HSUS Sues to Restore La Jolla Seal Barrier

The HSUS filed a motion for a temporary restraining order to immediately stop the harassment and injury of harbor seals at a small section of San Diego's beachfront. You can read about WCRO's ongoing efforts to protect the seals in the spring 2004 and fall 2004 issues of the “WCRO Regional News.”

In February the HSUS filed suit against the Mayor and City Council of San Diego, challenging the City's decision to remove a guideline rope and advisory signs at Casa Beach (also referred to as Children's Pool beach), which had kept visitors a distance from the 90-200 seals who inhabit the beach, allowing them to thrive and turn Casa Beach into a major tourist destination. Soon after the City Council ordered the removal of the ropes and advisory signs, people began approaching the seals very closely, as well as frightening, chasing, and crowding the animals off of the beach. This near constant harassment has reportedly resulted in injuries to a number of animals. Additionally, a number of seals have given birth prematurely to pups who

A seal rests in the sand at La Jolla's Casa Beach.

"Sanctuary" Horses Find Permanent Homes

In the spring 2004 “WCRO Regional News,” we reported that Slick Gardner of Buellton, California, had been charged with multiple felony and misdemeanor counts for, among other things, neglecting more than 500 horses on his 1,200-acre horse “sanctuary.”

After nearly a year of legal wrangling, Gardner pleaded no contest to animal cruelty and grand theft in a deal with prosecutors that required him to give up the several hundred horses on his ranch. In exchange for the plea, prosecutors agreed to drop 10 additional animal cruelty and check fraud charges that could have led to a 10-year prison term. As part of Gardner's plea agreement, he faced a maximum of one year in jail and $250,000 in fines and restitution fees. However, a dispute arose in October 2004. During a hearing on October 22, Superior Court Judge Art Garcia had Gardner jailed after finding it likely that he violated his probation. Up until that hearing, Gardner had been free on $50,000 bail, pending an appeal of his felony convictions. Gardner was subsequently evicted from the property. An October 29 hearing determined that Gardner had violated his probation by trying to block the removal of horses, and the judge sentenced him to 100 hours of community service. At the hearing, Gardner signed over all interest in the horses. Gardner is still appealing his conviction of animal cruelty.

Santa Barbara County Animal Services (SBCAS), several horse rescue organizations, and concerned individuals found permanent homes for most of the horses—some going as far away as Indiana. The fates of the remaining 78 stallions still on Gardner's property were now in question. This past January, HSUS's Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) gelded the stallions to facilitate their adoption. WCRO Regional Coordinator Curt Ransom assisted in handling the horses before, during, and after their surgery. The team, headed by Dr. Eric Davis, consisted of two veterinarians, several veterinary students, a licensed veterinary technician, Santa Barbara animal control officers, and an experienced wild horse handler. Return To Freedom, a wild horse sanctuary in Lompoc, California, loaned a hydraulic squeeze chute to the effort. The chute was necessary to humanely handle these untrained horses.

HSUS gave $5,000 to Return To Freedom for the feeding and care of the horses while they awaited transportation to their new homes. For information on adopting any of the remaining horses, contact our office.
ACTIVATION OF HSUS'S ENTIRE NATIONAL NETWORK

Florida's Division of Emergency Management designated The HSUS as the official agency to handle the needs of companion animals during the storms. It was the first activation of HSUS's entire national network of Disaster Animal Response Teams (DART), which are made up of experienced and highly trained volunteers who are authorized to travel in restricted areas to rescue pets. Even before the activation, The HSUS had begun establishing temporary shelters in the affected areas and working with local animal shelters and humane societies to care for the animal victims of Hurricane Charley. The first shelter to open in mid-September was the district health offices and facilities.

Our office is a very active part of DART, and our staff joined the effort within days after Hurricanes Charley and Frances hit Florida on both coasts. WCRO Regional Coordinator Curt Ransom reported to HSUS Punta Gorda compound on August 23, which was treating injured and lost animals. Punta Gorda was also the overall staging area for incoming volunteers, personnel, pet supplies, communications and animal rescue efforts throughout the state.

Ransom and HSUS Animal Sheltering Issues Director Kate Pullen worked with the Humane Society of Manatee County to oversee the temporary animal shelter in Bradenton on the Gulf Coast. This shelter, set up in an empty feed store, provided safe haven for dozens of lost and owner-surrendered animals and a well-supplied warehouse.

“Delto and Hardie counties had no permanent shelter, and their animal control officers were overworked to have a place to go with the overflow of animals they had worked so hard to rescue,” Ransom said. “Some of these officers were victims themselves but were still out helping others.”

