Endangered Species for Sale

Your government wants to facilitate trophy hunters importing markhor from Pakistan and wood bison from Canada, leather manufacturers importing crocodiles from Guatemala or Belize, and zoos and circuses importing Asian elephants for display and entertainment.

The Bush Administration has undertaken a new assault on the Endangered Species Act (ESA), one of the world’s most important conservation laws. On August 18, 2003, the Department of the Interior published a notice in the Federal Register announcing its intent to alter dramatically the conditions under which permits would be granted for the importation of endangered species from other countries.

With some exceptions, the ESA prevents the import of foreign endangered species, over 500 species across the globe. One exception is when such an action would be for scientific purposes or “enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species”; in other words, when the import of some individual animals would have a significant benefit to the wild population as a whole.

The new plan would drastically lower the bar that zoos, circuses, or trophy hunters must meet to qualify for this exemption to the detriment of countless animals. Unabashedly, the notice absurdly refers to highly imperiled Asian elephants as “surplus” animals!

This scheme is based on the unjustified suggestion that there may be some conservation benefit when live animals—or even the parts and products of slaughtered ones—are sold in the U.S. market. The unsubstantiated claim is that when this sort of commerce occurs, money goes back into conservation projects in the country of origin.

In fact, the proposed policy change would contain few restrictions and little public oversight. The policy suggests that permits would be granted in “limited situations” though there is no guidance as to what that means. Furthermore, the program that is being funded should be “designed” to promote conservation in the wild. There is no guarantee that it will promote such conservation at all. And once the endangered animal is on U.S. soil, there is no chance that the individual would be sent back to the wild if the exporting country does not live up to its end of the bargain.

The Bush Administration is putting a price tag on the head of every endangered species on earth—and it would allow these animals to be sold at any price.

AWI’s Ben White, the mastermind of the popular dolphin costumes seen in Cancun during the WTO, Ministerial Meeting (see story pages 6-7).
When Ethics Fail You, Just Make Threats

This ominous statement by Ted Reilly, head of the Swaziland Big Game Parks Department, was turned into a public relations mantra by the San Diego Zoo and the Lowry Park Zoo as they fought to import eleven elephants from Swaziland. To gain public support, San Diego Zoo has referred to the elephant purchase disingenuously as a “conservation effort” and steadfastly refused to share a combined four and a half acres of unnatural living space.

This was but one of many alternative locations that we identified.

The San Diego Zoo further maintains that it needs to snatch the elephants from their natural habitat because “Such a captive population contributes to the hedge against extinction of this species in the wild.” But neither zoo has made any claim whatsoever that these elephants, or any of their offspring (shouldbreeding ever succeeds—a risky proposition for elephants, to be sure), would go back into the wild. If nothing else, both sides of this issue agree that elephants do not breed well in zoos.

And while the zoos bought these elephants for a meager $112,000 contribution to the Swaziland Big Game Parks Department, they have spent many millions of dollars on the small enclosures in which the elephants will have to live. The true wildlife conservation priority rests with significant in situ resource investments—this means millions of dollars to protect the wild population, not increase the number in captivity.

These eleven elephants came from South Africa originally, where their families were killed as part of a cull a decade ago. By Mr. Reilly’s own admission, “They have all grown up together in a herd and are therefore familiar with each other.” Now, eleven have been removed from the wild and then separated even further—four to Florida and seven to California. A simple, sad question comes to mind: What if they miss their friends?

Judge Bates recognized that Mr. Reilly’s statement amounted to a bold threat and noted in his decision that “the Court does not appreciate such brinkmanship.” But in the end, as long as Ted Reilly continued to claim that he would kill the elephants, despite the offer to translocate them humanely and instead stated that “suddenly, and without any signs of distress or struggle, Benjamin became unconscious and jumped out of his saddle.”

No enforcement action was taken by USDA.

• USDA determined that Ringling’s use of chains and ropes to isolate nursing elephants from their mothers forcibly at Ringling’s “Center for Elephant Conservation” caused the animals “unnecessary trauma, behavioral stress, and physical harm,” and “was not in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act,” yet the agency quietly closed the investigation without taking any enforcement action.

