WCRO Fall 2002
Saving Hokget

Regional office staff are often called to respond to a disaster such as a hurricane or flood that is impacting animals. But the spring rescue of Hokget (also known as Forgae) the forgotten dog far off the coast of Hawaii was unusual in terms of the resources required to bring an animal to safety.

The request for assistance came from the Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS). A ship, the Insiko, had been damaged by an engine fire and had been adrift for nearly two weeks with a crew of about 11 people and one dog (Hokget). The humans were rescued by a cruise ship, but because of a series of miscommunications, the dog was left aboard the listing ship for what turned out to be another three weeks of survival at the open seas.

Initial attempts to locate the ship and rescue Hokget using the services of a marine salvage company, American Marine Services, proved fruitless. Just when HSUS and HHS were about to give up hope and resign themselves to the fact that the Insiko—with Hokget aboard—had sunk, a Japanese fishing vessel radioed the U.S. Coast Guard that they continued on page 2.

WCRO's Bob Reder visits with Hokget and Kauai Humane Society Executive Director Dr. Becky Rhoades during his visit to the Society's emergency shelter.

One Cockfighting Operation Shut Down, Then Another

February 25, 2002, Merced County, CA

WCRO staff assisted deputies and animal control officers during an investigation that led Merced County Sheriff's Department's problem oriented policing (POP) team to serve a warrant at Clifford Collins's Snelling, California, residence. The raid resulted in the seizure of cockfighting paraphernalia, several firearms, and 233 gamecocks valued at between $200 and $10,000 apiece.

In June, Collins pleaded no contest to raising fighting roosters, and was placed on three years of formal probation. Collins received the probation as part of a sentence levied by Merced County Superior Court Judge Robert Quall. Collins had been charged with possession of gamecocks with the intent to use them for fighting and for being a felon in possession of a firearm, said Deputy District Attorney David Leath, who prosecuted the case.

Terms of the sentence included a $1,000 fine and $7,000 in restitution to Merced County Animal Control for their work in the case. In addition, Quall ordered all firearms destroyed and the fighting roosters euthanized. A six-month jail sentence was suspended.

“We're generally satisfied with the outcome of this case,” said WCRO Director Eric Sakach. “The birds used in cockfighting are destined to suffer terrible wounds and an inhumane death in a pit, all for the sake of entertainment and profit.”

May 30, 2002, Merced, Stanislaus Counties, CA

WCRO helped shut down another large cockfighting operation after teaming up with deputies and animal control officers in raids on four Merced County locations. “Agencies from as far away as El Dorado County sent officers to assist and to observe,” said Sheriff's Sgt. Doug Jensen, supervisor of the POP team.

Arrested were three family members: Raul Galvan, 51, of Merced; Jesus Prado Galvan, 25, of Atwater; and Maria Galvan, continued on page 2.
Encinitas Bans Display of Exotic Animals

Exotic animals win in Encinitas, California, after the city council voted 3 to 2 on April 10, 2002, to ban any public display of a long list of exotic animals for entertainment purposes by a for-profit organization. In addition to the abuse targeted at all circuses, the ban will also make illegal many animal displays organized by for-profit groups such as small private zoos, including animal visits to classrooms. WCRG staff member John Dommers joined local groups to support the ban. He attended all the hearings and wrote and spoke to Council members. In addition to the abuse issues, Dommers pointed out public safety concerns. Encinitas is one of 17 cities, 16 states, and three counties that have approved legislation regulating animal acts or banning the display of wild animals entirely. Dommers also attended and spoke at a public hearing before the Pasadena, California, city council, which passed a similar ban last year.

continued from “Holget,” page 1 thought they had passed the ship on their way into Hawaii. This is when HSUS Northern Rockies Regional Director Dave Pauli was called for help. Pauli, at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard, submitted a written report for possible capture strategies (such as humane traps, nets, or chemical immobilization). Such measures might have been needed because a fishing boat crew who had boarded the disabled tanker had frightened the dog. Holget ran below deck to avoid capture. Two days later, HHS assembled a recovery team and invited Pauli to join. The HSUS and HHS developed strategies for Holget’s safe removal should the team be able to board the ship with the assistance of the U.S. Coast Guard, which was working to ensure that the Insho’s thousands of gallons of diesel fuel would not end up causing an environmental catastrophe. Upon arrival in Hawaii, Pauli met with the other response team members, veterinarian and Kauai Humane Society Executive Director Becky Rhoades and HHS Director of Operations Linda Haller. All that prevented an immediate rescue was formal Coast Guard approval that the ship was safe to be boarded and finding a way to get to Johnson Airstrip, which is 500 miles off the Hawaiian coast and serviced irregularly by commercial flights. Holget is a Taiwanese dog whose name means “merry fortune.” Her name turned out to be prophetic, for on the 21st day of her adventure, crew from American Marine Services tug Insho were ready to be rescued and made herself available for a quiet and quick capture by the tug boat crew. The entire HSUS/HHS team was ecstatic that Holget was finally in the care of humans and headed back to Honolulu. When Holget arrived, Dr. Rhoades evaluated her. The little dog then flew to the Kauai Humane Society where she was held for a four-month rabies quarantine.

