

Wildlife Tracks®

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Reckless Recreation: A Close Look at Events Involving Reptiles and Amphibians

During the summer, children and their families naturally seek outdoor activities such as fairs and contests. But some of these events should be avoided: Rattlesnake roundups, turtle races, reptile give-aways, and frog-jumping contests—that include the haphazard handling of reptiles and amphibians—put people at risk for illness and, in some cases, serious physical injury. Furthermore, they unnecessarily jeopardize many vulnerable species of reptiles and amphibians.

Exposure to reptiles and amphibians poses a human health threat

Any event involving public contact with a reptile or amphibian puts people at risk of contracting salmonellosis. *Salmonella* is a naturally occurring bacterium that lives in the gut of all healthy reptiles (snakes, turtles, lizards, and crocodilians) and amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders, newts, and caecilians). In November 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a health warning stating that salmonellosis can occur from handling any reptile or amphibian, whether wild-caught or captive-bred, or from touching any surface contaminated by *Salmonella* bacteria from these animals.¹ *Salmonella* infection in



At many state, county, and city fairs, a variety of small reptiles such as anole lizards and immature iguanas are routinely given away as prizes to individuals who have no knowledge of how to properly care for a reptile.

humans can result in illness, including sepsis or meningitis, and even death.

Children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to *Salmonella* infection and serious complications of the disease. In fact, in 1976, the extremely high incidence rate of reptile-associated salmonellosis cases among young children led the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban the sale of hatchling turtles as pets. The ban resulted in a 77% decrease in reptile-associated salmonellosis cases in the years directly following. But this ban alone was not enough, as reptile-associated salmonellosis cases have risen sharply in recent years. Contact with amphibians may also result in serious illness. In the summer of 2002, a rash of salmonellosis cases among children in

Mississippi was traced back to the handling of wild frogs and other amphibians.² According to the CDC, several cases of salmonellosis in children have resulted in severe illness and even death. The following precautions are recommended to prevent *Salmonella* infection from reptiles or amphibians.

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Letter from the Editor

Wildlife Tracks Mission and Goals:

Over 5,000 wildlife and habitat protection organizations nationwide are working to stop the rapid disappearance of wildlife and the destruction of their habitat. *Wildlife Tracks* combines the power of information, the power of networking and the power of people to strengthen local, state and national grassroots movements to preserve and restore wildlife and the ecosystems they need for their survival.

Goals:

- To expedite the exchange of experience and information between wildlife and habitat organizations, while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their efforts.
- To empower the grassroots by sharing the successful efforts to preserve wildlife and ecosystems and to inspire them to expand their vision and strategy to achieve long-term solutions.
- To assist in building responsible and credible organizations by providing information and guidance.

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The views expressed in these articles represent those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Humane Society of the United States or those of The HSUS Wildlife Land Trust. The HSUS and The HSUS Wildlife Land Trust encourage the grassroots use of all actions that educate and encourage the humane and proper treatment of human and non-human animals; however, we do not promote or support the use of any action that violates federal, state, or local laws and regulations in this process.

Discussions of wildlife protection and conservation often conjure up images of spotted owls, gray wolves, grizzly bears, or bald eagles. For others, wildlife in need of protection may take the form of the birds that visit backyard feeders or individual injured and orphaned critters that somehow—sometimes—wind up in the hands of wildlife veterinarians or rehabilitators: raccoons, red squirrels, opossums, and robins were my family's usual charges during our rehab days. But for many people, however compassionate they may be about conservation or animal welfare, creatures from the fur-less and flightless classes, such as reptiles, amphibians, and fish, rarely make it onto the radar screen. Though not a deliberate omission, these animals may often simply be forgotten in our unending work to address the urgent protection needs of the birds and mammals with which many of us are most familiar.

In this issue of *Wildlife Tracks*, Michelle Jacmenovic and Andrea Cimino provide an in-depth look at recreational activities that feature reptiles and amphibians, including well-supported arguments regarding the implications of these events for the welfare of the animals involved, the ecosystems from which they are unceremoniously plucked, and human health and safety. In addition to the factual information about the problems with these events, the authors describe successful efforts to stop such events or to mitigate their impacts on wildlife without negatively impacting the communities that host the events. Jacmenovic and Cimino outline simple and positive ways in which we all can improve the welfare and conservation of our beleaguered snakes, turtles, and frogs.

The other two articles in this issue provide first-hand accounts of two specific efforts to protect wildlife in the northeast United States. Susan Cockrell and Will La Page, founding members of Maine's NoSnare Task Force, describe an ongoing effort to end coyote snaring in Maine. Jessica Almy, from The HSUS Cape Wildlife Center, writes of a campaign to end the "put-and-take" hunting of captive-raised pheasants on a National Seashore in Massachusetts.



In both of these articles, the authors begin their stories with the events that first convinced them to invest endless time, energy, and money into these particular campaigns. Written from the perspective of those who are deeply immersed in their respective wildlife protection efforts, both articles can help us learn which tactics—public education, legislative, regulatory, legal, etc.—may be most effective. And both demonstrate the power of forming a coalition, either one of concerned citizens or of non-profit organizations. But perhaps the most instructive aspect of these articles is the lesson in patience and in having the will to continue with our advocacy efforts despite heartbreaking setbacks. The articles by Almy and by Cockrell and La Page may remind you of your own efforts to protect wildlife, whether by working as a wildlife rehabilitator, lobbying for wildlife protection legislation, helping to protect important habitat, or in countless other ways. I hope that these stories—with their successes and failures and the unerring drive by advocates to just keep pressing onward—will help you to continue with your own efforts.

I also call your attention to the enclosed reader survey postcard. We hope to be able to continue to publish *Wildlife Tracks* free of charge as a service to dedicated activists; but to do so, we must hear back from those who wish to receive it, confirming your interest. Simply complete the postcard and return it to us, or visit us online at www.hsus.org/wildlifetracks and complete a brief online form. This will help to ensure future funding of the publication and will guide us in selection of future article topics to best meet your needs. If you have a topic you would like to write about, please contact us, using the information below.

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RECKLESS RECREATION, cont. from front page

- Persons should always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after touching any reptile or amphibian or any surface with which the animal has had contact.
- Persons at increased risk of infection or serious complications from salmonellosis (such as children aged five years and younger and immune-compromised persons) should avoid all contact with reptiles and amphibians.
- Reptiles and amphibians should be kept away from food preparation and eating areas.

Such recommendations may be possible to follow in a home setting, but they are difficult, if not impossible, to follow during events such as fairs and public outdoor contests. The following is a discussion of the more common events that involve reptiles and amphibians.

Rattlesnake roundups

Rattlesnakes are invaluable in their ability to control rodent populations and also are a food source for a wide variety of predatory birds. Unfortunately, many people believe that these animals are worthless, don't feel pain, and are beneath basic humane consideration. Perhaps that explains why rattlesnake roundups continue to occur in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Alabama, and Georgia.

The rattlesnakes most commonly targeted for roundups include the western diamondback, the prairie or western, the eastern diamondback, the timber canebrake, and the black-tailed. These rattlesnakes live in a wide variety of habitats, including open desert sand dunes, northern prairies, and subtropical scrub. Though the southwestern United States contains the

greatest diversity of species, each of the lower 48 states contains at least one species of rattlesnake.

