prisoners of war

January 2-24, 1993, I traveled throughout Indonesia to investigate the legal traffic and export of primates, from their capture to their ultimate destination. This trade supplies animals subject to the laboratory-research facilities of the United States (and of other countries, although the United States is by far the largest recipient of wild-caught and captive-born monkeys).

Indonesia was a logical place to begin the investigation. In the past five years, Indonesia has exported more than 50,000 monkeys worldwide; the majority of them have come to the United States. There are currently five licensed primate exporters operating in Indonesia. Only four are actively exporting at this time. Over the last two years, there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of animals being exported from Indonesia, but the industry remains one of the largest in the world because of the power of our market. Our consumers who insist on dolphin-safe tuna. Purse-seine fishing on dolphins is on the way out because few nations are going to be willing to violate these standards if they're denied access to American markets.

We in the United States have the power to stop such destruction by displaying the leadership to say that American markets are not going to be open to people who brazenly and blatantly violate common, accepted standards of conduct. We're not going to be able to do it in the rest of the world unless we take the moral high ground at home. It's risky to dictate standards to the rest of the world, but I think we have the capacity to do it if we have a policy that's not selective, not species-specific but rather one that says, We're going to live on this planet in harmony with the rest of Creation. We are going to oust the large number of pests and are killed indiscriminately by through agricultural control programs. Although the animals are being killed or snatched from their homes for research, no one has bothered to find out how many primates are actually left. There has been no wild-life census in Indonesia since 1972.

My fieldwork first took me to Jakarta, capital of Indonesia. Jakarta is home to the dealers who export the monkeys, but not the monkeys. To document the trade in wild primates, I then traveled by car and boat to the northern part of Indonesia, the island of Sumatra, where the monkeys live in the wild, and then overland to the cities of Palembang and Lampung on Sumatra.

In a related expedition, I also flew to Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of the island of Borneo. There I spent two remarkable days with famed primatologist Biruté Galdikas, Ph.D., and participated in fieldwork focused on orangutans' wild habitats throughout Indonesia. The work of the HSUS's Humane Society International (HSI) encompasses important projects all over the world. Here is a brief report on the most recent activities of this organization.
These free-ranging long-tailed macaques are two of approximately 6,000 in a private captive-breeding colony on Deli Island. Inset: A long-tailed macaque captured by Indonesians in Sumatra is destined for the research trade.

Frightened long-tailed macaques are held at a collection site in Palembang. Caged primates may languish here for as long as three weeks before being transported to Jakarta for eventual shipment to the United States.

Those I observed in Indonesia.

An ancillary assignment was to examine the capture and sale of wild birds and other native wildlife and document the inherent brutality of the large animal market in Jakarta. I visited the infamous Pramuka bird market, where literally tens of thousands of exotic birds and mammals were offered for sale as food or pets or simply objects of amusement. The market covers more than three city blocks. It seemed as though every species of bird was represented. Cages of birds and mammals are piled two stories high.

When I visited the market, it was hot and raining heavily. The animals’ deceptively cries of fright and frustration hit me before I even reached the market. The birds who had died over the previous night were taken from the cages and thrown with callous efficiency into the stream below. I shuddered at the cries of a baby river otter who had been snatched from the wild. He turned frantically in his small cage, wailing in fear and confusion, unable to comprehend his fate.

The two primate species most commonly exported from Indonesia are the Macaca fascicularis, or long-tailed macaque, and the Macaca nemestrina, or pig-tailed macaque. Both species have been extensively utilized in research. The vast majority of those who come from Indonesia come from wild-caught populations.

Habitat destruction, hunting, and capture for research have begun to put a terrible strain on the wild populations of these two primates. As a consequence, numerous captive-breeding facilities have been established that acquire their breeding population from the wild and sell subsequent generations of offspring to the research community.

It’s hard to describe the chaos and tragedy capture inflicts on wild primates. Both species I observed are highly intelligent and socially complex creatures. A great deal of their time each day is spent grooming, touching, and interacting with other members of their communal family. They travel in well-defined groups and are both curious and cognitive in their relationships with their environment and each other.

Capture methods vary. Often a group of primate trappers locates a “sleeping tree.” Monkeys are diurnal animals: they feed and move during daylight hours. As night falls they gather together for safety and comfort, usually at preselected trees called “sleeping trees.” The trees afford them protection from the predators who are nocturnal in their habits. As darkness masks their world, monkeys take comfort in the closeness of others of their kind. Like most people, monkeys tend to share a fear of the dark. (Given the number of other creatures that eat them, this is probably a justifiable fear.) Once trappers locate a tree, in the darkness after the monkeys have bedded down, they surround the tree with large nets.

