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CA Horse Survives Wildfires

When WCRO staff responded to the swift-moving Poe fire in Northern California with a temporary mobile animal shelter (capable of housing more than 50 small animals), they learned that many horses and livestock had been left behind to fend for themselves. On the second day of operations, WCRO’s Robert Reder and local volunteer Mat Going responded to a report of a horse who had been left behind at a ranch where the fire had destroyed several hundred acres of woodlands the night before. When they arrived at the ranch, smoke could still be seen rising from stumps and logs where tall trees had stood. The ground and rocks were not to the touch. It was a scene of total devastation.

Based on information from neighbors, continued on page 2

Arthur’s Plight May Change State’s Handling of Bears

The story of Arthur first came to WCRO’s attention thanks to a call from a newspaper reporter in the small, picturesque community of Mammoth Lakes, located in the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California. Arthur, an adult black bear, had been living in a drainage culvert near a golf course when residents noticed that he was dragging one of his hind legs. “It was believed that the bear was possibly suffering from a gunshot wound,” said WCRO Regional Coordinator Bob Reder. Concerned citizens notified California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) officials who at first suggested that “nature should take its course,” but later decided that the bear should be euthanized.

According to Reder, “The latter decision caused a great deal of outcry among Mammoth Lakes’ citizens.” In an effort to save Arthur, WCRO staff intervened. “Thankfully, DFG decided to capture and transport Arthur to its holding facility in Rancho Cordova, where he was given a preliminary medical examination,” he said. Arthur was found to be underweight for an adult black bear who was preparing for hibernation. A more in-depth examination followed at the University of California (UC) at Davis, where x-rays revealed three small shotgun pellets imbedded in Arthur’s hindquarters. Although the wounds had long since healed, Arthur was diagnosed as suffering from a degenerative bone condition caused by either bacterial or fungal infection, possibly related to having been shot, and that the condition could diminish his chances for survival in the wild. WCRO requested and received approval from DFG to have an HSUS wildlife expert review the x-rays and results of the examination and submit our recommendations concerning Arthur’s fate. HSUS experts concurred with the findings of the UC Davis exam, and we have recommended that Arthur be examined again in the near future to determine if the bone degeneration has worsened. In the meantime, The HSUS has recommended that Arthur be placed in an accredited sanctuary, providing he is not suffering. Should Arthur’s condition show improvement, we believe he may be a candidate for release back to the wild. Such a decision will require the concurrence of DFG, whose current policy forbids the release of adult bears back into the wild. “We will continue to monitor Arthur’s condition and well-being,” said Reder. “And we will also be working toward a change in DFG policy toward adult black bears.”
Native Nations Clinics a Success

2001 California Fire Season Keeps WCRO Busy

During the summer of 2001, WCRO staff responded to four California wildfires and monitored several others. In August, the Leonard fire in Calaveras County burned more than 400 acres and was quickly followed by the Oregon Road fire in Trinity County, which burned more than 1,700 acres and a number of homes near the town of Weaverville. At the request of animal control and sheriff’s department officials in both counties, WCRO staff responded with supplies and equipment to assist with establishing temporary animal shelters, conducting animal rescue and search, and working in emergency command centers. The fire season extended into September as the Derby fire consumed more than 13,000 acres, again in Calaveras County. “We worked closely with Calaveras County Animal Control officials to help organize teams made up of animal control officers from four surrounding counties,” said WCRO Director Eric Sabach.

In August, the HSUS’s native nations spay/neuter and humane education clinics returned to Round Valley Reservation and then traveled for the first time to the Karuk Reservation in Happy Camp, California. “The clinics were well received and the residents were excited about our service,” said WCRO Program Coordinator Cynthia Cutler. Between the two reservations, 450 animals received vaccinations, and 250 dogs and cats were spayed or neutered. Veterinary students performed the surgeries under the direct supervision of licensed veterinarians. HSUS staff members used a combination of videotapes and cardboard cutouts and banners to conduct the humane education portion of the clinics for reservation residents (see photo, above).

At the invitation of the Karuk Family Resource Center, HSUS staff attended to another large group that arrived with pets to obtain free vaccinations and basic dog obedience lessons. WCRO plans to visit other reservations in Northern California and Nevada this year. The HSUS thanks Pfizer Animal Health for donating the vaccines, and all the volunteers, dental clinics, tribal officials, and humane educators whose hard work helped to make this year’s clinics a success.