Inhumane treatment of snakes

Few public events in the United States are as inhumane, environmentally destructive, and harmful to human health as rattlesnake roundups. During collection for roundups, snakes are gassed from their holes with toxic chemicals such as gasoline. They are also pulled from their burrows with fishhooks, inflicting lesions and gouged eyes. Collected snakes are kept in unhygienic conditions, crammed in crates or trashcans without food or water until the roundup event, which may be several days or weeks away. Under these stressful conditions, the snakes often fight and further injure each other; lack of food, air, and water causes some to die.

At the roundups, snakes endure having their mouths sewn shut for photo ops, and many "daredevil" acts, such as sacking contests, in which contestants try to bag the most snakes. During sacking contests, snakes are roughly thrown into sacs, causing broken and dislocated bones. The snakes that do survive the cruel public demonstrations and daredevil acts are eventually decapitated. Decapitation is a particularly cruel form of slaughter for reptiles.³ Since oxygen demand in reptiles is low, the snakes' body parts may remain alive for hours after their heads have been cut off. According to witnesses, including HSUS investigators, decapitated snakes are then often skinned in preparation for cooking.

The butchering of rattlesnakes and the preparation of their meat at roundups is generally conducted under very unhygienic conditions. At several roundups, people have been observed gut-



Few public events in the United States are as inhumane, environmentally destructive, and harmful to human health as rattlesnake roundups.

ting and skinning snakes with their bare hands. Furthermore, the meat is not inspected for human consumption. Persons who consume rattlesnake meat that is prepared at roundups are being exposed to potential illness caused by bacteria such as *Salmonella*, parasites carried by rattlesnakes, and meat that has been tainted with the gasoline or other toxic substances that are used to force rattlesnakes from their burrows during collection. Rattlesnake roundups also provide many opportunities for participants and spectators to become ill from salmonellosis through contaminated surfaces.

Environmental consequences of rattlesnake roundups

The methods used by rattlesnake hunters to extract snakes from their dens are not only harmful to the snakes but also destructive to habitat. As mentioned earlier, toxic chemicals such as gasoline are used to drive snakes from their burrows, and den openings and crevices are pried open with crowbars, which destroys habitat used by rattlesnakes and a wide variety of wildlife including gopher tortoises, indigo snakes, box turtles, pine snakes, southern toads, burrowing owls, and at least 30 species of invertebrates. In addition, exposure to gasoline kills a variety of wildlife or interferes with basic biological functioning, so they cannot feed or reproduce. A burrow contaminated with gaso-

The methods used by rattlesnake hunters to extract snakes from their dens are destructive to habitat used by other animals as well, including gopher tortoises, indigo snakes, box turtles, pine snakes, southern toads, burrowing owls, and at least 30 species of invertebrates.

line will not be habitable for years. Often a rattlesnake will abandon its habitat if subjected to any human disturbance.

And it is not wildlife alone that is placed at risk. Gasoline contains substances that are harmful to humans, such as benzene, ethylene dibromide, and ethylene dichloride. When sprayed into snake dens, gasoline is introduced into the soil, and then may contaminate the groundwater. Polluted groundwater is a threat to humans, wildlife, and livestock.⁴

Arguments of roundup organizers

Organizers claim that roundups keep rattlesnake populations in check and decrease the number of rattlesnake-caused injuries and deaths in humans and livestock. However, the number of livestock deaths from rattlesnakes is already minimal; snakes rarely attack large animals such as cattle, usually preferring to retreat instead. Even if cattle are bitten, unless the strike is close to the neck or nose area, the venom is not sufficient to kill the animal. Furthermore, roundups may actually increase the number of snakebites by encouraging the collection and handling of snakes by people who have no knowledge or experience in safe interaction with snakes.

The daredevil shows, common at roundups, glamorize irresponsible and dangerous handling of snakes. Data provided by the National Agricultural Safety Database (NASD) shows that at least 3,000 of the approximate 7,000 snakebites that occur each year in the United States are known to be the result of the victim purposely harassing or disturbing the snake. Snakebites resulting from deliberate recklessness also place an unnecessary strain on precious antivenin stocks and result in high hospital expenses. In 1994, a Milwaukee woman nearly died after being bitten by a poisonous snake she was handling at a zoo. Thirty-two vials of antivenin collected from zoos across the Midwest were needed to save her life. This incident

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raised concerns about the actions of one person jeopardizing supplies of snakebite antidotes.

Another common claim is that snake venom, used to manufacture antivenin, is collected at roundups. However, there are strict FDA guidelines for the collection of venom used for this purpose. Venom collected at roundups would be unusable because of the unsanitary conditions at such events and because venom degrades rapidly once it is exposed to air. Toxicologists assert that no legitimate U.S. antivenin producer would knowingly purchase venom collected at roundups.

In recent years, several roundups have been cancelled because local snake populations were so low that none could be found. Such a dip in snake populations could contribute to increases in rodent populations, which might result in serious problems, especially in farming areas. For example, due to severe

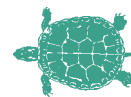
crop damage from rodent populations in Vietnam, the Vietnamese government recently banned hunting of snakes to supply the massive snake-meat trade in Asia.⁵ Annual damage to agricultural crops in Vietnam tripled between 1996 and 1999. In 1999, over 700,000 hectares (70 million acres) of crops were destroyed by rodents, resulting in severe economic losses for many farmers.

Events that have replaced roundups

People in some areas have realized the many negative consequences of roundups that abuse and kill native snake species and have transformed their traditional rattlesnake roundups into

events that celebrate, instead of abuse, native wildlife. Examples include the San Antonio Florida Snake Festival, Louisiana Snake Festival, and the Fitzgerald Georgia Wild Chicken Festival. The San Antonio Snake Festival had been held by the Jaycees as a fundraiser. In 1977, a non-profit organization called Rattlesnake and Gopher Enthusiasts, Inc. (RAGE) took over the events, changing the name from “roundup” to “festival.” Snake collection was discontinued and mechanical tortoises replaced live gopher tortoises in turtle races. The changes, combined with a wide variety of family activities such as face-painting, craft sales, and car shows, actually increased the amount of money earned. The financial success of the festival proved that these events can bring in money without killing live snakes.

Turtle races



Turtle races are held mainly during the summer and fall months in many parts of the U.S., including Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and California. The

racers are held in an exposed area of a fairground or parking lot. Turtles are released from the center of a circle and must race outward toward the circle perimeter, usually about ten feet. In anticipation of the event, participants—mainly children—collect turtles native to their area, usually common or ornate box turtles from surrounding forests, though other turtle species such as pond turtles are also collected. A number of states require a permit to collect more than several of any species of native reptile from the wild.

However, turtle race sponsors do not always abide by this requirement, and there is often no restriction on the number of turtles collected or entered in the races.



