Washington Bans Leghold Traps

Beavers, bobcats, otters, raccoons, coyotes, and other magnificent furbearing animals were granted protection from steel-jawed leghold traps in Washington on November 7, 2000, when voters approved Initiative 713 (I-713) by a 55 percent to 45 percent margin. In addition to steel-jawed leghold and other body-gripping traps used for recreation or commerce in fur, the initiative also bans the use of two deadly poisons, Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services has used both poisons to kill coyotes. The passage of I-713 marks the fifth time in the last six years that voters have passed state initiatives to combat the use of cruel and indiscriminate traps. Not surprisingly, trappers have sued to invalidate the voter-approved law. The HSUS will lead the effort in court to preserve the law intact.

Unfortunately, a similar measure in Oregon, Measure 97, met with steep opposition by the timber and ranching industries and was defeated. The HSUS and other groups are working to advance continued on page 5

WCRO Investigates CA School Program

The California education code has long required the humane treatment of animals in public elementary and high schools and in school-sponsored activities. The law mandates that live vertebrates are not to be experimentally medicated or drugged in a manner to cause painful reactions or induce painful or lethal pathological conditions; that they not be subjected to injuries through any other treatments; and, if they are kept on school premises, that they be housed and cared for in a safe and humane manner.

The code also contains a provision exempting vocational instruction in the normal practices of animal husbandry. Consequently, an unknown number of animals are killed every year by high school students as part of agriculture courses. Many of these students are freshmen with extremely limited knowledge and training in the physiology, handling, and behavior of animals, let alone slaughter techniques.

Regional Changes

The HSUS is pleased to announce the opening of the Pacific Northwest Regional Office (PNRO) in Seattle, Washington. HSUS Legislative Field Representative Lisa Wathne serves as director. This new office assumes responsibility for all HSUS activities in Washington State and Oregon, while WCRO continues serving California and Nevada and begins serving Hawaii as well. Contact PNRO at 5200 University Way, NE, Ste. 201, Seattle, WA 98105; 206-526-0949.
WCRO Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler examines a Bengal tiger who was seized and placed under protective custody.

WCRO Assists in Seizure of Exotic Animals

A t the request of Sacramento County Animal Care and Control, WCRO Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler assisted state and local officials in November with the handling and transportation of a number of exotic animals and birds seized in connection with the felony arrest in Sacramento of Jerry Blocker on charges of forgery, fraud, and perjury. Law enforcement officials asked that WCRO participate in the multi-agency response after investigators determined that Blocker was keeping numerous exotic animals on his property, including an Eurasian eagle owl, a red-tailed hawk, a Bengal tiger, a wolf-hybrid, and several macaws. All of the animals seized during the raid were placed in protective custody with various animal shelters and wildlife sanctuaries. Blocker may face additional charges for keeping exotic animals without a permit and under inhumane or unsanitary conditions.

To date, the Bengal tiger, now named “Gracie” by the Performing Animal Welfare Society in Galt, California, where she is being housed, is gradually beginning to adjust to her new surroundings and is eating well. The wolf-hybrid is currently being housed at another site under the care of Sacramento County Animal Care and Control. The wolf hybrid was not stoned prior to slaughter. More than 100 students enrolled annually in the course at this particular school. From farming or ranching families and even fewer expect to go on to a career in agriculture.

When asked if the parents of the participating students were aware that animals would be killed as part of the course, the teacher advised Reder that a notice is sent to the parents, but that the term “processing” was used rather than “slaughtering” or “killing.” When Reder asked about the obvious misrepresentation, the teacher innocently stated that some people might find the terms “slaughter” or “killing” offensive. Although the slaughter of livestock may be legally permissible under current statutes, no code section permits the killing of an animal by inhumane methods. School officials were urged to eliminate animal slaughter from the curriculum and to reexamine the necessity for a course with arguable educational validity for so few students. "The questionable methods of slaughter being employed and the age and inexperience of the students coupled with what we now know about the link between animal abuse and human violence give rise to our concern," said Reder.

There are many facets of this issue that our office is continuing to look into. One issue is that many alternatives to actual slaughter are available via educational videos or through visits to a commercial or university slaughter facility. Another is the presentation of a violent death to impressionable ninth-grade minds. This practice desensitizes students to the treatment of farm animals. Finally, the validity of a course in which the majority of students have enrolled with the idea of obtaining easy grades does not justify slaughtering animals. This is not an isolated case. WCRO has found that similar courses are offered in high schools throughout the western states, and in most cases, the decision to include the slaughter of animals is made at the district level. WCRO is working with Assemblyman Joe Nations, who has introduced A.B. 168. We are drafting a bill that will help protect animals used in agricultural studies.

