HUMANITARIANS WIN BIG IN CALIFORNIA; COUNTIES MAY BAN STEEL-JAW LEGHOLD TRAP

On September 3, 1987 humanitarians unexpectedly won a big victory for animals in a ruling by the State Attorney General's Office which concluded that any county may pass a law banning the use of steel-jaw leghold traps where necessary to protect public health and safety. The opinion, issued by Attorney General John Van De Kamp, is expected to spark debate over the need for these cruel devices in individual counties.

Ranching interests and trappers' groups oppose banning the traps. The California Department of Fish and Game, which sought the attorney general's opinion, opposes counties passing their own ordinances and has indicated local bans will be challenged on a case-by-case basis.

According to WCRO Director Char Drennon, "The results of studies have shown the steel-jaw leghold trap is nonselective, inhumane, and ineffective in preventing disease or controlling predators. Each year, thousands of pets are maimed or killed in these devices."

Humans are also at risk. Two years ago, a 14-year-old boy lost four toes in a Minnesota accident. In another incident, a four-year-old Maryland girl accidentally put her hand in a trap and suffered crushing fractures and tendon damage that required reconstructive surgery. A man in Maine, another in New York, and a hunter in Minnesota, all unknowingly activated traps and sustained severe injuries. And, in (continued on page 2)
A CHRISTMAS STORY

It was just two days before Christmas and the bustling sounds of holiday travel filled the air around Sacramento's Metro Airport. Planes were landing and taking off, jet engines howling, rushing travelers to their destinations. Automobiles were speeding along the highways, hurrying the non-stop, the non-stop, the non-stop... indeed, it was not for kindhearted Norm Metcalf, a Sacramento electrician, the dog might have perished.

"I had parked my truck beside the freeway near Sacramento Metro Airport to watch the holiday planes come and go," Metcalf said later. "And I felt a dog struggling to free itself. I didn't think I could reach it, and there were no people around to help."

Veterinarian Joy Miller examined the dog and determined that the leg was not broken. The dog's front left leg had been caught in a steel-jaw trap. Indeed, were it not for kindhearted Norm Metcalf, a Sacramento electrician, the dog might have perished.

"I was really surprised when Kurt walked in," Metcalf said later. "I didn't expect anyone to come, or even care."

And Metcalf and the rescued dog, subsequently named "Kurt," received considerable attention from the Sacramento news media.

The extensive rescue efforts prompted the WCRD to be besieged with inquiries from possible owners of the lost dogs and offers of adoption, and by citizens outraged that trapping was occurring in the county.

What's happened so far? Both dogs were adopted by local humane organizations. One dog, an elderly female, was spayed and neutered. The male dog was spayed and neutered. His happy ending are essential for any Christmas story.

The California Legislature passed several bills in 1988 that were signed into law. The WCRD had worked on all of them, arranging meetings with state legislators and testifying on others.

**AB 128—Assembly Member Jack O'Connell's bill on taxing the money being carried in the back of a truck unless it is safely enclosed or secured. (Exempts farm animals and ranch dogs in most situations.)

AB 1167—Senator Milton Marks: allowed disabled persons in public rental housing (housing owned by a state agency or local government) to have up to two pets. Elderly persons in this type of housing already have this right.

AB 1189—Assembly Member Bill Bradley: sets up an animal trust fund, supported by contributions, for grants to shelters that care for wild animals in captivity, particularly retired performing animals.

AB 1475—Assembly Member Marian La Follette: raises the penalty for cruelty to one's own animal from a misdemeanor to a possible felony, making it the same as the present penalty for cruelty to another's animal.

AB 1560—Assembly Member Phillip Kieberg: sets standards such as adequate food and veterinary care for all rental animals.

SB 10—Senator Alan Robbins: requires public animal shelters to maintain lost and found pets. Elderly persons in this type of housing already have this right.

It is obvious from experience that no one is likely to be released for research purposes. WCRD sent information and case law to the Fresno County District Attorney's Office which is handling the case. "I fail to see any comparison between spectators at a cockfighting event and those attending a bank robbery, an analogy the attorney who filed the writ used, according to Spectators" (continued from page 1)

WCRD Investigator Eric Sakach, who provided information and case law to the Fresno County District Attorney's Office, which is handling the case, "is the possibility of felony charges. The statute of limitations for felony crimes is three years. The statute of limitations for misdemeanor crimes is one year. Therefore, it is possible for these crimes to be prosecuted after the statute of limitations can give in the case. Members may wish to voice their concerns on this matter by writing to Governor Deukmejian, State Capitol, Sacramento, California 95814.

"He used to be gentle with cats and even slept with them."

In January, District Attorney Massini advised WCRD's Sakach that her office was still investigating the possibility of felony charges. The statute of limitations for felony crimes is three years. In January, District Attorney Massini advised WCRD's Sakach that her office was still investigating the possibility of felony charges. The statute of limitations for felony crimes is three years. The statute of limitations for misdemeanor crimes is one year. Therefore, it is possible for these crimes to be prosecuted after the statute of limitations can give in the case. Members may wish to voice their concerns on this matter by writing to Governor Deukmejian, State Capitol, Sacramento, California 95814.

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TRAINING ONGOING ON WEST COAST

In October 1987, Las Vegas was the site of the 35th session of The HSUS Animal Control Academy. Designed especially for animal control officers, humane agents, and others working in animal care, this session was hosted by Clark County Animal Control. Instructors included HSUS staff and leading authorities in law enforcement, animal handling, communications, and shelter management.

The Marin Humane Society in Novato will again be the locale of the California State Humane Officers Training Academy and Advanced Academy in early 1988. The basic academy is an intensive (65 hours) study of legal procedures and law enforcement with special focus on laws protecting animals. The curriculum includes 12 hours in animal care as required by state law for humane officer appointment. “The Advanced Academy offers specialized training in the field of investigation, including practical exercises that closely resemble crime scenes that officers may encounter in the field,” said WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach, who serves as a member of the Academy faculty. The academies are accredited by the Northern California Criminal Justice Training and Education Center, Santa Rosa Junior College. For additional information, please contact: Rick Johnson, Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd., Novato, California 94947.

PIGEON FLAP

Throughout the fall and winter months, WCRO received more than our usual number of complaints and inquiries regarding problems caused by excessive concentrations of pigeons and methods to control them.

While The HSUS understands the concern of merchants and city officials, and recognizes that control measures are sometimes necessary when bird concentrations pose health hazards, or droppings become offensive, many measures used to control their numbers are inhumane and ineffective.

“Methods that involve killing, narcotizing, trapping, or physical removal are among the least effective and may actually be counterproductive,” says WCRO Investigator Eric Sakach. “Studies have shown that bird poisoning programs actually produce favorable conditions for breeding and may ultimately result in even more birds than before.”

The HSUS advocates a common sense approach to bird control problems and, upon written request, will provide resource information to community leaders about humane and effective methods of managing birds.

Studies have shown that cruel bird poisoning programs actually stimulate breeding by pigeons and lead to increases in their populations.

Reflect for a moment....

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States.

Your will can provide for animals after you’re gone.

Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the Society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

Please send will information to

Name_________________________
Address_____________________
City________________________ State_________
ZIP code____________________

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/General Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

The Regional Report is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States West Coast Regional Office 1713 J Street, Suite 211 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 447-3295 Charlene Drennon, Director

The HSUS West Coast Regional Office serves California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. All contributions made to The HSUS West Coast Regional Office will be used for regional purposes and are tax deductible.