Nevada Wild Horse Update:

Judge Dismisses All But One Charge, Prosecutors to Appeal Ruling

Prosecutors in Nevada are trying to restore some of the charges that were dismissed against two ex-Marines and a friend who were accused of shooting and killing 34 wild horses just outside of Reno in December of 1998. Except for a single gross misdemeanor count of killing or maiming animals, the cases against the three former high school friends evaporated in March after a ruling by District Judge Michael Griffin, who said that there was no ballistic evidence to link any of the men's guns to shell casings found at the scene.

Storey County District Attorney Janet Hess said she had filed notice that she intends to appeal Judge Michael Griffin’s decision to dismiss all but the one remaining charge, which carries a penalty of up to one year in a county jail and a fine of up to $2,000. The case is set to go to trial November 1, 2000. A change of venue request by the defense has been granted, sending the matter from Virginia City to Carson City to be heard. The three men accused of slaughtering the horses remain free on bail.

Disappointing Ruling Means Seattle Goose Slaughter

Despite strong arguments by The HSUS and other animal protection organizations, U.S. District Judge Marsha Pechman ruled in June that Washington State can proceed with the proposed slaughter of up to 3,500 Canada geese in the Seattle area. State officials had sought federal approval for a kill in a 12-county region around Puget Sound, contending that growing goose populations were fouling area waterways, parks, and residential areas with their droppings.

HSUS Wildlife Attorney Patricia Lane argued in hearings that the federal permit allowing officials to stage the kill should be scrapped because it violated provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. She pointed out that the permit was based on insufficient information that did not satisfy the government’s own regulations. She also asserted that the approval process was tainted because the government did not adequately specify killing sites, thereby denying the public a chance to suggest alternatives, a clear violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

“Obviously, we are extremely disappointed in Judge Pechman’s ruling,” said Lane. “But we are more disappointed that federal and state officials have decided to go ahead with a slaughter that is not only inhumane, but will prove ineffective as well. Killing these geese will have little long-term effect on the goose population, but it will set a tragic and terrible precedent.”

She noted that The HSUS had set up effective goose management programs in Virginia and Michigan using humane solutions to human/goose conflicts. These approaches include proven non-lethal methods in conjunction with egg-addling or replacement to help reduce and stabilize goose populations.

Solving Urban Wildlife Problems

In March, WCRO staff participated in a Wild Neighbors seminar in Monterey County. Presented by John Hadidian, HSUS director of the urban/suburban wildlife protection program and Don Burton, DVM, director of the Ohio Wildlife Center, the popular course was hosted by the cities of Carmel and Pacific Grove, and the SPCA of Monterey County, in cooperation with the Monterey County Health Department. The seminar focused on humane and effective solutions to challenges with urban wildlife.

*Penalties for certain acts of animal cruelty were raised to felony levels as a result of the Virginia Range wild horse shootings.*
Disaster Preparedness Training Ongoing in Region and Across the Nation

WCRO Presents at First National Animal Disaster Conference

Last fall, Hurricane Floyd created a nightmare for the eastern United States. First the storm caused the largest human evacuation in the history of this country, with some three million people and their pets fleeing the East Coast in fear for their lives. Then when Floyd made landfall in North Carolina, the resulting floods caused tremendous animal and human suffering and death.

In March, while the memory of the devastating effects of Floyd were still fresh, the HSUS joined the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in hosting the first National Animal Disaster Training. The three-day event in Orlando, Florida, attracted 300 people from 56 states and Great Britain.

The goal of the conference was to encourage every state and local community to have plans to prevent or minimize the impact of disasters on animals and their owners. Participants ranged from state veterinarians and animal control professionals to managers to grassroots animal responders.

WCRO Director Eric Sakach and Dr. Heidi Hamlen of the California Department of Food and Agriculture in hosting the first National Animal Disaster Training held in March. The event was sponsored by The California Animal Response in Los Angeles (ENLA) in conducting a disaster preparedness training held in March. The program provided local animal control agencies, human welfare groups, and other non-profit and volunteer emergency responders with training to acquaint them with ENLA. ENLA is an umbrella program for non-profit or volunteer emergency responders that is overseen by The American Red Cross in Los Angeles County. Only organizations approved by both ENLA and the county are allowed to do disaster response work in Los Angeles County.

In June, Cutler attended three days of specialized, comprehensive courses in disaster animal rescue training sponsored by The HSUS in Brookville, Florida. The training was an intensive 20-hour course designed to provide participants with information and hands-on practice to make them effective animal rescue workers during a disaster! Courses covered establishing personal disaster plans, response and the law, damage assessment and safety, stress management, communications and alert systems, rescue/leapfrogging and identification, and large and small animal handling.

