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Large-Scale Rescues Costly

CSRO regularly receives reports from humane societies and animal control agencies faced with the overwhelming task of handling large-scale animal rescue operations. Cases involving puppy mills, fighting dogs, and animal hoarders have increased, and often involve several hundred animals in one location.

Last year in Bedford County, Tennessee, CSRO assisted a small humane society in its efforts to remove and care for more than 200 abused and neglected animals. CSRO Director Phil Snyder provided expert testimony, an on-site assessment, and other assistance throughout the case. The case is still pending, and the cost of caring for these animals has exceeded $25,000. In a separate case in Tennessee, a judge ordered the removal of 40 neglected, injured, and diseased dogs from an alleged puppy mill in Wayne County. In addition to the dogs who were removed, more than 200 dogs remained on the

This dog was photographed at a puppy mill. Rescues of large numbers of animals—as in puppy mill cases—cause difficulties for local animal shelters.

Working for Wildlife

Gatlinburg Black Bears

The number of conflicts between people and bears has risen, largely because suburban sprawl has encroached on bear habitats in many regions. Forced into human-populated areas, bears learn that people and their improperly disposed of trash make humans and their homes easy and reliable sources of food. These “nuisance” bears often lose their instinctive fear of humans and raid garbage dumpsters, even during daylight hours.

Five years ago, Steve Searles, founder of Bear Affairs, initiated a non-lethal program that reduced human-bear conflicts in Mammoth Lakes, California. After studying bears and consulting with bear experts, Searles developed a non-lethal, humane aversive conditioning program that teaches bears to once again be afraid of humans. These “problem” bears are taught to think that humans are the biggest, baddest bears on the block, and, no matter how rich the feeding grounds, to avoid humans and everything belonging to them. Searles’ Bear Affairs program uses the bears’ own behavioral instincts to prevent human-bear conflicts from arising in the first place.

Two CSRO-coordinated workshops were held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, called Aversive Conditioning of Black Bears. Gatlinburg is a community bordering Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is known for having already taken many progressive steps toward dealing with human-bear conflicts. Gatlinburg recently passed an ordinance prohibiting the feeding of bears and requires the use of bear-proof dumpsters in the city. Steve Searles’ workshop helped give local agencies ideas for additional steps to take in building on the successes of the programs already begun. The similarities of Gatlinburg and Searles’ hometown of Mammoth Lakes were interesting and made the workshop that much more relevant—both communities have a large influx of tourists visiting each year, with a relatively small permanent population. Both communities have experienced rapid growth in recent decades.

Four key agencies—the Gatlinburg Police Department, the Sevier County Sheriff’s Department, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the National Park Service—all sent staff to the workshop and engaged in dialogue about the range of options for safeguarding the public while implementing effective and humane wildlife programs.

Milwaukee Urban Wildlife Seminar

Moving on to wildlife found in our cities and suburbs, CSRO brought a nationally continued on page 2
Popular Animal Behaviorist Teaches WI Workshop

Ever wonder how animal shelters continually provide their clients with well-adjusted and well-matched pets? As you might expect, it is not by chance. In fact, the theories and methods for making behavioral assessments of dogs and cats have grown more and more sophisticated in just the past decade. And animal shelters across the county have eagerly researched and employed the most successful approaches.

Wisconsin’s animal shelters, always looking to stay up to date in all aspects of their profession, asked The HSUS to assist in putting together a dog behavior assessment workshop. Along with the Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies (WFHS), CSRO sponsored a program entitled Evaluating and Enhancing Dog Temperament, featuring nationally renowned dog behavior expert Dr. Scott Sternberg. Sternberg’s background and expertise in assessing, handling, and training dogs is respected throughout the sheltering world. He has been a regular and extremely popular instructor at our Animal Care Expo over the years, and her popularity was no less in Wisconsin—the all-day seminar was packed!

Sternberg focuses on not just physically sheltering the animals, but assessing temperament, improving behavior, lowering stress levels, and enhancing adoptability. Employing a variety of techniques that he has practiced and taught over the years, Sternberg uses animals from local shelters to demonstrate her methods. Her tips and techniques allow shelters to make more successful adoptions—a goal of every animal protection organization.

And it’s a goal that Wisconsin shelters want to pursue again in the fall. WFHS and CSRO have already arranged for Sternberg to return for an expanded two-day program.

Chicago Dangerous Dog Ordinance

As the summer of 2001 progressed, Chicagoans were shocked and saddened by a series of fatal dog attacks on children. Alderman Sheila Coleman was particularly troubled by these events, one of which had occurred in the ward she represents. She promptly announced that she would sponsor an ordinance strengthening the dangerous dog ordinance in the city. Coleman’s commitment to the issue was total, and she drafted and re-drafted language, showing it to various animal-related groups for comment, and ultimately even forming an expert panel of local and national animal organizations and agencies to assist her on the issue of dog bite prevention.

CSRO Program Coordinator Lynn Mooney was a member of the expert panel, providing important background information to the group and later testifying in support of the ordinance at a Chicago City Council hearing. The ordinance passed the full Council and is now law. Its provisions include requirements for liability insurance and spaying and neutering, as well as microchipping to identify dogs and stiffer penalties for injuries and deaths resulting from dangerous dogs.

