Trapping Agony Continues
The HSUS Fights to End the Anguish

Two weeks had passed since the golden retriever's disappearance. Chester's owner had hiked many snowy miles in search of her lost pet and had placed ads in local papers. She was beginning to lose hope.

Then a young girl, hiking across a field, discovered the dog — its front left paw gripped by the steel jaws of a leghold trap. Apparently, the trapper who had set the device hadn't bothered to inspect it for his catch, and Chester had been left to die.

Every bit of brush within reach of the trap had been eaten, and an emaciated Chester lay motionless in the snow. During the animal's frenzied attempts to escape, Chester had chewed off three toes, and tendons and bones were exposed. Still alive but too weak to stand, Chester whimpered in pain as the girl approached.

Chester's ordeal was not an isolated incident. The fact is, each year in the United States, thousands of family pets fall prey to steel-jaw traps. Some survive; many don't. Time and again The HSUS has received accounts describing the tribulations of those that have made it home alive: animals, like Chester, that have been discovered near death by hikers and snowmobilers; pets that have limped into owners' backyards, dragging traps on mangled, infected limbs. Most common are tales of dogs and cats losing toes and tongues, breaking jaws, and severing limbs in their attempts to escape from the wretched trap. Most unforgettable are the stories of trapped pets — deemed a nuisance by trappers — beaten and left for dead, only to somehow survive and be reunited.

WARNING! The material contained in this brochure is hazardous to the health and well-being of animals. Read with care.

Despite the fact that the steel-jaw leghold trap has been outlawed in dozens of civilized nations, each year in the United States, its vicious jaws maim and kill an estimated 15 million animals. For wild creatures that have no owners awaiting their return, their cries of anguish go unanswered and unheeded.

Ed Cesar
with their owners. But these animals are the lucky ones. They are among the few that survive the grim ordeal of being trapped. The fact is, each year in the United States, steel jaws spell prolonged agony and death for a staggering 15 million innocent animals, from foxes, raccoons, bobcats, and minks to swans, songbirds, and squirrels.

To end the abominable cruelties these creatures are forced to endure, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is launching the largest, most coordinated effort against trapping ever. With our fire fueled by the evidence attesting to the excruciating pain a captive experiences, trapping in America is pouring millions of dollars back into the fur industry’s massive advertising campaign and reports of a growing market that a captive will become too entangled to chew its feet off and escape. The individual who set the traps above apparently failed to check his traps regularly. In many areas of the country, regulations allow traps to go unchecked for days at a time. Four states have no trap visitation requirements at all! This means that an animal may remain shackled by the teeth for days or weeks without access to food or water. Since most legal trapping is done during winter months, when coats are at their fullest, animals must endure sub-zero temperatures and blizzard conditions with no prospect of refuge. Trapped and in pain, a captive often wins freedom by gnawing off its captured foot and abandoning it. For the mutilated animal that leaves a paw in the trap and a trail of blood in the snow, chances for survival are slim. Some do recover, however. Boasting of their prowess, trappers have occasion­ally reported recapturing animals missing two or more legs.

For most animals, the agony ends with the trap’s return. Captives are usually “dispatched” — in ways that cause least damage to the pelt: clubbing, drowning, or crushing the animal’s chest underfoot. As I struck the fox, the stick exploded into many pieces,” reads a letter by a thirteen-year-old boy in Voice of the Trapper magazine. “I quickly struck it solidly with what I had left of the stick. With the fox stunned we realized it was our chance to finish it off by standing on its throat and lungs.”

Though a large percentage of trappers do report killing “trash” animals. More often, however, they are killed and discarded, or cut up for bait.

Despite countless case reports of pets maimed in traps, despite trappers’ accounts of the ways they’ve brutalized their victims, and despite scientific evidence attesting to the excruciating pain a captive experiences, trapping interests forever claim that there’s no suffering involved in their activities! Instead, by stirring up public fears about rabies and employing terms like “sustainable yield” and “indispensable management tool,” they proclaim themselves ardent conservationists.

The fact is, as our detailed information shows, none of their claims bear up under scrutiny. Animals aren’t trapped for their skins alone. As the HSUS has shown, “Trappers are trapped for the price of their pelts!”

Though the fur industry employs only a tiny percentage of workers nation­wide, financial gains have long overshadowed any humane concerns. With profits reportedly soaring from the sale of inexpensive “fun furs,” the industry is pouring millions of dollars back into advertising its products. Thanks to pages and pages of print ads, as well as television commercials, game show giveaways, and glamorous nighttime “soaps,” furs are no longer reserved for the rich, but have become garments affordable to nearly all income levels, to be worn any­time, anyplace. The result of aggressive advertising: first-time fur buyers are younger than ever, and the industry claims that business is booming!

