Beware of dogs that bite!

How many dog bites happen in your community each year? It is one of the more serious problems that arise when people and animals live together in the community. In New York City alone in 1979, there were 17,290 animal bites of which 15,814 were by dogs, according to a UPI report. (Cats were responsible for 871, and the rest were bites from rats, raccoons, skunks, ferrets, parrots and others.)

As the community resource on animal problems, your organization or agency not only must respond to bite cases but also must take the lead in preventing dog bites by educating people on how to avoid them.

Continued on page 2
A success story
by Rick Collard

Collard is field investigator for the HSUS Gulf States Regional Office.

Dr. Michael Fox, of HSUS's Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, says the more common biting incidents could be reduced if people knew more about why dogs bite.

For example, joggers and bicyclers are often chased by dogs because all the dog can perceive about them is a set of fast-moving sneakers or bicycle spokes moving away. Both stimulate the dog to chase and sometimes bite at them.

People who try to intervene in dog fights are often bitten when one or both dogs redirect their aggression at the person.

A dog may bite its owner if it fails to recognize him or her or if the dog feels threatened. Sometimes a pet dog will begin to nip at family members when a baby is brought home; this new family member replaces the dog as the attention-grabbing "baby."

Fox also believes that many dogs not suited temperamentally to be pets are being produced by "puppy mill" operators in their haste to get profitable dogs on the market.

In March, the city council passed a comprehensive animal control and welfare ordinance requiring the neutering of all animals adopted from the shelter. ACOs now have the authority to issue citations to the irresponsible owners of free-roaming pets.

We learned in October that a new director for the Rabies Control Center had been hired. Julie Hodges had seen the news report and had become so incensed that she applied for the job herself.

Last August, a concerned Lousiana resident called our office about a local television news report showing cats being beaten to death with a pipe at the Bossier City Rabies Control Center.

We immediately contacted the reporter who told us that one arrest of employees at the center had already been made and more were to follow. HSUS supporters sent us updates on further developments, including a newspaper article quoting the mayor of Bossier City welcoming any help in correcting problems with the "dog pound."

Throughout this period, HSUS offered by mail to assist with training and materials, but no arrangements were made.

For a copy of this brochure, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Karla Gardner, Dog Warden Dept., 1700 Canton St., Toledo, ON 43624.

A dog may bite its owner if it fails to recognize him or her or if the dog feels threatened. Sometimes a pet dog will begin to nip at family members when a baby is brought home; this new family member replaces the dog as the attention-grabbing "baby." A puppy that has not been trained by its owner so that it knows its relationship to the human family may become aggressive trying to be a more dominant member of the household.

A report from the Center for Disease Control on eleven fatal dog attacks in 1974-76 says that each of the attacking dogs apparently felt threatened or felt that its territory was being threatened by the person. Also, in those eleven cases, the dogs were larger and were stronger than their victims. The report says that most of the dogs were known to the victims, and the deaths could have been prevented by more supervision when a child or small person came into contact with a larger dog.

Fatal attacks are fortunately rare, but even a minor bite results in stress for the victim, raises the possibility of rabies and may end up in the destruction of a dog that was simply defending itself against what it thought was a threat.

According to a dog bite study by the health department in Tompkins County, NY, 60% of bite victims owned or knew the dog that bit them. The study included 333 cases that occurred in 1978 and 1979. People under 20 years of age accounted for 56% of the total number of bite victims, and 77% of the facial bite wounds were inflicted on children under 10 years of age.

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The HSUS is holding a photography contest -- and you are invited to enter your best animal photos!

The categories are:
- Pets, black-and-white
- Pets, color
- Non-pets, black-and-white
- Non-pets, color

(Non-pets includes horses, cattle and other livestock as well as animals in zoos or in the wild.)

A $100 Grand Prize will be awarded for the best of all categories, and a $50 First Prize and $25 Second Prize will be awarded in each category. Ten photos in each category will also receive honorable mention, and those photographers as well as the prize winners will get the best-selling photography guide The Joy of Photography, compliments of Eastman Kodak Company.