• Two former Ringling employees provided detailed accounts of rampant mistreatment of the elephants. One of the elephants, Nicole, was beaten so badly that the bulb of a flashlight was embedded in its back. The USDA determined that Ringling’s use of chains and ropes to isolate nursing elephants from their mothers forcibly at Ringling’s “Center for Elephant Conservation” caused the animals “unnecessary trauma, behavioral stress, and physical harm,” and “was not in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act,” yet the agency quietly closed the investigation without taking any enforcement action.

Three years ago AWI, FFA, ASPCA, and Tom Rider, a former Ringling employee, brought a lawsuit against Ringling under the Endangered Species Act for its mistreatment of Asian elephants—an endangered species (see AWI Quarterly Fall 2000). Earlier this year, the U.S. Court of Appeals rejected Ringling’s arguments that the case should be dismissed so it is now finally moving forward in the federal district court in Washington, D.C. The plaintiffs are being represented by the public interest law firm, Meyer & Glitzenstein.*

A bullhook, otherwise known as an ankus, is a device with a metal head similar to a fireplace poker (including a sharp point) that sits on a two to three foot handle.

USDA ignores Ringling Bros.’ Elephant Abuse

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has set a horrible precedent—elephant families can be ripped apart to satisfy the desire of American zoo executives to import live elephants for display.
For over a decade AWI has watched global free trade agreements wage war on animal protection laws. This September, we took our fight to the front lines and attended the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in Cancun, Mexico.

Just minutes before the opening ceremony commenced, AWI’s Wendy Swann took advantage of a rare opportunity and approached U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman directly to convey our position that legislation designed to protect animals should not be threatened by implementation of the WTO. Secretary Veneman was given a copy of AWI’s most recent Quarterly and our free trade brochure, both detail the imperative to include animal welfare protection in all trade discussions generally and support humane family farmers around the world specifically.

As the conference began, opening speeches by officials representing the WTO and the United Nations, as well as Mexico’s President Vicente Fox, all emphasized the importance of sustainable agriculture and the desperate need to assist least developed countries and fight poverty.

In a particularly eloquent statement, delivered on behalf of Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, the Secretary General conveyed the following thoughts: “...we must tackle poverty. To assist least developed countries and emphasized the importance of sustainable agriculture around the world specifically.

Working closely with our Mexican colleagues of the Grupo Ecologica del Mayah, AWI dolphins marched several times. The first March was one of the most peculiar demonstrations on behalf of wildlife ever staged, with Mayan priestesses wearing our foam dolphins on their heads while conducting ancient rituals of reverence for the earth and her creatures. The ceremony was translated into Mayan, English, Spanish, and Aztec languages. Then, more than 200 people proceeded to march as dolphins around the WTO.

In Seattle, the dolphins prompted smiles among dozens of sympathetic delegates and passersby, enabling AWI staff to pass out literature and ask for support in the negotiations. Our exception was a British delegate who huffed, “Why don’t you go back to the sea where you came from?”

Whether sea turtles or dolphins, or whatever the future costume may be, the use of props has enabled AWI to connect with local citizens and peacefully educate countless individuals on the need for animal protection and the need to include animal welfare in international trade agreements.

Just outside the negotiations, WTO delegates approach dolphin demonstrators to learn about their agenda. The sign reads “Protect Life.” In English and Spanish.

AWI at the WTO

In a reprise of our launch of hundreds of sea turtle impersonators during the aborted 1999 Seattle meeting of the WTO, AWI created foam dolphin costumes for the recent WTO meeting in Cancun, Mexico. Like the turtles, the dolphins have become a symbol of the sovereign right of countries to establish laws that protect wildlife. With few exceptions, the WTO has held that member states cannot embargo a product based on how it is obtained or produced, deeming illegal such laws as the International Dolphin Conservation Act, which forbids the importation of tuna caught by setting nets around dolphins.

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AWI’s Wendy Swann explains to a fellow NGO from Nigeria how animal protection is beneficial to poor communities.

