



UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

▶ **BALLOT CAMPAIGN FIGHTS FOR MAINE BEARS**

IN THE SPRING OF 2012, as black bears awakened from a long winter's nap, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife released a few helpful reminders.

Keep garbage inside until pickup. Bring in bird feeders. Store grills in garages. As the announcement cautioned: "Bears who become reliant on people for food return to the same locations to eat and become less fearful of people."

It was useful advice for a state that celebrates its dazzling array of wildlife with moose-, bird-, and whale-watching excursions, plus 542,000 acres of state and national parks.

But it stood in stark contrast to scenes that would play out four months later. Starting each August, trophy hunters pile up bait: everything from animal carcasses to jelly doughnuts to leftover pizza. For the next month, bears amble up to feast. Then, as the calendar flips to September and another hunting season opens, those hunters position themselves for an easy, predictable shot.

"Shooting a bear at point-blank range while his head is buried in a pile of food is inhumane and unsporting," says Elise Traub, HSUS director of wildlife protection. "It's also really irresponsible because it conditions bears to human food sources and flies in the face of admonitions not to feed the bears."

Seeking to address this and other cruel aspects of the state's bear hunt, the HSUS-supported coalition Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting began gathering signatures this fall for a 2014 ballot initiative to ban bear baiting, as well as bear trapping and hound hunting.

Maine is the last state to allow widespread bear trapping. As

snare traps there are required to be checked only once every 24 hours, some bears have chewed off their paws to break free; others have frantically stripped the bark off all trees within reach. Hunters need simply to then walk up for a close-range shot.

Frightened, trapped animals are similarly targets for hound hunters, who wait for GPS- or radio-collared dogs to chase and corner a bear into a tree (unless the bear turns to fight instead).

In 2004, when a similar ballot campaign fell narrowly short, opponents argued that bans on hounding and trapping would hurt Maine's bear hunting industry while also fanning fears about the animals. "The state will literally say in one breath that if we can't

hunt bears by baiting, trapping, and hounding, we'll never see a bear," says Daryl DeJoy, executive director of Wildlife Alliance of Maine. "And then in the next sentence they will say if we do away with baiting, trapping, and hounding, we're going to have a bear problem."

Data from states that banned baiting and hounding in the 1990s now contradicts both claims. In Colorado, the number of bear hunters has since tripled. In Washington, it's nearly doubled. In Oregon, the number of nuisance complaints has remained stable (436 in '93, 457 in 2011). Ditto in Washington.

"I hate the idea of any animal suffering purely for our entertainment," says Connie McCabe, a Maine wildlife advocate. "... Is that what our hunting tradition is? Do we really need to cheat to go out and do what our fathers, grandfathers [did]? It's not the Maine way. It's not the fair way."

— Michael Sharp



1,786

Number of Maine bears killed by baiting in 2011—75 percent of all bears killed during that year's hunt.

FARMER TO FARMER

HSUS agriculture councils build bonds with family farmers

BILL MILLER HAS ONE BIG REASON for supporting The HSUS as it works to improve conditions for chickens, pigs, and cows in Ohio: Joe Maxwell, a fellow farmer.

Maxwell, HSUS vice president for outreach and engagement, raises hogs in Missouri and has fought to preserve independent agriculture there. That gave him instant credibility with Miller, vice president of the Ohio Farmers Union, which represents family farms.

“He is a major farmer who is dealing with an industry that has basically been taken over by two or three companies,” says Miller. “Part of the fight that all small farmers are having is that they’re being swallowed up and becoming less and less independent. They just don’t have the wherewithal to stand up to big ag.”

In recent years, as The HSUS pushed for an end to the extreme confinement of farm animals in Ohio, Miller heard many charges leveled against the organization. Some claimed it wanted to give animals the same rights as people. (As one farmer told Miller, “I’m not going to invite my cow into my living room.”)