Mooney also made an appearance as a guest on the WGN radio program “Pet Central” when host Steve Dale dedicated an entire show to the topic of the new Chicago ordinance. Other guests on that program included Alderman Coleman and representatives from Chicago Animal Care and Control and the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association. Dale and his guests fielded calls on a wide range of issues, from the ineffectiveness of breed-specific approaches to dog bite prevention, to the importance of dog owners’ responsibility to give their dogs training, socialization, and veterinary care.

Meet HSUS Disaster Dogs

The HSUS locked off its Disaster Dog program with a mock indoor and outdoor search demonstration by Robert Sessions and his dogs Sky and Thunder last November at The HSUS headquarters in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Sessions is the first recipient of HSUS Disaster Dog sponsorship. He is an accomplished canine handler and assistant search manager for the Maryland Urban Search and Rescue Task Force-1. He and his black Labrador teamates Sky and Thunder were on the first team sent to the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

The September 11 tragedies have demonstrated the important role urban search and rescue (USAR) dogs and their handlers play in responding to disasters. These dogs are trained to work with their handlers, using instinctual behavior and natural scenting abilities to recover survivors or find bodies in circumstances that make other methods impossible.

September 11 has also shown the need for more USAR canine teams. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed about 100 canine teams to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, stretching their resources to the limit. These experiences have demonstrated the need for increasing the number of highly trained teams to avoid overuse and injury of the members of existing teams.

“Most of those Disaster Dog teams are volunteers,” explains Anne Culver, director of disaster services for The HSUS. “FEMA requires extensive training and certification to work as part of its National Urban Search and Rescue Response System. FEMA pays the volunteers’ expenses when they are deployed, but many expenses, such as the cost of training, exercises, and travel, are frequently not covered. The handlers give of their own time and money to train themselves and their dogs, demonstrating the power of the human-animal bond in service to the good of society. Training to high standards takes time and can be expensive for the individual volunteer. That’s why The Humane Society of the United States wants to help.”

For more information on the Disaster Dog program or disaster preparedness for you and your pets, call 202-522-1100 or visit The HSUS’s disaster services page on the Web at www.hsus.org/disaster.

CSRO Helps During TN Flooding

When the far northeastern part of Tennessee was hit hard by flooding late in 2001, the Greeneville-Greene County Humane Society rose to the occasion and volunteered to be an intake facility for both owned animals who needed temporary housing and rescued animals. CSRO provided materials to the organization to help them prepare to host the displaced animals. CSRO staff worked with the shelter director and board members on a daily basis and supplied materials and expertise as they prepared for the worst. Thirty dog and cat flood victims came in their doors. The HSUS made an emergency financial donation toward the purchase of temporary pens, and CSRO staff helped arrange for a food donation.

Like most, the staff of the Greeneville-Greene County Humane Society probably never thought the animals in their community would be affected by disaster. If you would like information about disaster planning for your shelter or your community, please contact our office.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends...
Legislation that protects animals and the environment is vital to the animal protection movement. Effective laws give individuals, law enforcement officials, and the court system a tool with which to work when dealing with animal-related cases. Grassroots activism can make the difference between a good federal or state bill passing and becoming law, or failing and leaving a void.

Whether you consider yourself an animal advocate or an activist, you can help make a difference by becoming involved in legislative efforts. One effective way that allows your voice to be heard is to become a member of the HSUS Humane Activist Network (HAN). The network consists of individuals who contact legislators in their area, urging support of or opposition to member of the HSUS Humane Activist editor to educate the community, and individuals who contact legislators in their legislative efforts. One effective way that allows your voice to be heard is to become a member of the HSUS Humane Activist Network (HAN). The network consists of individuals who contact legislators in their area, urging support of or opposition to specific legislation, sending letters to the editor to educate the community, and exchanging ideas with other network members. HAN members recognize that through unification, their voices have enormous impact in evoking positive changes for animals.

The efforts of the network were critical this past year on numerous federal bills. An anti-cockfighting bill designed to prohibit the shipping of fighting birds across state lines was reintroduced in 2001. Current law allows them to be bred, raised, and shipped from states that prohibit cockfighting into states and countries that allow it. In the Central States region, Tennessee has banned cockfighting but allows the breeding, raising, and selling of game birds. Although the fight is far from over, we are encouraged by the reintroduction of this bill and increased support for its passage.

Additionally, the Puppy Protection Act, a federal bill actively supported by The HSUS and HAN members, was introduced in 2001. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois co-sponsored this bill. If passed, the Puppy Protection Act will improve the conditions under which dogs and puppies at puppy mills are bred and kept. It will also regulate the number of times a female can be bred and at what age, will require the socialization of dogs with other dogs and with people (this will make for a healthier, more well-behaved dog), and will improve the effectiveness of the Animal Welfare Act by revoking the licenses of those breeders who violate the law three or more times.

Locally, this regional office also relied on the network for help with state bills, including successful efforts on Animal Hoarder (S.B. 629) and Humane Euthanasia in Animal Shelters (H.B. 2391) bills in Illinois. These laws will undoubtedly improve the humane treatment of animals in Illinois.

Strengthen your voice, unite with others, and join the Humane Activist Network. For more information, contact our office.