While continuing to assist local animal welfare agencies and volunteer groups with the development and implementation of their own disaster plans, WCRO emphasizes the importance of individual pet owners to be prepared before a disaster strikes. If you are a pet owner and you would like to receive free information about how to prepare for emergencies, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Pets in Disasters, WCRO, P.O. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220.

21st Century Technology Featured at Symposium

The newest Web sites, including one that provides community-specific information on pet adoptions, lost and found pets, pet health, spay/neuter information, and local veterinarians, were accessed on the Internet and video projected on a big screen for more than 150 attendees of the POP (Pet Overpopulation Program) ’97-2000 symposium in San Diego. The event is sponsored by the California Council of Companion Animal Advocates, a consortium of organizations working in animal care and control, veterinary medicine, preserved dog/pedigree cat breeding, the pet care industry, and animal protection. WCRO Regional Projects Coordinator John Dommers serves as chair of the Council and coordinated the event.

According to Dommers, “Our diverse member organizations work to advocate the value of companion animals in a spirit of candor, cooperation, and respect to solve the problems of unwanted, unowned animals in California.”

A 60-foot mobile spay/neuter clinic from the Arizona Humane Society was a focal point of a full-day session on How To Set Up Mobile Spay/Neuter Programs. Other sessions focused on feral cats, contemporary shelter design, humane education, and proven ways to increase pet adoptions.

Dr. Marvin Mackie addresses attendees at the sixth POP Overpopulation Symposium in San Diego.

Oregon, Washington Residents: Vote “Yes” on Initiatives to Restrict Steel-Jawed Leghold Traps and Deadly Poisons

Volunteers, working under the banner of Protect Pets and Wildlife (a coalition of more than 100 groups led by The HSUS), have gathered 360,000 signatures to qualify ballot measures to restrict the use of cruel traps for statewide ballots in Oregon and Washington. On November 7th, please vote “yes” on I-713 in Washington and “yes” on a similar measure in Oregon.

The measures restrict the use of steel-jawed leghold traps, snares, and conibear traps for recreation or commerce in fur. They also ban two poisons, sodium fluoride, otherwise known as Compound 1080, and sodium cyanide.

In Oregon in 1998, trappers killed more than 40,000 fur-bearing mammals, including beavers, bobcats, mink, coyotes, and fishers. In Washington, trappers kill more than 20,000 fur-bearing mammals annually.

Steel-Jawed Leghold Traps Are Cruel and Inhumane

Steel-jawed leghold traps and other body-gripping traps cause severe injury and suffering to wildlife and pets, causing lacerations, broken bones, and joint dislocations. The American Veterinary Medical Association, the World Veterinary Association, and the American Animal Hospital Association declare the steel-jawed leghold trap “inhumane.”

Animals caught in traps suffer for not minutes, but hours and even days while in the traps. Some animals resort to twisting off or chewing off a leg to escape a trap’s vice grip.

Steel Traps and Poisons Pose A Danger to Children, Family Pets, and Endangered Species

Steel traps and poisons do not discriminate, victimizing any creature who stumbles upon them. They are like land mines. For every ‘target’ animal killed, such as an otter or bobcat, there are as many as 10 ‘non-target’ victims, including eagles, pets, and deer.

Again, please vote on November 7th, and feel free to contact the campaigns directly to assist. The Protect Pets and Wildlife Web site is at www.banculturetraps.org. Or contact the group in Oregon by writing to P.O. Box 40372, Portland, OR, 97240; calling 503-872-9673; or sending e-mail to crueltraps@call2.org. In Washington, write to Protect Pets and Wildlife at 5200 University Way NE #201, Seattle, WA 98105; call 206-528-0245; or e-mail bantraps@seanet.com.

Reflect for 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 ____________________________

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Home tomorrow, the shelters would again be full within a matter of weeks, and the problem of how to deal with too many unwanted animals would still exist. Until we find a way to solve the root of the pet overpopulation problem—the irresponsible pet owner—no kill is just another way of saying you’re getting someone else to do your dirty work. Nobody understands better and wishes for a solution more than the people who must perform the task of euthanasia in animal shelters.

I hope you’ll think about this.

As the check-out clerk handed me my change, she looked toward the woman who was now busily unloading her overflowing grocery basket. “Madam, this is an express lane; 10 items or less only.”

The clerk then looked at me and said, “I just want you to know we adopted our dog from animal control five years ago. She’s fixed and licensed!”