Dolphins Swim Down the Streets of Cancun

For some, the lack of consensus in Cancun suggests that the meeting failed and creates uncertainty as to how the WTO will survive. For others, the outcome signifies success and a positive turning point. Regardless, it is unlikely the WTO will dissolve into oblivion—in fact, specific agriculture negotiations are already scheduled for October and more general negotiations will commence no later than December.

Left unchecked and not forced to include animal protection, liberalized trade will likely continue to have a detrimental effect on sentient beings and the environment. Therefore, as long as these negotiations continue, AWI will continue to advocate the protection of animals. Trade and commerce will not take place in an ethical void.
Time to Crack Down on Animal Fighting

In an effort to deter barbaric animal battles such as dogfighting and cockfights, federal legislation has been introduced to establish felony-level jail time for anyone who violates the Animal Welfare Act’s provision outlawing animal fighting and prohibit the interstate and foreign commerce in torturous tools such as knives and gaffs used in cockfighting.

The Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act, introduced in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1532) by Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) and in the Senate (S. 736) by Senator John Ensign (R-NV), doubles the current prison time for those who engage in animal fighting from one to two years. The Act further makes it “unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument attached, or designed or intended to be attached, to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture.”

Senator Ensign said on the Senate floor, “This legislation targets the troubling, widespread, and sometimes underground activities of dogfighting and cockfighting where dogs and birds are bred and trained to fight to the death. This is done for the sheer enjoyment and illegal wagering of the animals’ handlers and spectators...”

Antifreeze Deaths Leave a Bad Taste in Congressman’s Mouth

Congressman Gary Ackerman (D-NY), alarmed at the idea that as many as 10,000 animals may die annually after ingesting automobile antifreeze containing ethylene glycol, has introduced H.R. 1563, legislation to “require engine coolant and antifreeze to contain a bittering agent so as to render it unpalatable.”

According to the National Safety Council, ethylene glycol, which was used in World War I as a substitute for glycerol in explosives, is used in antifreeze today, it can have deadly consequences. According to Ackerman notes that consumption of spilled antifreeze “poses a danger to our youngsters playing outdoors, dogs being walked by their owners, cats being let out of the house, and even stray animals such as birds, squirrels, raccoons, etc.”

“The Antifreeze Safety Act” calls for all engine coolants or antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol also to “include denatonium benzoate at a minimum of 30 parts per million.” Denatonium benzoate is considered by many to be the bitterest substance known to humans. Animals would not ingest a liquid containing this unpalatable substance, which is already used as a bittering agent to repel deer from consuming plants in one’s yard.

Antifreeze spills may be inevitable, but animal poisonings as a result can be minimized dramatically with enactment of this modest but vital legislation.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

—Urge both of your Senators to cosponsor S. 736, the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act.
—Urge your Representative to cosponsor H.R. 1532, the House version of the Animal Fighting bill; and H.R. 1563, the Antifreeze Safety Act.

Address Senators as: The Honorable (full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.
Address Representatives as: The Honorable (full name), United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) and the Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT)

A
nnonymous donor has provided funds to award up to twelve applicants with funds for proposals intended to improve laboratory animal welfare. The focus of these awards is to improve housing, handling, and/or experimental situations for laboratory animals. This program is not species limited. Studies may, for example, examine:

• how physiological and behavioral stress responses to common husbandry (e.g., capture) and traditional treatment procedures (e.g., gavage, injection, blood collection) can be reduced or eliminated (e.g., by training the subjects to cooperate rather than resist);
• whether animals caged at different tier levels show different physiological and behavioral stress responses when being approached by personnel, and how these responses can be minimized or avoided;
• whether the presence of a compatible companion buffers physiological and behavioral stress responses to experimental situations (e.g., enforced restraint).

Any studies to be undertaken must be non-invasive, with the possible exception of obtaining blood for biochemical measurements and if possible using animals who have been trained to cooperate during venipuncture. Objective measures might include behavior, coat appearance, body weight, analysis of feces, urine, or blood as described above.