Legislation in Oregon that will protect furbearing species from such cruel devices in the future.

Both I-713 and Measure 97 qualified for the ballot with all-volunteer signature drives—a reflection of the broad support this animal protection issue has with the public. Thousands of volunteers in both states dedicated countless hours of their time to gather signatures and raise necessary funds for the initiative campaigns. Dozens of letters to the editor appeared in major newspapers throughout Washington and Oregon, expressing support for a ban on cruel traps used to capture animals for frivolous fur fashions.

Over the last decade, voters have approved more than a dozen laws to protect animals through the statewide ballot initiative process, banning activities ranging from trapping to cockfighting to bear baiting. Oregonians and Californians can vote in the upcoming election to protect animal welfare and fight cruelty.

If students are to learn about agriculture in public schools, The HSUS believes they should learn humane, sustainable practices.

First Strike Goes to Teachers, Inter-Tribal Council

In cooperation with the Sacramento Department of Animal Care and Regulation, WCRO Program Coordinator Bob Reder recently presented information about the well-documented connection between animal abuse and human violence at the 2000 annual meeting of the California Inter-Tribal Council, a group comprised of 109 Native American tribes throughout California. The meeting focused on violence in the family, so it was an appropriate setting to introduce the HSUS's First Strike campaign, which seeks to educate the public and government officials about this connection. Through such presentations, The HSUS helps foster cooperation among community organizations so they can increase intervention efforts, strengthen anti-cruelty laws, and ultimately prevent abuse and violence.

In November, the California Teachers Association sponsored Stopping the Fear: Creating Violence-Free Public Schools and Communities in Sacramento. WCRO staff Bob Reder and Eric Sakah participated in the meeting, providing information about the First Strike campaign to attendees.

How Are We Doing?

We'd love to know if your HSUS Regional News meets your expectations. To find out, we're asking a few quick questions, and we hope you'll take a minute to respond. After checking your responses, just clip out the form and send it back to us in the envelope enclosed with this newsletter. Thanks for your help. Your responses will help us improve the newsletter.

1. How would you rate your HSUS Regional News overall? (Circle one.) poor fair good excellent

2. What types of articles do you enjoy most?

3. What types of articles do you enjoy least?

4. Do you prefer longer or shorter articles? (Circle one.) longer shorter

5. Would you like to see more photos?

6. How do you think the HSUS Regional News could be improved?

Reflect a moment...

How can I help animals and receive income and tax savings at the same time?

By making a planned giving 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 ____________________________

You Can Help

Our office is gathering additional information on agricultural classes that use animals as they seek legislative remedies, and we need your help. We will be looking into which school districts include agricultural classes and if those districts allow the raising and slaughter of animals. We are also interested to know if you or your children have taken or are currently enrolled in such a course. Please forward information to WCRO.
Celebrating Farm Animals at Veggie Cook-Off

The eighth annual National Farm Animals Awareness Week ran September 17–23. WCRO celebrated the event on Sunday, October 1, as a sponsor of the popular annual Veggie Cook-Off held in Sacramento to benefit Animal Place, a Vacaville-based sanctuary for farm animals. More than 400 people enjoyed sampling a spectacular array of healthy and delicious dishes prepared by school students as well as professionals. Envisioned as an educational event each year, the clinic will also offer low-cost veterinary services. Attracting media attention to vegans cooking and farm animal issues, the Veggie Cook-Off is open to amateur and professional chefs throughout Northern California. More than 400 people enjoyed sampling an appetizer, entrees, and desserts. The first 200 of the more than 400 guests received attractive ceramic coffee mugs donated by The HSUS with the Veggie Cook-Off logo on one side and a National Farm Animals Awareness Week design on the opposite side.

WCRO Director Eric Sakach had the pleasure of speaking to the audience as a treat of a judge. He expressed his gratitude for the support of The HSUS and its commitment to animal welfare.

Legislative Update

Following is an update on recently enacted legislation and a listing of bills that may need your support. HSUS staff are constantly in contact with legislators and local activists to assist in the passage of humane legislation and to stop bills considered inhumane. We cannot guarantee that the HSUS position on the bills will remain as reported here, as bills may be amended. For up-to-the-minute information and to become a member of the Humane Activist Network, contact WCRO.

