MOUNTAIN LIONS FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Governor Deukmejian’s veto of S.B. 76, which would have continued the moratorium on mountain lions in the state of California, was a blow to all who worked diligently to preserve these magnificent cats. The governor stated that they “should be treated like any other game mammal” and, as of January 1, 1986, they have been.

Beginning in April, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will hold a series of hearings to set sport hunting guidelines, the first step toward “open season” on mountain lions. At a Sacramento hearing held early in March, the DFG recommended delaying setting hunting regulations for mountain lions until 1987. A department spokesman stated that biologists and game managers lack data on which to set hunting seasons this year on the state’s estimated 4,800 mountain lions, which have been protected since 1971.

At the same March hearing, department officials backed away from a proposal to kill all mountain lions in the North Kings area of Fresno County, in effect a “test” to determine whether the extermination of all mountain lions in the North Kings area, and 50% of lions in adjacent areas, would cause an increase in the deer herd population.

The WCRO and its members have registered their strong objections to the study with Jack Parnell, director of California State Department of Fish and Game, and our concern with a (continued on page 2)

Mountain lions are an increasingly rare sight in western states. If hunters and trappers have their way, these animals will become even more rare. (continued on page 3)
Northern California Ravaged by Floods

February 1986 will long be remembered in northern California as the month of floods when thousands of people in numerous communities in more than 12 counties, including Sacramento County, were forced to evacuate, in some cases without any warning. The storms that caused dams and rivers to swell, and a chain of devastating floods, affected the lives of a number of people and countless pets, livestock, and wildlife.

The West Coast Regional Office was inundated with calls and reports from local humane societies and animal-control agencies either needing assistance or offering help. While disaster relief efforts for people and animals went smoothly, with a high degree of organization and cooperation in most of the affected areas of the state, efforts in other areas seemed confused and without resolve.

Numerous instances of heroic efforts to save animal lives were marred by acts of indifference or callousness. “Disasters bring out the best and worst qualities in people,” said WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach who, accompanied by HSUS Investigator Paul Miller and Martin Humane Society’s Field Services Director, worked with animal control officials in Yuba County.

The communities of Linda and Olivehurst in that county were among the hardest hit in the state. The disaster evoked an outpouring of help in the form of volunteers, pet food, kennel facilities, and veterinary assistance from local SPCA’s and animal rights groups in Sacramento, Yolo, and Yuba counties.

Organizations seeking information on how to design a disaster relief plan should contact the WCRO.
LAW LIMITS HOW DEPOSITS ARE SPENT
A.B. 1663, passed in California and in effect as of January 1, 1986, states that all animal shelters must take a deposit on dogs and cats in an amount not to exceed $30 for cats, and $40 for dogs and use the deposit for spaying or neutering. Dogs and cats over six months of age must be spayed or neutered within 60 days of adoption. Any under six months of age must be altered within six months.

This law changes the existing law by adding dogs, and by limiting how an agency can spend unclaimed deposits. Now, any deposit not claimed may be used only for 1) a public education program to prevent overpopulation of dogs and cats, 2) a program to spay/neuter dogs and cats, or 3) a follow-up program to assure that animals sold or given away by shelters are in fact spayed or neutered.

Our thanks to Peninsula Humane Society for sponsoring the bill and to HSUS members for their letters and calls supporting the legislation.

Judi Kukulka of the WCRO has just completed a study of California state humane officers following a request from Assemblyman Wally Herger for help on a bill to require educational training for such officers. Heretofore, no one had correct figures on the numbers or legality of those appointed.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION
A.B. 1620, which passed, calls for more inspections of exotic animal exhibitors. It became law on January 1, 1986.
A.B. 1628, which failed before the Revenue and Taxation Committee, would have given an income tax deduction for spaying or neutering.

NEW AND CONTINUING CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION
S.B. 1405, authored by Senator David Roberti, is a two-year bill and would allow specially trained humane officers access to animal-research laboratories to check for compliance with state and federal laws.
S.B. 2438, authored by Senator Richardson, would except Nelson bighorn sheep from fully protected mammal status, thereby making them game mammals open to sport hunting. It should be opposed.
S.B. 2439, also authored by Senator Richardson, would lower the fee for a license to take elk to $100 and remove the protectionist language of the existing law. Humanitarians are urged to oppose it.
A.B. 2833, authored by Assemblyman Killea, would appropriate $4.5 million from the General Fund for California condor projects, the money to be split between the San Diego Zoo, the Los Angeles Zoo, and the California condor release project.
A.B. 3626, authored by Assemblyman Bradley, would make it a crime for anyone who uses animals in research to fail to provide for the humane care, treatment, or use of those animals.

If you would like to receive timely alerts on animal legislation, join our HSUS Activist Program. All members are eligible and can join by contacting WCRO.