Roadside Zoos Are Not Zoos

HSUS Launches Campaign Against More than 1,000 Menageries of Misery

Joe is an American Black Bear. No one is really certain just where Joe came from, but there are some facts about Joe's life that we do know.

For six years, Joe lived in a cage that was so small he could not stand up on his hind legs without hitting his head on the wire that enclosed the top.

The bottom of the cage was seldom cleaned thoroughly, so Joe spent much of his time standing in old straw, candy wrappers, and his own waste, causing ulcers to develop on his feet.

Instead of having a balanced diet, Joe lived mainly on doughnuts and sodas, resulting in medical problems that stunted his growth.

Fresh air, clean water, and room to exercise were strangers to Joe. His task in life was to sit in his cage and attract the attention of the people who patronized his owner's riding stable.

After months of pressure and insistence by HSUS staff members, the owner of the riding stable finally agreed to let us find Joe a new home. When the time came for him to leave, however, he had to be sawed out of his cage because the lock on the door had completely rusted over.

Today Joe is living in an animal orphanage in California, where he is well fed and cared for. Thousands of other animals like Joe are not so lucky. They remain imprisoned in so-called roadside zoos, under grossly inhumane conditions, where the best thing that could happen to many would be a painless death.

A Widespread Problem

No corner of the country is free from these menageries of misery. The Humane Society of the United States estimates there are more than 1,000 such establishments nationwide.

Unlike zoological gardens, these menageries are run by amateurs whose prime motives are economic. Roadside
The bare patches on this Chimpanzee's arm and leg are the result of the animal pulling out its own hair. Wild animals in captivity, when deprived of opportunities for proper exercise or companionship, often exhibit frustration reactions such as this.

A good zoological garden, in addition to providing good food, housing, and medical care for its animals, is an educational institution. The good zoo maintains an outreach program. Good zoos have institutions of higher learning, and provides an environment for breeding rare and endangered species.

Concern for the welfare of animals and a dedication to learning and wildlife conservation is what distinguishes the zoological garden from the roadside menagerie.

The roadside menagerie is usually a place created to attract and enliven people who lack the expertise to understand such a complex venture. A parks and recreation person may have suggested it as a solution of an animal awaiting a "new home" in the local parks in the belief that a zoo would provide an educational and enjoyable experience for local citizens. The end result is a menagerie that has not been planned, is not staffed by professionals, and receives inadequate financial support.

These municipal menageries were often started by well-meaning people who lacked the expertise to understand such a complex venture. A parks and recreation person may have suggested it as a solution of an animal awaiting a "new home" in the local parks in the belief that a zoo would provide an educational and enjoyable experience for local citizens. The end result is a menagerie that has not been planned, is not staffed by professionals, and receives inadequate financial support.

The HSUS was one of the first national animal welfare organizations to take a long, hard look at zoos, including roadside menageries. During the last nine years, we have worked intensively, conducting zoo inspections, public education and awareness programs, and developing a working relationship with the professional zoological community as well as the governmental agencies charged with the welfare of animals.

The HSUS is

• Inspecting zoos. To date, we have inspected a total of 359 major and minor zoos and menageries. Most have been inspected several times.
• Reporting violations of the Animal Welfare Act to USDA officials and pressuring them to correct substandard conditions.
• Teaching sections of the USDA training program for zoo inspectors.
• Working for the passage of additional amendments to the Animal Welfare Act which would further protect zoo animals.
• Stimulating public pressure to bring about change at menageries where laws are not specific enough to obtain convictions.
• Taking legal steps to improve or close menageries where other action has not worked.

The HSUS is planning to continue our work in this area with greater intensity, adding more personnel, stepped-up inspection schedules, and highly visible publicity campaigns. In addition we will be:

• Accompanying USDA inspectors on many zoo inspections.
• Actively working to close menageries. Several have already been targeted for action. Evidence has been collected and we are now preparing cases for presentations to public sector groups charged with overseeing the selected menageries.
• Working with USDA Washington, D.C. staff on a day-to-day basis.
• Making use of state anti-cruelty laws and other state laws protecting zoo animals and native wildlife.
• Pressuring local officials to shut down roadside menageries in their jurisdictions.
• Using the Freedom of Information Act to obtain USDA inspection forms to document our case alleging uneven enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.
• Following up on USDA inspections. If an inspector sanctions conditions we find unacceptable, we will go to USDA superiors and demand remedies.
• Petitioning USDA to strengthen its regulations for the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.