California

Official California legislative information can be obtained from the state Web site at www.leginfo.ca.gov/bldic/html.html. To contact the governor’s office or legislators, call 916-322-9900.

S.B. 338, by Sen. Edward Vincent, requires any animal shelter that supplies alive or dead animals to researchers, educational institutions, veterinarians, or blood banks, post a sign to advise the public. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

S.B. 2149, by Sen. Richard Polanco, would have made it a crime to sell or exchange an exotic animal to a hunting ranch, with the exception of certain game species. HSUS position: Support. Status: Voted by the governor.

A.B. 161, by Assemblyman Ken Maddox, redesigns “dog breeder” to include those who sell two or more litters per year and requires them to provide warranties and medical care. It also prohibits the use of raised wire floors in kennels, as is allowed under current law. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

A.B. 168, by Assemblyman Joe Nation, eliminates the exemption of vocational agriculture classes from the prohibition against causing pain and suffering of animals in elementary and high schools. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

A.B. 1336, by Assemblyman Paul Koretz, requires that all dogs and cats sold or given away at pet shops be spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

A.B. 1709, by Assemblywoman Carol Miglen, expands existing law that makes it a felony if a “mischievous animal” kills a person. If the animal also does “great bodily injury” to someone, it would also be a felony crime. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

A.B. 208, by Assembly member Collins, limits local authority to address local animal issues. HSUS position: Oppose. Status: In committee.

A.B. 1, by Assemblymember Chris Holden, makes it a felony to own a dog for any purpose other than pet ownership. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.


H.B. 534, by Sens. Rod Tamm and Sam Slem, allows fishers to drop unassailable parts of sharks at sea. This practice is known as shark finning. HSUS position: Oppose. Status: In committee.

This horse, who broke a leg during a rodeo, would have benefited from a new California law that prohibits the use of electric prods in chutes and requires that a veterinarian be on call at all times during rodeos.

S.B. 1121, by Sen. Gloria Romero, prohibits all activities that permit the public to come in direct contact with a circus or carnival animal, such as riding elephants. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

S.B. 1462, by Sen. Don Perata, requires a veterinarian to be on call during rodeo events; requires that local animal control be notified by event promoters; prohibits certain practices found in rodeos, such as electric prods in the chutes; and requires veterinarians to report injuries to the State Veterinarian Board. HSUS position: Support. Status: Signed by the governor.


A.B. 291, by Assembly member Clahora, increases the hunting game tag fee by 5%. Funds generated will be utilized for enhanced predator and habitat management. HSUS position: Oppose. Status: In committee.

H.B. 602, by Assemblymember Craig Packard, prohibits any animal shelter that supplies live animals to circuses or carnivals from housing exotic animals. HSUS position: Support. Status: In committee.

Cooperatively, follow the link to the Humane Activist Network at www.leginfo.ca.gov/bldic/html.html to include those animal issues of interest to you. To find out more about California bills, call the governor’s office at 916-322-9900.

WCRO Director Speaks in Brazil

Illegal animal fighting and the abuse of animals in rodeos were the topics of two presentations by WCRO Director Eric Sakach during the second Latin-American Animal Protection Congresso and third Brazilian Animal Protection Congress held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in October. Sakach traveled to Sao Paulo at the invitation of ARCA Brasil, an animal protection organization, on behalf of Humane Society International and The HSUS to give a presentation on the status of illegal animal fighting activities in North America and how the activities relate to what is reported internationally. He was joined in the presentation by Galt Police Department Detective Chris Sanford, an HSUS consultant. While cockfighting is illegal in Brazil, increases in that activity are being reported there along with reports of organized dogfighting. According to Brazilian law-enforcement authorities, much of the animal fighting activity in Brazil is tied directly to narcotics trafficking. Sakach also participated in a debate on the abuse of animals in rodeos. About 340 people from all over the world attended the week-long conference, and Sakach and Sanford were interviewed at length by international news media.

Nevada Youth Sentenced for Animal Cruelty

In January, a 13-year-old Yerington, Nevada, boy was found guilty in Lyon County Juvenile Court and sentenced to stay at a juvenile facility for an indefinite term and undergo mandatory psychological treatment on charges of animal cruelty. The case had shocked and outraged people throughout the state. The youth had been charged with gouging out the eyes out of a Labrador retriever last April. The blinded dog was found by a citizen who brought him to the Lyon County Animal Shelter. Workers rushed the dog to a local veterinary hospital where veterinarians euthanized the suffering animal.

