Nation Outraged Over Shooting of 34 Wild Horses in Nevada

Nevada law enforcement and animal protection authorities are hopeful that the three men arrested for the shooting of 34 wild horses in northern Nevada in late December will be prosecuted to the maximum degree allowed by law. According to officials, several young colts and pregnant mares were among the free-roaming animals that were found shot to death in a popular wild horse viewing spot just east of Reno, Nevada (see above). It is the worst slaughter of wild horses in the state in a decade.

Investigators have yet to determine a motive for the shootings, but suspect that the animals were used for target practice by the three charged with firing high-powered rifles from the roadside. The bodies of nine horses were found by sheriff’s deputies responding to a report of shots being fired in the area. The rest of the horses were located with the aid of a helicopter search over the next two days. According to investigators, many of the animals endured prolonged suffering. Several horses were maimed.

continued on page 2

Large Dogfighting Operation Shut Down

Seized Dogs Stolen Then Recovered
On December 17, police arrested a Galt, California, couple on suspicion of running a professional dogfighting operation. Arrested on felony dogfighting and other charges were Cesar Cerda and his wife, Mercedes Ruiz Monterrubio. Assisted by WCRO staff and officers from Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation, Galt police officers seized 55 pit bull terriers, many heavily scarred from previous fights, along with training equipment, veterinary supplies, a portable dogfighting arena, dogfighting paraphernalia, and videotapes of dogfights. “This was one of the larger professional-level operations we’ve encountered,” said Eric Sakach, WCRO regional director. During the search, law enforcement officers also found a stolen handgun and a sophisticated marijuana cultivation operation on the premises.

A fear that there would be attempts to steal the dogs, who were being held as evidence, became a reality early Christmas morning when 18 dogs were stolen from Sacramento County’s animal shelter. By a fortunate twist of fate, the animals were recovered several hours later when a Manteca police officer stopped a van with a suspected drunken driver and discovered numerous pit bulls in blood-smeared cages inside the vehicle. Unaware that the dogs had been stolen just a few hours earlier, the Manteca police officer arrested the driver and two passengers who were subsequently booked into the San Joaquin County jail on suspicion of possessing dogs for fighting purposes and cruelty to animals. Three days later, a detective with the Manteca Police Department contacted Sakach for assistance with their case and mentioned that they had seized 18 dogs. “It was just a little too coincidental,” said Sakach. “I immediately sent staff to Manteca to compare our photographs of the dogs with the dogs in Manteca, and it turned out they were the same animals! All of the dogs were positively identified as the same animals stolen from Sacramento County and were returned.” The investigation continues, and cases against all the defendants are pending trial.
WCRO Provides Emergency Help in New Year’s Eve Cat Collector Case

On the afternoon of New Year’s Eve, WCRO received an emergency request for assistance from Placer County Animal Control Supervisor Mike Rodriguez, whose agency was faced with rescuing and housing 92 sickly cats found huddled inside a small trailer near Newcastle, California. WCRO provided portable kennels and purchased an additional 50 cages, which were delivered to the site by WCRO Program Coordinators Geoff Simmons and Cynthia Cueto. Simmons and Cueto then assisted Placer County’s officers with the rescue operation. The Auburn Area Animal Rescue Foundation, the Animal Spay and Neuter Clinic, Friends of the Auburn Placer County Shelter, and Animal Outreach provided additional help. Two veterinarians, Drs. Christine Mattson and Lucy Anthein, worked in an effort to evaluate and treat the cats, many of whom were found suffering from disease. “The condition of the cats and the trailer where they were kept was appalling,” said Simmons. “The floors and countertops were four inches deep in animal feces and the stench was overpowering. Most of the animals were caged with fecal matter and suffering from urine burns and upper respiratory infections.”

The cat’s owner, Suzanna Youngblood, had been collecting the cats for some time by responding to free-to-good-home advertisements and taking in strays as she found them. She has been auratically charged with felony animal cruelty. The case is pending.

California Animal Protection Measures Pass by Wide Margins

But Several Wildlife Groups Sue To Overturn Leghold Trap Ban

In what can only be termed a decisive victory for animals, California voters this past November approved a bill authored by S.B. 225 which guarantees passage of a number of animal protection measures, including passage of Proposition 4 that bans cruel and indiscriminate traps and poisons, principally used to kill wildlife. The measure passed by a 57 to 43 percent margin. “This is a historic win for animals,” said WCRO Director Eric Sakach. “California is the fourth state to ban recreational and sport trapping through the initiative process.”

Proposition 6, which outlaws the commercial sale of horses for human consumption, passed by a 59 to 41 percent margin.

Unfortunately, several wildlife groups, including chapters of the National Audubon Society, filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the portion of Proposition 4 that bans the steel-jaw leghold trap. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court on December 3, seeks preliminary and permanent injunctions against the measure’s ban on leghold traps. The plaintiffs, which include the Marin and Golden Gate Audubon chapters, the National Audubon Society, and California Waterfowl Association, asserted that leghold traps are valuable in protecting birds from predators. “The HSUS believes that both birds and mammals should be protected, and we deplore the use of these cruel and indiscriminate traps,” said Sakach. The HSUS and the other organizations that sponsored the initiative as the group ProPAW have filed a motion to intervene to protect the core provisions of Proposition 4.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the measure into law on December 9, 2004.