Kauai Society Refuge for All

 Providing emergency shelter for people and their animals during disasters is one of The HSUS’s goals. On Hawaii’s island of Kauai, collaboration among public and private agencies has resulted in just such an emergency shelter for all creatures. “The Kauai Humane Society (KHS) was recently designated as a place of refuge for both two-legged and four-legged species during time of disaster,” said veterinarian and KHS Executive Director Becky Rhoades. KHS’s new 30,000-square-foot building has been approved for both uses, a measure that Rhoades says will give people peace of mind, knowing that all members of their family will be safe in an emergency. The Hawai’i chapter of the American Red Cross and Hawaii State Civil Defense have made KHS’s shelter the first in the United States to be certified for dual usage. To further disaster planning efforts on the islands, The HSUS is making plans with KHS for disaster training there.

Native Program Expands into Nevada

For the first time, HSUS’s native wildlife spay-neuter and pet wellness program traveled to Nevada to provide needed services to the Ft. McDermitt, Elko, and Duck Valley Reservations. This clinic is part of The HSUS’s exciting new program Remote Area Veterinary Services (RAYS), which provides spay/neuter and vaccination services to companion animals living in poor, rural communities and on Native American reservations. WCRG Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler worked closely with Debi Mek, environmental health and engineering specialist with the Indian Health Service, to organize the trip. The clinic handled 305 animals, with 287 dogs and cats receiving wellness exams and vaccinations. Of those, 192 pets were spayed or neutered. Sixteen horses also received vaccinations or wormings or other veterinary treatment. During the clinic, Cutler led discussions on basic pet care; how to interpret animal “body language”; the importance of spaying, neutering, and vaccinating animals; and dog bite prevention. In addition to the families who brought their pets to the clinic, John Moddrell, principal of the McDermitt High School, organized several classes of students to attend the pet care sessions. “Students at all levels participated in interactive activities,” said Cutler. “They asked intelligent questions, and I believe they went away with information they can apply in daily life.” She said, “It’s wonderful to work with reservation communities that recognize there is an animal overpopulation problem and are interested in a humane resolution.” The HSUS commends all the volunteers and tribal officials who worked so hard to bring our clinic to their communities.

BARK is Better than a Bite

Every year, dogs bite more than 4 million people in the United States. Most of those victims are children under the age of 13. The HSUS’s new BARK (Be Aware, Responsible, and Kind) Dog Bite Prevention Program hopes to change that. Developed by The HSUS’s youth-education division, the BARK program is designed to help kids stay safe around dogs, reduce the number of dog bite-related injuries in the community, and positively enhance the bond between people and dogs. It is the only program of its kind that’s proven effective in teaching elementary school students how to behave safely around animals.

For perfect use by teachers, human educators, and parents, the BARK program consists of a 23-minute video, and a fun, easy-to-use 32-page activity book of lessons and worksheets designed to teach kids how to avoid being bitten. The comprehensive BARK Program costs just $23.95. (The video and activity book can also be purchased separately for $19.95 and $5 respectively.) Order online at www.animalsheltering.org, or send a check or money order payable to AHAR, PO. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06432-0362.

continued from “Director’s Report,” page 6 There is a better solution. Comprehensive dangerous-dog legislation that is adequately funded and enforced in conjunction with better consumer education and stricter, enforceable regulations regarding responsible pet ownership would do a real service to dogs, their families, and their communities.

For example, the two huge Presa Canario dogs involved in the January 20, 2003, attack on Dave Apple were feared by others in their community, perhaps themselves as well. But neighbors never reported them or their fears. If they had reported them, the local animal care and control agency could have responded and possibly determined whether the dogs were indeed a menace.