Local citizens established a reward fund amounting to $3,000, and WCRO contributed another $2,000 for information leading to an arrest and conviction. The boy, whose name has not been released because of his age, was identified as a suspect when several witnesses came forward, some responding to the reward offers. Information from those witnesses led to the youth’s conviction, according to Lyon County Chief Deputy District Attorney John Schlegelmilch. Prior to sentencing, WCRO provided information to the Lyon County probation department supporting the link between animal abuse and human violence and urged the department to recommend to the court a period of incarceration and psychological treatment. During the sentencing hearing, Third Judicial District Court Judge David Huff ruled that the court found the defendant to be a “delinquent child.” “It was a horrible and cruel act you committed,” Huff said.

According to Schlegelmilch, there is a “good balance between punishment and treatment” in this case, adding that the boy “will be monitored closely and return to court many times for reviews.” WCRO will propose legislation to make serious acts of cruelty a felony crime in Nevada in the coming legislative session.

The United States

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Spring 2001

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

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WCRO Regional News

Spring 2001
Director’s Report

By Eric Sakach
Director of the West Coast Regional Office

Citizens Have Something to Crow About in Riverside County

If you can imagine what it is like to hear hundreds of roosters crowing loudly and nonstop beginning at about 3 o’clock in the morning until mid-morning and then starting up again in the afternoon every day of every week, you might be able to understand why Cindy Scheirer of Riverside, California, helped to initiate a campaign to limit the number of roosters that can be raised in residential areas of her county.

Early last year, Scheirer learned about two cockfighting busts in her area at about the same time a second rooster operation was being established next door to her home. She now had rooster farms on both sides of her property with nearly 200 fowl sounding off for much of the day and night. Earmuffs offered little relief.

Cindy became a very busy speaker addressing a variety of community groups and civic leaders. She even led a “rooster noise field trip” to her property for the Riverside County Planning Commissioners in order to gain support for her proposal to regulate the number of fowl who can be raised on neighborhood parcels of land. Riverside County Supervisor John Tavaglione, who represents Cindy’s district, had received a handful of rooster noise complaints over the years, so he wasn’t surprised when the Planning Commissioners passed the ball to him following a hearing on the proposed ordinance.

Cindy contacted our office and learned more about the noisy fowl and the reasons why more of the fowl farms were cropping up. A contributing factor is that cockfighting has been moving their operations to California. In California, cockfighting is still just a misdemeanor crime, whereas in some other nearby states, including Arizona, cockfighting has been made a felony crime. Joined by WCRO’s John Dommers, Cindy and a citizen support team co-led by Louise Mazochi, Karen Buford, and Linda McDonald presented compelling testimony to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors at a hearing last August.

Despite vocal opposition from gamefowl breeders and cockfighting sympathizers, the Riverside County Supervisors passed Ordinance Number 348, which severely restricts the number of roosters who can be raised on various sized parcels of property. Now Cindy Scheirer and dozens of other thankful residents of Riverside County are welcoming the peace and quiet this ordinance will bring them in the months ahead as the ordinance is phased in.

Supervisor Tavaglione spearheaded the drive to get the ordinance passed, as most of the problems were reported in his district. Unfortunately, he is now facing a recall effort staged by a group of people who opposed the ordinance. WCRO has issued a letter of appreciation for Supervisor Tavaglione’s work to pass the ordinance with the hope it will assist a citizen’s group to help defeat the recall effort. According to John Dommers, “Supervisor Tavaglione simply acted in the best interest of his constituents and the animals. He has listened to all sides and acted in a fair and appropriate manner. He has a fine and honorable record as a supervisor and does not deserve to be recalled from his position.”

WCRO frequently receives complaints from concerned citizens and frustrated homeowners who are suddenly faced with the noise and odor problems associated with the raising of gamecocks. Homeowners and real estate agents have complained to us about declining property values and an inability to attract buyers because of the accompanying noise and possible criminal activity related to cockfighting. Our office will be pleased to provide elected officials with copies of ordinances passed in Riverside County and other jurisdictions to help combat these problems. We congratulate Cindy Scheirer on her victory and for setting an example for others faced with similar problems.

Contacting HSUS

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Promoting the protection of all animals

Riverside County Supervisor John Tavaglione joins Louise Mazochi (left) and Cindy Scheirer, who showed that citizens can make a difference.

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