Sick and dirty, but lucky to have been rescued, this kitten was discovered living in a filthy trailer with more than 90 other cats.

Horses,” continued from page 1

and had to be euthanized to spare them further misery. At least one horse had been tortured with sprays to the face from a fire extinguisher. News of the gruesome discovery was reported nationally and has shocked and angered people across the nation.

“The correlation between animal abuse and violence toward humans is well-documented,” said WCRO Director Eric Sakach. “The persons responsible for the sickeningly deliberate and brutal attack on these poor animals should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. In addition, our office is committed to working with all interested groups to pass needed legislation making malicious and intentional animal cruelty a felony crime in Nevada.”

The HSUS offer of $10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for this crime spurred other leads that eventually led to the recovery of the alleged perpetrator. The case has since been referred to the prosecutor’s office.

California's Animal Protection Bill Soldiered On In 2004

The news from the HSUS, which includes the Nevada Humane Society, Friends of the Lincoln Park Zoo, and other animal protection groups, was that the HSUS and its allies were working to pass legislation in the next session of the California legislature. The group's priorities included legislation to ban the sale of animals to research laboratories, to strengthen animal cruelty laws, and to ban the use of leghold traps.

The HSUS has been active in California for many years, and has seen some success in passing legislation to protect animals. In 2003, the group worked with state legislators to pass a bill that would have banned the sale of animals to research laboratories. The bill passed the legislature, but was vetoed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The HSUS has continued to work on this issue, and is hoping to pass similar legislation in the next session of the legislature.

In addition to the sale of animals to research laboratories, the HSUS has also worked on legislation to strengthen animal cruelty laws. In 2004, the group worked with state legislators to pass a bill that would have increased penalties for animal cruelty. This bill also passed the legislature, but was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

The HSUS has also worked on legislation to ban the use of leghold traps. In 2004, the group worked with state legislators to pass a bill that would have banned the use of leghold traps. This bill also passed the legislature, but was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

The HSUS continues to work on these and other issues to protect animals in California. In the next session of the legislature, the group hopes to pass similar legislation to protect animals.
WCRO Regional News

`round Our Region: News and Activities From the WCRO States

Pro Wrestler Tag Teams With The HSUS To Slam Cockfighting

In February, World Championship Wrestling Champion Bill Goldberg joined The HSUS to announce support for federal legislation to close a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act that still allows the interstate transport of birds for cockfighting. The enormously popular Goldberg teamed up with WCRO Director Eric Sakach and HSUS Senior Vice President Wayne Pacelle during a congressional briefing and visits to offices of individual members of the Senate and House to speak in support of legislation introduced by Colorado Sen. Wayne Allard, the lone veterinarian in Congress. "When I fight, I choose to step into the ring," said Goldberg. "But animals are forced to fight, and they suffer and die in the process. It is animal cruelty in its worst form."

HSUS Animal Fighting Courses Go Coast to Coast

WCRO Director Eric Sakach instructed three statewide, day-long courses on the investigation of illegal animal fighting in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania this past November. Sponsored by The HSUS's Connecticut State HSUS.

In December and January, two more courses were hosted in California by SPCA, President Patricia City of Boston Animal Control, the Boston Police Department, the Humane Society of San Bernar-

dine County, the Luzerne County District Attorney’s Department, the Humane Society of San Bernar-
dine County, the Luzerne County District Attorney’s Office, and Allied Health College.

In December and January, two more courses were hosted in California by the San Bernardino Police Department, the Humane Society of San Bernar-
dino Valley, and the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Department. The combined courses attracted a total of more than 400 law enforcement personnel.

The Alternatives Loan Program: Providing Humane Learning Tools for Animal-Friendly Classrooms

In 1995, The HSUS began loaning dissection alternatives to students, teachers, and parents as a way to help those who object to dissection and to encourage the adoption of alternatives in the classroom. Since then, about 300 dissection alternatives have been loaned to students from 31 states and three countries.

The Alternatives Loan Program has more than 100 alternatives to the use of live animals for dissection or invasive exercises. Designed for middle school through college level students, they include computer programs, videos, models, and charts representing 15 animal species. In addition, these programs have been used to develop hundreds of students each year who object to dissection. Students are advised on how they can negotiate alternati-
es with teachers and administrators. They also learn about new re-
sources available and our recently launched e-mail discussion group, the Inter-Campus Animal Advocacy Network (I-CAAN).

To learn more about the Alternatives Loan Program or to receive a dissection alternatives section campaign packet, write to: HSUS West Coast Regional Office, P.O. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220. Name ____________ Address ____________ City ____________ State ____________ Zip ____________ Phone ____________

WCRO Preparing for Emergencies

During the annual meeting of the Oregon Emergency Management Association in Eugene, Oregon, in October, emergency management officials from throughout the state visited The HSUS's exhibit booth, where they learned about The HSUS's animal disaster services program. WCRO Regional Projects Coordinator John Dommers attended the training conference and said, "I was pleasantly surprised to learn that officials from the Portland area had already begun to distribute HSUS materials on disaster management planning for animals in the areas they serve. Our presence at the conference provided details about our services that were welcomed by everyone in attendance."