Careful planning has gone into the development of the facilities. The USDA followed up on our complaints but their approach was one of compromise and conciliation rather than tough enforcement. USDA officials seem to believe that with temporary measures a facility such as this one can become a functioning zoo. We believe that by licensing such operations, USDA itself would be communicating federal government sanctions their existence.

During a recent visit to this menagerie, Pressman, requested that a USDA veterinarian accompany her. Among the many problems Pressman pointed out to the veterinarian was a wolf kept in a cage with bars. The USDA vitaminian replied that it was the owner's right to keep the wolf, Pressman requested that a USDA veterinarian accompany her. Among the many problems Pressman pointed out to the veterinarian was a wolf kept in a cage with bars. The USDA vitaminian replied that it was the owner's right to keep the wolf, Pressman said. "The wolf has to walk over bars all day and cannot lie down or rest. It has been snowed in. The wolf has to walk over bars all day and cannot lie down or rest. It has been snowed in."

Thinking these conditions were in violation of the Animal Welfare Act, the HSUS investigator requested a USDA inspection of the facilities. The USDA followed up on our complaints but their approach was one of compromise and conciliation rather than tough enforcement. USDA officials seem to believe that with temporary measures a facility such as this one can become a functioning zoo. We believe that by licensing such operations, USDA itself would be communicating federal government sanctions their existence.

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RIPPLES OF ANIMAL CRUELTY are commonplace. Frequent complaints on roadsides, public service stations, diners, motels, and gift shops.

ROADSIDE MENAGERIES

What is The HSUS Doing? What Are We Planning to Do?
Our professional investigators are a necessary part of the process if we are to put an end to roadside menageries. Join our nationwide campaign to close the menageries! By becoming aware of the problem and educating yourself, you will become an extension of our educational outreach, our programs, and our pressure, The HSUS has intensified its efforts to close these institutions.

Help The HSUS

You can do a lot to help The HSUS end the misery of animals imprisoned in menageries. Join our nationwide campaign to close the menageries! By becoming aware of the problem and educating yourself, you will become an extension of our educational efforts through conversations with people around you.

Your financial support will help enable The HSUS to continue zoo inspections. Our professional investigators are a necessary part of the process if we are to put an end to all menageries.

Our investigators serve two distinct purposes. First, they report violations and seek redress on behalf of the animals. Second, they serve as watchdogs for U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors who are supposed to be enforcing the law and protecting animals from the kinds of things we've told you about within this brief report.

We firmly believe that without our presence, our programs, and our pressure, The USDA and state government agencies would take no action to stop the cruelties found behind the rusty bars of menageries. We know that fewer animals are suffering because of our zoo program. Your membership and support makes this continuing effort possible.

Please use the enclosed postage paid envelope to send your tax deductible contribution today.

Join Our Campaign To Close Roadside Menageries

Zoos have been an accepted part of the American culture for so long that they have taken on an aura of respectability. The amateurs who run menageries are taking advantage of this situation. They have created animal prisons and call them zoos!

Sometimes dressed in their khaki safari outfits, they try to convey an image of jungle veterans who have personally tracked down, captured, and transported their captive beasts across the seas for us. They'd like us to believe that they understand the habits and habitats of their captives. Don't be fooled!

Join our campaign to get rid of these miserable menageries. Work with us. Use our three step program to end the misery.

What You Can Do

1. Go to the Menagerie
If you find a roadside or municipal menagerie in your area, pay a visit. Look for signs of crowding, filth, poor housing, inadequate diets, and bad medical care. Take photos and notes.

2. Contact Authorities
Take your evidence to local authorities such as fish and game commissioners, humane agents, and political leaders (especially if it is a public facility).

If local authorities fail to respond, contact the nearest USDA office. You can also contact state officials who administer laws pertaining to captive wild animals, or call the county attorney's office.

Report your findings to The HSUS. If local authorities refuse to take action, we may be able to help. But you must help in the battle by keeping us informed.

3. Talk to Others
Tell your friends and associates about menageries you have found. Ask them to join you in not patronizing or supporting such places. Give copies of this report to interested parties.

Naturally, when inspecting or evaluating a menagerie, you should not represent yourself as an agent of The HSUS. Our investigators have had many years of training and experience to draw upon. Your views, as a resident of the area, will carry plenty of weight.

All contributors of $10 or more will receive this bumper sticker. By displaying the bumper sticker on your car you will be helping The HSUS publicize the roadside zoo problem. Who knows, perhaps your bumper sticker will make someone choose not to enter a menagerie of misery.

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