Each award will be for $6,000. In the case of successful completion of the application, some individuals may be invited to present their papers at a national symposium. Additional funds will be provided for travel for these meetings.

This award is limited to North American applications. The proposal itself should be in the form of a letter clearly stating the objectives of the study and the anticipated outcomes. It should provide sufficient detail so that reviewers can understand what is being proposed, how it will be achieved, and how the data will be evaluated.

Each proposal must be approved by the Animal Care and Use Committee, and the proposal itself must be signed by the Head of Animal Services and the Director of Animal Services at the Institution. Applications should be sent via email to alternativetesting@jhu.edu. Any parts of the application that cannot be sent by email must be sent in multiples of 10 copies each to: Alan M. Goldberg, Ph.D., The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health 111 Marketplace, Suite 840, Baltimore, MD 21202-6709

Deadlines and Review: The deadline for submission of these applications is December 10, 2003, and they will be reviewed by an international group of reviewers. The AWI and CAAT will make the final decisions on those applications to be funded. Successful applicants will be funded by February 28, 2004.

It is hoped that successful applicants will be able to submit a manuscript of their project and its outcome to an appropriate journal. Final reports provided by the applicant will be posted on websites such as the Animal Welfare Information Center website, the Altweb site, the Animal Welfare Institute website, and other places as appropriate.

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A beagle suffering from untreated bite wounds at Baird’s kennel.

four of the 125 dogs taken from Baird’s premises.

DOG DEALER’S DAY OF RECKONING

A number of the victims at Baird’s Arkansas facility were in need of veterinary care, including emaciated dogs and dogs suffering from heartworm, ehrlichia, eye infections, and bite wounds. All of the animals were violently dunked in a tank of the insecticide Permethrin to kill fleas and ticks, according to LCA.

had obvious eye infections. The lone cat, a gray haired tabby with a bad eye, cowered in a litter box inside a large cat carrier set apart from the dogs.

It is believed that the USPS is involved because in addition to keeping too many animals in small pens, providing no shade, inefficiencies in record keeping, sanitation, veterinary care, and corrugated sufficient evidence of wrong-doing to obtain a search warrant. The agents investigating Baird have been close-lipped about the situation, but the LCA website contains a portion of the organization’s findings including graphic photographs and video footage of animal abuse and neglect amid the squalor. The footage includes scenes of a dog being shot and another being hung by his collar and hit in the head.

This isn’t the first run-in with the law for Baird; in fact, the local sheriff noted, “I remember one occasion several years ago when we recovered one dog [from Baird’s premises] that was lost or stolen.” USDA inspectors have documented deficiencies in record keeping, sanitation, veterinary care, and housing at Baird’s premises. Baird has been cited by USDA for keeping too many animals in small pens, providing no shade or too little shade for animals, and keeping animals that were lame or suffered illnesses that needed veterinary attention. In 1997 Baird was convicted of violating the Animal Welfare Act but was fined a mere $5,000. In that case the judge ruled that Baird’s “failure to verify the information given to him by his suppliers—by looking at the person’s driver’s license—amounted to failure to maintain his records fully and correctly.” He also found that Baird had purchased random source animals from unauthorized sources.

DOGS OF RECKONING

The Animal Welfare Institute has discouraged laboratories from utilizing Class B, random source dog and cat dealers, because of the myriad problems associated with them. While the number of dealers has plummeted, 18 remain in operation. Baird is believed to have sold at least 3,000 dogs a year for experimentation and was likely making between $250 and $800 per animal, easily earning him more than a million dollars a year for the animals he collected from trade days and flea markets among other sources. The box on this page contains a list of research facilities that have supported Baird’s business by purchasing animals from him.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “The search was in connection with an ongoing investigation of alleged violations of the Animal Welfare Act and other federal criminal statutes.” It is believed that the USPS is involved because in addition to selling live animals for experimentation, Baird was selling animal parts and shipping them by U.S. mail.

