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280 Fighting Birds Seized in PA

A Pennsylvania state police officer informed HSUS of a farm he believed was breeding birds for cockfighting. He needed expert confirmation from our office. HSUS investigators assisted the state troopers in developing a case during a four-month investigation.

Officials seized more than 280 roosters. Working as a team, the troopers, HSUS investigators, and the Adams County SPCA served search warrants on two homes. Between the two properties, investigators found cockfighting paraphernalia including magazines, trophies, veterinary supplies, contest photos, a weight scale, and gaffs (blades attached to birds’ legs during a match). Officers arrested four residents of Adams County and charged them with cruelty to animals for raising and selling fighting birds and criminal conspiracy. One resident was charged with cockfighting in Virginia; he also shipped birds within the United States and to Canada and Mexico. All four defendants pled guilty under plea arrangements.

Animals, Too, Were Affected by Sept. 11 Attacks

Even as we watched the September 11, 2001, terrorist acts on television, MARO and HSUS headquarters staff members were responding to animal needs in New York City and the National Capital area. The HSUS worked with the New York Center for Animal Care and Control (CACC), and placed several trained disaster response teams on alert. We contacted the New York City animal shelters to determine if there was any direct impact on these facilities, finding that while the facilities housing animals were fine and not affected by blowing dust and debris, the CACC administrative offices, a block from Ground Zero, were unusable, though the staff were unharmed.

Our concern then moved quickly to the plight of animals possibly stranded in dwellings in lower Manhattan. We assisted CACC in setting up a toll-free number for people to call with information about pets in need and in publicizing this number through our affiliated groups and through press releases and the HSUS Web site. HSUS staff responded to a massive amount of correspondence and calls from concerned citizens and the media about issues such as offers of volunteer assistance, in-kind donations, and requests for information about the well-being of animals stranded in residences as well as those possibly stranded in the transportation system, of potentially orphaned animals, and of the search-and-rescue dogs at both sites.

The HSUS quickly sent CACC a check to help them set up temporary offices, as well as money to buy essential electronic equipment. Subsequently the HSUS disaster services staff obtained the anonymous donation of 10 additional complete computer workstations to facilitate CACC’s ability to network and coordinate operations among its five shelters. In addition, The HSUS provided information via our Web site to clarify the volumes of information and rumors circulating about the situation in New York City and to channel public contributions directly to CACC.

In the aftermath of this event and well into October, donations of pet food and supplies exceeded warehouse facilities in New York City. At the request of the Federal

continued on page 2
Meet HSUS Disaster Dogs

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He HSUS kicked off its Disaster Dog program with a mock disaster and drill at the FEMA headquarters in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The drill was used to assess the capabilities of the dogs and their handlers in responding to disasters. These dogs are trained to work with their handlers, using instinctual behavior and natural scenting abilities to recover survivors or find bodies in circumstances that make other methods impossible. September 11 has also shown the need for more USAR canine teams. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed about 100 canine teams to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, stretching their resources to the limit.

"Most of these Disaster Dog teams are volunteers," explains Anne Culver, director of disaster services for The HSUS. "FEMA requires extensive training and certification to work as part of its National Urban Search and Rescue Response System. FEMA pays the volunteers' expenses when they are deployed, but many expenses, such as the cost of training, exercises, and travel, are frequently not covered. The handlers give of their own time and money to train themselves and their dogs, demonstrating the power of the human-animal bond in service to the good of society. Training to high standards takes time and can be expensive for the individual volunteer. That's why The Humane Society of the United States wants to help."

For more information on the Disaster Dog program or disaster preparedness for you and your pets, call 202-432-1188 or visit www.hsus.org/disaster.

Albany Area Gets Spay/Neuter Van

O
n August 23, 2001, New York’s First Lady Libby Pataki christened the Animal Protective Foundation of Schenectady’s mobile spay/neuter unit at a ceremony in which several state and local political figures participated. Gordon Willand, executive director of the Animal Protective Foundation (APF), said the van would add to the number of animals sterilized in the Pet Pal Spay/Neuter Clinic. For example, it is to be made available periodically to shelters in the vicinity that are not yet able to fund their own spay/neuter clinic.

Dr. Beverly Blinn-Knapp, APF’s veterinarian, will provide information on APF’s spay/neuter clinic in a workshop to be offered during the Empire State Animal Protection Forum, in May.

continued from “September 11,” page 1

Emergency Management Agency, MARO arranged for their later distribution to animal shelters and pet owners adversely affected by the disaster.

The September 11 tragedies have demonstrated the important role urban search and rescue (USAR) dogs and their handlers play in responding to disasters. These dogs are trained to work with their handlers, using instinctual behavior and natural scenting abilities to recover survivors or find bodies in circumstances that make other methods impossible. September 11 has also shown the need for more USAR canine teams. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed about 100 canine teams to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, stretching their resources to the limit.