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STUART REIM



SARAH REEB

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Turtles are collected in numbers that no one could hope to keep humanely. For example, an estimated 15,000 turtles have been collected for races held in Kansas, and an estimated 700 to 1,000 turtles have been collected for use in races in Minnesota. Recently, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources informed turtle race sponsors that the events were in violation of state reptile collection laws and would be discontinued. Permits for commercial collection of turtles in Minnesota were denied based on conservation concerns. However, state legislators and businesses that profit from the many tourists who attend the turtle races successfully pushed for legislation to allow the collection of turtles for the races without a permit.⁶

Collections begin weeks or even months in advance of the races, and collected turtles are kept in cramped and



SARAH REEB

Following the events, turtles are often released en masse in the most convenient place for the holder, which may be far from their home range.

filthy conditions in buckets or boxes outside. The animals endure dehydration, starvation, and exposure to the elements. According to reports from concerned citizens, many collected turtles die even before the races, and participants simply go out and collect addi-

tional turtles.

The abuse continues during and after the races. The turtle species frequently used in races normally spend a good part of warm summer days in shade and in the water to avoid high temperatures. Turtles cannot tolerate temperatures over 85° F for extended periods of time, but in races, they must remain on hot pavement that may reach over 130° F for long intervals or for the entire event, leading to dehydration and internal injury for many. Because they are ectotherms (cold-blooded), reptiles do not exhibit the same signs of injury and stress that may be noticeable in mammals.⁷ It may take weeks or even months for them to appear sick after contracting an illness or suffering trauma. By the time signs of injury or illness are clearly noticeable in a reptile, it is often too late to help the animal and they perish. It is certain that many turtles that are used in these events are released with injuries: trauma, malnourishment, and dehydration that result in their demise long after the contests are over.

Following the events, turtles are often released en masse in the most convenient place for the holder, which may be far

from their home range. This makes obtaining food, water, and habitat difficult or impossible and increases their susceptibility to predators and disease. In addition, a pregnant female turtle will often retain her eggs if she is displaced from her home range.

Although turtle race sponsors in many areas have been reluctant to replace or alter the event, activists have been successful in advocating for more humane treatment of race turtles. A Kansas activist was able to talk organizers into providing shade and shelter for race turtles before and during the events and eventually into reducing the number of turtles collected for the races.



Frog jumping contests

Like turtle races, frog-jumping contests are held as fund-raisers or recreational events in many parts of the United States, including California, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. They may be held annually or even weekly in some areas. The participants, usually children, gather frogs native to their area, most commonly bullfrogs, from surrounding wetlands. The frogs are then entered in contests to see which can jump the greatest distance.

Frogs captured for these contests are exposed to improper handling, the risk of disease, lack of nourishment, temperature extremes, excessive noise, and potential predators, such as cats and dogs. For many contests, thousands of frogs are collected. For instance, for the Calaveras County Frog Jumping Contest, held annually in California, one family boasts the collection of up to 300 frogs to be “trained” for a single event. It is virtually impossible for anyone to provide adequate care for such a large number of frogs prior to and during the races.

Many frogs collected for the contests are kept confined for days and possibly weeks in a large bucket or pool of water prior to the races. This is neither a suitable nor humane environment for frogs. They may drown without access to dry areas. Likewise, frogs may die within

hours if kept in a dry environment. Most importantly, as with many wild animals, confining frogs together under stressful conditions invites the spread of disease among wild populations once released. At the very least, confinement results in territorial confrontations and possible injuries.⁸

Frog jumping contests also present conservation concerns. Scientists have warned that the decline in amphibian populations is reaching crisis proportions. In fact, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists 25% of all amphibian species as threatened with extinction.⁹ They are facing enormous threats to their survival from human activities that result in habitat loss and pollution. As amphibians are one of the first animals to show signs of serious environmental damage in an ecosystem, declines in their populations are cause for concern. They also help control insect populations such as mosquitoes, as well as algae levels in wetlands. In the past, population decreases resulting from collection for events may have been undetectable. However, with all of the other threats they face, wild amphibian populations may be unable to sustain such collection.

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Recently, several state wildlife agencies have attempted to discontinue these events because of the conservation issues they create.

This year in Calaveras County, California, wildlife officials expressed concern that frogs released after the annual contest could pass on diseases that would be devastating to more sensitive amphibians such as the endangered red-legged frog. Due to these concerns, frogs used in the Calaveras County jumping contests are now only released into a few local ponds designated by wildlife officials. Frog jumping events in South Carolina have recently reported a shortage of frogs, making the



Frogs like this bullfrog are collected from wetlands and entered in contests to see which can jump the greatest distance. They typically suffer from improper handling, lack of food and water, temperature extremes, and other hazards while held captive for the contests.

collection of frogs for a frivolous activity all the more irresponsible. Humane concerns are also causing groups to reconsider these events. Cedar Rapids, Iowa discontinued its annual frog-jumping contest after activist Audrey Rahn approached the city council about the inhumane treatment of jumping frogs at the town's "Freedom Fest" celebration. The council chose to replace the scheduled event with a "children's" frog jumping contest, reportedly a huge success. Parents and other spectators were more inclined to cheer on the children than the frogs. Children also enjoyed the opportunity to show off their athletic and artistic abilities. Many other communities are considering changes to frog jumping events as well, including the famed Calaveras County Frog-Jumping Contest. The Calaveras fair board has discussed the possibility of phasing out the frog jumping contests due to humane concerns voiced by local citizens and animal welfare groups.

Reptile give-aways



At many state, county, and city fairs, a variety of small reptiles such as anole lizards and immature iguanas are routinely given away as prizes. For the duration of the fair, the animals remain crammed together in small enclosures or stacked in hundreds of Styrofoam containers. They

endure temperature extremes; they are handled carelessly, and their basic physical needs are ignored. Reptiles that survive long enough to be given away are then placed in the hands of an unprepared individual, usually a child, who has no knowledge of how to properly care for a reptile.

Caring for any reptile requires specialized knowledge, expense, and long-term dedication. Many reptile species may live 25-100 years and may grow to be quite large and aggressive. Iguanas, for example, may grow to be six feet in length and require a closet-size enclosure with climbing areas. They also have varying temperature and moisture requirements. Neither reptile give-away sponsors nor fairgoers consider the commitment these animals require. The thrill of winning a reptile at a summer fair is short-lived, but the responsibility is long-term. Unfortunately, great numbers of these animals suffer and die during fairs and thereafter because of improper care and neglect.

Fair boards and health officials are often concerned with the human health threat of reptile-associated salmonellosis and legal liability should a fair patron become ill from handling reptiles at a fair event. In 2001, several HSUS employees attended a local fair where anole lizards were being given away as prizes. They ob-

served children handling reptiles while eating and watched a pregnant woman handling a reptile without being warned by fair workers of the danger she faced. The fair board and the county health commissioner were promptly notified of the health hazard presented by the reptile prizes, which the fair immediately discontinued.



Alternative events

The turtles, frogs, snakes, and lizards used in races, jumping contests, and roundups are wild animals that, even with proper care, suffer during capture and confinement. While some of these events may be less harmful than others, all of them inflict stress on these animals and put them at serious risk of illness, injury, or even death. Event sponsors should consider alternative events that would have educational value and incorporate respect for local wildlife.

