

Conclusions and Recommendations

The HSUS has made significant headway in the past nine years in raising the public's level of awareness of the presence of unsatisfactory conditions in zoos and the reasons for those conditions. It has made the public aware of the differences among zoos and given general guidance to the humane movement to make the very important distinction between zoos which should remain and be upgraded and those which should be closed. The HSUS has also singlehandedly brought about specific improvements for animals in certain cases and helped to expedite pending improvements in other cases. It has made itself known nationally to the public, the news media, municipal officials, and to local humane organizations as the one national animal welfare organization which does more than give "lip service" to zoo reform.

The HSUS has also made the public aware of the presence and intent of the Animal Welfare Act, as well as the shortcomings of USDA in enforcing the provisions of the Act with respect to captive wild animals. The constant pressure on USDA is beginning to show some results, but there is no reason to believe that there will be massive improvements or closures of class 3 zoos anytime soon.

The HSUS has also attempted to communicate to the members of the zoo profession the perspective of that segment of the humane movement, doubtless the majority, which wishes to see good and potentially good zoos improved and incorrigibly bad zoos eliminated. The HSUS's sincerity has been subject to question in this regard because it has failed to reinforce the work of good zoos with praise. This has been done by Sue on an individual basis, and articles of a positive nature have appeared in KIND and Humane Education, but these have not been sufficient to

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counteract the impression that HSUS merely tolerates even the best of zoos.

The zoo profession in America has made many steps forward in defining its responsibilities regarding modernization of exhibits, education, professional ethics, and conservation. The HSUS has, Sue Pressman feels, helped get "their" message across to a segment of the public they would probably not have reached otherwise. But while the good and better zoos have gotten even better, the menageries at the bottom of the scale (both public and private), while getting no worse generally, have stayed the same. The "new attitude" of USDA toward the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act has not yet filtered down to the level at which animal care is actually improved. The communications between The HSUS and the zoo profession have improved since 1975, but need to be improved further. Given their present preoccupation with professional ethics, the voices of the "best and the brightest" within AAZPA should be strengthened and reinforced by The HSUS.

There is no reason to believe that HSUS constituents have lost interest in zoo reform as an issue. The public's interest in zoos has appeared to grow rather than diminish and the trend toward more naturalistic exhibitions, breeding of endangered species, and better education programs will probably insure that the level of interest remains high. The public is becoming increasingly sophisticated in its understanding of wild animals. The zoos are becoming more sophisticated in their approach to exhibition, conservation, and public education. The HSUS Zoo Program should likewise become more sophisticated to keep pace with these trends.

The Zoo Program Should Not Continue As It Is

Since the Wildlife Department was created in 1971, the responsibilities of its

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one staff member have grown beyond the investigation of zoos. For several years, Sue Pressman has been responsible for The HSUS efforts to uncover and correct abuses to performing animals in circuses, motion pictures, and television. She has also, since the death of Frank McMahon, been responsible for observing and reporting on the world's major seal hunts. Additionally, she has been responsible for problems involving wildlife relocation and "exotic pets." All of these activities, some more than others, have generated correspondence and inquiries from the public, local humane societies, and the news media.

During this period zoo problems have continued to require investigation and to generate considerable correspondence and inquiries from HSUS constituents, both local and national humane organizations, the AAZPA, and the news media. With the added responsibilities described in the preceding paragraph, less time has been available in recent years to react to zoo problems than was possible in the program's early days. With no other national animal welfare organization having an active program of zoo investigation, the public, the zoo profession, humane societies, and municipal officials have nowhere else to turn but to The HSUS.

With the growth of The HSUS staff since the mid-1970's, Sue has had to spend more time providing information to other departments regarding a variety of wildlife related issues or legislation. Considerable time must be spent also coordinating the zoo-related work of the regional directors and their investigators. While the regional office staffs are able to handle many problems with respect to class 3 zoos, they are less well prepared to deal with class 2 zoos.

