New Shelter Urged For Oklahoma City

An HSUS Gulf States Regional Official visited the Oklahoma City Animal Shelter recently and concluded that the city needs a new shelter in order to care for dogs and cats properly and humanely.

Regional Field Representative Bernard M. Weller praised the city's animal control employees for their conscientiousness during his visit early in the spring.

Although Weller found that employees were not always using the most humane techniques in handling animals, he said they were eager to learn improved methods. Weller demonstrated how lifting stray dogs by the back of the neck and the underside at the same time hurts the dogs less and protects the employee more than other methods.

"Most importantly, the public treats animals more humanely if the dog war- (Continued on back page.)

Gulf States Staff Aids In Education Efforts

Regional Director Douglas M. Scott has been working with HSUS education officials in recent months to apprise state officials of HSUS activities in humane education and to seek new sources of funding for humane education projects.


Officials of both agencies expressed interest in the projects progress in developing new materials and methods for teaching kindness and requested that their states be included in the next phase of field testing scheduled by HEDEP. Westerlund, who is a professor of education at the University of Tulsa, (Continued on back page.)

TEXAS ZOO SETS BAD EXAMPLE—The Midland, Texas, zoo is a good example of how not to run a zoo. HSUS Gulf States investigator Bernard M. Weller visited the zoo earlier this year and found no professional staff, no trained animal handlers, improper diets, poor maintenance, small and crowded quarters, and lack of any valid objectives. In the photo above, an ocelot lives in a barren pen with an open drainage ditch running through it and only a plywood box for shelter. Since his visit, two cougar cubs, a badger, and a chimpanzee died of improper diet and exposure to the elements. A few months earlier, two adult tigers died.

(Continued on back page.)
Texas rattlesnake roundups are in full swing again, but not without the concerned and watchful eyes of HSUS Gulf States regional officials, herpetologists, wildlife biologists, and individuals concerned about respect for life and environment.

The justification and validity of rattlesnake roundups have been questioned increasingly since HSUS conducted a wide-spread investigation of the activity a year ago. HSUS investigators, assisted by herpetologist Pat Burchfield, curator of the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas, concluded that the roundups were “sideshow shows of torture and bloodshed.”

Although the announced purpose of the events is to rid the Southwest countryside of dangerous reptiles and to provide anti-snake-bit serum to medical and research facilities, the investigators concluded that the actual purpose appears to be to attract tourists for the purpose of spending money.

“Somehow or other, people of the Southwest have come to think of the rattlesnake as a worthless creature to be tortured and killed at their whim,” I was told at that time. “Nothing could be further from the truth, since the rattlesnake plays an important role in the ecosystem of the country, especially the Southwest.”

One of the largest hurdles we have faced in changing the nature of these roundups is the fact that many of them are sponsored by local Jaycees. A copy of the HSUS investigative findings was sent to the national Jaycee office. As a result, Bud Low, national program manager for environmental improvement, issued a statement, which read in part:

“It is my understanding that the hunt (roundups) will not be conducted by the Jaycees this year and that the Texas Jaycees will not participate in the event that they hold or sponsored by other organizations.”

But...I have asked that the carnivore atmosphere be dropped and that the Jaycees use their influence to make sure that those who participate in the event hunts are actually held, not allowed to gain a realization that the rattlesnake, whatever his reputation, should not be made to suffer the sort of abuse and torment that the roundups bring.” Emphasis has been placed on the fact that children who participate assume an ethical conduct to continuation of abusive practices, and thus are not allowed the opportunity for appreciation of the advantages of certain creatures to the natural balance of our life system. Simplicistic terms, children will maintain the ethic throughout life that killing certain creatures is fun.”

Although HSUS is pleased by this statement, we have as yet no indication that this thinking has been transmitted to the local Jaycees level. We have encouraged, however, that the statements from local sponsors that humane treatment will be part of this year’s program.

HSUS, assisted by herpetologists, will be observing this year’s roundups carefully. I urge all humans in the area to join us in educating the public about the value of the rattlesnake, the need to treat all living creatures humanely, and the need to teach children respect for all forms of life.

I would be happy to send a copy of the HSUS investigative report to anyone requesting it from the regional office.

Roping Jack Rabbits for Fun

In spite of the efforts of Texas humanitarians for many years to teach their fellow man respect for all life, some Texas communities continue to look on wildlife solely as a source of amusement and revelry. The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office was instrumental last fall in getting city officials of Odessa, Texas, to cancel a jack rabbit roping contest scheduled for its “Son-of-a-Gun Weekend.”

The event, which would be viewed as a rabbit rodeo, was brought to the attention of the regional staff by officers of the Midland, Texas, SPCA. The chairman of the event had announced that any method of capturing the rabbits, which were to be turned over to a fellow man for the Posse Arena, would be permissible.

Regional Director Douglas M. Scott wrote to the mayor of Odessa and to officials of “Son-of-a-Gun Weekend” warning them that the animals would undoubtedly be subjected to torment and injury and that such actions might violate the Texas Anticruelty laws. With the assistance of the Midland SPCA, Scott succeeded in getting the event canceled.

The regional staff is now in the process of investigating an armadillo hunt scheduled in Victoria, Texas.

HSUS Demands Zoo Make Improvements

The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office has been working with Nueces County, Texas, officials to make drastic improvements to the county zoo.

Regional Field Representative Bernard M. Weller visited the zoo in early April and found that it failed to meet minimum standards of care for animals and had no valid objectives. Among his specific findings were: (a) improper diets, (b) poor maintenance, (c) shelters for individual animals too small, and (d) poor sanitation.

County officials welcomed Weller’s offer of assistance in finding means of correcting the deficiencies. The first step the county took was to contract for the services of a veterinarian to provide adequate medical care for all the zoo’s animals. Officials are also considering a completely new concept for housing the animals.

County Commissioner Clark Blunt said that the county wants to take immediate steps necessary to bring the zoo up to HSUS standards.

Region Assists Town With Animal Control

The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office is working with citizens and officials of New Braunfels, Texas, to develop a humane animal control program. Chief of Police Burney Boeck requested assistance from the regional office.

Scott told Welter that the county wants to take immediate steps necessary to bring the zoo up to HSUS standards.

Correction

The Gulf States Region news in April 1973 contained an error. The number of rattlesnake bounties paid by the state of Texas in 1971 was approximately 794.
Scott, Westerlund, and Eileen S. Whitlock, Ed.D., associate project director, were guests of the Humane Society of Amarillo (Texas) in January. They were invited to meet with local society leaders, other civic leaders, and area educators to discuss HEDEP and the National Assn. for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE), an organization founded by HSUS to disseminate ideas and materials on humane education.

In February Scott and Westerlund met with several New Orleans residents who are interested in humane education to discuss HEDEP and NAAHE.

"I am impressed with the enthusiasm with which news of our humane education projects is being met," Scott said. "I look forward to taking this information to humanitarians throughout the Gulf States Region."

OKLAHOMA CITY Continued

Inadequate Quarters—The shelter provided for these two bobcats at the Midland, Texas, zoo is no better than that at the worst roadside zoo. In spite of many problems equally as bad as this one, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has ruled that the zoo meets the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act of 1970. HSUS, however, has notified Midland city officials that radical changes must be made. The city has already appointed a professional zoo director and begun a new feeding program.

The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office serves Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Requests for assistance or information should be directed to 1800 S. Staples St., Corpus Christi, TX 78404 (512-883-2513).

The National Assn. for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE), has been created for teachers and other persons interested in humane education issues. A quarterly journal and newsletter will report developments in methodology, materials, and evaluation. For further information contact your regional office.

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Scott said he was tremendously impressed by the enthusiasm for HEDEP demonstrated by members of the faculty and administration.

Lee Addresses Churches

HSUS National Director Amy Freeman Lee, Litt.D., addressed the annual meeting of the San Antonio Council of Churches earlier this year on the humane ethic and its relationship to basic religious ethics.

HSUS Gulf States Regional Director Douglas M. Scott, who attended the meeting, reported that the attendance was the largest in several years.

"The large turnout can be attributed to one thing," Scott said. "And that is the respect and affection that the people of San Antonio have for Amy Freeman Lee." Dr. Lee is a resident of San Antonio.

Accompanying Scott was State Rep. Lyndon Olson, Jr. of Waco.

University Students Hear About HSUS

Gulf States Regional Director Douglas M. Scott spent four days at the University of Tulsa earlier this year discussing a broad range of HSUS activities with graduate classes in humane education.

The university introduced two courses in humane education as a result of the HSUS Humane Education Development and Evaluation Project (HEDEP), which is based there. Stuart R. Westerlund, Ed.D., professor of education at the university and HEDEP director, invited Scott to meet with the classes to give them insight into the day-to-day activities of an animal welfare organization.

Scott said he was tremendously impressed by the enthusiasm for HEDEP demonstrated by members of the faculty and administration.