As dawn comes and the monkeys awake, drowsy and disconcerted, they climb down to the ground to begin the day’s routine. They walk into a virtual war zone. Monkeys are grabbed by their tails and have their arms pinned behind them. If they try to protect themselves or their family members by biting, the trappers simply take a stick or stone and bash in their teeth. They are then indiscriminately thrust into temporary holding cages. As many as fifteen animals are stuffed into a cage less than one foot by one foot by three feet. The cages are often made of bamboo sticks tied together with rope and twine. The monkeys’ faces evoke pictures of prisoners of war in World War II newsreels. Their soulful eyes peer out frantically from their cages.

The prisoners are then taken to holding facilities, operated by collectors, where they are put in larger enclosures with other monkeys captured from different locations. They wait, sometimes for weeks, before agents representing the exotic.
to the back of the cage. The monkeys were exposed to the torrential rains and the scorching sunlight because there was no cover (the narrow perch offered some protection but not nearly enough). Approximately sixteen to eighteen monkeys were housed in one pen. It was impossible to count them accurately because in their panicked state they ran frantically back and forth.

The lack of adequate food, the fear, and the housing of unfamiliar monkeys together caused the larger monkeys singly to bite or beat the smaller ones off the perch. After they fell, cringing and crying, these small victims would whimper and crawl to the edge of the cage. They would then curl up in the fetal position and begin to tremble violently. The monkeys who had been there the longest had gaunt bodies and hollow eyes.

One very young mother had been placed in a dilapidated “chicken coop” cage. She looked terrified and twisted her head frantically back and forth as she hugged her tiny baby tightly to her chest.

Every time one of the larger males ran to the wall of his cage and screamed, she would moan pitifully and hug her baby with both arms. She would then drop her head and close her eyes. The proprietor of the facility told me, “She hasn’t touched a drop of food for two days; she probably won’t make it.”

Once procured by the agents, the monkeys are transported by truck and boat for as long as three days to various facilities, where they are quarantined and screened to determine their acceptability for sale to a researcher in another country. The transfer from the exporting country to the end user is far beyond standardized. These animals sent to the United States are tested for tuberculosis and screened for whatever specific requirements the U.S.-based importers have. The primates are then loaded into individual compartments in a shipping container.

The containers I observed had six single compartments on each side, twelve in total. Food and water for each monkey are placed in the container. They must last for the entire journey, which, counting flight and waiting time, can cover three days. No one touches the animals from the time they leave Indonesia until their arrival in the United States. On August 2, 1992 a shipment of 110 monkeys left Indonesia via an international airline. Upon arrival in the United States the monkeys were dead.

The stress, fear, inadequate food, lack of proper housing, neglect during transport, and “culling” of those animals not deemed suitable for research have reportedly contributed to a mortality rate as high as 80 percent. As one primate exporter said of another exporter during my trip, “If he’s shipping 1,000, you can guarantee 5,000 were captured and processed to deliver 1,000.”

One or two of the exporters I visited have begun to reduce greatly the mortality rate by expediting the pace and delivery of wild-caught primates to their facilities. Nonetheless, no one truly knows just how high the mortality rate is from capture to final destination, and no one can deny the terror of the animals as they attempt to comprehend their desperate state.

As I watched, the only monkeys that I had seen had been the opportunistic beggars loitering in parks and around hotels in Africa and in zoos around the world, or the terrified, snarling creatures in laboratory cages. While traveling through Sumatra on a one-lane road deep within the rain forest, I looked up and saw a wild long-tailed macaque running through the trees. I stopped my car and grabbed my camera. As I peered through the viewfinder, I saw she was not alone—her baby was with her. I saw the love and concern she expressed for her offspring and the way in which the two interacted with each other and their surroundings. She was a beautiful wild creature, sleek with good health. She climbed gracefully through the canopy of the forest, her young one scrambling awkwardly, but happily, behind. Twice I watched the young one misjudge his step and slip from the branch or vine he had tried to grasp. Each time his mother’s arm shot out to pull him back to safety. She would then anxiously groom his head and peer closely at his face to assure herself that he was unhurt. I could hear her crooning softly to him as she did so. Like an impatient teenager, he was eager to be off to explore the next branch, to jump to the next tree, and he would quickly escape his mother’s grasp and dart away. Her behavior was so human-like, her curiosity so childish, her love as strong as the love any mother ever gave to any child, that I shuddered as I imagined them captured by nets, thrust into bamboo crates, and propelled into a world that is forbidding, foreign, and hostile. I tried to picture, to feel, their fear. I could not, but I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that their world was being violated unconscionably.