One hundred twenty-five dogs and one cat were seized during the search, which lasted from August 26 to the 31st. Most of the dogs who were seized in the raid are hounds, walkers, beagles, and some Labrador mixes. According to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, “many begged to be petted. Some appear thin, their ribs showing through their skin, and others

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You can help by sending much-needed letters to USDA thanking them for taking action against Baird and encouraging the prompt revocation of his dealer’s license. The contact information for USDA is: Chester Gibson, Deputy Administrator, Animal Care, USDA/APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737; email: ace@aphis.usda.gov.

Four of the 125 dogs taken from Baird’s premises during the raid. These photos are from USDA’s website. www.aphis.usda.gov/ where you can view images of the animals who were seized. The animals have been placed with rescue groups where they are receiving veterinary care, being spayed or neutered, and will then be available for adoption.

The groups include Bluebonnet Beagle Rescue of Texas, Inc., Doberman Rescue Group of Oklahoma, Michigan Hound Rescue, and Northeastern Arkanasons for Animals.

CUSTOMERS OF C.C. BAIRD

- Allegheny University of the Health Sciences (PA)
- C.W.L. (TX)
- Church and Dwight (NJ)
- Colorado State University
- East Tennessee State University
- IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. (ME)
- Jefferson College Vet Tech (MO)
- Iowa State University
- KCM (Kids Count in Missouri)
- Loyola University Medical Center (IL)
- Masonic Medical Research (NY)
- Mercy Health Care (AZ)
- Miami University (FL)
- Mississippi State University
- Naval Medical Center (VA)
- Professional Laboratory (NC)
- SA Scientific (TX)
- St. Joseph’s Hospital (AZ)
- Still Meadow, Inc. (TX)
- Synthetics, Inc. (CA)
- Texas Tech Health Center
- Tulane Medical School (LA)
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- University of California at Irvine
- University of Florida
- University of Nebraska
- University of Pittsburgh (PA)
- University of Illinois
- University of Mississippi
- University of Missouri at Columbia
- University of South Alabama
- University of Tennessee
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Virginia
- Vanderbilt University (TN)
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- West Virginia University
- Young Veterinary Research Services (CA)
Calves have a strong need to suck, and a frequent industry criticism of keeping calves in groups is that they suck on other. In this project, special buckets attached to the sides of the pens of calves in groups are used to feed the calves. The buckets have specially designed rubber teats that satisfy the calves’ instinct to suck, even when there is no milk in the buckets.

Because most U.S. animal scientists specializing in calf nutrition do so from the formula-fed veal perspective, Johnson and colleagues have been working with scientists in the Netherlands to formulate quality diets for the male calves that are more in keeping with the calves’ natural digestive needs.

The premise of AWI’s humane farm husbandry program is that animals must enjoy sound physical and psychological health in environments that permit constructive expression of natural behaviors. Housing and management should consider the biological and behavioral characteristics of the animal and include sufficient space and opportunity for performing self-protective (e.g., avoiding pain or injury), self-maintenance (e.g., grooming), and other important behaviors (e.g., care of young and social interaction). Animals should be free from pain, fear, hunger and thirst, discomfort, disease, and distress. Small family-owned and operated dairy farms, where cows are traditionally released from straw-bedded barns to graze on green pastures as soon as Spring weather allows, are disappearing from the American landscape. Mega-dairies confine thousands of cows on concrete and dirt lots year-round, using bovine growth hormone and non-therapeutic administration of antibiotics are prohibited. AWI’s protocol addresses the need to preserve family-owned and operated dairies characterized by high welfare standards. This form of agriculture tends to preserve the identity and value of individual members of the herd and avoids the growing dependence of dairy operators on the cheapest unskilled hired labor available.

The project is in the process of developing a customer base for these young male calves so that more restaurants and chefs will choose to purchase meat from calves raised in high welfare environments. Preliminary market tests at upscale restaurants and with chefs ethically committed to purchasing food that comes from humane, sustainable sources have indicated that the chefs are pleased with the results of their decisions to support the project’s aims, and they welcome the opportunity to choose meat from calves raised with humane husbandry. AWI is grateful to contribute its expertise and guidance to this project to improve the conditions under which male dairy calves are raised.