In late September, WCRO Program Coordinator Paul Bruce, who is also a registered veterinary technician, met up with our DART at the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County in the aftermath of Hurricane Jeanne. This state-of-the-art shelter has a normal capacity of 200-250 animals, but during the hurricanes as many as 300 animals were in the shelter at any given time. Besides the normal strays and surrenders, the shelter housed as many as 100 “foster” animals. These were animals whose owners were temporarily without housing, electricity, or water because of the storms. The shelter itself suffered approximately $50,000 worth of storm damage.

Bruce helped humane officers set traps — catch missing animals, delivered food to several needy homes, assessed needs in the community, and assisted shelter staff with intake, veterinary care, and evaluation of animal victims. His quick action in making sure that a malnourished and vomiting Afghan hound got to a local veterinary hospital most likely saved the dog’s life.

Also, he was at first glance between Bruce and another local homeless victim. Bruce named the adorable beagle/jack Russell mix Vero, and she now lives with his family in Sacramento.

“The people of Florida were devastated, and many families lost everything,” Bruce said. “For most people, pets are part of the family, and I was fortunate to be able to offer some comfort by caring for their pets during this crisis.”

HSUS Disaster Services offers information to help you plan for the needs of your pets, horses, and livestock before, during, and after any disaster. Go to www.hsus.org/disaster to find it. You can also donate to The HSUS Disaster Relief Fund or learn how you can join the DART network.

ARREST MADE IN SACRAMENTO CAT BURNING

August 2004, The HSUS offered a $2,500 reward for the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for dousing a kitten with lighter fluid and setting him on fire. Though alive when he was found, the kitten had to be euthanized because of his injuries. On August 30 of last year, Jimmie Jones, a 19-year-old Del Paso resident, was arrested and charged with felony animal cruelty. Jones allegedly told witnesses that the black cat was “bad luck” before he placed it on a barbecue and set him on fire. His case is currently pending trial. The HSUS plans to pay the reward to the person who tipped police to Jones’s crimes.

The HSUS is offering rewards in the following California cases to help bring animal abusers to justice. In most instances, the reward is $2,500*. Please note that all calls regarding the rewards will be kept strictly confidential.

**Phoenix the cat was burned in Cameron Park on November 29, 2004. Anyone with information about this crime should call El Dorado County Animal Control at 530-621-7999.**

**$5,000 is offered in Sacramento blowgun attacks on ducks and cats at Miller Park Marina and Southside Park in September 2004. Call 916-808-5585 with information.**

**A cow was killed with a bow and arrow in the Sawyer's Glade area, northeast of Montague, in Shasta County. Please call 530-842-5564 or 530-926-5563 with information.**

**Fifteen ducks were shot with pellet guns in Eureka’s Sequoia Park duck pond in July of 2004. This past February 10, more ducks were found shot. Call the Eureka Police Department at 707-441-4178.**

**The HSUS and the Peninsula Humane Society have combined to offer a $3,000 reward in the case of unexplained death of two dogs at a Millbrae, California, residence on August 14, 2004. Please call 650-340-7022, ext. 602.**

**$10,000 is offered in the case involving the shooting deaths of at least five feral cats at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles last July. Call the Los Angeles County Police department at 310-328-3377.**

**Stopper the sea lion was found shot in a Napa vineyard in July 2004. Anyone with information is asked to call Ed Matlock at 707-812-4445.**

**$4,000 is offered in the case of two cats found suffocated in a plastic crate in the Bowman area of Placer County on March 15, 2004. Call Placer County Animal Control at 530-486-5548.**

**$5,000 is offered in the case of mutilation and decapitation of a rabbit in February 2004 at Davis High School in Davis, California. Call the Davis Police Department at 530-747-5400.**

*A new reward of more than $2,500 is in combination with other groups or individuals.*

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not survive.

Because the Casa Beach seals are enduring great harm during this critical breeding and pup-rearing season, The HSUS is seeking a restraining order that would require the mayor and council members to replace the protective barriers immediately. Although the seals are protected by the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act, the city has refused to take any action to protect them.

Despite our best efforts to negotiate with the mayor and city council members in good faith, they have consistently and inexplicably refused to replace the ropeline and advisory signs,” said Jonathan Lovence, vice president of animal protection litigation at The HSUS.

"The mayor and council members have left us no choice but to ask the court to order the city to protect seals during pupping season."