SPECIAL CATEGORY FOR SHELTER SENSE READERS: Animal Care and Control, black-and-white. First Prize is $50 and Second Prize is $25. Ten photos will receive honorable mention, and those photographers will get a year's subscription to SHELTER SENSE free. All photos will also be entered in the $100 Grand Prize competition.

Contest rules:
1) All entries must be submitted by November 1, 1980. You may submit as many entries as you like.
2) All entries become the property of HSUS and will not be returned.
3) Black-and-white entries must be glossy prints measuring no less than 5" x 7" and no more than 8" x 10". Color entries may be glossy prints measuring no less than 5" x 7" and no more than 8" x 10" or slide transparencies.
4) Each entry must be labeled with the name and address of the photographer and the name of the category in which the photo should be entered.
5) All entries must be the original unretouched work of the photographer, and there must be no other logos, borders or text on the photo.
6) Entries cannot have been printed in any publication with a circulation larger than 10,000, or have been mass reproduced for sale, such as on posters.
7) Entries must be the original unretouched work of the photographer.

Mail entries to: PHOTO CONTEST, HSUS, 2100 L STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20037.

Entries will be judged by John Fish, Director of Consumer Publications for Eastman Kodak Company; Dick Darcy, Photo Editor for the Washington Post; and Carole Despard, Picture Editor for Smithsonian Magazine. Winners will be announced in HSUS publications, and a list of winners will be available from HSUS on request after January 1, 1981.

HSUS gratefully acknowledges the support of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Manning, which makes this contest possible.

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Hodge's has demonstrated that concerned citizens do not have to discount the price of $7.50 nationally that amounts to over $500 million annually.

Two local IGA grocery stores sold the items to the society at the wholesale price of $7.50, leaving the society a net gain of $500 thousand annually.

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The Jefferson County, KY, Animal Shelter reports that an area resident has been convicted of theft by deception for adopting dogs from the shelter and reselling them by falsifying American Kennel Club registration papers. He was also convicted of bribery of a public employee. His sentence is a two-year prison term.

The man bought several dogs at the shelter's fee of $12.50 on his own and then asked kennel attendants to save certain breeds for him, promising to "make it worth their while." He used different names to make these purchases. The shelter checked local newspaper advertisements and found dogs matching the descriptions of dogs he had purchased being offered for $100 and more.

To get positive proof, the shelter worked with Jefferson County police and the state attorney's Economic Crime Unit. Several dogs that were likely prospects were marked with tattoos that looked like freckles. These dogs were then sold to the man by a kennel attendant with a hidden transmitter enabling detectives to overhear - one transaction took place in a parking lot. Detectives then purchased the same dogs which were positively identified by the tattoos. It took some time to arrange the necessary buys because the dogs selected by the "adopter" resold so quickly.

When the conviction was announced, many area citizens called to report that they had purchased dogs from the convicted man and that these dogs were in poor physical condition.

An American Kennel Club representative investigated the case also since 1974. So quickly.

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The Jefferson County Animal Shelter, Manslick Rd., Louisville, KY 40216.

Forsyth Humane Society, Crums Ln., Louisville, KY 40216.

The HSUS, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is seeking information on a popular bird repellent compound. Several products containing polyisobutylene as a basic ingredient are marketed as sticky compounds to be spread along ledges to discourage pigeons, sparrows, starlings and other birds from roosting there. These compounds, which are advertised as being harmless to birds, are sold under such brand names as Roost-No-More, Bird Tanglefoot and Bird Stop.

If you receive reports of birds being adversely affected by any commercial bird repellent containing polyisobutylene or a similar ingredient, please send details to Guy R. Hodge, Director, Research and Data, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. While there is no conclusive evidence that these products are harmful to birds, HSUS and the Fish and Wildlife Service are gathering any information available on the matter in response to some uncertain reports of birds being adversely affected.

Stress - how it affects people and how it can be lessened - has been in the public eye lately.

