town of Whiting is located in the poorest county in Maine. Several hours east of Bangor, this area has a high unemployment rate and relies on season industries such as fishing and blueberry harvesting. The closest veterinary practices and animal shelters are 40 to 50 miles away.

The week began with the arrival of a team of nearly 50 volunteers who included veterinary students, veterinarians, technicians, and NERO staff. The clinic provided spay/neuter surgeries for dogs and cats, as well as rabies and distemper vaccinations and veterinary students, veterinarians, tech­nicians, and NERO staff. The clinic provided spay/neuter surgeries for dogs and cats, as well as rabies and distemper vaccinations and disadvantaged pet owners—many of whom were stretching their limited resources to feed stray and abandoned animals—received veterinary care for their pets.

The Whiting clinic was a landmark event in more ways than one. Although RAVS has been in operation for a number of years, its outreach has focused on American Indian reservations and Appalachian communities. The Whiting clinic marked the first time that RAVS has come to New England, and we hope that the success of this event will translate into additional clinics in our region.

For more information about the RAVS program or to make a donation, visit www.ruralearlevet.org.

Send a Message to Trader Joe’s

Unlike its competitors in the retail foods market, such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s, Trader Joe’s still sells eggs from hens confined in “battery” cages so small they can’t even spread their wings. These animals are so intensively confined that they never engage in many important behaviors, including nesting, perching, and dust bathing. Their lives are filled with immense suffering. In the past, Trader Joe’s has been responsive to customer concern for animal welfare, but the chain is refusing to stop selling eggs from caged hens.

The HSUS needs you to call Trader Joe’s at 781-455-7319 and ask the company to adopt a policy to sell only cage-free eggs.

During your next trip to Trader Joe’s, talk with the store manager and request that the chain adopt a policy against selling battery cage eggs. Please send us your Trader Joe’s receipt, c/o The HSUS, Factory Farming Campaign, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037. We’ll send them to the company to show that their customers care about the welfare of laying hens.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

Please send me information about …

- Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
- Providing for my pet’s care in my will and in case of emergency.
- Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.

Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

Promoting the protection of all animals

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES 
NERO Regional News Fall 2003
Director’s Report

By Joanne Bourbeau
Director of the New England Regional Office

Campaigns Are Coming

With the many exciting changes and restructuring happening here at the HSUS, it’s sometimes difficult for us to keep up with our own growth! I wanted to take this opportunity to update our members here in New England about one exciting development—the creation of our new campaigns department. It will focus on four areas of animal protection: factory farming, fur, hunting, and cruelty and animal fighting.

While we look forward to the development of tools and resources that both HSUS staff and members can use to spread our message, there are plenty of activities that come under the campaigns umbrella already taking place in our region.

From coyote killing contests and remote-control hunting in Vermont, to bear baiting and hounding in Maine, to pheasant stocking in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, controversial hunting practices have taken center stage here in New England in recent months. While the hunting “tradition” is fairly entrenched here, NERO is often called upon to help local activists put an end to particularly egregious and cruel forms of hunting that have no place in our modern society (see “HSUS Exposes Vermont Coyote Kill” on page 1). Our hunting campaign will focus on canned hunts at the federal and state level, research and exposure of state-funded pheasant stocking programs; youth, women, and minority recruitment to hunting; and contest kills.

The banning of gestation crates for sows in Florida and foie gras production in California were both monumental wins for animals that made national news. Massachusetts has followed suit with two bills that mirror these protections, and NERO will be actively lobbying for their passage. The goal of our factory farming campaign will be to help reduce the suffering of animals raised for food by promoting the refinement of abusive husbandry practices as well as the reduction and replacement of animal consumption.

In New Hampshire, NERO objected to a proposed wildlife control operator (WCO) rule that allowed land snaring and allowed WCOs to keep pelts. Despite our objections and supporting scientific evidence that shows how extremely inhumane snares are, the Fish and Game Department approved the rules. Our fur campaign will focus on outreach and advertising to the public, including consumers, retailers, and fashion designers, to reduce and ultimately end the use of fur and fur trim in fashion. We will also continue to apply pressure to the trapping and fur farming industries.

In the realm of animal cruelty and animal fighting, NERO has been and will continue to be very active. We were recently appointed to the New Hampshire Governor’s Task Force Regarding the Humane Treatment of Animals, and continue to provide leadership to similar broad-based anti-cruelty coalitions in Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Training and development of resources have also been major focuses for our office, and we regularly provide advice, assistance, and reward money to local law enforcement officials on individual cases. A reward that the HSUS contributed to in a horrific cat burning case in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, brought forth a father and son who ultimately admitted to the crime and are currently being prosecuted for animal cruelty. The goal of the animal cruelty and fighting campaign is to protect animals from cruelty and violence, including animal fighting, by working with individuals, law enforcement, prosecutors, and other professionals.

We’re excited about the positive outcomes these campaigns will have for animals. We’ll be sure to keep you informed about how you can help us along the way!

Contacting HSUS

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www.hsus.org/nero

Promoting the protection of all animals

Thanks to an HSUS reward, those who attacked and burned Phoenix (above) were caught and prosecuted.

The NERO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, New England Regional Office, P.O. Box 819, Jacksonville, VT 05342-0619; 802-368-2790. Joanne Bourbeau, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays. © 2005 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved. A COPY OF THE LATEST REGISTRATION AND 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. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. Printed on recycled paper.