AWI Dairying Standards

The Animal Welfare Institute’s forthcoming Humane Dairy Cattle Husbandry Standards require that the animals graze pasture in season, have freedom of movement when sheltered from inclement weather, be provided straw or similar suitable bedding to protect the animal from a hard or abrasive resting surface and to help keep the animals clean. Shipping newborn calves to auctions or other farms, tail-docking, electric cow trainers, tie stalls or stanchions, and administration of bovine growth hormone and non-therapeutic administration of antibiotics are prohibited. The standards require that herds be allowed to graze on healthy, well-maintained pastures in season.

Cattle in this dairy factory spend their days on cement floors standing in their own urine and manure. Lameness is prevalent in dairy factories.
overcrowded and confined to sheds with inadequate flooring. Muscovy ducks prefer to rest and sleep in trees, but in factories they are restricted to inadequate flooring, as restriction to inadequate flooring, overcrowding, solitary confinement of breeding animals, and mutilations. In the case of ducks, the most common mutilation is debilling, the removal of part of the top bill with scissors or a hot blade. Scientists acknowledge debilling causes acute and chronic pain. Confined to factories, ducks, who are waterfowl, are prohibited from accessing adequate amounts of water. Furthermore ducks, like all poultry, are exempt from the federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which requires that animals be insensible to pain before they actually are killed. Two of the largest and most notorious duck factories are Maple Leaf Farms, located in Indiana, California, with facilities in Indiana, California, Wisconsin, and Ohio, and Grimaud Farms, located in North Dakota. In direct contrast to the cruel status quo, AWI continues to establish humane husbandry standards and has now developed criteria for ducks. AWI’s standards allow ducks the opportunity to express natural behaviors essential to health and well-being such as swimming, bathing, and foraging for food. The water requirement also enables ducks to express natural sieving behavior. A duck has a row of toothlike serrations along the edge of the bill that are used to strain food out of the water. As for foraging, ducks naturally spend a substantial amount of time searching for food. AWI standards require ducks be fed nutritional feed and require that the food be distributed, or occur in the environment, so that the ducks search for it thereby providing enrichment and exercise. Additional criteria include outdoor access, shelter from extreme elements and predators, and minimal group size. Furthermore, wire and slatted flooring as well as debilling are prohibited. AWI’s guidelines are not humane but practical, and past experience illustrates that public demand has the power to abolish cruel factory practices. One example is the case in England in which consumers refused to buy ducks that had been debilled. Farmers who had previously espoused that it was impossible to raise ducks without debilling responded to the pressure and stopped the practice of debilling Muscovy ducks.

A Course in Cruelty at Purdue University

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Contact AWI and visit www.awionline.org for copies of our humane husbandry standards. Pass them along to grocery store and restaurant managers. Do not purchase products from duck factories, and educate others about humane alternatives.

Duck Hunters Prey on Predators in North Dakota

About 200,000 acres of prime wetland in North Dakota have had virtually all of their raccoons, fox, and skunks eliminated by trapping. Steel jaw leghold traps, necksnare, and conibear traps were used. The trapping has been conducted out of season, in the springtime when mothers are rearing their young, by trappers who received a bonus for doing a particularly successful job. The fur trappers who had inhabited the land were massacred in a series of pseudo-scientific studies to determine the effects on the breeding success of ducks if an effort was made to eradicate all predators from the ducks’ territory. Common sense would tell you that the population of ducks will increase with-out predators, yet, oddly enough, the researchers “were somewhat surprised about finding dramatically higher nest success on trapped sites.”

The project, conducted from 1994 to 2002, has been supported by Delta Waterfowl (DW). The mission of DW is “...to enhance waterfowl populations while securing the future of waterfowling,” and a strategic objective is to “preserve and promote hunting as an integral part of waterfowl management.” Under the guise of research, DW has extirpated predators over vast tracts of land by securing exceptions to the state trapping laws in order to increase duck numbers for hunting. This “research” must be prohibited.