But according to Toronto veterinarian Paul D. McCutcheon, animal shelters should be concerned about how stress affects the animals. He says being confined in the shelter in new surroundings with different food can significantly increase the chances of an animal getting sick - especially a former household pet.

In an article in California Veterinarian, McCutcheon says that being sick is more than just having the symptoms of the disease. "The two-month-old puppy that is presented with a mucopurulent nasal discharge and depression of distemper - the three-year-old collie suffering from an infected bite wound - the ten-year-old cocker spaniel with a persistent cough of valvular heart disease, have considerable in common, in spite of their age differences and specific afflictions. Each is presented with specific signs - but each is suffering from the additional common malady of 'just being sick.'"

Similarly, the new atmosphere of the shelter makes an animal more susceptible to infectious disease. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea can come simply from stress.

SHELTER SENSE spoke to the doctor about animal care in shelters. McCutcheon recommends that shelter animals be vaccinated immediately on arrival, since "their natural immunity will really take a beating" from stress. The vaccine will boost the immunity of any earlier vaccinations the animal may have had; and if it is the first vaccination for the animal, the earlier the shot is given, the better. Administer a second shot in two weeks if the animal is still in your care.

One of the specific problems that can arise in dogs is their chewing any material in their cages in an effort to relieve stomach distress. McCutcheon says this is a sign that stress is a significant problem for the dog and that tranquilizers may be needed under strict veterinary supervision. When the animal's stress is being adversely affected, cage matting should be removed and hard nylon bones provided for the dog.

The HSUS seeks data on pigeon repellent

Stress and sickness

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McCUTCHEON also suggests starting the animals on antibiotics, again under veterinary supervision, if gastrointestinal symptoms from stress begin.

For pets accustomed to human handling, contact with no one except other animals is a "tremendous shake-up," according to the veterinarian. "The shelter workers should handle these animals in an affectionate manner, with a lot of petting and touching and speaking affectionately." If possible, pets not used to other animals should be caged separately.

For the stray unaccustomed to people, McCUTCHEON recommends caution since too much handling could be stressful but advises that these animals do need to be socialized even if it does take extra time and effort.

The following page lists common signs of disease to look for in the shelter animals. Make copies to hand out to all staff members and post copies in the kennels.

A single sign does not necessarily mean an animal is sick. An animal may lose its appetite for a day or sneeze once or twice without there being a medical problem; however, these signs should be watched. If they continue or other signs appear, a veterinary check is in order.

Try to get into the habit of looking for disease signs every time you go through the kennels. Use your eyes, ears and especially your nose to check for anything unusual about the animals. The earlier you detect a health problem, the better your chances of successfully treating it and producing a healthy animal for adoption.
The HSUS now has available a "Directory of Manufacturers and Suppliers for Animal Control Agencies, Animal Shelters, and Spay Clinics." The publication can be ordered for $.75 from HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Guidelines for employee safety in animal shelters are available free from the HSUS West Coast Regional Office, 1713 J Street, Suite 305, Sacramento, CA 95814. The guidelines were developed by the California Animal Control Task Force, a group of progressive animal control and humane society directors organized by HSUS West Coast Regional Director Charlene Drennon.

The North Carolina Humane Federation is offering a 120-page Humane Handbook, including material on cruelty investigations, boards of directors, fund raising, publicity, school programs and other topics as well as lists of national and state animal-related organizations and agencies. For those outside North Carolina, the handbook provides a thorough outline for organizing a handbook for any state or community.

Send $12 to North Carolina Humane Federation, Education Committee, PO Box 892, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Two or more copies are $10 each. If you already have the first edition of the handbook, just send for the 1980 Handbook Supplement for $4.

"Dog Care" and "Cat Care" are two pamphlets available for $1 each from Monterey County SPCA, PO Box 5058, Monterey, CA 93940. These pamphlets include pet health and training information and guidelines on responsible pet ownership.

