PROTECTING WILD BIRDS

In the last decade, more than seven million exotic birds such as parrots, macaws, cockatoos, and mynahs were snatched from their forest homes in Latin America, Africa, and Asia and imported into the United States for sale as pets. More than one million birds died during transport to this country or in quarantine after arrival. These figures exclude the additional millions of birds that died prior to export from their home countries. This legal trade in wild birds bound for the United States makes smuggling of prohibited species that much easier, and therefore causes even more suffering and death (see the article on page 14). The wild bird trade is pushing many species to the brink of extinc-
tion. Tragically, the importation of wild birds is completely unnecessary; birds hatched and raised in captivity are readily available to pet suppliers and make better pets than do wild-caught birds.

The HSUS and more than two hundred other animal-protection and conservation organizations support The Wild Bird Protection Act (H.R. 2540, S. 1293). This act provides maximum protection for wild birds that may be imported for captive-breeding purposes. It also provides citizens and organizations with the right to sue those who would violate it and specifically does not preempt state legislation (such as that in New York and New Jersey) that offers birds greater protection than it does. It will require the marking of birds hatched and raised in captivity, thus making it easier for consumers to identify captive-bred birds.

Another bill, weaker and therefore unacceptable to The HSUS, is supported by the pet industry. That bill proposes continuing wild-bird importation for another five years. In July, at our request, Rep. Robert Torricelli of California, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, wrote to Presi-
dent Clinton: "I am concerned that the rehabilitation center in that country. In his letter, Representative Torricelli asked President Clinton to "continue to lend your support to the efforts of the center and... ensure that birds are not removed from facilities where they are currently housed until they can be transferred to the rehabilitation center" at the zoo in Tegucigalpa. We thank Rep. Torricelli for his efforts.

SENATE HEARING ON HORSES HELD

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tage, testified at an oversight hearing before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies. They strongly recommended that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) develop criteria for humane, non-invasive fertility-control methods, when such control is needed in managing wild-horse populations. Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, who acted as chair-
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Senator Reid's state is home to 80 percent of the nation's wild horses, but it receives less than 20 percent of the funds appropriated for their protec-
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was represented at hearings on this bill by testimony recommending that the center to be established under this policy be located at the Smithsonian Institution, which already has a respected research program, and that the Congress ensure the success of the program by authorizing appropriation of adequate funds. These bills appear to be moving toward votes in the House and Senate.

FISHING-METHODS FUNDS APPROVED

The U.S. Senate has approved an appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Commerce that includes $8 million for a study to develop fishing methods that will provide an alternative to the dolphin-deadly purse- seine-net method now used by fishermen in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean. Since the House of Representatives' funding bill does not include a similar appropriation, The HSUS will be pushing for the Senate version to be adopted when house and senate members meet to work out the differences between the two bills.

OTHER 1992 APPROPRIATIONS

The HSUS has encouraged members of Congress to approve appropriations for the establishment of a National Organics Standards Board, a first step toward the implementation of a program for labeling organically produced food. The Senate agriculture appropriations bill for fiscal year 1992 earmarks at least $250,000 for this board. We will ask the appropriate representatives to keep this money in the compromise version of the bill when they meet with senators to discuss it.

Both the Senate and House appropriations bills cover health programs. These bills contain language that encourages use of alternatives to animal testing, when such tests are available, by the National Toxicology Program (NTP), an interagency program that validates new toxicology tests. The Senate bill specifies that $1 million be used for this purpose. The NTP is already using money appropriated in 1990 for these alternatives. Such tests are less expensive, easier to conduct, and faster than traditional animal tests.

The major funding bills for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would direct NIH to promote the use of the alternatives tests. The authorization bill for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would direct NIH to make alternatives research a priority and establish goals for this research. The HSUS will encourage the Senate to retain this provision in the bill when it is considered there.

BARRING EXOTICS

Two major bills dealing with exotic animals have been introduced in California. S.B. 1013 would ban the establishment of alligator farms. A.B. 1740 would exempt ostriches from sales tax by defining them as poultry. S.B. 1013 would prohibit the issuing of permits for the operation of alligator farms if the alligators were kept for the use of their meat or hides. Current law states that it is unlawful to import, transport, possess, or release live alligators into California without such a permit, which can be obtained from the state department of fish and game.

Passage of A.B. 1740 would set a new definition for ostriches as "exotic livestock." If passed, the bill would make it more lucrative for people to raise exotic animals in California, which can be obtained from the state department of fish and game.

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LAPHAM REPORTS ON OAKLAND SHELTER

In December 1990, in response to public pressure, the city of Oakland, California, asked the West Coast Regional Office for an on-site evaluation of its program and shelter. Investigator Kurt Lapham compiled, then prepared a highly critical report that was delivered to the city in March of this year. He recommended that a new shelter be built, more staff be hired, and animal-control personnel be formally trained. He concluded that all euthanasia of animals in the city's shelter should be stopped until the staff was properly trained in euthanasia techniques. Shelter staff members have since received training in euthanasia techniques at the Oakland SPCA.

WILD HORSES AT RISK

This summer The HSUS led a coalition of humane and wildlife protection groups in efforts to save wild horses on the Nellis Air Force Base Wild Horse Range in Nevada. After years of mismanagement by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), extreme drought had left the severely degraded Nellis range with only limited grazing and dry water holes.

In response to the crisis, the Air Force hauled water to traditional watering sites on the range and the BLM removed orphaned foals. The HSUS, the American Horse Protection Association, and other national groups met with BLM officials and demanded more action. The BLM rounded up and removed 2,000 horses from the Nellis range and placed them in the Adopt-a-Horse Program. Several of the horses were shipped to New Jersey. The state hosted its first wild-horse adoption in August, The HSUS's Paula Jewell and Stacy Bohlen attended. Special thanks go to Dawn Lappin of Wild Horse Organization and Kathy Barrown of the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses for their efforts.

The HSUS continues to monitor the crisis at Nellis (see page 28).

RANCH OPERATOR FOUND GUILTY

In June a California jury found a Monterey County rancher guilty of running a hunting operation in which illegally imported exotic cats were shot by trophy hunters for a price. Floyd Lester Patterson III was found guilty on thirty-five misdemeanor counts in connection with an investigation conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Monterey County District Attorney's Office. The HSUS West Coast office had asked Assemblyman Sam Farr to make inquiries about how the exotic cats, including endangered tigers and leopards, were imported and to learn what zoos or dealers supplied them. Initially, the three defendants in the case pleaded not guilty, however, one of the defendants subsequently pleaded guilty to six counts, resulting in a sentence of 880 days in jail and a $10,000 fine. The district attorney has filed...