Miller didn’t necessarily believe what people said, though, attributing the claims to “the rhetoric coming out of [an] industry that doesn’t want anybody to step on their toes about what they do with their animals.” And then meeting Maxwell won him over: In April, Miller became one of five founding members of the HSUS Agriculture Advisory Council for Ohio. Soon after, the union’s Miami Valley chapter, which covers the region in which Miller’s 160-acre organic farm lies, endorsed the council.

“I don’t know any small farmer who isn’t concerned for the welfare of their animals,” says Miller, who keeps 60 to 90 cows on his farm, where they graze on grass and fertilize fields. “A lot of the problems really arise with these factory farms.”

Ohio’s state agriculture council is the third to be formed in the last two years; a Nebraska council was created in 2011 and a Colorado council in 2012. An Iowa council will be announced by December. Comprising farmers and ranchers, these advisory boards help The HSUS improve state laws and regulations to better protect farm animals. They also link family farmers with consumers who want to refine their diets by purchasing higher welfare products.


In Ohio, The HSUS will use outreach events, workshops, and social media to inform its members about farmers who treat animals better, while also helping those farmers establish a cooperative to increase their competitiveness with factory farms in the marketplace, says John Dinon, state director of outreach and engagement.

In 2010, negotiations between The HSUS and industry groups such as the Ohio Farm Bureau led to an agreement to phase out some of the most extreme forms of confinement of breeding sows and veal calves, to prohibit transport of downer cows, to place a moratorium on new battery cage facilities for egg-laying hens, and to require humane euthanasia for downer cattle. The tail docking of dairy cows is also being phased out there. Now, Dinon and HSUS Ohio state director Karen Minton want to build on that progress by strengthening relationships with farmers.

“We spent a great deal of time talking about the things in agriculture we didn’t like; now we are shining a spotlight on good husbandry practices and the farmers who have found a better way forward,” says Minton. “We celebrate good stewardship of the land and animals. We want to help farmers who are struggling to survive.”

— *Karen E. Lange*

□ **TAP HERE** to watch a video about the Ohio council.



Bill Miller, of The HSUS's Agriculture Advisory Council for Ohio, grazes cows on his family farm.

Lifting the Underdog



It was time to get down to business at the Florida state cabinet meeting last January. State Attorney General Pam Bondi introduced the next guest, picked her up, and carried her around the room, kissing her head and exclaiming how sweet she was.

The guest loved it.

After all, Molly didn't get out much—the 1-year-old, black-and-white bull terrier mix was waiting to be adopted at the Tallahassee-Leon Community Animal Service Center. Bondi had brought her to the meeting that day to make it happen.

“She’s a consistent champion for dogs,” HSUS Florida state director Kate MacFall says of Bondi, who frequently brings her rescued Saint Bernard to work. The canine meet-and-greet grew from a conversation the two had last year about pet overpopulation and the plight of shelter dogs. Bondi asked MacFall, a longtime volunteer at the Tallahassee shelter, what she thought about bringing adoptable dogs to the cabinet meetings. “I said, ‘Done! What day? What time? I’ll be there!’ ”

Bondi has an affection for the underdog—pets whose age, size, or color makes it harder for them to find homes. Since the meet-and-greets began in September 2012, all 14 dogs she’s showcased have been adopted, many by people who attended the meeting or saw a photo on Bondi’s Facebook page. Her success has inspired a friend on the Tulsa, Okla., city council to follow suit.

The 75-pound German shepherd mix at the May meeting was too big for Bondi to carry. But it didn’t stop her from kneeling down—in elegant black suit and high heels—and wrapping her arms around his neck.

— Arna Cohen

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Etsy, the online marketplace for handcrafted and vintage items, has prohibited its 30 million users from selling on its site anything made from any part of a threatened or endangered animal. The ban applies to both new items and those that predate the Endangered Species Act, even if the seller has documented proof of the legal right to sell.

The Obama administration announced in August that it does not support breed-specific legislation, such as bans on the ownership of pit bulls, calling them “largely ineffective and often a waste of public resources.” The statement appeared on the White House’s “We, the People” website, in response to a 30,000-signature online petition asking for a ban on such legislation.