"Casa Beach seals and their newborn pups may be irreversibly harmed if the ropeline and advisory signs are not promptly replaced," said Dr. Naomi Rose, marine mammal scientist..."The HSUS. "Given the harassment the seals are facing on a daily basis, they could permanently abandon Casa Beach, unless the ropeline and signs are replaced."
Contra Costa Coyotes Walk a Fine Line

Coyotes in California’s Bay Area are increasingly coming into conflict with local residents. The latest incidents occurred last summer when San Jose officials began receiving numerous calls regarding missing pets and close encounters with coyotes in residential neighborhoods. Most of the calls came from the Villas of Almaden housing development, where two years ago, five coyotes were trapped and destroyed by Contra Costa County Vector Control. Under increasing public pressure, the San Jose City Council voted on an emergency ordinance to allow the use of padded, steel-jawed leg hold traps to combat the perceived threat. Though narrowly defeated, the ordinance was scheduled to come up for consideration again in late October.

At that meeting, WCR0 Program Coordinator Paul Bruce, Little Blue Society’s Mary Pagliert, and the Animal Protection Institute’s Camilla Fox joined with other animal protection groups in speaking out against the use of the traps and encouraging the council and residents to seek more humane alternatives, such as keeping pets indoors, installing fencing around livestock, and not leaving pet food or garbage accessible. By a slim six to five margin, the ordinance was again defeated.

Bay Area communities from Los Gatos to Santa Rosa have seen a recent rise in human/coyote conflicts. To find out about humane ways of dealing with wildlife conflicts, go to www.wildneighbors.org.

WCRO, RAYS on the Rez

In recent months, WCRO has journeyed often with Rural Area Veterinary Service (RAVS) teams. RAVS is the HSUS program that brings free veterinary services to underserved rural and Native American communities around the globe. Volunteer veterinary students work with experienced veterinarians to provide essential animal health services such as sterilizations and vaccinations, as well as educational programs on a variety of topics, including disease prevention and animal care.

Last year, WCRO Regional Coordinator Curt Ransom (below) traveled with the RAVS team to the Duck Valley and Duck Water reservations in Nevada. In April 2005, he again joined the team in Duck Valley and Jackpot, Nevada, and also went to Fort Hall, Idaho. In Jackpot, Ransom assisted local humane advocates in capturing cats from a feral cat colony to be spayed and neutered at the RAVS clinic.

Early this year, WCRO’s Paul Bruce joined the RAVS team in Colово, Califor­nia, where they vaccinated and sterilized 98 dogs and cats and vaccinated 200 for rabies.

Bruce is a registered veterinary technician whose medical knowledge was a great asset to the team.

Humane education is an important aspect of RAVS clinics, so the team made presentations at schools and community centers and offered tours of the clinics, which proved an ideal way of engaging students’ interest in both animal care and the RAVS program. Most importantly, regional personnel also provide teachers and other local educators with humane education materials.

The HSUS and The Fund for Animals Join Forces

The HSUS and The Fund for Animals (The Fund) officially joined forces in an unprecedented and historic combination on January 1, 2005. This is the first time in the history of the animal protection movement that two national, high-profile organizations have united in order to advance their common mission.

“The groups have decided to join forces not out of necessity but because we believe we can do more to help animals together than we can do operating separately,” said David O. Webers, M.D., chair of The HSUS board of directors.

The two groups plot to operate their advocacy programs under the banner of The HSUS, building a new external affairs department to focus on major defining issues such as fur, sport hunting, factory farming, and malicious animal cruelty, including animal fighting. They will pursue these goals with a multifaceted approach involving investigations, litigation, communications, and professional campaigning.

“Our new campaign, we will create meaningful social change for animals,” said Terri Pacelle, president and CEO of The HSUS. “Our goal is nothing short of a kinder, more compassionate society where we join with our animals that we are not abused in either in random acts of cruelty or in institutional settings, such as industrial factory farms.”

Legislative Update

For up-to-date reports of proposed legislation in California, Hawaii, and Nevada, go to WCRO’s Web page at www.hsus.org/wcro. Click on the “WCRO Legislative Activities” link and then on your state.

California

Animal fighting penalties. S.B. 156 increases the penalty for a second or subsequent violation of the animal fighting statute from a misdemeanor (punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for up to one year) to a felony punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for up to three years.

Internet hunting. S.B. 1028 makes it unlawful for any person to take birds or mammals—located both in state and out of state—by means of computer-assisted remote hunting.

Eating. H.B. 309 designates marine reserves encompassing a minimum of 20 percent of the state’s marine waters around each of the main Hawaiian Islands.