To perform these duties, animal care and control agencies need to be adequately funded and staffed so that they can establish outreach programs to inform a community that they’re an available resource and should be called for any animal-related concern. The HSUS also offers Animal Care Expo as a regional or state event to help animal care and control officials and animal owners and managers as they develop “pets welcome” policies that are fair and allow only responsible pet owners of non-dangerous animals. Please visit www.hsus.org/rentwithpets to learn more. In addition, we are working to better educate the insurance industry about dog behavior and responsible pet keeping so that they, too, can improve their policies to effectively address concerns regarding dangerous animals.

Expo 2003 Set for Biggest Little City

Join us April 2-5, 2003, for the HSUS’s Animal Care Expo in Reno, Nevada. It’s the premiere trade show and educational conference for animal care professionals, offering dozens of specialized workshops and more than 100 exhibitors. To learn more, visit www.animalsheltering.org.
Dollars for Arthur

The HSUS recently gave the Performing Animals Welfare Society (PAWS) a $5,000 donation toward the care of the black bear known as Arthur (see Spring 2002 WCRO Regional News). WCRO’s Bob Reder presented the check to PAWS Director Pat Derby at their facility in Galt, California. Arthur first came to WCRO’s attention in the fall of 2000 when he was observed dragging one hind leg in Mammoth Lakes, California. Pressure from WCRO and others prompted the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to capture Arthur and have him examined at the University of California, Davis. It was determined that he suffered from a degenerative bone disease and would not be a candidate for release. After having the bear’s medical reports evaluated by several other experts, WCRO helped facilitate Arthur’s transfer to PAWS, where he will live out his life under excellent care and medical supervision. Current plans at PAWS include a large bear enclosure at their San Andreas facility where several bears will enjoy a natural environment.

WCRO continues to work with other organizations to change a policy often perceived as causing the capture and release of adult and nuisance black bears. WCRO has joined the Tahoe Council for Bears, a group of concerned individuals and organizations working to mitigate problems associated with the increase in human population and interactions with the black bear population in the Lake Tahoe area. Education and cooperation of residents and businesses is key to reducing problems. The HSUS advises those who reside in areas populated by large carnivores such as black bears, mountain lions, and coyotes to properly dispose of garbage and recyclables so that they are not accessible to animals. Wild animals are attracted to such foods quickly and learn to return to them. Some trash, such as plastic bags, is also dangerous to wildlife.

Do not feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals may cause them to become habituated to humans. That lack of natural fear can lead to the creation of a “nuisance” animal or a dangerous situation. Supplying food to wildlife will only encourage those animals to become less afraid of humans. That lack of natural fear can lead to the creation of a “nuisance” animal or a dangerous situation. Supplying food to wildlife will only encourage those animals to become more comfortable around humans. That lack of natural fear can lead to the creation of a “nuisance” animal or a dangerous situation. Supplying food to wildlife will only encourage those animals to become more comfortable around humans. That lack of natural fear can lead to the creation of a “nuisance” animal or a dangerous situation.

National Conference on Animals in Disaster

During the last week in May, more than 150 animal shelter directors, animal service officers, and other community disaster managers from throughout the United States attended The HSUS’s National Conference on Animals in Disaster in Fort Worth, Texas. WCRO’s Bob Reder was a presenter, and he commented that presentations ranging from biohazard and the threat from foreign animal disease to developing a community plan gave attendees valuable information. The HSUS encouraged attendees to take the information they received back home to implement disaster planning in their communities.

CA Activist Network Strengthened

In cooperation with The HSUS government affairs department, WCRO presented four workshops entitled Lobby 101 in California this past April. This introduction to the federal and state legislative process was well attended in San Diego, Los Angeles, Concord, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Speaking at all locations were HSUS’s John Goodwin, Nancy Perry, and Beth Roscoe. WCRO’s John Dommers and Bob Reder (shown at left, above, with several workshop participants) facilitated the venue in San Diego and Sacramento, respectively, presenting information concerning California politics. As a result of these workshops, the HSUS Humane Activist Network gained 90 additional members, one new state coordinator, and nine district captains.

The HSUS has teamed up with the Fund for Animals to create the Humane Activist Network—a national, grassroots network of volunteers who work to pass animal protection legislation—and we need you to help make the Network a success. By working together, we can amplify our voice for animals and make a real difference.