A great deal has been accomplished on a reactive basis with zoos, yet it seems

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clear, given the present direction of The HSUS toward a more controlled, analytical approach to animal welfare problems generally, the Zoo Program as it is presently conducted is too superficial to continue as it is. The continuation of a one-person Wildlife Department reflects an apparent lack of commitment on the part of The HSUS to wildlife-related issues.

Recommendations

The HSUS should take the advice of William Conway and decide whether it wants to "fish or cut bait" where zoos are concerned. The HSUS must decide as an organization whether the keeping of animals in captivity in zoos constitutes a justifiable use of wildlife. If The HSUS recognizes that good zoos are needed in our culture to provide necessary contact between people and animals; to perpetuate animals faced with extinction in the wild--even in cases where restocking the wild with captive-bred animals is unlikely; to contribute to the public's knowledge of animal life and ecology; and to inspire an appreciation for animals and understanding of the urgent need to preserve them and their habitat, then it should, logically, commit itself to "making American zoos the best in the world." Either zoos are necessary to our culture or they are not. The HSUS will have to make its support of good zoos evident if it is to lead its constituents to evaluate them effectively. A position of mere tolerance of even the best aspects of zoos is not likely to inspire the general public to become involved with class 2 zoos to the extent necessary to elevate them to class 1.

Having made the public aware of the shortcomings and problems of zoos, The HSUS should take the next logical step and prepare a detailed publication or "Manual for

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Zoo-goers," to enable them to distinguish between zoos that can be improved to an acceptable level and those that cannot, and how to assist effectively in bringing about improvements or closure. Such a booklet should contain: The HSUS policy statement on zoos; a description of The HSUS system for rating zoos; and a statement of The HSUS's belief that zoos must have an operating philosophy which expresses a sincere commitment to conservation, education, research (but only that which will benefit animals in the collection or in the wild), and the welfare of its animals.

The booklet should also make some statement about the efforts of the AAZPA to improve zoos and the zoo profession through its Accreditation Program, code of ethics, guidelines for the disposition of surplus animals, sanctions against members who violate the ethics code, and so forth. Comparison should also be made between the number of institutions that are members of AAZPA and the number of exhibits licensed or registered by the USDA. The booklet should contain photographs to illustrate the difference between "zoos" and "menageries," a distinction which The HSUS should take the lead to initiate (see the discussion which follows in this section). The booklet should also indicate, apropos of the distinction between zoos and menageries, that zoos must have a sufficient number of professionally trained staff members with the authority necessary to make decisions regarding the institution's exhibits and programs.

The booklet should state The HSUS's views on those aspects of zoos which are of the greatest concern to animal welfare advocates. The following questions should be answered from the animal welfare perspective: Where do zoo animals come from? How

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are they captured in the wild? Who regulates the capture? What is the mortality among wild-caught animals during capture? Are zoos a drain on wild populations? Is there any justification for zoos to continue taking animals from the wild? How can animals from different climates adjust to zoos? Can the social and behavioral needs of animals be met in captivity? How important is the mortality rate in a zoo? Is there any type of research on zoo animals which is justifiable? How should zoos handle their surplus animals? Why do zoos have surpluses of animals? Is there any justification for breeding endangered animals in zoos if they can never be returned to the wild? What laws govern zoos and how are they administered? Why are zoo societies needed? How do zoos teach about animals?

The booklet should also describe The HSUS's continuing efforts to improve the class 2 and eliminate the class 3 zoos, and it should encourage humane organizations to participate in cooperative education programs with their local zoos.

Sue feels that she has not adequately prepared humane societies to deal with their local zoos. Yet these societies are in a far better position than The HSUS representatives ever will be to monitor the progress of a zoo. Local societies cannot be expected to know instinctively when progress is truly underway and moving at a reasonable pace, or whether a municipality or zoo officials are hiding behind an ambitious "master-plan." Sue believes she could make more progress in this regard by participating to a greater extent in The HSUS workshops which draw members of humane societies and federations from all over the country.