First Strike Seminar Presented

From left: HSUS volunteer Elaine Acededo, WCRO Program Specialist Carolay Gay, Dr. Lynn Loar of the Pryor Foundation, HSUS’s Randy Lockwood, Placer SPCA Executive Director Veronica Blume, Placer County Animal Control Manager Rick Ward, and WCRO Regional Coordinator Bob Rader at the First Strike seminar.

Fig 1. First Strike Seminar. A 450-animals pr/minus/nation/nation/ness 13,000 animals.

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More Than a Dream, School Makes Humane Education a Priority

I

I imagine a school that makes it a priority to focus on violence-free studies and promotes respect for people and animals on a daily basis. It sounds great, but to date, the burdensome regulations that govern traditional public schools have prevented such ideals from materializing.

If Dr. Yale S. Wishnick, who works for the California Teachers Association, fulfills his dream with support from The HSUS and others, California will have a charter school that will make humane and environmental education a curriculum priority, rather than an exception. Representing WCRO on Dr. Wishnick’s planning committee for a violence-free charter school, WCRO Special Projects Coordinator John Dommers suggested approaches and materials that would help mold a generation of kind children who will grow up to be compassionate adults. According to Dommers, “This is one of the finest opportunities to implement humane education in classrooms that I have seen in 30 years of working for The HSUS. It was a pleasure to see more than 40 teachers, parents, and community environmental, and animal protection groups send the initial planning session.” Dommers also noted that “The charter school concept is catching on.” As of the 2001 legislative season, 37 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have signed into law charter school legislation. “What is especially nice,” says Dommers, “is that charters give teachers an opportunity to create new models without being bogged down by some of the obstacles in existence. While people in traditional schools try to be innovative, they keep running into barriers. Some are state mandates. Some are board policies and procedures. We will be working outside those constraints to streamlining humane education programs for the proposed violence-free charter school.” The HSUS will also be bringing in the resources of your youth education division, the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education, as a resource for the project.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me more information about:

Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative. 

— Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS. 

— Providing for my pet in my will and in case of emergency. 

— Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

Promoting the protection of all animals

[Signature] 

[Name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

[Daytime Phone] [Evening Phone] [E-mail]

[Date]

[NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION]

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

More Than a Dream, School Makes Humane Education a Priority

Students read KIND News, a newspaper published by The HSUS’s National Association for Humane and Environmental Education featuring articles and games designed to teach kindness and respect for all living things.

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

Humane Treatment of Pigs

The HSUS is working on a Hawaiian organization to develop a proposed legislation that would prohibit the practice of keeping pigs in small crates such as gestation and farrowing crates. Sen. Suzanne Chun-Oakland has agreed to introduce such a bill. Pigs are extremely active and inquisitive. When free to roam, they spend much of their day enthusiastically snuffling, nibbling, and manipulating any object that enters their territories. Social contact is extremely important to pigs. They play and seek out and enjoy close contact with each other. More and more communities are outraged not only by the treatment of pigs, but also by the takeover of farming by industrial agriculture and the negative impacts on environmental quality, communities, and food production practices.

This bill will address what is perhaps the most inhumane method of production: the use of the gestation crate. Sows spend the majority of their lives in these crates, barely larger than their bodies, with concrete or metal-slatted floors on which they can only take a step or two backward or forward. They must eat, sleep, and eliminate in the same small space. This practice has been outlawed in other countries such as the United Kingdom and Sweden, but continues to be the principle housing method on hog factory farms in the United States.

What can you do? Write a letter of support to Sen. Suzanne Chun-Oakland, State Capitol, Honolulu, HI 96814. Please send a copy to our office.

Cockfighting

A new cockfighting ordinance has been signed into law by Honolulu Mayor Jerome Harris. The new law sets minimum fines and raises maximum fines for the manufacture, possession, or possession of the sharp implements known as gaffs or slashers that are attached to the legs of fighting roosters. The City and County of Honolulu, where the ordinance has force, covers the entire island of Oahu.

Exotic Animals

There is a strong movement throughout the state to prohibit euthanasia of shelter animals by the use of gas chambers, decomposition chambers, gas shot, or other inhumane methods. A soon-to-be-proposed bill would require that only sodium pentobarbital injection could be used. WCRO is now forming a coalition of humane organizations throughout the state on this issue and will seek a sponsor for a bill to eliminate inhumane and outdated methods of euthanasia.

Esoteric Animals

WCRO is working with animal advocates in Clark and Nye counties on the introduction of ordinances to regulate possession and confinement of certain exotic animals such as lions, tigers, and other large carnivores.