Nevada

Vicious dogs and animal fighting. A.B. 318 provides that a dog is vicious if he kills or maims another domesticated animal and authorizes the destruction of a dog found to be vicious. The bill also prohibits the possession of a bird or animal with the intent to fight the bird or animal.

Two CA Legislators Get Awards

Two California legislators have been honored with legislative achievement awards from The HSUS for outstanding efforts to pass laws that protect animals.

California Assemblyman Paul Koretz sponsored and passed A.B. 1857, which banned the declawing of large cats such as tigers and lions, the first such law in the country. Special recognition goes to Koretz’ chief of staff Theresa Stark for her tireless lobbying for A.B. 1857. Assemblyman Koretz has been a long time champion of the animals. He sponsored a passing resolution to make Hollywood an animal-cruelty-free zone, and in 2003 he sponsored bills to ban pound seizure and bear hunting. While these bills did not pass, they were excellent tools for education, and we hope to see them again.

California Sen. John Burton sponsored and championed the passage of S.B. 1520, the bill to outlaw the force-feeding of ducks and geese for the production of pate foie gras. This legislation also bans the sale of foie gras that is produced in such a manner. The law goes into effect in 2012 to give the producers time to adapt to the new requirements or shut down. This is the first law in the country to ban this type of abuse.

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

Please send me information about:

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

Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency

Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS

Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS

Giving The HSUS a gift of stock

Promoting the protection of all animals

www.hsus.org/wcro. Click on the WCRO Program Coordinator and then on your state.

Support.
Director’s Report

By Eric Sakach
Director of the West Coast Regional Office

Helping Animals Is Easier Than You Think

Hardly a week goes by that I don’t hear from someone wanting to know what he or she can do to help animals. And anyone who knows me knows that I’m never short on suggestions.

Generally, one of the first things I’ll suggest is becoming a member of The HSUS. The simple act of becoming a member (or renewing your membership) with The HSUS is possibly the easiest way to demonstrate your concern while supporting our efforts to help companion animals and wildlife, as well as animals on farms and used in research. A membership with The HSUS will help fund our educational, legislative, investigative, and outreach projects throughout the region, across the U.S., and around the world.

If you’re already a member, why not consider making a memorial donation in honor of a pet, friend, or relative? You can through our Kindred Spirits program. And if you’d like to contribute in a more structured way, our planned giving office has suggestions about estate planning, annuities, and even gifts of stock that can help avoid capital gains taxes.

While our Urban Wildlife Sanctuary Program can show you how to create a habitat for your wild neighbors right in your own backyard, our Wildlife Land Trust can help you if you have land that you would like to preserve as a lasting wildlife habitat.

If you’re already a member and you want to be more active, try speaking out for animals. Our Web site www.hsus.org always has action alerts about national, state, or county matters that affect animals.

Are you interested in learning more about the legislative process and how you can become an important part of it? The Humane Activist Network is HSUS’s national grassroots network of people who work to pass animal protection legislation. Your participation will help make the Network a success. By working together, we can amplify our voice for animals and make a real difference.

So you see, it’s easy to help animals. All you need to do is ask.

Making your yard more friendly to wildlife is just one of many easy ways to help animals.

Training on a Large Scale

On a daily basis, animal care and control officers confront cases that involve numerous neglected and abused animals. These always difficult situations can involve hundreds of animals of multiple species on a single property. At HSUS’s Animal Care Expo 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia, a day-long workshop, Large-Scale Animal Investigations for Smaller Agencies and Budgets, covered many of the legal and logistical aspects of handling a difficult multi-animal investigation and rescue. This vital training was designed to empower smaller agencies to address cases that are not normally handled due to their overwhelming nature. Attendees learned how a small or even unsheltered agency can process animals as evidence for cruelty law enforcement. They were shown the necessary on-site documentation—including photographs, paperwork, videos, and sketching skills—essential for a successful cruelty rescue or impound.

Also, options were explored for prosecuting the case without physically impounding all or any of the animals. Other novel concepts discussed included creative enforcement and sentencing and sheltering at multiple agencies.

If your agency is interested in forming a local task force for disaster events and investigating hoarding, livestock, and animal fighting cases, please contact our office.

Contacting HSUS

Write:
HSUS West Coast Regional Office
P.O. Box 417220
Sacramento, CA 95841-7220

Call:
916-344-1710

Fax:
916-344-1808

Web Page:
www.hsus.org/wcro

Promoting the protection of all animals