The HSUS Education Department should keep up with the advances in zoo education programs and continue to stress the common purposes of humane society education

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programs with those in good zoos and aquariums. The HSUS should pursue the suggestion made by Warren Iliff to form a national committee of humane society and zoo leaders to explore the ways in which the objectives of both zoos and animal welfare organizations overlap and complement one another. The recommendations made by such a committee could result in expanded and more meaningful education programs for both groups.

Additional suggestions have been made by other members of the zoo world which would improve The HSUS's credibility and effectiveness in dealing with zoos generally, as well as strengthen the bonds which exist between The HSUS and those in the zoo profession who share animal welfare concerns. The HSUS should take Dr. Wayne King's suggestion to present the AAZPA with a general statement expressing what The HSUS expects a zoo to be, and AAZPA should be asked to publish this statement in its newsletter. The HSUS should also take Phyllis Moore's suggestion to make the full scope of its interest, concerns, and activities known to AAZPA members. Her specific suggestion to provide each member of AAZPA with a copy of The HSUS Policy Manual is probably not financially feasible, but a less ambitious alternative means of accomplishing the same end could be devised.

Unfortunately, even the AAZPA members who evince the greatest sympathy for The HSUS seem to know relatively little about the structure of the Society and the scope of its activities.

The Rating System Should Be Revised

The rating system should be expanded from its present range of 1 through 3 to 1 through 5 to emphasize the differences which presently exist in all those institu-

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tions currently lumped together under class 2. Those at the top would, presumably, remain there, while those presently considered to be 3's would be reclassified as 5's. This would serve to emphasize how far away they are from justifying their existence. Since 2's would be closer to excellence, they might perhaps be inspired to make the changes necessary to become 1's. 3's would be solidly in the middle: half-good and half-bad. The number 4 classification might be reserved for those zoos such as Central Park which, if radically changed in concept, might be considered worth saving. The HSUS should continue to stress the fact that this rating scale is not considered to be either an alternative to, or rival of, the AAZPA Accreditation Program.

The Wildlife Department Should Have a "Master Plan" For Zoos

The Wildlife Department should devise a twofold plan for dealing with zoos, one aspect of which would be directed to a campaign to eliminate "roadside" zoos (most of which are not members of the AAZPA), and the other entailing AAZPA member institutions of all calibers. The HSUS should monitor the AAZPA's Accreditation Program closely and register official protests whenever class 3 zoos are accredited. The HSUS should also notify AAZPA of serious animal welfare problems it is having with AAZPA member-institutions. The Association should be encouraged to use its influence to improve these institutions or bring about their closure. AAZPA should also be encouraged to include a section of the humane movement in its course material for its Management School. Presently, that material appears to reflect only a negative view of animal welfare advocates.

Because the term "roadside zoo" has proved to be inadequate to describe all the

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zoos considered by The HSUS to be without justification, The HSUS should consider discouraging the use of the term. It is popular but it seems to connote only commercial establishments in the minds of most people. It would be more appropriate to speak only in terms of "zoos" (which are acceptable) and "menageries" (which are not). This would more effectively define these two types of operations by what they do rather than be appearing to emphasize where they are. This would also help to reinforce The HSUS's contention that wild animals do not belong in the hands of "amateurs" either as pets or for exhibition purposes.

Since the majority of class 3 zoos are not subject to the sanctions of the AAZPA, the efforts to eliminate them will have to be centered around the Animal Welfare Act. There is some feeling within the zoo world that AAZPA and The HSUS could--and should--work together to eliminate these operations which are a source of indignation to animal welfare advocates and give all zoos a bad name. Wayne King appears to feel strongly that a lawsuit by The HSUS against USDA to force a more strict interpretation of the Animal Welfare Act would produce the desired result. The AAZPA might be willing to join such a suit if a satisfactory definition of a "minimum zoo" could be created (Wagner, Personal Communication).

