A Serene Scene For the Holidays

Wildlife artist Robert Seabeck's elegant swan carries HSUS members' holiday greeting to loved ones this year. Each package of 20 cards and envelopes costs $8. The greeting reads, "May all creatures of the Earth know the peace and joy of this season." Last year's card sold out early, so order soon—supplies are limited. (Cards are available after August 1, 1992.)

Greeting Card Order Form

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td>92A Swan</td>
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Shipping and Handling $3.00

Total $8.00

Method of payment: [ ] Check [ ] VISA [ ] MasterCard (check one)

Acct. # ____________ Exp. Date ____________

Name ________ Address ________

City State Zip

Signature ____________

All orders must be prepaid and will be filled while supplies last. Make all checks payable to The HSUS Greeting Cards, 3100 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. To ship UPS, please provide a street address or use the returnable label provided on the back of this magazine. Allow four to six weeks for delivery.

Enlarge Your Circle of Friends

New from The HSUS is a colorful T-shirt featuring the endearing art of Mimi Yang Olsen. Two gentle dogs and three contented cats cluster near a spacious window, surrounded by beloved playthings. Made of white preshrunk cotton, the shirt is available in small, medium, large, and extra large at $12.00 each. Message reads: The Humane Society of the United States. Great for Christmas!

Enlarged by PHK

TRAPPING IN THE NINETIES

WHO PAYS THE PRICE?

In December 1983 two passersby found Lucky, a German shepherd, dehydrated and near death, caught in a steel-jaw leghold trap. Emergency veterinary care saved Lucky's life, but not his leg. Other pets and wild animals are less fortunate: each year millions of animals suffer and die in steel-jaw leghold traps, conibear traps, and snares.

Many people are unaware that traps may be amputated as a result of severe injury. Terror-stricken animals have tried desperately to free themselves, injuring their jaws as they gnawed at the traps in an attempt to free their limbs. (Trappers sometimes report that they have found animals asleep in traps, but such animals are, more likely, exhausted from their struggle or in shock.) Some animals free themselves only by chewing off their own limbs. Earlier this year a small dog in Memphis, Tennessee, was found with broken bones and a missing foot; a steel-jaw leghold trap was later found in a neighbor's backyard with the dog's foot still in the trap. In August 1985 a four-month-old kitten was caught in a steel-jaw leghold trap; she chewed off her paw to escape. Other animals suffer in traps for hours, days, even weeks. Those not found in time succumb to dehydration, starvation, exposure, or attack by other animals. Yet trappers claim that traps rarely hold animals in place.

Trapping case reports collected by The HSUS demonstrate the incredible danger that traps pose to pets. In the last six years, such reports received by The HSUS revealed nearly 600 injuries of nontarget animals, almost all of whom were pets. Cats and dogs were caught in nearly equal numbers, and more than half the cases resulted in permanent injuries. Proportionately, more pets are found dead in conibear traps; leghold traps are more commonly associated with serious injuries such as broken bones, broken teeth, and loss of limb(s). Yet these statistics belie their importance, because they are only a minute fraction of the millions of injuries suffered each year.
In 1990 a cat was brought to the Marshall County (Indiana) Humane Society with his paw caught in a leghold trap. The cat had dragged the trap to a barn, where he was discovered. He was later euthanatized. According to the trapping case reports submitted to The HSUS, many such incidents occur every year.

and only the tip of the iceberg of pain and suffering experienced by pets and other nontarget animals. The reality is that each of these animals represents a tragedy of pain for the pet, and for the owner.

The Truth about Trapping

The ROMANTIC VISION OF THE RUGGED outdoorsman trapping for his food and clothing bears no resemblance to today's reality. No one in our society currently needs to wear fur for warmth. Trapping is done for money.

Within recent years the demand for fur has declined considerably. In 1986 an estimated 17 million fur-bearing animals were trapped in the United States for the fur market; in 1990 3.8 million fur-bearing animals were trapped—a 77 percent decline. Still, pelts continue to have value because many consumers—unaware of or indifferent to the suffering behind every fur coat, toy, or bit of trim—continue to buy such items.