Frighteningly, the effect animal proponents will have on profits, the fur in­dustry is now gearing up to counter our claims. The HSUS has learned that in­dustry representatives and “wildlife ex­perts” recently met at a secret location to develop strategies to defend and fur­ther promote their trade. By pouring more money into print ads, radio, and TV spots, furriers plan to make billions more on their blood-furs by stressing the industry’s so-called “responsible conservation practices.”

What The HSUS Is Doing

While glamorous promotions have fostered America’s love affair with fur, consumers have remained virtually blind to the suffering they sanction each time they wrap themselves in fur.

Trappers Fight Us on N.J. Law

O n April 27, 1984, after nearly twenty years of dedicated struggle, ani­mal proponents rejoiced as New Jersey governor Thomas Kean signed a bill outlawing the use of the steel-jaw trap throughout that state. Passage of the bill was an unprecedented victory, not only for animal proponents, but for millions of wild creatures that would otherwise have been trapped and bru­tally killed for their fur. Or so we thought.

In September of 1985, a month before the ban was scheduled to take ef­fect, trappers filed suit against the state, challenging the constitutionality of the law and contending that use of the so-called padded steel-jaw trap is legal under the new measure. (The padded device—nothing more than a conventional trap with a miniscule strip of rubber between the jaws—had been considered and rejected by the state legislature.)

To ensure that the trap ban (which takes effect upon the suit being disposed of) is upheld, The HSUS has intervened on behalf of the state and will now have to reconstruct the many arguments we’ve presented over the last twenty years. “Although New Jersey residents have already spoken out against the trap, and the legislature and governor have seen fit to ban the activity,” said HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Director Nina Austenberg, “The HSUS now has to start from square one, reddefending the trap ban.” Exactly what does this mean? It means that during the next few months, The HSUS will spend countless hours, not to mention tens of thousands of dollars in litigation expenses, to ensure that this trap ban is upheld. After all, the lives of New Jersey’s wild animals are once again at stake.
By placing graphic advertisements in major magazines, The HSUS is working to open the public's eyes to the tragic consequences of buying furs. We will also be making footage, depicting the horrors of trapping, available to the media and the public for use in combating the issue through educational campaigns.

Time and again, The HSUS has gone to the courtroom in defense of innocent animals victimized by the trap. In addition to the legal battle currently being waged in New Jersey, The HSUS, with fifteen other organizations, recently sued New York State on the grounds that use of the steel-jaw trap violates New York's anti-cruelty law. (We believe the measure, intended to safeguard all animals from blatant cruelty, should certainly protect wild creatures tortured in this brutal trap!) Though the judge dismissed the case on what he felt were legal precedents, he issued a strong statement in favor of animal protection. We are now appealing the decision to a higher court.

Our efforts don't end there. The HSUS has worked in dozens of states, helping to draft anti-trap bills and obtain their enactment. Our wildlife biologists have repeatedly testified before state legislatures, courts, and Congress. On a local level, HSUS regional directors have helped implement municipal ordinances banning the steel-jaw trap. And, with your support, our efforts will continue until we've succeeded in ending the anguish for millions of defenseless creatures nationwide.

In its frenzied struggle to free itself from the trap's grip, a red squirrel rips apart a nearby tree limb.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- **Write to Senator John H. Chafee**, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Environmental Pollution (410 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510). Urge him to schedule hearings in his subcommittee on S. 1368, a bill that would ban the shipment of padded-jaw or steel-jaw leghold traps. Hearings that would help expose the atrocities of trapping have never been held in the Senate. Ask him to look into the matter now, before millions of additional animals are senselessly slaughtered.

- **Contact your own senators** (U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510), urging them to cosponsor S. 1368. Explain to them that you do not feel the financial gains of 500,000 fur industry workers and trappers justify the persecution of 15 million animals each year!

- **Also write to Representative Henry A. Waxman**, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment (2415 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515), who has already held hearings on H.R. 1809, which would ban the use of the steel-jaw leghold trap. Ask him to move that bill through Congress now.

- **Work to outlaw trapping in your community or state and to educate the public.** For materials (including reproducible trapping/fur ads) to help you begin an anti-trapping campaign in your area, send $5 for The HSUS Trapping Awareness Kit (The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037).

- **Finally, help The HSUS end the agony for millions of wild animals brutally trapped and killed for their fur. Your tax-deductible contribution is critical if we are to continue taking legal action to protect animals victimized by this torturous device and expanding our legislative and educational programs to safeguard all animals from painful and untimely deaths. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.**

With the generous support of our members, The HSUS has been developing and placing graphic anti-fur ads such as this one in major magazines including Newsweek, Cosmopolitan, and Ms.

The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202) 452-1100

Additional copies of this report are available upon request at 30¢ each or in quantities of 12 for $2.90 and 25 for $3.50. Payment must accompany order.

Copyright ©1986 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved.