Bloodless or Portuguese-style bullfight promoters in California are using a loophole in the California Penal Code to hold their not-so-bloodless spectacles in the state despite a recent opinion by California Attorney General George Deukmejian.

Although bullfighting in any form is prohibited by law in California, an archaic exemption still exists under Penal Code section 597m, which reads: “This section shall not be construed as prohibiting bloodless bullfights, contests, or exhibitions held in connection with religious celebrations or religious festivals.”

This exemption has caused much controversy and confusion among humane authorities and district attorneys when they are confronted by the bullfight promoters. The WCRO recently obtained a published opinion by the Attorney General on the subject of bloodless bullfights. According to this February, 1981 opinion, “It is a violation of Penal Code section 597m for a bullfight promoter to stage a bloodless bullfight at which a priest simply says a Catholic mass and blesses the bulls.”

The opinion goes on to state that a bloodless bullfight would only be legal if it is an integral part of an over-all religious celebration or festival. But profit-hungry promoters still hold these events and are planning others, usually by approaching a priest of a Catholic church and offering to promote a bloodless bullfight “in connection with” a Catholic mass. An admission fee is charged and the proceeds of the bullfight are divided between the sponsoring church and the promoters, even though it is common knowledge that Catholic masses are conducted daily throughout the world and bullfights are neither part of the liturgy of the mass, nor an essential adjunct to it. In fact, the Vatican has a long history of abhorring cruelty to animals and has condemned bullfighting throughout much of its history, even as recently as 1966.

Unfortunately, California bullfight promoters have been successful in finding certain priests who will sponsor the events and the WCRO has learned that these events are being held regularly in some areas, including Escalon.

PUPPY MILLS — Profiteering on Massive Cruelty

Sentenced to a life of misery, adult dogs in puppy mills are frequently subjected to injurious and unhealthy conditions. They are deprived of the exercise, play, and affection that companion animals deserve. Most puppy mill operators see their dogs not as pets, but as puppy-producing machines to be used solely for profit.

A puppy mill is a mass dog-breeding establishment that produces puppies for profit by selling them wholesale to the pet industry. Thousands upon thousands of puppies are produced annually to be sold to brokers who, in turn, sell them primarily to pet stores across the nation. Because profit, not quality dogs, is the goal of the puppy mill owner, breeding practices are often shoddy, and the breeding dogs are frequently kept under the most inexpensive possible conditions that will keep them alive and producing. These mills are characterized by overcrowding, filth, inadequate shelter, and insufficient food, water, and veterinary care.

The HSUS believes the deplorable conditions must be brought to public attention if these cruelties are to be stopped. Help us educate the public about the hidden abuses, the consumer ripoff, and what can be done by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the WCRO. We will send you a free, informative puppy mill report to share with someone who cares.
CRUELTY AT LIVESTOCK AUCTIONS

The West Coast Regional Office of the HSUS has begun gathering information on the abuse of animals at livestock auctions on the West Coast. WCRO is compiling the information to determine how widespread abuses are in the transportation, handling, and sale of auctioned animals, and has concluded there is need for reform on the part of many livestock operators. A number of local humane organizations and animal control agencies are helping by sending officers to visit auctions, observe conditions, and report back so we can identify the most persistent problems.

Investigator Eric Sakach has inspected both large and small scale auctions in California and has found that, while some are kept clean and auctions animals are handled in small scale auctions in California and has found that, while some are kept clean and handled in abusive conditions, and report back so we can identify the most persistent problems.

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catching furbearing animals and would have phased out the trapping of predators. Humanitarians had managed to collect well over the 54,773 signatures required for the initiative, which was designated BALLOT MEASURE #5.

The WCRO sent Action Alerts to HSUS constituents in Oregon urging their support but the measure failed because its opponents, heavily financed from out-of-state sources, portrayed trapping as a public service to Oregon’s economy and a boon to public health.

OAT subsequently filed suit against the opponents of Ballot Measure #5 citing nine areas in which false statements were made. (Under Oregon law, a political action committee can sue for damages caused by false campaign statements.) The WCRO has now been advised that OAT has joined forces with the Northwest Wolf Preservation Society to form Wildlife Defense Northwest (WDN) to build support for the lawsuit.

The defendants in the suit, an Oregon-based political committee and an Ohio corporation, first moved for dismissal of the case on the grounds that the Oregon law unconstitutionally stifled free speech. However, according to an update from WDN, the motion was denied. Ruling in favor of Oregonians Against Trapping, the judge stated, “I conclude that under the Oregon Constitution the people contemplated that free speech would and should be limited by statute designed to prevent abuse… Nothing is more fundamental to elections than the public interest in having them as free as possible of deliberate falsehoods concerning the material facts.”

The WCRO has been advised the defendants filed a second motion, now pending, asking that the suit be thrown out for lack of standing by OAT. The opponents want the suit to die. This second motion will result in further delay before the actual trial begins.

The suit is shaping into an important issue for wildlife and the future of the Oregon electoral process. Oregon citizens who care about the suffering of animals caught in cruel steel traps or snares may contact Wildlife Defense Northwest at P.O. Box 3582, Portland, Oregon 97208.

**West Coast Seminars for Law Enforcement Agencies A Success**

Nearly 600 police officers, sheriff’s deputies, humane officers, animal control officers, and federal agents have attended recent seminars on the West Coast on investigating the illegal activities of dogfighting and cock-fighting. As mentioned in the last issue of the West Coast Report, several hundred officers had attended programs conducted by HSUS Chief Investigator Frantz Dantzler and WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach in Northern California. Since then, hundreds more, including a number of prosecuting attorneys and judges, have attended HSUS workshops in Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Southern California.

Each workshop was jointly hosted by a humane or animal control agency in cooperation with a police or sheriff’s department or district attorney’s office. The HSUS thanks all the hosting agencies and all who attended these workshops.

**Did You Know?**

HSUS publishes Kind magazine for children ages 8 and above. Bimonthly, $4 per year. HSUS’s National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education publishes Humane Education magazine for teachers and other humane educators. Quarterly, $7 per year. You can write to either or both at:

HSUS
2100 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office serves California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. Requests for assistance should be addressed to Charlene Drennon, West Coast Regional Director, 1713 J St., Suite 305, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916-447-3295). All contributions made to the HSUS West Coast Regional Office will be used for regional purposes and are tax-deductible.