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News from Other Regions

The 10 HSUS regional offices all extend the important work of The HSUS in many ways. Following are just a few stories from other regions about some of the good work being done.

Great Lakes’ Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program in High Gear

The Belmont County Animal Rescue League hosted the first HSUS Appalachian Spay/Neuter clinic in November at a National Guard armory. The Morgan County Humane Society held The HSUS’s second clinic in December at the Banquet Hall of the Stockport Mill Country Inn. Both two-day clinics were a great success, sterilizing more than 150 dogs and cats. The 2002 schedule is already filled, with clinics in Athens, Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, and Washington counties. The idea for the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program came out of a discussion between The HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office (GLRO) and humane groups from Southeastern Ohio in November 2000. The local groups expressed the need to reduce the number of unplanned and unwanted litters of dogs and cats in their communities.

Determined to address the problem, the groups formed Southeastern Ohio Humane Organizations (SOHO) and joined forces with The HSUS Remote Area Medical (RAM), a volunteer veterinary medical corps, to offer the clinic. The HSUS provides spay/neuter surgeries for the pets of families who could not otherwise afford the service.

As GLRO director, it has long been Sandy Rowland’s dream to provide direct assistance to animals in Ohio’s Appalachian region. Thankfully, others believed in her dream too. The Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, A Key Trust Company of Ohio, provided start-up costs and HSUS members provided funding for the program’s first year.

The first Appalachian spay/neuter clinic was held one short, but bus...
Northern Rockies Ft. Hall Spay Clinic

The Shoshone-Bannock tribes of the Ft. Hall Indian Reservation located in the southeast corner of Idaho invited The HSUS Northern Rockies Regional Office (NRRO) and University of Michigan School of Veterinary Medicine staff to participate in their first spay/neuter clinic in August 2001. The coordination and success of this event was due to hard work and outstanding communication with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Council, tribal health and human services agency; the Pocatello Humane Society, Pocatello Animal Shelter and Control, and the Blackfoot Humane Society. Each morning beginning at 5 a.m., this gentle community's members began lining up with their pets outside the clinic. We held five days of surgeries, altering approximately 75 animals per day and vaccinating more than 300 dogs and cats. Veterinary students and NRRO team members also presented humane education programs to the community while pet owners and their children quietly waited for their pets' recovery or health assessment checks.

having been shot, and that the condition could diminish his chances for survival in the wild. WCRO requested and received approval from DFG to have an HSUS wildlife expert review the x-rays and results of the examination and submit our recommendations concerning Arthur's fate. HSUS experts concurred with the findings of the UC Davis exam, and we have recommended that Arthur be examined again in the near future to determine if the bone degeneration has worsened. In the meantime, The HSUS has recommended that Arthur be placed in an accredited sanctuary, providing he is not suffering. Should Arthur's condition show improvement, we believe he may be a candidate for release back to the wild. Such a decision will require the concurrence of DFG, whose current policy forbids the release of adult bears back into the wild. "We will continue to monitor Arthur's condition and well-being," said Reder. "And we will also be working toward a change in DFG policy toward adult black bears."

Tribal elders, dancers, and musicians honored our team with an outstanding performance on our final night in Ft. Hall. When the NRRO team returned to Billings, we received a certificate of thanks from the Shoshone-Bannock tribes expressing their thanks "for making our home a safer place, and for giving our pets the good health they deserve."

Conflicts between people and bears have been on the rise, fueled by increased human invasion of bear habitat and regional droughts, which cause food shortages for bears. Lured into human-populated areas in their search for food, bears, being smart and opportunistic creatures, soon learn that improperly-disposed-of trash makes for easy and tasty meals. Well-meaning residents often add to the problem by feeding bears, which leads them to view humans and their homes as easy and reliable sources of food. These "nuisance" bears are either caught and relocated or, tragically, killed.

"Bears live by a few simple rules," says Searles. "Bear society is based on dominance. This means the biggest, toughest bear pretty much does what he wants and everybody else knows to get out of his way. And bears generally avoid conflict; they would rather flee than fight."

Searles' Bear Affairs program uses the bears' own rules against them. Using dominant body language, vocalizations, and various props, law enforcement officers trained by Bear Affairs communicate to bears that humans are dominant, and that avoidance of people and their

continued on page 6
**Tough NJ Cruelty Law Passes**

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ARO Director Nina Austenberg was one of the few people invited to attend the private signing of S. 1515A by Acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco at the State House. The new law amends current law to establish as a crime of the fourth degree: purposely, knowingly, or recklessly torturing, torturing, maiming, hanging, unnecessarily or cruelly beating, needlessly mutilating or cruelly killing a living animal or creature or to cause one of these acts. It would also require the court to order a juvenile who is found guilty of a disorderly crime to receive mental health counseling by a licensed psychologist or therapist named by the court for a period of time to be prescribed by the licensed therapist. Crimes of the fourth degree carry penalties of up to 18 months in jail and a fine of up to $10,000.