Despite the claims of its proponents, trapping does not reduce disease in wildlife populations. There is evidence, in fact, that it increases the incidence of diseases such as rabies. Studies have shown that when trappers reduce a species' population in an area, other members of the species are more likely to migrate to that area. Efforts to establish territories in new areas may result in increased fighting among animals, increasing the chances of disease transmission. Further, those with an interest in promoting trapping sometimes intentionally relocate animals. Trappers are suspected to have started the current Northeast rabies epidemic by transplanting infected animals from Florida to West Virginia to increase the raccoon population. (Today the rabies threat to humans has been virtually eliminated. The best protection against the disease has proved to be widespread vaccination of dogs and cats against rabies and reasonable caution when in the presence of wildlife.)

Trappers and wildlife managers also claim that trapping resolves conflicts between humans and wildlife, such as those arising from raccoon raids on trash cans or gardens or coyote predation of sheep or confined poultry. However, nonlethal alternatives—beginning with tolerance of some losses to wildlife and including use of fencing and other exclusion devices, live (humane) traps, and sheep-guarding dogs—can solve such problems.

Unfortunately, traps such as legholds, conibears, and snares are readily available to anyone who thinks they offer a solution to a problem with wildlife. In Cambridge, Ohio, a man illegally set a conibear trap in an alley in order to "catch whatever was getting into his trash"; on February 21, 1992, his trap caught his neighbor's dog, Sadie. It took five men to release Sadie from the trap. She died the following day from internal injuries. (Cruelly charges have been brought against the trapper.) In 1990, in Gladsden, Alabama, a man was found guilty of cruelty to animals (and fined $25) for setting a steel-jaw leghold trap under his house. The trap was set to catch mice, but it caught a gray house cat instead. The cat struggled in the trap for a full day before he was rescued; his hind leg had to be amputated.

Trappers also contend that traps catch only targeted furbearers, such as raccoons, muskrats, and coyotes. They ignore or deny the fact that an estimated five million nontarget animals—including dogs, cats, hawks, ducks, and squirrels—are trapped in the United States each year. A study by Thomas N. Tomsa, Jr., and James E. Forbes entitled "Coyote Depredation Control in New York: An Integrated Approach" funded by the federal Animal Damage Control program found that, for every coyote trapped, as many as 10.8 nontarget animals were trapped.

Changing the Laws

MORE THAN SIXTY-FIVE COUNTRIES have banned the steel-jaw leghold trap, and the European Community recently voted to ban the trap as of 1995. Yet the leghold trap continues in wide use in the United States, which leads the world in the number of animals trapped each year. Many U.S. groups have tried to make their neighborhoods and towns trap-free; some have succeeded. After two cats were caught in leghold traps in Michigan City, Indiana, residents worked to pass a town ordinance that prohibits use of the traps. In California in 1990, investigator Kurt Lapham of The HSUS's West Coast Regional Office brought the trapping issue before the Sacramento City Council after his cat was caught in a steel-jaw leghold trap. The council unanimously adopted an ordinance that outlaws the traps.

For a year a small grass-roots group in Hudson, New Hampshire, pushed for a ban on steel-jaw leghold traps. On July 22, 1991, the town council unanimously passed such an ordinance. Until all states take the responsibility for protecting citizens and their pets, as well as wildlife, from trapping, it will be up to individuals to press for bans. Meanwhile, pet owners should keep pets under supervision at all times. Inspect your property, particularly large tracts of land—traps are often set illegally on private property. Check with animal-control agencies and neighbors to see if traps have been found in the community. Ask people whose pets have been caught in traps to contact The HSUS for a trapping case report form. Filing reports helps us in the battle to ban traps throughout the country.

Above: a fawn is one of many nontarget animals caught in traps every year. Right: in 1990 an unfortunate cat in suburban Kentwood, Michigan, stumbled upon four steel-jaw leghold traps set in a square. The animal tripped three of the four traps and had to be euthanatized.

FUR FACTS

FOR DECADES THE HSUS HAS Fought trapping. We have not won the war but we have won some of the battles. In 1986, a good year for the fur industry, 17 million furbearers were trapped in the United States alone. In the following years, consumer demand for fur filtered: in 1990 the figure dropped to an estimated 3.8 million animals. Although many people believe that trapping has either been abolished or is rarely practiced, trapping is on the increase once again. Consumer demand for fur-trimmed coats and other fur items has created a new market for trapped fur. It is estimated that for every furbearer trapped, two unintended victims (including pets and members of endangered species) are injured or killed.

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