A select list of "problem" zoos should be compiled. These would be zoos which have resisted all efforts to improve them. The worst one among them should be singled out for legal action. The HSUS has threatened to file suit against a municipal zoo since it began the Zoo Program. The only legal action The HSUS has taken against a zoo entailed charges of cruelty under what were probably highly unusual circumstances; that is to say the situation did not entail the sort of sustained municipal apathy or resistance to improvement which most often character-

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izes the worst city-operated zoos. A successful lawsuit, or even an unsuccessful one, would be very likely to have a salutary effect on The HSUS's efforts to inspire cities to improve their zoos or close them.

The other zoos on the "problem" list should receive more deliberate attention from HSUS, but not necessarily of a legal nature. Where appropriate the AAZPA and local humane organizations should be asked to assist The HSUS in seeking to improve or close zoos. The AAZPA should be kept informed of The HSUS's view of its member institutions, particularly those which are accredited. It should be made clear to local humane societies just what can and cannot be accomplished by HSUS with respect to a local zoo. Disappointment has resulted in the past when local organizations have expected changes to take place more quickly than was actually possible.

The Wildlife Department should develop a slide program on zoos to show at regional seminars and conference workshops. This could also be useful in dealing with zoo people who are under the impression, as many of them seem to be, that the majority of "roadside" zoos have been eliminated by the Animal Welfare Act.

The Wildlife Department should continue to monitor legislation affecting the acquisition, transportation, handling, and housing of zoo animals. If the USDA's "new attitude" towards its enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act proves not to result in improved conditions for animals, and litigation against USDA is considered premature or unfeasible, then The HSUS should consider other alternatives such as urging Congress to call oversight hearings on the Act, or sympathetic Representatives or Senators could be asked to submit legislation to strengthen the Act's provisions

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(these have in fact been under consideration for some time to one degree or another). In order to effect a "master-plan" for zoos it will be necessary to add at least one full-time staff member to the Wildlife Department. A full-time secretary is also a necessity for a Department which generates such a large volume of correspondence. The present system under which the secretary of the Wildlife Department shares her time with the Research and Data Services Department is unsatisfactory and makes the production of the printed materials described in the preceding paragraphs an impossibility.

Files should be kept on issues surrounding zoos as well as on the individual zoos themselves. This would facilitate locating information on such subjects as the disposition of surplus animals, captive propagation of endangered species, zoo education programs, AAZPA's policies which pertain to animal welfare issues, trends in zoo exhibit design, and so forth.

The Zoo Program's Potential for Funding

Despite the oft-repeated criticism that The HSUS has used its Zoo Program as a "gimmick" or "ploy" to raise money, the opposite appears to be true. The professional firm of Oram Goldstein Associates, Inc., retained by The HSUS in 1975 to analyze its programs and publications from the standpoint of their fund-raising potential, listed the Zoo Program fifth among the organization's priorities and indicated that it had good potential for funding from individuals, foundations, corporations, and even selected municipal governments. The Oram Goldstein analysts also pointed out that over a 2-1/2 year period only four special reports out of seven had earned \$20,000.00 or more: The 1975 Special Report on Zoo Reform was listed second

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from the top on a descending scale.

Oram Goldstein recommended that the Zoo Program should be "maintained on a long range basis," or "at the very least, it should be made an intensive five-year project" (HSUS Files). Yet, despite this recommendation the program has not been conducted intensively, and with no special report since 1975, and with less frequent mention of the program in The HSUS News than was common in the Program's early days, its fundraising potential has remained undeveloped.

The HSUS should send out another Special Report (or Close-up Report) on zoos to determine whether The HSUS constituents are still concerned enough to offer their financial support to the Program. This report should contain good news about zoos as well as bad.