In keeping with emergency preparedness, WCRO staff members Eric Sakach, Geoff Simmons, and Cynthia Cutler successfully completed Standardized Emergency Management System and Emergency Operations Center training during the ninth annual Continuing Challenge Conference in Sacramento, California. The courses are designed for support, supervi-
sory, management, and executive personnel who will likely respond during emergencies. In the photo above, Geoff Simmons and Cynthia Cutler practice low angle rappelling during a technical animal rescue course.

WCR0's Geoff Simmons helps herd emus to an awaiting transport in flooded Jackson County, Mississippi.

WCRO Staff Assist in Animal Rescues in Aftermath of Hurricane Georges

In October, WCRO Program Coordinators Cynthia Cutler and Geoff Simmons traveled to Mobile, Alabama, where they joined staff from The HSUS's Southeast and Southwest Regional Offices and the Houston SPCA to assist in ani-
mal rescues associated with Hurricane Georges. Among the animals rescued were 14 emus, who were transported to the Jackson County Animal Shelter in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where they received shelter, food, and veterinary atten-
tion. In addition, the animal rescue team transported nearly 100 dogs from Mississippi shelters to the Houston SPCA for adoption.

Prehistoric Plymouth: A 20,000-Year-Old Archaeological Mystery

Headline: "Plymouth is Not the Oldest Settlement in America!" The famous Mayflower site is not the ancient emer-
ging of a 20,000-year-old archaeological mystery. Impressive evidence suggests that the site of the First Thanksgiving was visited by early man.

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International Cruelty Free Logo Unveiled

On December 16, the first-ever international cruelty free logo for cosmetics and household products was unveiled at a news conference at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in California. Designed by the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics, of which The HSUS is a member organization, the logo is a tool in helping to end decades of cruel and unnecessary animal testing as well as product labeling confusion. The new international logo will let consumers know that no animals were used in any part of the testing of a product and will effectively put an end to any confusion about the validity of a company’s claims that its product is cruelty free. Consumers can expect to see the new logo on products this year.

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 can assure that animals 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, WCRO, P.O. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220.

Name ____________ Address ____________ City ____________ State ____________ Zip ____________ Phone ____________
HSUS Uncovers Dog and Cat Slaughter for Fur Industry

In mid-December, millions of Americans watched in horror as the findings of an 18-month investigation by The HSUS were exposed during a nationally televised investigative report on “Dateline NBC.” The investigation uncovered one of the fur industry’s dirtier little secrets: The brutal slaughter of companion animals—dogs and cats—to be turned into fur coats, fur-trimmed accessories, and even stuffed toy animals.

The investigation, conducted by a nine-person team led by The HSUS’s Chief Investigator Rick Swain and German journalist Manfred Karremann, focused on practices in China, Thailand, and the Philippines. The team documented dogs and cats being kept under the worst conditions imaginable and being killed by such means as slow suffocation, hanging, clubbing, or bleeding to death. The death toll is conservatively estimated to be in the range of two million dogs and cats killed annually for their fur. It usually takes from 10 to 12 dogs or 24 cats to manufacture one coat—more if puppies or kittens are used.

The investigation found that dog and cat fur is aggressively marketed and sold in both the United States and Europe, and that some manufacturers deliberately mislead consumers about product composition. The fur from a domestic dog may be sold under such names as gae-wolf, sobaki, Mongolian dog, and Asian jackal, among others. Domestic cat fur is often marketed as wildcat, goyangi, and katzenfelle, to name a few.

While a few states, including California, have laws against selling dog or cat pelts, U.S. laws are largely ineffective, since no labeling laws regulate products costing under $150, which can include parkas, gloves, fur linings, and insoles for footwear. Unless DNA tested, dog and cat fur is often indistinguishable from other animals used by the fur industry. Federal law does not currently prohibit the importation of domestic dog and cat pelts into the United States.

Of course, the fate of wild animals that are raised in cages or cruelly trapped for the fur trade, whether here or abroad, is no better. Wearing a fur-trimmed garment is a sure way to advertise that the wearer really couldn’t care less about preventable suffering. And conscientious, forward-thinking designers such as Oleg Cassini have shown that new synthetics are a luxurious and vastly superior alternative to animal fur.

If you’d like more information about The HSUS’s investigation into the dog and cat fur trade and what you can do to help make a difference, check out our Web site at www.hsus.org. Or order our complete expose, shown at right, for $4 (plus $1 for shipping and handling) from The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. (Warning: The expose contains graphic and disturbing photos and information.)

Contacting WCRO

Write: HSUS West Coast Regional Office
P.O. Box 417220
Sacramento, CA 95841-7220
Call: (916) 344-1710
Fax: (916) 344-1808

As many as 24 domestic cats may have been killed to make the coat at left; as many as 15 German shepherds may have been killed to make the coat above.