Legislative Update

The following is information about legislative activities and bills that may need your support. HSUS staff remain constantly in contact with legislative offices and local activists to assist in the passage of humane legislation and to stop bills that are not considered of benefit to animals. We cannot guarantee that the bills’ statuses are current or that The HSUS position on the bills will remain the same, as bills may be amended. For the latest information and to become a member of the Humane Activist Network, please visit www.hsus.org/legislation.

California

SB 345: Animal Blood Bank Regulations
Introduction by Sen. Sheila Kuehl, The HSUS supports this bill, which has passed through the Senate and now faces the Assembly. Please write Sen. Kuehl in support of this bill, which would require humane treatment of animals at commercial animal blood banks. Such facilities are currently unregulated.

AB 2474: Safeguarding Animals from Fatal Ingestion of Anti-freeze. Introduced by Assembly Member Joe Simintian and Wilma Chan, this bill requires the addition of a bittering agent to automotive anti-freeze products. These products contain ethylene glycol, which has a sweet taste and if ingested can cause the failure of children, cats, dogs, and other animals. The bill is currently awaiting assignment to a Senate committee.

AB 670: A new cross-reporting law, introduced by Assembly Member Virginia Strom-Martin and signed by Gov. Gray Davis, is designed to encourage employees of county child protective services agencies to report suspected cases of animal abuse to appropriate authorities. Current law already requires animal control officers to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Hawaii

Feeding of sharks is now illegal in Hawaii. Sen. Lorraine Inouye introduced the bill and Gov. Cayetano signed it on May 31, 2002. Attracting sharks to photograph or hunt by luring them with food is a danger to both humans and sea life. This practice puts at risk both humans and sea life. This practice puts at risk both humans and sea life.

Laurie’s Story

Laurie is an excellent example of how one determined person can make a difference! In addition to Laurie’s outstanding achievement, WCRO’s Bob Reder met with Clark County activists to exert pressure upon the school board for a favorable vote, and HSUS’s Lesly King supplied scientific evidence regarding alternatives to dissection, such as computer generated models. King will continue to assist the school board in the application of those alternatives.
I
t wasn't long after the verdict, (which has since been overturned) in which a jury unanimously convicted a San Francisco woman of second-degree murder for her dog's fatal mauling of Diane Whipple in her San Francisco apartment hallway, that the overreacting began. While the decision sent a powerful and much-needed message to dog owners that they are responsible for their animals' actions, it also raised many questions: Would landlords suddenly ban dogs from rental properties? Would insurance companies demand even tougher animal restrictions? Would cities again try to prohibit certain breeds? In the wake of Diane Whipple's death, the expectation is that more and more apartment leases will contain no-pet clauses. I even received a number of calls from heartstzick apartment dwellers in the Sacramento area telling me that they'd been given five days to get rid of their dogs or face eviction.

Fatal attacks, like the one that claimed Diane Whipple's life, usually generate a lot of public and governmental attention, which may translate into well-meaning but misguided laws and regulations that attempt to prevent not only dog maulings but also dogfighting and dog bites in general. One of the more common civic reactions is to ban certain dog breeds—and mixes thereof—most notably the larger breeds such as Dobermans, rottweilers, American pit bull terriers, German shepherds, and others who seem to make the list based only on some individuals' biases. Once passed into law, these restrictive measures can find their way into other policies such as rental housing and condominium regulations, and insurance company exclusions.

Unfortunately, the problem with breed-specific restrictions is that they fail to address the larger problems of irresponsible owners who do not properly train or socialize their pets. Some even abuse their animals or train them to be aggressive. Communities that have enacted such bans have discovered they are no solution. Animal control agencies, even those that are well funded and equipped, consider the bans an enforcement nightmare. Agencies often are not properly trained or staffed to enforce the laws, and breed identification isn't always a simple process. Some insurance companies institute blanket bans despite the fact that no one can distinguish a potentially dangerous dog from a safe, loving pet based on breed alone.

Breed-specific policies—whether municipal bans, rental-property guidelines, or insurance company “not allowed” lists—simply do not serve their intended purpose. A dog's tendency to bite is a product of several factors, including a lack of early socialization of the dog to people; whether the dog has been spayed or neutered; the animal's recognition of where he or she "fits" in the hierarchy of the family; mistreating for fighting or increased aggression; genetic makeup, including breed and strains within a breed; quality of care and supervision by the owner; current levels of socialization within the dog's human family; behavior of the victim; and whether the dog has been chained for lengthy periods of time.

continued on page 5