We commend Acting Gov. DiFrancesco and the New Jersey Legislature for enacting legislation that substantially strengthens New Jersey’s statutes against cruelty to animals. The public is often shocked when persons found guilty of aggravated animal abuse “get off lightly.” However, the fact is, without legislation such as that which Acting Gov. DiFrancesco recently signed, perpetrators of even the most hideous crimes against animals could not receive appropriate sanctions. The new law corrects a long-standing deficiency in the judicial system by providing a mechanism for responding to the seriousness of such crimes.

**Empire State Animal Protection Forum**

A series of workshops on key animal issues will be held May 19-21, at the Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson, New York. The Empire State Animal Protection Forum will serve as a networking opportunity and educational experience for seasoned animal protectors, as well as those who are new to the field. Animal care and control professionals and other members of the humane community will speak on topics of interest ranging from effective use of the Internet in shelters to establishing a spay/neuter program.

For additional information, please see MARO’s “Workshops and Training” page at www.hsus.org/regions, or contact our office.

**Director’s Report**

By Nina Austenberg

Directors of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Good Works Nationwide

I know our regional members are interested in all activities or legislative issues. I thought you would like to know what the nine other regional offices are doing—not to mention the vast amount of activity generated by our headquarters and international offices. With that thought in mind, I’ve looked to the HSUS’s annual report for a few highlights.

The HSUS has expanded its Pets for Life campaign, which aims to keep pets and people together by helping pet caregivers solve the problems that often cause them to relinquish their pets. The program helps find solutions to animal behavior issues and lifestyle changes such as the birth of a child, a move, or allergies—all of which might otherwise cause a pet owner to abandon a beloved companion animal. The HSUS’s Pets for Life program has already provided conflict resolution education to more than 100 shelter personnel from 32 states. The HSUS’s First Strike campaign, which reveals the connection between animal cruelty and human violence, has also been extended. The HSUS conducted more than 50 workshops and presentations in the United States, as well as one workshop in Costa Rica, for animal control personnel, police officers, and social workers.

The HSUS continues to expand the circle of species, places, and participants involved in anti-cruelty and anti-abuse activities. Under the aegis of The HSUS, collaborative studies are being conducted on water buffalo by the U.S. Navy on Guam, on tul elk by the National Park Service at Point Reyes National Seashore in California, on fallow deer by ZooMontana and the Detroit Zoo in Michigan, and on prairie dogs by ZooMontana in Kansas. Our research team has used immunococontraception technology to reduce deer numbers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Maryland, as we as at Fire Island National Seashore in New York.

Staff from other regional offices have worked in Washington state to sterilize 200 dogs and cats on the Quinault and Makah reservations over a nine-day period. Training programs continue to be a focus for regional offices across the country. During 2001, the HSUS presented more than 50 workshops and conferences on topics such as animal cruelty, urban wildlife, and disaster preparedness. I hope you will also take the time to read the articles in this newsletter that focus on activities outside the Mid-Atlantic region. In the MARO Regional News we will continue to concentrate on issues that most directly affect our regional constituency, but we want you to know that there’s a wealth of information available if you take the time to explore. The HSUS website at www.hsus.org and our many publications. I hope you will make an effort to report and learn more about the issues closest to your heart, to help reinforce the link between animal cruelty and human violence, and to share our planet.

**Contacting HSUS**

Call: 973-927-5611
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**MARO Regional News**

MARO honored New Jersey Sen. Robert Martin with a certificate of appreciation at a reception in October. Sen. Martin was responsible for securing 5,700,000 dollars for New Jersey’s Animal Population Control Fund and for reinitiating the state position responsible for inspecting shelters, pet shops, and kennels. The humane community is indebted to him. The senator’s wife, Karen Martin (left), joined MARO Director Nina Austenberg as she presented the certificate.

**Rusti Says, “Thank You!”**

I very warm thank you to those who helped Rusti the orangutan get closer to a permanent home (see the fall 2001 MARO Regional News). Your donations for Rusti and the HSUS captive wildlife protection program have been sent to Orangutan Foundation International. A year ago, an HSUS member and her husband were at the Honolulu Zoo and spoke to a caretaker who hoped the sanctuary would soon be finished. Our member wrote, “I was thrilled to see his picture and story in the MARO Regional News. I hope Rusti and his caretakers get their wish soon.”

**The HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office**

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