In many areas, events such as those described above have become local traditions that are important to the citizens as a source of entertainment, recreation, and funds for the community. However, with time comes increased knowledge, understanding, and hopefully greater concern for people, as well as living creatures who share our world. The events we enjoy and participate in should reflect these changes. Traditional events that use reptiles and amphibians pose unnecessary dangers to people and animals and give participants a distorted view of the basic necessities that these often misunderstood animals require to survive. This results in many negative consequences, including failed attempts at keeping wild animals as pets, causing suffering and death for many animals and injury and illness to humans as well.

Suggestions for stopping events using reptiles and amphibians

If events such as roundups, turtle races, frog-jumping contests, and reptile give-aways are a part of summer fairs and activities in your area, activists can take the following steps to help replace them with safe, humane alternatives.

- Do not support these activities by attending or hosting them.
- Prior to fairs or other such events, contact event benefactors and sponsors to express your concerns politely and ask that a humane alternative event replace turtle races, roundups, or frog-jumping contests. If possible, offer your assistance in organizing it. If sponsors refuse to cancel, advocate for more humane treatment of reptiles and amphibians during planned events.
- If you witness an event that involves public contact with reptiles or amphibians, inform the event sponsor of the health risks involved and their legal liability should an event participant become ill or injured due to handling reptiles or amphibians at their event. If the fair is governed by a fair board, contact the board and ask that they do not allow reptiles and amphibians to be handled by the public at their fair.
- Local voices are the most effective tool in ending or making animal events more humane. If communication with event organizers is unsuccessful, write letters to the editors of local newspapers, voicing your concerns about these events.
- Attend City Council meetings to express your concerns on humane and conservation issues regarding entertainment events that use live animals. Offer your assistance in planning alternative events.
- Contact your City and/or State Health Department and express your concern about the handling of reptiles and amphibians by the public at fairs and other summer events. Ask that they take an active role in informing the public, fair boards, and event sponsors of the human health dangers involved in activities involving reptiles and amphibians.
- Contact your state DNR to ensure that state reptile or amphibian collection laws are not being violated by these events. Ask that these activities be monitored as to their possible effects on reptile and amphibian populations.
- Event sponsors must receive permission from the State Secretary of Agriculture in order to legally give away reptiles.

Contact your State Secretary of Agriculture and ask that reptile give-aways at local fairs be stopped due to the human health risks and cruelty issues involved. Ask that, at the very least, information on reptile-associated salmonellosis be distributed to fair-goers.

- Learn about reptiles and amphibians in your local area. Support or volunteer for amphibian and reptile monitoring projects, such as FrogWatch USA - a frog- and toad- monitoring program managed by the National Wildlife Federation and the United States Geological Survey. Volunteers are recruited to collect information about their local frog and toad populations.

You may obtain fact sheets, sample letters, and possible alternative events for roundups, turtle races, frog jumping contests, and reptile give-aways from The HSUS's reptile campaign, Just Say No to Reptiles as Pets, by contacting one of the authors in the Wildlife and Habitat Protection Section: MJacmenovic@hsus.org or ACimino@hsus.org.

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Notes

- 1 Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, November 12, 1999, **48** (44).
- 2 Handling frogs could be a *Salmonella* infection risk factor. *Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy*, May 20, 2002.
- 3 Warwick, C. (1986). Euthanasia of reptiles—decapitation: inhumane method of slaughter for the class Reptilia. *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, **27** (34).
- 4 Warwick, C., Steedman, C., & Holford, T. (1991). Rattlesnake collection drives—their implications for species and environmental conservation. *Oryx*, **25** (1), 39-44.
- 5 Flourishing Trade in Snake Meat Leaves Rats Free. *South China Morning Post*, January 23, 2001.
- 6 Rep. Howes introduces amendment to protect turtle races in Longville. *The Pilot Independent*, March 7, 2003.
- 7 Ernst, Carl H., Lovich, Jeffrey E., and Barbour, Roger W. (1994). *Turtles of North America and Canada*.
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- 9 2002 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



Coyotes began dispersing into Maine in the early 1960s, filling the niche once occupied by the human-extirpated wolf.



Prayer for Peace:

A Preliminary Announcement of the End of Wildlife Snaring in Maine

“We ask for mercy for all who suffer. And forgiveness for all who cause or would benefit from the suffering of others. Breathe Your Peace into our being that we might breathe Your Peace back into the world.”

With this opening prayer, Maine’s House of Representatives began an ordinary day, April 2, 2003—one that would end with a profound sense of disappointment for a handful of animal activists who had been trying for years to bring a measure of that peace to the Maine woods by putting an end to wildlife snaring.

This story actually begins back in the early 1980s with Maine’s white-tailed deer. Highly valued as targets for hunters, Maine’s deer are viewed by many as the savior of the state’s faltering, timber-dependent, rural economy. The hunting industry has long been a strong political and economic force, and the northern third of the state is full of hunting guides, camps, sporting goods stores, and snowmobile and ATV dealerships.

White-tailed deer are abundant in the southern and coastal regions of the state; so abundant, in fact, that some residents see them as vermin. Road kill numbers rise every year, and farmers and gardeners report that deer are their number-one “pest” problem.

Not so in northern Maine. Ask a typical resident from up there, and he or she will tell you that northern Maine needs more deer to attract out-of-state hunters, who fill up the bars, motels, and restaurants and leave lots of money behind when they go home. These Mainers demand that the state’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIF&W) do whatever is necessary to ensure that deer numbers increase, no matter the cost.

There is a very good reason why deer are somewhat scarce in northern Maine: it is incredibly cold with heavy snows that come early and stay late. Though deer thrive in Maine’s lush summers and falls, the winters up north can be too rough for them to survive in any great numbers, es-

pecially when clearcutting has fragmented their habitat and rampant poaching whittles their numbers.

The role of the coyote

This is where Brother Coyote comes in: Driven, some say, by unrelenting extermination efforts by ranchers, farmers, and government agents, coyotes began dispersing into Maine in the early 1960s, filling the niche once occupied by the human-extirpated wolf. Thriving on rodents, berries, fruits, and the occasional free-roaming cat or dog, the coyote is classified as an opportunist carnivore.

In the winter, trying to survive when most of their preferred food sources are buried in snow, coyotes also sometimes kill deer, who are at a disadvantage because it is difficult for them to move about in deep snow. Anyone who knows anything about the natural world knows that this, the relationship of predator to prey, is healthy, vital, and the most basic fact of the web of life. As Maine author and wildlife activist

Cherie Mason titled her book about the predator/prey relationship, *Everybody's Somebody's Lunch* (Tilbury Press, 1998).

The hate some Mainers feel for the coyote is the stuff of medieval tales: When the first coyote was reported trapped in the 1960s in northern Maine, legend has it that people drove from miles around just to spit on its corpse. That coyotes sometimes kill deer to live makes them the devil incarnate to many hunters who want to be, not just the top, but the only predator in the woods.

And if there are never enough deer in northern Maine, there are also never enough ways for Maine hunters and trappers to kill coyotes, even with the most liberal hunting and trapping regulations in the entire northeastern United States and the Canadian provinces. Coyotes are legally hunted year round, even at night during



Coyotes are hunted year round in Maine, even at night during breeding season.

ing their breeding season. Many are chased by hounds and, when exhausted, shot point blank or torn to pieces by the dogs. They also may be shot on sight as part of “animal damage control,” or shot over bait, trapped in the fall and winter months, and, beginning in the early 1980’s, snared.

The return of the neck snare

Neck snares, banned in the 1930s in Maine along with set guns because of their inherent non-selectivity, are far crueler than even the leghold trap. When an animal walks into the wire loop, usually set on wildlife paths, it begins to tighten, which then causes the animal to struggle. The more the animal pulls and squirms, the tighter the loop becomes, slowly strangling the animal to death. Trappers have bragged about the efficiency of the neck snare, which manufacturers claim will “dispatch” the animal in 15 minutes or less under ideal circumstances.

But some animals move through the snare and are caught around their torsos, which prolongs an already excruciatingly slow death. Furthermore, wire neck snares



A coyote struggles in vain to free himself from a neck snare, but his efforts will only tighten its deadly grip.

DECK RANDALL/HISUS

cannot be set or altered to kill only coyotes. They frequently kill foxes, bobcats, fishers, hares, threatened bald eagles, endangered lynx, companion animals, deer and moose, and countless other non-target animals.

Every winter for the past 20 years, from December through March, DIF&W has paid trappers to set snares to reduce coyote predation on white-tailed deer. Over time, the program has been liberalized and expanded at the insistence of the extremists in the hunting and



Neck snares, banned in the 1930s in Maine along with set guns because of their inherent non-selectivity, are far crueler than even the leghold trap.

trapping communities: what once was an animal damage control program has grown into a full-blown recreational season for trappers, for which they get paid. That this legislatively mandated program is not desirable for a number of biological reasons, and does not work anyway, is a matter of scientific fact. That it serves to keep the extremists in the hunting and trapping communities happy is reason enough for

the politicians, many of whom are themselves hunters and trappers, to support it.

Animal activists from across the state have protested the coyote-snaring program every year since its inception, writing letters to each succeeding governor, as well as to state wildlife officials, legislators, and DIF&W biologists. Each fall, as the opening of snaring season approaches, a flurry of letters appears in Maine newspapers, reminding the public of snaring’s cruelty and the unacceptability of such a scientifically unjustifiable program. And every year the snaring program proceeds as planned.

A turning point

The fall of 2001 was a turning point in the fight for a couple of reasons. First, a journalist with Maine Public Radio broke a story about a DIF&W study of the remains of snared coyotes in which were noted a large percentage of what are referred to as “jellyheads.” This term is used to describe snared wild animals whose corpses show evidence of massive hemorrhaging in the head during the death struggle, an indication that it was quite prolonged. Later, the investigating biologist would comment that such a death, from bursting blood vessels, would probably be very

agonizing and might be best understood by people who suffer from migraine headaches.

The report also documented broken bones and teeth, which would mean that the coyotes had tried mightily to escape strangulation, and that some had still been alive as long as three days later when the trappers returned to bludgeon or shoot them.

A second event added enormous weight to the first: it was the leak of an interoffice memo from a DIF&W field biologist, discussing his and other biologists' lack of support for the snaring program. He wrote that "coyotes are not a significant threat to our deer population;" that the "presence of a large canid predator is a benefit to deer, not a detriment;" that "killing an animal by strangling it with a wire loop often results in a slow, painful death, sometimes lasting days;" and that "it would violate state humane laws to treat a domestic dog in the same manner."

Finally, it seemed that activists had what they had been waiting for—a crack in the bureaucratic and legislative wall that had protected the snaring program. People who had been fighting what seemed a lone battle against snaring all those years joined together and made a crucial decision: We would not give up until wildlife snaring ended in Maine, no matter how many obstacles were placed in our way or how long it took. Try as we might, it was difficult to avoid war metaphors, so we decided to go with the idea that snaring is a kind of war, a war against wildlife. We named ourselves the NoSnare Task Force and organized the campaign against snaring on three fronts: education, legislation, and litigation.

Launching the campaign

First we contacted outdoor writer Ted Williams and supplied him with significant DIF&W memos, reports, and emails obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In his scathing article, "Maine's War on Coyotes," in the Septem-



When most of their preferred food sources are buried in snow, coyotes sometimes kill deer.

ber 2002 *Audubon Magazine*, he called Maine pro-snaring sportsmen's groups "extremist" and Maine's DIF&W the nation's "laughingstock." A slightly different version of the article was subsequently printed in *Downeast*, February 2003.

Information about our anti-snaring campaign was also disseminated in HUMANElines email alerts, a joint project of The HSUS and The Fund for Animals, generating threats of a tourism boycott and hundreds of letters to Maine's governor and wildlife officials.

NoSnare members published a steady stream of letters and op-ed pieces in major newspapers, including one from internationally respected coyote researcher Marc Bekoff of the University of Colorado. We also collected thousands of signatures on petitions asking for an end to snaring and, through a grant from The HSUS, created a web site (www.nosnare.org).

Having received permission to reprint the Ted Williams article, NoSnare members sent information packets to every wildlife conservation and animal welfare

organization in Maine. Because of the widespread publicity, snaring became a subject of classroom study and discussion across the state. And, for the first time ever, Maine wildlife biologists, through their professional organization, and with the encouragement of a former DIF&W commissioner and a leading coyote researcher from the University of Maine, formally opposed the snaring program.

With public opinion so overwhelmingly opposed to snaring, NoSnare planned to submit a bill to the state legislature that would ban the neck snare in Maine. Meanwhile, another coalition of individuals, along with the Maine chapter of the Audubon Society, which, prior to the publication of Ted Williams's article, had supported snaring, decided to offer legislation to ban only the snaring program but not the snare itself.

Fighting the status quo

All legislation submitted in Maine is referred to a legislative oversight committee. In the case of bills dealing with snaring, that committee is the notoriously pro-hunting IF&W Joint Legislative Committee, which has never allowed a wildlife protection bill to pass to the full legislature for consideration: such bills are killed on the spot.

By now, snaring opponents included moderate sportsmen, who pointed out that the snaring program was a public relations nightmare for hunters, as well as the editors of Maine's two major daily newspapers, who proposed ending the snaring program. But the diversity of voices opposing snaring made no difference to the Committee, with the exception of one lone member.

Several weeks after a rancorous four-hour public hearing, during which trappers jammed the Committee room and spoke about how "evil" the coyote is and how an end to snaring would mean an end to "life as we know it" in northern Maine, the Committee killed NoSnare's anti-snare bill in less than one minute. NoSnare members and others, including two wildlife biologists and a group of school children, had testified in favor of



Neck snares frequently kill non-target animals, including threatened bald eagles, endangered lynx, and companion animals.



Highly valued as targets for hunters, Maine's deer are viewed by many as the savior of the state's faltering, timber-dependent, rural economy.

the bills, but our unemotional, scientifically accurate words were never given serious consideration.

Having rejected the bill that would ban the neck snare, the Committee turned to the bill that banned only the snaring program. This was amended so that an “Act to Ban the Coyote Snaring Program” became an “Act to *Improve* the Coyote Snaring Program” (emphasis ours). The amendment language was taken from the snaring regulations recently drafted by the Maine Trappers Association. If passed as amended, the bill would create an even more liberalized snaring program.

After all of this legislative duplicity, NoSnare activists still held onto a thread of hope: Because this bill had been passed on to the full legislature for consideration, thanks to the negative vote of the one, valiant, anti-snare Committee member, the issue would finally be debated. Surely, we thought, public opinion would defeat this pro-snaring bill. It is important to note that, by this time, the snaring issue had been labeled “radical animal rights,” and proponents of snaring had spread the word that passage of an anti-snaring bill would signal nothing less than the beginning of a ban on all trapping. The IF&W Committee chair told a reporter that, even though legislators knew that “something

had to be done about snaring, we hate to hand a victory to the animal rightists.”

A narrow defeat

And so, on April 2, 2003, after a very short debate, during which one of the IF&W Committee members stood before the Maine State House of Representatives and other citizens of Maine and deliberately misrepresented the provisions of the amended bill, vowing that it made snaring more humane, and the Committee chair compared the effort to end snaring with banning mouse traps and pet carriers, the Act to Improve the Coyote Snaring Program passed. The vote was heartbreakingly close, which proved just how far we had carried the issue. Still, we had failed to bring to coyotes and other victims of snares the peace that the legislative chaplain had spoken of in her opening prayer.

The legal battle

But this defeat was not the end of the story—not by a long shot! While the educational and legislative campaigns were proceeding full-tilt, Daryl Dejoy, registered guide, wildlife rehabilitator, and a found-

ing member of the NoSnare Task Force, had been pursuing a lawsuit to ban snaring. Working with Portland pro bono environmental lawyer, Bruce Merrill (whose expenses will ultimately be paid by grants from The HSUS, the Animal Protection Institute, The New England Grass Roots Fund, and The Fund for Animals), Daryl managed to uncover some crucial information about unintended victims of the snaring program—so-called “non-targets.”

The DIF&W emails and memos mentioned earlier prove that, as the snaring program was expanded and liberalized, many DIF&W staff biologists had expressed serious concerns about the vulnerability of threatened bald eagles and endangered lynx to snares. Trappers have reported killing at least two eagles and one lynx in snares, and, as the DIF&W biologist wrote in his now-famous memo on snaring, it would be “naive” to believe that trappers report all non-target kills, particularly endangered species. In response to NoSnare’s prompting, Maine’s Attorney General’s office has issued a statement

warning that the snaring program may put DIF&W in violation of the federal Endangered Species Act.

At this writing, negotiations between NoSnare, DIF&W, and the Attorney General’s office are proceeding. Although NoSnare activists wish to avoid a costly and prolonged lawsuit and are hoping that the Attorney General will force DIF&W into an administrative ban on snares, we are committed

to doing whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to end wildlife snaring in Maine, forever.

The next installment of this saga will appear in a later issue of *Wildlife Tracks*.

Susan Cockrell and Will LaPage are wildlife activists living in Holden, ME, with their goats, dogs, and free-range chickens. Both teach at the University of Maine and are founding members of Maine’s NoSnare Task Force.



Animal activists from across the state of Maine have protested the coyote-snaring program every year since its inception.



Even the deputy director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife suggests that pheasant hunting violates hunters' own code of "fair chase."



STOCKING AND STALKING PHEASANTS: Where Factory Farming Meets Canned Hunting

The pheasant's feathers shimmered in the long rays of autumn sunlight. He was still. I had approached him on his blind side and was able to enter his pen without disturbing him.

The pheasant was not even a year old, but he was blind in one eye, was missing the tip of his beak, and had already been hit by a car. He came to The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Cape Wildlife Center, in Massachusetts, when a passerby had stopped and gingerly scooped the stunned bird into his arms.

The day I entered his pen, the bird had recovered from the impact of a car's wheels against his two-pound body. But unlike most of the animals we treat at the Center, this one could not be released into the wild. He had been raised in captivity and lacked even the basic survival skills necessary to evade predators and to forage. Not to mention his blind eye and mutilated beak.

This was the day the pheasant was leaving us to go to a nearby farm, where he would live with a handful of other birds in a large indoor-outdoor enclosure. I

knew this was not the ideal life for a pheasant, but "ideal" was no longer an option.

As I crouched in his pen and thought of his future, the bird began to walk toward me, coming quite close before he turned his head just enough to see me with his good eye. Then, in the instant he caught sight of me, he flew straight up in the air, an explosion of brilliant feathers.

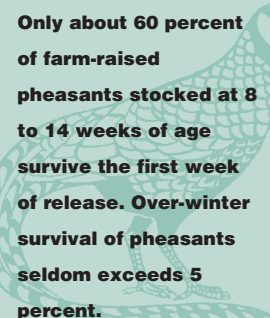
The life of a pheasant

It is hard to say whether pheasant stocking is a farm animal issue or a wildlife issue. The birds, after all, are raised in huge flocks of more than 1,000, and, like chickens or other poultry, they are subjected to the stress of intense confinement, they are fed a medicated diet to prevent illness, and the tips of their beaks are removed with cauterized irons to keep them from injuring each other in their unnaturally close quarters.

But unlike chickens, when pheasants reach "market weight," they are not sent to slaughter. Instead, the pheasants, native to Asia, are dumped into American wildlife management areas, where they be-

come moving targets for hunters.

According to Pheasants Forever, a national hunters' group, only about 60 percent of farm-raised pheasants stocked at 8 to 14 weeks of age survive the first week of release. Over-winter survival of pheasants has been documented to be as high as 10 percent, but it seldom exceeds 5 percent. Small numbers of survivors from the early- to mid-1900s somehow established viable, self-sustaining populations in some parts of the country, including North and South Dakota. But in other regions, including New England, very few free-ranging pheasants survive from year to year. While there are humane considerations regarding the hunting of any animal, producing captive birds for "put-and-take" hunting particularly raises the hackles of anyone who cares about animals.



Only about 60 percent of farm-raised pheasants stocked at 8 to 14 weeks of age survive the first week of release. Over-winter survival of pheasants seldom exceeds 5 percent.



Rescued by a passerby, this captive-raised pheasant would have otherwise died from injuries he received when struck by a car.

In addition to the obvious humane considerations for the pheasants themselves, the release—and temporary survival—of non-native pheasants may result in a temporary increase of “easy” prey for predators and additional carrion for scavengers, potentially disrupting the natural balance of the ecosystem.

The number of pheasants stocked in 2002 for put-and-take hunting is staggering. That year 13 state agencies stocked directly, or provided to game clubs, more than 750,000 ring-necked pheasants nationwide. If we use Pheasants Forever’s survival estimates, only 38,000 to 75,000 of those birds lived through the winter, resulting in a tremendous waste of life: the death toll ranks at more than a half million animals annually.

Writers who detail human tragedy tell us that numbers are meaningless. To count by hundreds, or thousands, or hundreds of thousands of lives is to diminish the



The tips of pheasants’ beaks are removed with cauterized irons to keep them from injuring each other in their unnaturally close quarters.

value of each one. So what are we to say about the deaths of pheasants that we have hatched and raised and left to die or be killed? Each of the hundreds of thousands of pheasants who perished this winter faced a unique end: shotgun, predator, car, or starvation. While I cannot say what any one individual pheasant experienced once released into the wild, nearly defenseless, I imagine that each felt some shiver of terror, like

the easily spooked bird I encountered at the Cape Wildlife Center. But of this I am certain: we humans have so deprived these birds for our own meager pleasure that their freedom became a curse.

Efforts on Cape Cod

Here in Massachusetts, we have made a concerted effort to stop the introduction and hunting of farm-raised pheasants on the Cape Cod National Seashore. In 2001, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocked 800 birds on the Cape Cod National Seashore, which is managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Our goal was to eliminate the program entirely in 2002.

Instead, the Division stocked 600 birds, and the managers of the Seashore agreed to phase out the pheasant-stocking program.

Of course, the overall number of birds stocked by the Division did not change. Those 200 birds slated for the Seashore ended up in another wildlife management area. In all, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stocked 40,000 birds and gave 8,000 additional chicks to game clubs to raise and stock.

In Massachusetts, all you need for pheasant hunting is a shotgun, a dog to flush the birds out of brush, and a hunting license. In the neighboring state of Connecticut, where 18,935 birds were stocked in 2002, pheasant hunters are also required to purchase a \$10 pheasant “harvest” tag.

Each state that stocks pheasants finances its program differently. In Massachusetts, the program is paid for by general license sales, including recreational fishing licenses, and Pittman-Robertson taxes, meaning that it is financed by hunters, as well as by non-hunters who fish or buy guns, ammunition, or related apparel, including the blaze orange safety vests and hats necessary for outdoor recreation during the state’s many hunting seasons.

Other states stock more pheasants than Massachusetts. For example, in 2002, Wisconsin stocked 58,000 pheasants and gave an additional 55,000 birds to game clubs, and Pennsylvania stocked 192,710 pheasants.

That same year, Illinois raised 68,764 birds in its state-run hatchery. Pheasant stamps cost \$15 per hunting trip, in addition to license and permit fees. How-

ever, the potential cost to the environment is much higher. The Illinois Department of Conservation has reported the parasitism of prairie chicken nests by hen pheasants and the displacement of male prairie chickens by male pheasants, a concern because the prairie chicken is a state-listed endangered species in Illinois. Despite the objections of local activists and The HSUS Central States Regional Office, Illinois continues to raise and release birds to cater to special interest groups.

Idaho, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wyoming also have active pheasant stocking programs. Michigan and Nebraska have had controversial put-and-take stocking programs in past years, and some states, such as California, do not stock statewide but allow individual counties to stock pheasants to raise upland game stamp revenues. Furthermore, Minnesota, while not actively promoting put-and-take pheasant hunting, stocked some 600 wild-caught South Dakota pheasants in 2001, in an attempt to increase the state’s wild population. In other states—such as Iowa,



In 2002, 13 state agencies stocked directly, or provided to game clubs, more than 750,000 ring-necked pheasants nationwide.

Oklahoma, North Dakota, and South Dakota—pheasant hunters stalk birds from established populations. This April, Texas Parks & Wildlife banned pheasant hunting in four counties where the agency had determined that numbers of free-roaming pheasants were too low.

Most National Park Service units do not allow any hunting and work diligently to keep exotic plants and animals, such as pheasants, out of the parks. So, while the actual number of birds released at the Cape Cod National Seashore is relatively small, releasing farmed pheasants there for put-and-take hunting is a particularly inappropriate use of land held in the public trust.

Moreover, few Massachusetts residents hunt—only about 1 percent of the population—and a recent survey found that more than half of Cape Cod residents agreed that hunting should be curtailed on Cape Cod because of increased growth and development. Despite all of these factors in our favor, it has not been easy to eliminate pheasant stocking on the National Seashore.

In the mid-1990s, The HSUS, The Fund for Animals, and other animal protection organizations had taken the tack of urging the Cape Cod National Seashore managers to conduct an environmental assess-

ment of the pheasant-stocking program. These organizations commented on the ensuing assessment and organized letter writing drives to the Seashore's superintendent, imploring her to end the program.

These efforts were successful, because they forced the Seashore man-

agement to examine the environmental effects of pheasant stocking, they raised awareness of the issue, and they ensured that our concerns were made part of the public record. The steps we took afterward

depended upon having laid this foundation.

Notably, the environmental assessment process did not address all of the environmental concerns surrounding the program, but it did assess the potential impacts of a research project, commissioned by the Seashore management, which found that none of the birds released at Cape Cod National Seashore survive the winter. This supported our argument that the program needlessly wastes animals' lives, since no birds live long enough to establish a wild population.

In 2001, The HSUS joined with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) to request that the Cape Cod National Seashore's Advisory Commission review the pheasant-stocking program and offer its recommendations to the superintendent. We testified at a Commission hearing, organized activists to attend a public meeting, and began developing local media contacts.

In the end, our position received the support of Cape Cod's Provincetown Board of Selectmen, the local daily newspaper, another wildlife rehabilitation center, a land trust group, countless local residents, and the majority of the Commission members. However, because the Commission acts by total consensus and its members were not unanimous in supporting our position, its report to the superintendent did not recommend terminating the stocking program.

Together with three local residents, the MSPCA, and The Fund for Animals, The HSUS sued the NPS, on the grounds that the pheasant stocking program does not comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as the NPS has not adequately addressed the potential environmental consequences of pheasant stocking and the attendant hunting. We requested a restraining order to stop pheasant stocking for the 2002 hunting season. The night before the restraining order was heard in court, the NPS announced that it would phase out the pheasant-stocking program, and, surprisingly, it exempted the Cape Cod National Seashore from NPS management policies

prohibiting the introduction of non-native animals until the program was phased out. The judge denied our request for an injunction, and the NPS refused to set a deadline for the phase-out of the program.

Awaiting the judge's decision on the lawsuit itself, we are mid-stride in this campaign, but we are confident that we will end pheasant stocking on the Cape Cod National Seashore.

What the future holds

While hunting in general is waning in popularity, pheasant hunting is particularly vulnerable. Even the deputy director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife suggests that pheasant hunting violates hunters' own code of "fair chase." In a hearing on pheasant stocking on the National Seashore, he said

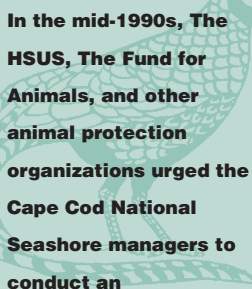
... put-and-take pheasant hunting is certainly questionable relative to fair chase. And so we need to balance the numbers of pheasants that are put out there that predators take versus the ones that hunters take and at the same time not have it be so unethical that the bird is just sitting there and the hunter walks up and shoots it.

The ethics of pheasant stocking are a nationwide concern. Outdoor writer Ken Hoopengartner criticized Washington State's pheasant program in his region's Tri-City Herald, claiming that stocking semi-tame birds encourages unsportsmanlike conduct. In his column, Hoopengartner urged hunters to "adhere to the ethics of sportsmanship in the pursuit of any game species," warning that failing to do so "provides ammunition to those waiting to slam the door shut on hunting."

