Trapping Agony Continues: The HSUS Fights to End the Anguish
Two weeks had passed since the golden retriever's disappearance. Chester's owner had hiked many snowy miles in search of her lost pet and had placed ads in local papers. She was beginning to lose hope.

Then a young girl, hiking across a field, discovered the dog—its front left paw gripped by the steel jaws of a leghold trap. Apparently, the trapper who had set the device hadn't bothered to inspect it for his catch, and Chester had been left to die.

Every bit of brush within reach of the trap had been eaten, and an emaciated Chester lay motionless in the snow. During the animal's frenzied attempts to escape, Chester had chewed off three toes, and tendons and bones were exposed. Still alive but too weak to stand, Chester whimpered in pain as the girl approached.

Chester's ordeal was not an isolated incident. The fact is, each year in the United States, thousands of family pets fall prey to steel-jaw traps. Some survive; many don't. Time and again The HSUS has received accounts describing the tribulations of those that have made it home alive: animals, like Chester, that have been discovered near death by hikers and snowmobilers; pets that have limped into owners' backyards, dragging traps on mangled, infected limbs. Most common are tales of dogs and cats losing toes and tongues, breaking jaws, and severing limbs in their attempts to escape from the wretched trap. Most unforgettable are the stories of trapped pets—deemed a nuisance by trappers—beaten and left for dead, only to somehow survive and be reunited with their owners.

WARNING! The material contained in this brochure is hazardous to the health and well-being of animals. Read with care.
The Cold, Hard Facts

The steel-jaw trap is nothing more than a hinged metal ring activated by a powerful spring. When an unsuspecting animal steps on the “pan” at the center—WHAM!—jaws snap together with such force that bones may shatter on impact. While the effect of the steel trap on an animal’s limbs has been compared to that of a car door slamming on a human’s hand, the agony only begins there. Reacting in pain and panic, the victim struggles to free itself, often breaking its teeth as it fiercely bites at the trap. With each twist and turn, the trap cuts deeper into the limb, tearing flesh and ligaments, and causing bones to snap.

Suffering and injuries incurred as the captive thrashes about are often compounded by the trap’s failure to check its traps regularly. In many areas of the country, regulations allow traps to go unchecked for days at a time. Four states have no trap visitation requirement at all! This means that an animal may remain shackled by the trigger for days. The individual who set the trap above apparently failed to escape. The individual who set the traps above apparently failed to

Trappers frequently set two or more traps at a single site—insurance that a captive will become too entangled to escape. The individual who set the traps above apparently failed to

In addition, the advertisements we’ve been placing in major magazines have begun to focus attention on the cruelties of trapping and have prompted a flood of inquiries from the public. While our outcry has the fur industry on edge, we must now vastly increase our efforts if we’re to ensure that the brute slaughter stops, once and for all.

off its captured foot and abandoning it. For the mutilated animal that leaves a paw in the trap and a trail of blood in the snow, chances for survival are slim. Some do recover, however. Boasting of their prowess, trappers have occasion­ally reported recapturing animals missing two or more legs!

For most animals, the agony ends with the trapper’s return. Captives are usually “dispatched” in ways that cause least damage to the animal—clubbing, drowning, or crushing the animal’s chest underfoot.

As I struck the fox, the stick exploded into many pieces,” reads a letter from a thirteen-year-old boy in Voice of the Trapper magazine. “I...quickly struck it solidly with what I had left of the stick. With the fox stunned we realized it was our chance to finish it off by standing on its throat and lungs.”

Though a large percentage of traps are youths, even veterans can’t control their animal’s wander into a trap’s jaws. The fact is, anything that triggers the trap—from ducks and turkeys to hawks and chipmunks—is fair game. Sometimes a trapper releases hapless “trash” animals. More often, however, they are killed and discarded, or cut up for bait.

What We’re Up Against

Despite countless reports of pets maimed in traps, despite trappers’ accounts of the ways they’ve brutalized their victims, and despite scientific evidence attesting to the excruciating pain captive experiences, trapping interests forever claim that there’s no suffering involved in the industry. Instead, stirring up public fears about rabies and employing terms like “sustainable yield” and “improvable management tool,” they proclaim themselves ardent conservationists.

Fur!” The HSUS is determined to go unchecked for days at a time. Four states have no trap visitation requirements at all! This means that an animal may remain shackled by the steel-jaw trap is nothing more than a hinged metal ring activated by a powerful spring. When an unsuspecting animal steps on the “pan” at the center—WHAM!—jaws snap together with such force that bones may shatter on impact. While the effect of the steel trap on an animal’s limbs has been compared to that of a car door slamming on a human’s hand, the agony only begins there. Reacting in pain and panic, the victim struggles to free itself, often breaking its teeth as it fiercely bites at the trap. With each twist and turn, the trap cuts deeper into the limb, tearing flesh and ligaments, and causing bones to snap.

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With their owners. But these animals are the lucky ones. They are among the few that survive in the wild. Birds, squirrels, and steel jaws spell prolonged agony and death. The fact is, each year in the United States, 20 to 60 animals brutally die for every fur coat sold. Yet, thanks to glamorous promotions, consumers have remained surprisingly ignorant of the painful facts.

The HSUS has learned that in industry representatives and “wildlife experts” recently met at a secret location to develop strategies to defend and further promote their trade. By pouring more money into print ads, radio, and television campaigns, they hope to encourage and en­courage the suffering they sanction each time they wrap themselves in fur.

What The HSUS Is Doing

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By placing graphic advertisements in major magazines, The HSUS is working to open the public's eyes to the tragic consequences of buying furs. We will also be making footage, depicting the horrors of trapping, available to the media and the public for use in combating the issue through educational campaigns.

Time and again, The HSUS has gone to the courtroom in defense of innocent animals victimized by the trap. In addition to the legal battle currently being waged in New Jersey, The HSUS, with fifteen other organizations, recently sued New York State on the grounds that use of the steel-jaw trap violates New York's anti-cruelty law. (We sued New York State and to educate the public. For materials (including reproducible trapping/fur ads) to help you begin an anti-trapping campaign in your area, send $5 for The HSUS Trapping Awareness Kit (The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037).

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In its frenzied struggle to free itself from the trap's grip, a red squirrel rips apart a nearby tree limb.

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Additional copies of this report are available upon request at 30¢ each or in quantities of 12 for $2.00 and 25 for $3.50. Payment must accompany order.

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