For many years round up of wild ponies on an island just off the peninsula shared by Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland has been monitored by The HSUS. Sponsored by a local volunteer fire department of the Delmarva peninsula, the proceeds from the sale of these ponies are used to support their activities. The ponies are rounded up on Assateague Island and then made to swim across to Chincoteague Island where the famous auction is held.

For the first time since The HSUS began observing and offering recommendations, it is felt that the animals are now being handled in a humane manner. Critical of the practices and procedures employed in previous years, The HSUS has worked together with other experts in equine management and handling to correct many instances of abuse of the animals. "I feel that had it not been for the efforts of the many concerned humanitarians, the abuse of the Chincoteague ponies would have continued," said Phil Steward, HSUS investigator who was on the scene this past August. No foals were transported in trunks of cars or back seats this year, animals were not beaten with boards or whipped with bull-whips, foals under the age of three weeks were not auctioned, nor were foals that were not able to eat grass and hay sold—all of which had been the case in past years.

HSUS plans to continue to monitor this annual event and will take immediate action to insure the humane handling and treatment of the animals.