Animal Care and Education Center will send you a free copy of their poster "The Fatal Multiplication Table" for a self-addressed stamped envelope. The poster has a diagram showing that one dog can be responsible for the births of 444 dogs in five years with uncontrolled breeding. It comes in a copy of the Center's newsletter and is to be clipped out and displayed. Write the Center at Box 64, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067.

A bumper sticker with the message "Pets Need Responsible Owners" is available for $10 per hundred plus $.50 postage for each hundred from the Veterinary Medical Association of Tennessee, PO Box $199, Nashville, TN 37219.

The Sonitrol Corporation offers a security system where a trained operator at a Sonitrol office listens through an electronic monitor on your property for any sounds that indicate a break-in. The operator reports any suspicious noises to the police and to you. For the address of the Sonitrol franchise nearest you, write Sonitrol Corporation, 6161 Lake Ellenor Dr., Orlando, FL 32809.

The Adult Volunteer Program of the Wisconsin Humane Society publishes an attractive newsletter for the volunteers. For a sample copy and a list of volunteer job descriptions, write Pat Kohloff, Volunteer Coordinator, WHS, 4151 North Humboldt Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53212.

ANCOM, the company that offers the "Pet Owner Education Series" of films with a special projector system, is introducing new films on seizures and congestive heart disease. Humane societies that purchase the ANCOM system receive a free film for elementary school age children about pet ownership titled "A Pet is a Special Friend."

ANCOM is also considering producing training programs for humane society personnel on such topics as animal care and restraint and owner counseling. If you are interested in purchasing such programs or if you have comments or suggestions on what they might include, ANCOM would like to hear from you. This is your chance as animal professionals to influence the training materials being developed for the field of animal care and control.

To make your comments and to receive further details on the ANCOM pet owner education films and projector, write them at 940 0 Street, Box 81730, Lincoln, NE 68501.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has published a brochure titled "The Veterinary Profession and Animal Control" on the role veterinarians can play in community animal control. The brochure helps clarify the attitudes of the AVMA toward animal control matters. It is available free from AVMA Public Information Division, 930 North Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60196.
Mavron, Inc., has introduced a new animal control vehicle, a mini-pickup model with an aluminum carrier cube that can hold six animals. The chassis and cube meet all Federal requirements. The cube sections have removable dividers to make room for larger animals, all sections are self-draining and all outside doors are key-locked. The vehicle has a wheel base of 106.9", 2.3 L engine, power brakes, a 4-speed manual transmission, and a 1400 lb. payload capacity. The cost is $9800 plus delivery.

For complete information, write Paul Miller, Mavron, Inc., PO Box 196, 1512 Road 225 West, Warsaw, IN 46580 or call (219) 267-3044.

SHELTER SENSE has received information on two kinds of cage floor coverings. A plastic-coated grid flooring, which would be suitable for cages in the shelter or in animal control trucks, is available from Ridgian Veterinary Products, 301 West Main Street, Mount Horeb, WI 53572. They will send a small sample and price information on request (see illustration in left margin). SHELTER SENSE would not recommend this kind of flooring for runs since it does allow drafts.

Kendall Veterinary Products has introduced Vet Mat, washable cage flooring that can be cut to size. A brochure is available from The Kendall Company, Veterinary Products, One Federal Street, Boston, MA 02101.

VOTING "YES" for the DOG POUND

Citizens in Ottawa County, OH, have voted in favor of a levy to build a new animal shelter. The vote was largely the result of a campaign by the Ottawa County Citizens for the Dog Pound, organized by the Ottawa County Humane Society (PO Box 15, Port Clinton, OH 43452).

Local newspapers report that more people voted on the levy than on the county candidate races. Humane society officials credit that support of the levy to the reasonable amount of money being asked for - the levy will cost each homeowner only $1.20. Also, the county has agreed to stop collecting the funds when the shelter costs are met, so the full amount approved by the vote may not have to be collected.

The society reports that another levy was voted down a few years ago because of the larger amount of money involved and because voters seemed to think the levy was to raise funds for the private humane society.

