HUMANITARIANS WIN BIG IN CALIFORNIA; COUNTIES MAY BAN STEEL-JAW LEGHOLD TRAP

On September 3, 1987 humanitarians unexpectedly won a big victory for animals in a ruling by the State Attorney General’s Office which concluded that any county may pass a law banning the use of steel-jaw leghold traps where necessary to protect public health and safety. The opinion, issued by Attorney General John Van De Kamp, is expected to spark debate over the need for these cruel devices in individual counties.

Ranching interests and trappers’ groups oppose banning the traps. The California Department of Fish and Game, which sought the attorney general’s opinion, opposes counties passing their own ordinances and has indicated local bans will be challenged on a case-by-case basis.

According to WCRO Director Char Drennon, “The results of studies have shown the steel-jaw leghold trap is nonselective, inhumane, and ineffective in preventing disease or controlling predators. Each year, thousands of pets are maimed or killed in these devices.”

Humans are also at risk. Two years ago, a 14-year-old boy lost four toes in a Minnesota accident. In another incident, a four-year-old Maryland girl accidentally put her hand in a trap and suffered crushing fractures and tendon damage that required reconstructive surgery. A man in Maine, another in New York, and a hunter in Minnesota, all unknowingly activated traps and sustained severe injuries. And, in

(continued on page 2)

News coverage of the plight of a dog rescued from a steel-jaw trap in Sacramento outraged citizens and brought forth an outpouring of concern that the cruel devices are still allowed.

(see “CHRISTMAS” page 2)
A CHRISTMAS STORY

It was just two days before Christmas and the bustling sounds of holiday travel filled the air around Sacramento's Metro Airport. Planes were landing and taking off, jet engines roaring, rushing travelers to their destinations. Automobiles were speeding along the highways, hurrying the busy commuters, no doubt, to family and other festive celebrations.

There was note, was no one could be, the office of the Sacramento News-Mercury. Indeed, it was not for kindhearted Norman Metcalf, a Sacramento electrician, the dog might have perished.

Sacramento electrician, the dog might have perished. Speeding along the highways, hurrying the dog along, the male apparently of the same mixed breed was just two days before Christmas and the victim of one of the numerous and across the country. A major difficulty has been to persuade local authorities that the trap made the dog's appearance that the trap made the trap. The extensive media coverage caused the Attorney General to be besieged with inquiries from farm animals and ranch dogs in most situations.

The California Legislature passed several bills that were signed into law, bringing charges against him for cruelty to animals. They have been accused of causing the deaths of as many as 50 dogs in their care, with police睡ing that the number could be set if Fresno County District Attorney's Office. The murder charge was filed during the Superior Court investigation, which is under way. The murder charge was filed during the Superior Court investigation, which is under way.

**Humanitarians** (continued from page 1)

Arizona's Animal Cruelty Prevention Act makes it a class A misdemeanor to cause undue suffering or injury to an animal, a class C misdemeanor to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal, or a class D misdemeanor to cause injury to an animal. The law also provides for the creation of an Animal Cruelty Prevention Council, which is to be comprised of five members, one appointed by the Governor and four appointed by the Attorney General.

The council will establish policies and procedures for the enforcement of the laws, and will report annually to the Governor and the Attorney General on the enforcement of the laws and the implementation of the council's policies and procedures.

**Spectators** (continued from page 1)

WCRC investigator Eric Sakach, who provided information and case law to the FBI and the Sacramento District Attorney’s Office, which is handling the case. “I fail to see any comparison between spectators at a cockfight and spectators at a baseball game,” said Sakach.

The Washington State Humane Society commends the Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office for its efforts and hopes common sense will prevail, similar challenges are currently pending in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The WCRC has forwarded information and decisions from similar cases where the law was upheld to the deputy district attorneys handling the challenges.

**HSUS Presses for Further Action in Cat Killings Case**

According to Mendocino County (CA) District Attorney Susan Massini, four correctional officers at the Chamberlin Creek correctional facility allowed 30 cats to be killed for cruelly to animals. They have been accused of causing the deaths of as many as 20 cats in their care, with police figuring that the number of cats killed was as high as 50.

According to Mendocino County (CA) District Attorney Susan Massini, four correctional officers at the Chamberlin Creek correctional facility allowed 30 cats to be killed for cruelly to animals. They have been accused of causing the deaths of as many as 20 cats in their care, with police figuring that the number of cats killed was as high as 50.

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TRAINING ONGOING ON WEST COAST

In October 1987, Las Vegas was the site of the 35th session of The HSUS Animal Control Academy. Designed especially for animal control officers, humane agents, and others working in animal care, this session was hosted by Clark County Animal Control. Instructors included HSUS staff and leading authorities in law enforcement, animal handling, communications, and shelter management.

The Marin Humane Society in Novato will again be the locale of the California State Humane Officers Training Academy and Advanced Academy in early 1988. The basic academy is an intensive (65 hours) study of legal procedures and law enforcement with special focus on laws protecting animals. The curriculum includes 12 hours in animal care as required by state law for humane officer appointment. “The Advanced Academy offers specialized training in the field of investigation, including practical exercises that closely resemble crime scenes that officers may encounter in the field,” said WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach, who serves as a member of the Academy faculty. The academies are accredited by the Northern California Criminal Justice Training and Education Center, Santa Rosa Junior College. For additional information, please contact: Rick Johnson, Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd., Novato, California 94947.

PIGEON FLAP

Throughout the fall and winter months, WCRO received more than our usual number of complaints and inquiries regarding problems caused by excessive concentrations of pigeons and methods to control them.

While The HSUS understands the concern of merchants and city officials, and recognizes that control measures are sometimes necessary when bird concentrations pose health hazards, or droppings become offensive, many measures used to control their numbers are inhumane and ineffective.

“Methods that involve killing, narcotizing, trapping, or physical removal are among the least effective and may actually be counterproductive,” says WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach. “Studies have shown that bird poisoning programs actually produce favorable conditions for breeding and may ultimately result in even more birds than before.”

The HSUS advocates a common sense approach to bird control problems and, upon written request, will provide resource information to community leaders about humane and effective methods of managing birds.

Studies have shown that cruel bird poisoning programs actually stimulate breeding by pigeons and lead to increases in their populations.