Our prediction: The winter season of 1992–93 will mark the most critical moment in the fight against fur. In years to come, we will look back on 1992–93 and say, “That was the year that made the difference. That was the year we won.”

Or will we have to look back in defeat and say, “That was the year we lost”?

When, in 1988, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) launched The Shame of Fur Campaign, exposing the cruel truth about
few, people in record numbers rejected fur forever. Fur sales plummeted as sales after sales closed. The end of the decade saw record-low fur sales, worldwide, the market faltered.

But now, incredibly, the fur industry has rallied. "Stores Gear for Full Gains as Fur Trend Surges," reads the headline on the front page of a June 1992 issue of Fur World, a fur-industry publication. Sales of fur-trimmed items are up, and the fur industry appears confident that sales of all-fur garments will soon rise as well.

The fur industry is also launching a shrewd advertising campaign to counter our efforts to stop the horrifying cruelty of fur. Shrewed, because it diverts attention from the truth—the matter of choice—a personal decision to stop the horrifying cruelty of the fur industry has rallied. "Stores Surges," reads the headline on the front page of a June 1992 issue of Fur World, "surging a shrewd advertising campaign, the fur industry hopes to sidestep the issues of cruelty and exploitation... a clever ploy! One ad campaign even allies the fur industry with conservation and research designed to "improve conditions for fur-bearing animals."

The HSUS has received more than two thousand trapping case reports each year, and has made it clear that fur is no longer on their shopping list. But now our hard-won achievement is in jeopardy. The fur industry has hung a success—on—and is clawing its way back, slipping fur back in to the mainstream with sales of fur-trimmed items and launching advertising campaigns to promote fur sales.

Fur sales are inching back up, and the fur industry is planning a big push for this year's fur season, in the hopes of fanning a backlash flame against those who choose compassion over cruelty.

By focusing on the issue of choice, the fur industry hopes to sidestep the issues of cruelty and exploitation... a clever ploy! One ad campaign even allies the fur industry with conservation and research designed to "improve conditions for fur-bearing animals."

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wildlife mangled by traps. Endangered or threatened species, such as bald eagles, also fall victim to traps. It's a cruel and enormous waste—for the "luxury" of a fur coat.

THE FUR INDUSTRY—FIGHTING BACK

Despite these inescapable facts, the fur industry persists in finding ways to twist the truth and deceive the public. The industry has insisted, for example, that trapping is necessary for wildlife management and disease control. In truth, wild-animal populations naturally self-regulate in accordance with available food and habitat. Also, there is no evidence that trapping controls diseases, such as rabies, that may threaten humans. In fact, evidence suggests that trapping worsens the problem! Yet trappers use such scare tactics to try to con the public into believing that trappers serve a useful purpose and are motivated by concern for wildlife, when in reality most are motivated by the money they receive for each pelt.

Demand for fashionable pelts also contributes to the decline of entire species. At its March 1992 meeting the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species placed the South American Geoffroy's cat on Appendix I, prohibiting international trade in products from these cats. Demand for these animals’ pelts was noted as a significant contributing factor to this species’ decline. How concerned for the environment and wildlife can the fur industry be, when it threatens the survival of entire species?

Because the fur industry hasn’t managed to counter charges that the fur trade causes enormous suffering and harms the environment, the industry is now claiming that opposition to fur denies Americans their rightful freedom of choice. Perhaps you’ve seen the advertisement headlines: "Fur... Because It’s My Fashion Choice," "Fur... My Choice, Naturally." It’s all part of a new advertising blitz by the fur industry, an industry that hopes to foster—and capitalize on—consumers’ confusion.

How much longer must animals suffer and die for garments that cater only to human vanity?

The HSUS is committed to ensuring that the truth gets out—and that we don’t lose the ground we’ve gained against this trade in torture (see sidebar, "The Coming Crisis"). We intend to keep fighting on the side of compassion with our own advertisements, billboards, and media announcements. But we need your help to make our important campaign even more successful. We know that consumers have the power to stop the suffering and cruelty involved in fur. But we must strike now, at this critical moment.

- Be aware of all fur—fur trim, fur accessories, fur used as lining. The fur industry is trying to survive the declining sales of coats by foisting fur in other forms on the public. Don't be fooled! All fur hurts!
- Help us track the innocent victims of trapping through HSUS Trapping Case Reports, from which we compile information critical to cities and towns trying to enact trapping bans. Fill out a report for every case of unintended trapping you see, to help us document the numbers of nontarget animals who suffer in traps each year. Pass out extra forms to veterinarians and local humane societies. For four (free) blank Trapping Case Report forms (they may be copied), send a stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope to Trapping Case Report, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, The Humane Society of the U.S., 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.
- Tell stores that sell fur—in any form—that you oppose the selling of fur products. Even stores that have closed their fur salons may still sell fur in other forms. Be on the lookout! Complain to the producers of television shows and movies that glamorize furs. Write in protest to contests, charities, and companies that use furs as prizes or promotional items. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper objecting to fur advertisements and exposing the truth about fur.
- Support retailers that refuse to sell fur. Let them know you support them—the fur industry often targets such retailers in massive letter-writing campaigns that criticize them for their stance.
- Use the enclosed reply card to order reprints of this Close-Up Report. Distribute them widely. Order "Fur Shame" stickers and put them on the envelopes of all your correspondence; stick them on fur advertisements in magazines and newspapers and mail these ads back to the publications in which they appeared.
- Finally, help The HSUS end the fur industry’s war on animals by helping us spread the word about this brutal trade. Your tax-deductible contribution will help us get the message out at this critical moment—and help us in our work on behalf of all animals who suffer at the hands of humans. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.