California

Regulate traveling circuses and carnivals. Sen. Gloria Romero introduced S.B. 1210 last session, a bill to regulate traveling circuses and carnivals with animals that perform in the state. If passed, this bill will require additional information concerning the handlers, trainers, and the history of any animals involved in a public safety incident. It also would require a submitted plan for capturing escaped animals.

According to the Animal Protection Institute, since 1990, captive felines have been responsible for at least 73 human attacks worldwide and one-third of those attacks resulted in fatal injuries. Since 1990, captive elephants were responsible for 43 human deaths and more than 100 injuries worldwide. Through this bill, local government officials will have advanced knowledge and can better prepare for what may be a potential problem.

What can you do? Please write or contact Sen. Romero’s office in support of this bill: State Capitol, Room 4062. Sacramento, CA 95814; phone 916-445-1418; fax 916-445-0485.

Pro-friendliness license plate: Sen. Jack O’Connell introduced S.B. 1425 to provide car owners with the option of a special animal-friendly license plate. Several specialty license plates are currently available in California that fund myriad programs, including those that benefit the arts, children, and the environment. O’Connell’s proposed plates would help address the problem of overpopulation.

For an initial fee of $50, car owners will receive a license plate that includes the image of a dog and cat on it. Proceeds will be used to provide free and reduced-cost spay/neuter services throughout California. Fourteen other states have laws allowing citizens to buy special license plates to benefit animals with most of the proceeds going to support spay/neuter programs. “These personalized, animal-friendly license plates will be a win-win situation for both the animals and the people of California,” stated WCRO’s Robert Reder. “Funds generated will help decrease the horrific amount of unwanted animals who must be euthanized each year because there are simply more cats and dogs than there are homes for them.”

WCRO Regional News Spring 2002

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

WCRO Regional News Spring 2002

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
By Eric Sakach
Director of the West Coast Regional Office

Sentences in Horse Shooting Case a Disappointment

In February, District Judge Michael Griffin sentenced the three men accused of a shooting rampage that left dozens of wild horses dead in the hills near Virginia City, Nevada, and angered people across the nation. Judge Griffin sentenced former Marines Scott Brendle, 24, and Darien Brock, 23, both of Reno, to just 60 days in jail following their arrests. Anthony Merlino, 23, also of Reno, received a one-year probation sentence. In addition, Brendle and Brock were each ordered to pay $2,000 fine, and Merlino was ordered to pay a $1,000 fine. Each man must also perform 100 hours of community service and pay $500 in restitution.

The imposition of the less-than-harsh sentences is an immense disappointment to us and was largely the result of plea agreements made in January in which Brendle and Brock pleaded no contest to single gross misdemeanor counts of killing or maiming an animal. Merlino pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor count of disturbing the peace. The judge could have imposed six months in jail for Merlino, but he chose not to.

This case leaves me feeling sorry not only for the animals who were killed for no other apparent reason than to satisfy a depraved sense of personal amusement, but also for the people of Nevada who must feel some sense of embarrassment over the inadequacies of their laws.

Trainer Acquitted in Elephant Abuse Case

In December, a Santa Clara County jury decided that star circus trainer Mark Gebel did not abuse an elephant when the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus opened in San Jose last August. Gebel was accused of injuring a 33-year-old female elephant with a hooked stick called an ankus as a group of elephants headed toward the arena for a grand finale on August 25. WCRO’s Bob Reder, who met with officials from the Santa Clara Valley District Attorney’s Office to assist with case preparation and arranging expert testimony, was later quoted in the media as saying, “Despite the verdict, the trial helped raise awareness about the treatment of animals in circuses.”

Contacting HSUS

Write:
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Call:
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Promoting the protection of all animals

Animal Cruelty Study Released

The HSUS, as part of its First Strike campaign, has released the findings of a year-long study on animal cruelty in the United States. Results from the study show that an extremely high number of intentional cruelty cases were committed by male teens under the age of 18. The research also shows that a large number of cases of intentional animal cruelty also involved some form of family violence, whether domestic violence, child abuse, or elder abuse.

The HSUS is the first organization to conduct a national study examining the prevalence of human violence as it relates to animal cruelty incidents. The HSUS seeks to turn the nation’s attention to the connection between cruelty toward animals and violence toward people (see article on page 5).

The HSUS compiled information from more than 1,600 high-profile animal cruelty cases nationwide that occurred between January and December of 2000. Reports came from well-documented sources. Of these cases, more than 900 involved intentional violence toward animals. The balance consisted of cruelty resulting from neglect.

This April, we release the second study on cruelty cases from 2001. To receive copies of both reports, call toll-free 1-888-213-0956, or send an e-mail request to FirstStrike@hsus.org.