The Great Floods of '97: New Year Begins on a Wet and Tragic Note for People and Animals in Region

The first few weeks of January were a time of fear, loss, and tragedy for numerous people and animals in Western states. As 1996 drew to a close, a tropical storm system, called the Pineapple Express, pounded the region with record rainfall. The resulting floods, which left parts of Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, and California in shambles, are believed to have claimed the lives of more than 20 people and thousands of animals.

In northern California, steady warm rains dissolved mountain snowcaps causing devastating mudslides and necessitating massive releases of runoff waters from dams. A combination of rain-swollen rivers, high tides, and a succession of levee breaks forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people, pets, and livestock throughout California's fertile Central Valley. While maintaining contact with local humane societies and animal care and control agencies within the affected states, WCRO responded to communities needing assistance.

WCRO Director Eric Sakach assembled a disaster response team, including WCRO Program Coordinator Geoff Simmons, Southeast Regional Office Program Coordinator Ken Johnson, and Companion Animals Senior Associate Jorge Ortega.

The HSUS team first responded to Yuba County where they worked under the direction of California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) Disaster Area Veterinary Coordinator Dr. Garry Goemann and Yuba County Animal Control Director Bob Tielemann. Using a large tent erected by military personnel, the team first helped to set up a triage facility adjacent to Dr. Goemann's veterinary practice in Marysville. During the week that followed, team members helped to coordinate rescue efforts using boats in heavily flooded areas and later assisted with the field rescue of hundreds of stranded and displaced dogs, cats, horses, and livestock in the communities of Olivehurst, Linda, and Arboga. Officers from the Yuba-Sutter SPCA, Placer County Animal Control, and El Dorado County Animal Control and personnel from the University of California at Davis, the California Department of Fish and Game Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided additional assistance.

Rescuers brought animals to the triage facility where they were examined and given veterinary treatment. From there, animals were moved to a holding facility operated by another organization until they could be reunited with their owners. While many horse owners and livestock producers had hurried to move their animals to higher, safer ground, others were either unprepared or caught by surprise. According to Sakach, one such incident had tragic consequences for a dairyman who lost more than 200 cows when a saturated portion of the levee collapsed. "It was a gruesome scene of tangled bodies that will haunt all of us forever. One look and you knew these animals had suffered terribly," Sakach said.

continued on page 2
The Humane Society of the United States...
Cruelty in Live-Animal Markets Must Stop

In the Fall 1996 issue of the WCRRO Regional News, you read about a raid on a major dogfighting ring in the Bay Area. Three men involved in the operation were indicted. Two of the defendants pled guilty to charges of felony dogfighting and cruelty to animals. While one of them awaits sentencing, the other received additional time in state prison. Charges against the third defendant were dismissed.

Bay Area Dogfighters Sentenced

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 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 planned giving and our programs to help animals.

Mail this coupon in the envelope enclosed or send it directly to The Humane Society of the United States, WCRRO, PO. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220.

The HSUS Wildlife Lawsuit Trust protects wild animals by permanently preserving their natural habitats and providing them sanctuary within those habitats. We accept tax-deductible donations including tax-deductible donations of wildlife-dependent properties where the wildlife also is permanently protected.

Please help save wildlife.

If you have property that should be permanently protected, please contact:

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office
PO. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220
(916) 344-3730

An Affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States

Volunteers Needed in California To Gather Signatures for 1998 Ba’ Initiative To Ban Steel Jaw Leghold Trapping and Hound Hunting!

The HSUS, working with other state and national humane and environmental organizations, will be launching a ballot initiative in 1998 to ban steel jaw leghold trapping and the hound hunting of bears and other animals.

Your help is needed to stop inhumane and unsporting hunting practices.

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.

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City ___________________ State ______ Zip ______
Phone ( ) ___________ FAX ( ) ______
E-mail Address ______________________

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

The HSUS, working with other state and national humane and environmental organizations, will be launching a ballot initiative in 1998 to ban steel jaw leghold trapping.

Your help is needed to stop inhumane and indiscriminate 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.

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City ___________________ State ______ Zip ______
Phone ( ) ___________ FAX ( ) ______
E-mail Address ______________________

Attention, California and Nevada Members! The HSUS Needs Your Help To Stop Cruel Trapping and Hunting Practices

We would like to repeat the terrific victories for wildlife that happened during the last election in Washington and Oregon (see article below). But this time we are looking to win big for wildlife in California and Nevada. We know that with the help of dedicated HSUS members, we will succeed in making the entire West Coast Region a more humane place for wildlife.

Please consider collecting signatures for the ballot initiatives described at right. As we’ve proven, your efforts make a tremendous difference.

Oregon, Washington Voters Send Strong Message to Hunters

Voters in Washington and Oregon sent a strong message to hunters in their states that cruel and unsportsmanlike hunting practices will not be tolerated. Voters in the Pacific Northwest made the 1996 elections one of the most successful ever for wildlife and The HSUS.

In Oregon, The HSUS worked with the Oregon Bear and Cougar Coalition and others to defeat Measure 34, sponsored by the Oregon Hunters Association. Measure 34, which would have repealed 1994’s Measure 18, which banned bear baiting and hounding of hunting black bears and cougars, was rejected by voters by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent. In Washington, Initiative-655, which bans bear baiting and the use of dogs to hunt black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx, passed by a whopping 63 percent to 37 percent. The HSUS worked with more than 65 other groups on the “Yes on I-655” campaign to ensure its passage. To everyone who worked so hard on these initiatives or voted for them, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

If you live in California or Nevada and would like to help collect signatures for our upcoming ballot initiatives, please fill in and return this 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 Humane Society of the United States

3

The Humane Society of the United States...
Finding Balance

As the most recent disaster to hit Western states came to a close and the long process of recovery began, I had a chance to reflect on the collective experiences of the staff members who made up our disaster team. Each of us was deeply affected by the terrible loss of life and suffering endured by people and animals. Like many of the victims, we experienced fatigue and sporadic feelings of helplessness from being at the mercy of nature’s destructive forces. Like my colleagues, I am still haunted by the mental snapshots of the most grotesque scenes of drowned and suffering animals we encountered in the field.

But part of the recovery process involves finding balance. For me, that balance comes from recalling the images associated with each community’s emergency planning. Like many of the victims, we experience concern and support of so many caring people. Of course, there is a story behind every animal who was rescued, but the daring rooftop rescue of a stranded border collie named Rodeo by a Channel 3 helicopter crew from Sacramento was an exceptional moment of victory over the catastrophic floods, and served to remind a nation that animals are also victims of disaster and must be included in every community’s emergency planning.

To all of the organizations, agencies, veterinarians, and volunteers—and to all of you who called to offer your support—thank you!

New FEMA Guide Addresses Animals

When disaster strikes, planning should be in place to address the care and control of animals too. That’s the message being delivered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its new guidelines to state and local emergency planners. In FEMA’s *Guide For All Emergency Operations Planning* (SLG-101), the agency issues specific recommendations—for the first time—pertaining to the welfare of animals. In the guide, FEMA recommends that state and local planning teams include members of the animal services community as a group having a role or stake in emergency response.

In acknowledging the more than 100 million pets in the United States, FEMA Director James Lee Witt says his agency “recognizes the importance of including animal welfare issues in the development of emergency plans.” The HSUS agrees. With the help of Dick Burns, a former FEMA public information officer and longtime friend of The HSUS, we were able to work with the agency and put forth a commitment to all the victims of a disaster.

For additional information on disaster planning for animals, please contact the Disaster Services Program of The HSUS at 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.