Exp0 2001—Dallas, Texas, March 7–10

Plan now to attend the training and trade show for animal care and control professionals.
Native Nations Spay/Neuter Program Expands

In May, WCRO staff joined forces with Remote Area Medical (RAM) veterinary services to bring spay/neuter clinics to the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon and the Quinnut reservation in Washington. With the help of Nancy Collins and Judy Bud of Warm Springs, and Vicki Bryson, Angela Keating, and Arnie Julich of Quinnut, our first clinic in the Pacific Northwest was a big success. A total of 201 animals were examined, vaccinated, and surgically sterilized during the trip, and many American Indians and their children learned about the importance of spaying and neutering and vaccinating their companion animals. “The clinics were well received in the community,” said WCRO Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler. “Several people stopped by to see what the excitement was about. Some returned later with their animals. The program was designed to assist reservations in controlling the exploding animal overpopulation. These clinics are held in rural areas where there are few veterinary services easily accessible for preventing pet overpopulation, and the health risks associated with roaming, unvaccinated animals are significant,” she said. “We hope to reach out to even more reservations next year.” In August, the HSUS/RAM clinics returned to the Round Valley and Hoopa reservations in Northern California. The veterinary staff and volunteers worked hard to make these clinics successful. WCRO would like to thank everyone who donated time and supplies, including Ft. Dodge and Pfizer, Inc. for the vaccines and Becton-Dickinson for veterinary supplies.

WCRO Welcomes New Staff Member

We are pleased to announce that Robert Reder has joined the WCRO staff as program coordinator. Over the past 10 years, Reder was assigned to the HSUS investigations section and Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. Prior to joining The HSUS, Reder spent 18 years as a New Jersey peace officer. Reder was educated at Fairleigh Dickinson University and is certified as an instructor by the New Jersey Police Training Commission. He has organized and presented numerous workshops for local humane society and animal control personnel, and he is experienced in the legislative arena.

Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler (right) assists veterinary students Deb Taranik (left) and Lori Donley with the examination of a dog at the Quinnut clinic.

First Strike for Washington Prosecutors

In June, more than 200 prosecutors convened about First Strike™, an HSUS program highlighting the correlation between cruelty to animals and violence toward humans, when The HSUS Dr. Randall Lockwood spoke at the Washington State Prosecutors Association conference in Lake Chateau, Washington. Armed with the latest research about the significance of animal cruelty as an indicator of family violence, the psychology of animal abuse, and various treatment programs, prosecutors in Washington State now have new resources for dealing with animal abusers.

WCRO Sponsors Conference, Pet Population Summit

HSUS Field Representative Lisa Wathne attended the first combined annual training conference of the Washington Animal Control Association and the Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies held in Spokane last September. Sponsored in part by WCRO, the conference focused on such issues as prevention of urban wildlife problems, cruelty investigation, media relations, and pending legislation. In June, Wathne attended the Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies third annual summit, also sponsored in part by WCRO. “The 2000 summit focused on shelter marketing techniques, with an emphasis on reuniting stray shelter animals with their original owners,” said Wathne. “Participants were provided with a step-by-step tour of the planning and carrying out of a statewide marketing campaign for returning pets to their owners.”

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 state legislative offices and local activists to assist in passage of humane legislation and to stop bills considered inhumane. We cannot guarantee that The HSUS position on the bill will remain as reported here, as bills may be unfavourably amended. For up-to-the-minute information and to become a member of the Humane Activist Network, contact WCRO.

California

A.B. 230, by Assemblyman Mike Honda, would allow larger uses of validated alternative methods that do not involve the mortality of animals when research agencies seek to protect turtle populations from being decimated in other states; it does nothing to protect California’s wildlife from the threat posed by the release of non-native species; and it does nothing to stop inhumane transportation, housing, or slaughter practices. HSUS position: Oppose. Status: In Senate Appropriations Committee.

A.B. 2479, by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl, would require that animals in live animal markets be held under humane conditions and killed humanely. HSUS position: Support. Status: Passed by the Assembly. In Senate Appropriations Committee.

A.B. 2570, by Assemblyman Abel Macias, would have prohibited Gill nets for 20 miles along the coast near Santa Barbara where sea otters migrate. Unfortunately, the bill was amended to require an “observational program” rather than a ban. HSUS position: Oppose. Status: Passed by the Assembly. In Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee.

A.B. 2754, by Assemblyman George House, would amend S.B. 1785 (passed in 1998) to lessen the tremendous overcrowding and disease caused by increased holding requirements for unacceptable and sick animals. Recent surveys of animal shelters by the Fund for Animals and The HSUS indicate that for many shelters, S.B. 1785 actually resulted in overcrowded conditions, increased incidence of disease, more animals being euthanized, and a decrease in adoptions. HSUS position: Support. Status: Passed by the Assembly. In Senate Judiciary Committee.