One can wholeheartedly support the abolition of all sport hunting and simultaneously acknowledge the wisdom of incremental change. If the ethics of pheasant stocking divide the hunting community, why are animal protection advocates so quiet about the systematic farming and release of pheasants for shooting?

Henry Spira, the influential animal protection advocate who helped reform the cosmetics industry, picked his targets based on their vulnerabilities to public

(Continued on back page)



In the mid-1990s, The HSUS, The Fund for Animals, and other animal protection organizations urged the Cape Cod National Seashore managers to conduct an environmental assessment of the pheasant-stocking program.



REPORTS



Weakening the National Environmental Policy Act: How the Bush Administration Uses the Judicial System to Weaken Environmental Protections, by Defenders of Wildlife, is an empirical study of arguments the administration has made in federal litigation where NEPA violations have allegedly caused harm to the environment. The arguments are compared with well-accepted legal interpretations of those NEPA issues, and the response of the federal judiciary to the administration's arguments is also assessed. A table of NEPA cases decided from January 21, 2001 to January 21, 2003 is included in the 37-page report. Read or download at www.defenders.org.

Endangered Forests: endangered freedoms: 10 Endangered National Forests at Risk from Bush Administration Policies, from the National Forest Protection Alliance and GreenPeace, identifies and profiles the 10 national forests most endangered by the Administration's attempts to accelerate logging, mining and other development. The 40-page report is on line at: www.endangeredforests.org/report/index.htm.

The Conservation-Minded Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning: How to Get Involved in Minimizing the Impacts of Roads on Florida's Wildlife, from Defenders, briefly explains the impacts of roads on wildlife and outlines the transportation planning and design process, explaining how to participate in it most effectively. Read the report online at www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/new/florida.

Second Nature: Improving Transportation Without Putting Nature Second, from Defenders, profiles innovative programs that seek to improve transportation infrastructure while protecting biodiversity. Read the report or an executive summary online at www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/secondnature.html.

Broken Promises: The reality of Big Oil in America's Arctic, from The Wilderness Society, compares the public relations claims made by drilling proponents to the oil industry's track record and recent actions in the oil fields of Alaska's North Slope.

Read the report online at www.wilderness.org/NewsRoom/Release/200030408.cfm.

Integrating Land Use Planning and Biodiversity, from Defenders, summarizes a 2002 workshop to cultivate dialog on the integration of biodiversity and land use planning and to highlight conservation planning already underway. Read the report of an excerpt from the executive summary online at www.defenders.org/habitat/planning.html.

BOOKS



Slam-Dunking Wal-Mart!, by Al Norman, known as "the guru of the Anti-Wal-Mart movement," provides a full strategic plan for stopping superstore sprawl in your hometown. 256 pp. HB: \$24.95 (online purchases) plus \$4 first book S/H. Visit www.sprawl-busters.com/slamdunk.html or call 1-877-DUNK-WAL.

Vital Signs 2003: Trends that Are Shaping Our Future, published by The Worldwatch Institute, presents the latest economic, social, and environmental statistics and explains the most relevant global trends affecting human and environmental health. PB: \$14.95. Phone 1-888-544-2303 or go to www.worldwatch.org.

Six Modern Plagues and How We Are Causing Them, by Mark Jerome Walters, draws on new research, interviews, and his own investigations to connect emerging health risks and their ecological origins, providing a useful introduction to the links between disease and environmental degradation. HC, 212 pp., \$22. Island Press: 800-828-1302 or www.islandpress.org.

OTHER



On Nature's Terms: Predators and People Co-existing in Harmony, a 25-minute video, by award-winning film producer John de Graaf, makes the important connection between the ecological, economic, and social factors for carnivore species conservation and the necessity of protecting large, connected expanses of land. As the film focuses on the positive changes in attitudes toward predators, it is ideal for public forums, as a training tool for staff and volunteers, and

for fundraisers. Purchase for \$20, including tax, shipping, and handling. Make checks payable to WildFutures/EII at WildFutures, 353 Wallace Way, NE, Suite 12, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110, or phone 206-780-9718 for credit card purchases. Every PBS station in the U.S. received a press packet with the video; you can help by calling your local PBS station and urging them to air it.

Signposts 2003: Envisioning the Future, a Worldwatch CD-ROM, contains all text, datasets, graphs, and tables from State of the World 2001, 2002, and 2003, and Vital Signs 2001, 2002, and 2003, as well as *A Worldwatch Retrospective: Timelines and Tables*. Windows, Mac, and Unix/Linux compatible; includes both HTML and PDF formats and provides hundreds of hyperlinks to related online articles and websites. Individual: \$99, Institution: \$125, Student: \$75. Call 888-544-2303 or visit www.worldwatch.org.

Draft Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances Handbook, a publication produced to guide private landowners in implementing Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA), has been released for public review. The CCAA permit program is designed to encourage landowners to manage their land to benefit ESA-listing candidate species. The handbook text is online at <http://endangered.fws.gov/candidates/ccaa handbook.html>.

Keeping the Wild in the West Quarterly Bulletin, published by the Predator Conservation Alliance, provides a forum for the latest scientific research and management practices for forest carnivores in the American West. Read the first three issues online at www.predatorconservation.org. Additional reports and maps are available online as well, along with registration information for this year's conference in Yellowstone National Park, October 2-5.

If you have a publication or website announcement, please phone (301) 258-3147 or e-mail bstallman@hsus.org.

Jessica Almy/HSUS




After being raised in captivity for “put and take” programs, pheasants lack even the basic survival skills necessary to evade predators and to forage.

PHEASANTS, cont. from page 14

opinion, the intensity of the suffering they caused, and the opportunities available for change. If we are to use this framework for choosing our targets, then pheasant stocking is an ideal issue on which to focus the attention of the animal protection community. The practice is vulnerable even within the hunting community because of concerns about “fair chase,” and hunting itself is already passing by the wayside. But most importantly, the animals’ suffering is as preventable as it is certain.

When I think back to the pheasant I met here at the Cape Wildlife Center, I am struck by the irony of the situation: What saved his life was that he had been hit by a car.

This need not happen. Not here. Not anywhere.

Jessica Almy
Wildlife Advocate
The Humane Society of the United States Cape Wildlife Center 

PHEASANT STOCKING IN 2002

State	Number of Pheasants Stocked Directly by State Wildlife Agencies	Other Stocking Activity
Connecticut	18,935	
Idaho	17,170	
Illinois	68,764	
Massachusetts	40,000	+8,000 chicks given to game clubs to raise and stock
New Hampshire	13,000	
New Jersey	50,000	
New York	104,145	+1,000 stocked by game clubs
Ohio	15,000	
Pennsylvania	192,710	
Rhode Island	3,500	
Washington	100,000	
Wisconsin	58,000	+55,000 birds given to game clubs
Wyoming	20,000	
SUBTOTALS	701,224	64,000
GRAND TOTAL	765,224	

Wildlife Tracks

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
 Wildlife Department and
 The HSUS Wildlife Land Trust

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