Now home, where I am once again safe and dry, I realize the piles of statistics heaped on my desk that reflect the mortality rates of wild-caught monkeys cannot begin to suggest the cost in lives and the quantity of suffering that are part and parcel of the wild-caught-primate trade.

HSUS/HSI’s mission is to eliminate needless cruelty and suffering among living creatures. We hope that the disturbing images of the wild-caught primates abducted from their homes, captured on film and forever etched in my mind, will demonstrate the need for a compassionate and comprehensive solution to a little-publicized problem. A ban on the importation of wild-caught primates is a desperately needed first step.—David K. Willis, vice president, Investigations, HSUS/HSI

LENDING A HAND TO ORANGUTANS

The Indonesian locals call orangutans the wise old men of the jungle, and, as I looked into the faces of eight young orangutans sitting in their cages, their eyes did reflect a wisdom and perception beyond their years.

Each pair of eyes was fixed on one figure, Biruté Galdikas, the world’s leading authority on orangutans and the woman recently heralded as “Leakey’s Last Angel” by the New York Times Magazine. “The Professor,” as she is respectfully called by her associates, had rescued and nursed back to health each of the young orangutans. (Indonesian authorities had obtained the primates from Taiwan, where they once were pets.)

We were to release the young orangutans into a guarded sanctuary five miles deep in the jungle. “The Professor” had given me the honor of carrying two of them. “We are one man short,” she explained, “No problem,” I replied.

Two-and-a-half miles into the jungle, after wading through long, deep swamps, being bitten by seemingly thousands of angry mosquitoes, and wrestling with a seven-and-a-half-year-old orangutan named Esther, who wanted to go any...

where but with me, I no longer had the breaths or strength to say, “No problem.” In the ninety-degree heat and 90 percent humidity of Borneo’s jungle, I was down to grunts and nods of the head as my only forms of communication.

As I boosted the reluctant Esther onto my back for the second half of the journey, I reflected with admiration on the dedication and the fierce drive of Dr. Galdikas. “The Professor” has been studying orangutans in Kalimantan (the Indonesian part of Borneo) for two decades. In addition to having unconditional empathy for orangutans, she has also become a fearless advocate for the protection of the world’s rapidly disappearing rainforests.

However, as I methodically trudged through the jungle with Esther, Dr. Galdikas, who carried a baby orangutan with his arm slung around her neck, eyes closed and head snuggled against her shoulder, her dedication and commitment went beyond academics. Her actions were fueled by the realization that the orangutan is as individual and special as any life on this planet.

When we finally arrived at the release site deep in the forest, I marveled at the new releases as they cavorted, climbed, and took to their new world. As I picked off two leeches, unwelcome hitchhikers on my back, I realized that Dr. Galdikas is more than Leakey’s Last Angel; she is, for the orangutans, their last hope. I desperately hope she succeeds in saving them.

Orangutans peer anxiously from their cage on route to a release site in Kalimantan, Borneo. Insel: primatologist Biruté Galdikas is the world’s leading authority on orangutans and the species’ devoted protector.
Black rhinoceroses seem to bid each other farewell as their species faces possible extermination by poachers. Inset: a poached rhino is one of thousands killed within the last two decades. (Now 117) A total of 150 rhinos have been poached in three years in one park alone.

THIS TAIWAN

BOYCOTT ANNOUNCED

In response to plummeting rhinoceros populations worldwide, HSUS/hsi has called for an emergency boycott against Taiwan, the leading importer of rhino horn.

The trade in rhino horn causes devastating poaching of all five species of rhinos. Such trade continues even though all rhino species are on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which bans the international trade in their horn. Rhino poaching may drive all species of rhinoceros to extinction in only five years, according to Esmond Bradley Martin, a United Nations special envoy who recently returned from a three-month-long investigation of the decline of the species.

Approximately 10,000 rhinos—of three Asian and two African species—remain in the wild. Thirty years ago there were about 100,000. The population of African black rhinoceros alone has been slashed from approximately 65,000 in 1970 to 2,400 today, a decline of 96 percent in little more than twenty years. In the past three years, nearly 150 rhinos have been poached in one of Zimbabwe’s national parks alone.