A.B. 648, by Sen. Don Perata, would require that a veterinarian be on call at all times during all rodeos to treat injured animals. It bans the use of electric prods and requires that the veterinary staff and volunteers treat any other inhumane transportation, housing, or slaughter practices that occur. HSUS position: Support. Status: Passed by the Assembly in Senate Agriculture Committee.

A.B. 2082, by Sen. Jack O’Connell, would prohibit manufacturers and testing facilities from using animal tests for products such as cosmetics, pesticides, and household products if a validated alternative is accepted by the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for the Validation of Alternative Methods, a federal committee comprised of 14 federal regulatory or research agencies, and approved by the relevant federal agency or program and its staff. HSUS position: Support. Status: Passed by the Senate. In Assembly judiciary Committee.

Sea otters deserve better protection than that afforded by A.B. 2370.

Washington

S.B. 3001 was passed and signed into law by Gov. Gary Locke. The bill amends Initiative 655, which passed with a 63 percent majority vote in 1996 and banned the use of dogs for sport hunting of cougars. S.B. 5001 allows the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue permits for non-resident hound hunters to randomly hunt and cull cougar populations in areas where there are perceived problems with them. The WDFW-proposed rules for implementation of this law provide that: hunters can keep the hides, up to four hunters can participate in each hunt, hunting parties can extend into watersheds, and 75-85 cougars will be killed the first year.

This plan has all the elements of a trophy hunt. Hounds may occur in areas where cougars may not even be a significant problem. Large numbers of hunters with dogs will again be tramping through Washington’s wilderness. Many hunters will participate solely for the opportunity to bag a trophy for their living room. And a significant number of cougars who have caused no problems will be hunted using the unfair and unsportmanlike practice of hound hunting.

Washington residents please express your displeasure to: Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501. Explain that these rules blatantly violate the intent of Initiative 655.

Oregon

F.B. 1075 was vetoed by Gov. John Kitzhaber. This bill would have effectively undermined Measure 18, which passed in 1994 and banned the use of dogs for sport hunting of cougars.
she thought was responsible for all those animals brought into animal shelters.

"Irresponsible pet owners," she shot back. "But a lot of those poor animals are just lost. And some people just can't keep their pets," she added with an air of superior knowledge. "They're forced to get rid of them. You know how much pet deposits are here!"

"Well, if that's the case," I continued, "Why do you blame animal shelters for having to euthanize so many animals?"

"Because they could find homes for most of them if they really wanted to," she intoned. "There are no-kill shelters, you know. But animal control; they just don't care. They'd rather kill them."

All at once I understood the source of this woman's frustration. The term "no-kill" is one we frequently hear at our office. Callers want to know if there's a no-kill shelter where they can drop a pet they've decided against keeping. People want to know where they can find a no-kill shelter to adopt a new pet because they'd rather not visit the animal control facility. People call to complain because their local shelter hasn't yet adopted a no-kill policy. People ask how they can start a no-kill shelter in their community.

The term "no-kill" has led to more confusion among people than any other I can recall in the past 25 years. It's such a benign sounding term, yet it is used in such divisive ways. It's a term that has found its way into the collective vocabulary of the general public, our elected officials, and the animal sheltering community; and, too often, it is being used to burn rather than build bridges at a time when we all need to work together to end the tragedy of pet overpopulation. Too often, groups capitalizing on their no-kill position use the term to try to elevate their status above another organization or municipal animal control department, while remaining pretty selective about what animals they will accept. The public does not realize that a shelter that calls itself no-kill may still euthanize animals. And there are more than a few no-kill groups that do little more than warehouse discarded pets. I don't think the term "no-kill" should be confused with "guilt-free."

"You're right about some of the causes," I said. "But you're terribly misinformed if you think animal control professionals don't care. I don't know that anything I might say would change your mind, but let me suggest to you that if every animal shelter in every city and state declared themselves to be no-kill, and every animal in every shelter found a home, we'd consider this a victory."

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The WCRO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, West Coast Regional Office, P.O. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220; 916-344-1710. Eric Sakach, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays. © 2000 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved. A copy of the latest financial information filed by The HSUS may be obtained by contacting The HSUS, Office of the Treasurer, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-452-1100; or in Washington, The Charities Division, Office of the Secretary of State, State of Washington, Olympia, WA 98504-0422, or by calling 1-800-332-4483. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by any state.

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