Bindhu Pamarthi, Miss District of Columbia 2013, brought more than beauty and talent to this year’s Miss America pageant—she brought a humane platform as well. A student at Georgetown University Law Center, Pamarthi used the opportunity to promote the end of animal testing in the cosmetics industry, saying this summer: “I don’t believe that animals should suffer for the sake of physical beauty.”



New! HALO

Vegan Garden Medley for dogs



Ellen DeGeneres, animal advocate, co-owner, Halo

✓ wholesome ingredients from the earth

✓ a complete and balanced recipe



halopets.com/vegan

©2012 Halo, Purely for Pets

SHOTS IN THE DARK

HSI HELPS FIGHT ENGLAND'S BADGER CULL



Protestors in central London march in support of badgers (below). Unlike their solitary and notoriously cantankerous North American cousins, European badgers live in communal burrows, or setts, with sleeping and nursing chambers for upwards of a dozen clan members.



THE KILLING HAPPENS AT night, when unsuspecting badgers emerge from their underground communities in search of food: earthworms, insects, carrion, and root tubers. The shooters are landowners, farmers, and hired marksmen in parts of west and southwest England—known hot spots for cows infected with the bovine form of tuberculosis.

As shooters set their sights indiscriminately on the young and old, fit and not, the poor-sighted, nocturnal animals plod across the landscape, tempted into the open by strategically placed caches of peanuts.

Sometimes centuries in the making, European badgers' well-worn paths and tunnels once provided haven for their intricate clans, thanks to U.K. and European protections that enabled the iconic animals to thrive in England's highly managed landscape. But badgers have come under increasing fire since the species was identified as a wildlife reservoir for bovine tuberculosis. Six-week-long government-sanctioned pilot culls began in late August and are set to continue over the next several years. The initial target of 5,000 badgers

near Somerset and Gloucestershire could increase to 130,000-plus animals (roughly one-third of the country's badgers) as the cull expands to other regions, says veterinarian Mark Jones, executive director of Humane Society International/U.K.

Joining with the grassroots coalition Team Badger, HSI has been promoting more-viable solutions such as badger and cattle vaccinations, while also spotlighting animal welfare concerns such as the likelihood that night shooting will leave many badgers wounded rather than killed outright. "Given half a chance, they will escape underground," says Jones, "and suffer a long and agonizing death."

Jones sees overcrowded, intensive cattle farming as a much bigger factor in TB's spread. Former government scientist Chris Cheeseman, who studied the issue for decades, points to cow-to-cow transmissions as the greatest factor, exacerbated by the high frequency with which British cattle are sold, traded, or otherwise moved around the country. Culling, it turns out, can actually increase the "relatively minor" role badgers play in the spread of bovine tuberculosis, Cheeseman says, as fright-

ened badgers flee from their tight-knit families and contained territories. In a letter to a British newspaper last October, more than 30 scientists warned of an increase in disease rates from culling.

Dave and Gill Purser say killing badgers is a carrot for farmers unhappy with the government's test-and-cull policy for cows and decades of unfulfilled promises for a cattle vaccine. The couple, who farm in Gloucestershire, has never lost a cow to TB in 30 years thanks partly to "commonsense husbandry measures": securing feed stores, cleanliness, and respectful handling of animals to reduce their stress.

In Wales, culling was abandoned in favor of an injectible badger vaccine. Northern Ireland, too, may be moving toward that strategy. At a June rally in London, Queen guitarist Brian May handed government officials a petition—promoted in part by HSI—bearing 250,000-plus signatures against the cull. Says Cheeseman: "Badgers have a rightful place in our ecosystem and should be allowed to exist without ... persecution. [They] are beloved by the British public. Indeed, they are part of our folklore." — Ruthanne Johnson

FROM LEFT: CALUM DICKSON/ALAMY; JACQUELINE LAU/DEMOTIX/CORBIS