Rhino poaching is inherently cruel. Not only are rhinos shot with guns, but they are also trapped in wire leg snares, where they may suffer for days before the poachers return to spear the captives and gouge out their horns with a hatchet. The horn is shipped to Taiwan, China, and South Korea, where it is ground into a powder that is used as a traditional medicine as a fever-reducing agent. In Yemen, in southeast Asia, horns are carved into ceremonial dagger handles. So lucrative is the international trade in rhino horn that even juvenile and baby rhinos are killed for their tiny horns.

In addition to the ban, enacted by CITES in the mid-1970s, on the international trade in rhino horn among the treaty’s (now 117) member nations, CITES has asked all nations to ban the domestic sale of rhino horn, as mandated by a new law. Unless a greater commitment is made, the government will be unable to ban the sale of the horn. Dr. Bradley Martin met with Taiwanese government officials about the trade and “was very, very disappointed with their response. They are not willing to put the resources into enforcing their law.” Taiwan’s unwillingness to stop its rhino-horn trade places an unfair burden on the relatively poor African nations that have rhino populations. These nations have been forced to spend a great deal of money to protect their rhinos from poachers who feed the Taiwanese market for rhinoceros horn. Some African wildlife guards have been killed in gunfights with poachers who will do almost anything to escape with their valuable loot.

Taiwan’s intransigence over rhino horn is especially disturbing in light of the country’s destruction of other endangered species. Bears from all over the world, including the United States, are also exported by Taiwan. Ball-bladders, paws, and other bear parts are used in traditional medicine and gourmet cooking. A bear gallbladder, used to treat infections, may sell for thousands of dollars.

Unless Taiwan is pressured to curb its insatiable demand for endangered species and stop its destructive exploitation of such animals once and for all, the species will be driven to extinction.

The HSUS/hsi boycott of Taiwanese goods seeks to save such animals by changing consumer behavior. The United States is one of Taiwan’s major trading partners. Our stores are filled with clothes, electronic devices, and sporting goods labeled “Made in Taiwan.” Better than any other nation, we are poised to stop Taiwan’s use of animals in Endangered Species. HSUS/hsi has called for an emergency boycott against Taiwan, the leading importer of rhino horn. Wildlife guards have been killed in gunfights with poachers who will do almost anything to escape with their valuable loot.

Rhino horn, AK-47s, and ammunition are among the booty confiscated from poachers in Africa. Wildlife guards have been killed in gunfights with poachers who will do almost anything to escape with their valuable loot.
few of you reading this will have known Hans-Jürgen Weichert, a man who championed the protection of animals worldwide for the past four decades. Serving as vice president, Field Services, for HSI at the time of his death, Mr. Weichert embodied dedication to animal protection and commitment to enlisting the community of those who would join in this crusade.

Having served as president of both the World Federation for the Protection of Animals and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Mr. Weichert never abandoned his ongoing efforts to enlist government support for animal-protection initiatives in his own country of Germany. With the assistance of the German government, he was provided access to China and numerous East Asian countries, where he worked tirelessly to bring about reforms in animal shelters, and government policies.

Through the local organizations that he headed for the past several years, the Deutsche Tierfreunde E.V., Mr. Weichert and his wife, Hansmure, continued to provide assistance throughout their community and country to animals in need.

Mr. Weichert joined the staff of HSI in 1991 as our representative for animal protection in the Far East. He was instrumental in establishing a working relationship between HSI and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. This cooperative endeavor recently resulted in improved slaughtering techniques and equipment in the abattoirs of Laos.

HSUS/HSI salutes this man who advanced the protection of animals worldwide. We have lost a great colleague and personal friend.
A pacarana, one of only eighteen living in captivity, shyly eyes a visitor to WSPA's wildlife refuge on the outskirts of Bogotá.

Salazar. On our tour through the shelter, we saw the large portable X-ray machine donated to ADA last year by HSUS (see the Winter 1993 HSUS News). Although ADA has no official status, it works cooperatively with local police and other governmental units. Citizens, officials, and most of all animals appreciate the great community service provided by the angels of mercy at ADA. As we were leaving, a horse-cart driver stopped for a friendly chat with Ms. Delgado. His horse, well-fed and healthy, undoubtedly was one of the beneficiaries of an ADA public-information program.

On the outskirts of Bogotá, a hodgepodge of buildings stretches as far as the eye can see. This province was once a veritable wasteland, but now it shelters some of the new city's poor. In 1986, this expansion is WSPA's new wildlife refuge, near to the city and already in operation.

Biologists Karin Osbahr and Juanita Roda oversee a small staff and provide rehabilitation, relocation, and release to a wide variety of wildlife...