The society's campaign included radio announcements and newspaper advertisements based on seven basic reasons to support the levy. A "yes" vote would provide a low cost and modern facility, provide a centrally located facility, promote humane treatment of animals, start a one-time project with low cost to each homeowner, limit collection to only one year, cost no more than $88,000 and help to control the county's animal problems.

Construction plans are getting underway this summer.

Pet Patrol, a clearinghouse for information on lost pets in Erie County, NY, reports that their seven-member staff has reunited 1500 pets with owners since the group started in April, 1979.

The staff members travel through the county photographing unidentified animals held in shelter facilities by the county's dog wardens. The group also takes information from people who have found straying pets and who are trying to find the owners. This information is incorporated into a file for pet owners to examine.

Pet Patrol is funded by a CETA grant which expires in the fall; the group is seeking other sources of funding. They have exceeded the goals for reuniting pets and owners and for making educational presentations that were stated in the original contract.

The group reports that more than 65% of Erie County residents are pet owners. (Pet Patrol, 3580 Harlem Rd., Cheektowaga, NY 14215)
In Dade County, FL, the health department reports that dog bites reached a peak of 8,538 in 1972 and have declined each year since then to a low of 5,145 in 1979. Animal Services Director Ron Petty says the decrease is apparently due to more people living in condominiums and apartments where pets are not allowed, resulting in fewer dogs being around to bite. "I would like to think that it's also more public awareness and responsible pet ownership. We know dogs are no less likely to bite now than they were."

Petty confirms that most bites come from owned dogs, and that these dogs are responding to threats to their masters or their property. Even small dogs will bite a person who may appear to be hurting their masters. "These are single 'bite and run' cases...the dog is asserting a message to stay away."

Petty also points out that it doesn't occur to many owners that their dogs will bite so they do not notice when potential bite situations develop.

Petty says that his field officers rarely suffer dog bites because they are trained and they have the equipment to handle the dogs. If they are approached by a snarling dog, they can give it the end of a control stick or their clipboard to bite. Many people walking along are not carrying anything they can use in that way. Dogs that have been identified as dangerous are usually captured with box traps.

Petty does tell the story of one animal control officer who was shot by an enraged citizen. The officer left animal control work to become a mail carrier—now he is frequently bitten by the dogs on his route.

All shelter employees should know the procedure for handling dog bite cases; however, you can perform a real service to your community by informing people about dog bites. People who understand how dogs react will be able to avoid bites, including keeping their own dogs from biting. This month's Reproducible will help you in this effort.

You may also wish to work with doctors and health officials to determine where and how dog bites occur in your area so you can offer specific suggestions in your public information materials.

Photos from "Animals Can Bite," Pyramid Films, PO Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406.
The Florida legislature has passed a law requiring all animals adopted or sold from public and private shelters to be neutered. I've summarized that here in a single sentence, but the real accomplishment of the new law took months of background work. Local and state humane organizations worked on the passage of the bill along with HSUS's own representatives in the southeast.

These humanitarians found a legislator to introduce the bill, provided background information and rallied support from state residents to convince legislators that the bill should pass. Details had to be worked out and compromises made, but in the end, the bill passed and animal control professionals got a new tool to use in their efforts to reduce pet overpopulation.

We in the animal care and control field hate the cruelty and irresponsibility we see every day - but we can't simply go around the community shaking our fingers in the faces of the people who are cruel or irresponsible. We need sound laws with clear enforcement powers to be able to solve animal problems.

Getting those laws passed takes time and dedication. A chart provided by the California state senate on "How a Bill Becomes Law" shows no less than 23 separate steps a bill must go through before it becomes a law - from concerned citizens finding a legislator willing to introduce the bill through committee hearings, readings and referrals, and votes.

But if your state laws do not provide the support you need to run a sound animal control program in your community, it will be worth your while to organize a campaign for better legislation. It will mean saving tax dollars, sparing animal lives and preventing more cruelty than simply coping with the status quo.