Resources provides an “educational” special use permit so that raccoon, opossum, skunk, muskrat, otter, and beaver can be trapped as part of the class even though the trapping is done outside of the state mandated season. The course is touted as teaching a “respect for wildlife,” yet leghold traps, neck snares, and conibear traps are the instructive tools, and there is nothing respectful about these cruel traps.

Apparentely Purdue University has partnered with the FTA in conducting this “trapper’s college” for more than two decades. The FTA is a big supporter of steel jaw leghold traps, despite the fact that they are condemned as inhumane by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Hospital Association, and the National Animal Damage Control Association. Steel traps and conibear traps adorn the FTA’s website. The class runs for six days and will allow students to “experience at least nine hours a day of intensive trap line instruction.” The animals caught, be they target or non-target victims, may suffer severed tendons and ligaments, broken bones, amputation of toes, and a long, drawn-out struggle against an exacitingly painful device prior to death. And the students, who have inflicted such suffering can’t keep the animals’ fur pelts, but they get several books and other trapping propaganda, free samples of animal lures, a certificate and graduation patch from the FTA, and two continuing education credits from Purdue University.

You CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Register your objection to Purdue University’s so-called educational trapping program. Please write to Martin C. Jischke, President, Purdue University, 1011 Hovde Hall, Room #200, West Lafayette, IN 47907 or email him at mcjischke@purdue.edu.

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United Nations Urged To End Destructive Fishing

BY TODD STEINER
DIRECTOR, SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT

More than 400 leading scientists and 100 organizations from around the globe, including the Animal Welfare Institute, are calling for a United Nations (U.N.) moratorium on pelagic longline and gillnet fishing in the Pacific Ocean to protect endangered sea turtles and other marine species. Longlining and gillnetting are major factors in the decline of the Pacific leatherback turtle, for instance, which is predicted to go extinct in ten years if immediate action is not taken. It appears that the return of nesting leatherbacks to Pacific beaches this year was the worst on record. Scientists estimate that there are now fewer than 5,000 nesting female leatherbacks left in the Pacific Ocean down from 91,000 in 1980, a decline of 95%.

Commercial longline fishing involves a ship at sea pulling (literally) a long fishing line, sometimes up to 60 miles long with a thousand baited hooks. This fishing technique is indiscriminate and causes high by-catch of unintended marine species, including birds such as albatrosses who dive for the bait, are hooked, and tragically drown. Longlines are sometimes called the “landmines of the sea” because of their widespread arbitrary slaughter. Similarly, huge “gillnets” draped in the ocean swallow up thousands of unintended victims, including marine mammals who suffocate and die. In an open letter to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, which appeared recently in The New York Times, noted scientists (among them Edward O. Wilson, Dr. Sylvia Earle, and AWI’s good friend in Mexico, Homero Aridjis) alerted governments and fisheries managers across the globe to the worsening crises of our global fisheries and the rapid decline of the Pacific leatherback sea turtle. (It can be viewed at http://www.seaturtles.org/pdf/scientistletterfinal.pdf.)

The decline of the leatherback in the last five years is nothing short of catastrophic, and it is imperative that the global community come together to eliminate the use of the most destructive forms of industrial fishing before it is too late,” said Dr. Sylvia Earle, an Explorer-in-residence at National Geographic and esteemed marine expert. Dr. Larry Crowder, Duke University Marine Laboratory researcher, added, “tragic declines of leatherback and loggerhead sea turtles have been well documented in the Pacific, …and the impact of longline fishing on these and other marine species can’t be underestimated.”

A recent report to the Pew Charitable Trusts estimates that there are almost two billion hooks set per year by the longline fishing fleet. The United Nations and Kofi Annan must recognize that in order to save the endangered leatherbacks, as well as imperiled sharks, seabirds, and dolphins, we must stop these weapons of mass destruction from destroying our oceans. There are just too many hooks adrift in the Pacific to give these threatened and endangered species a fighting chance for survival.

U.S. Courts previously have taken important steps to protect embattled marine species by closing the Hawaiian swordfish longlining fleet altogether and restricting the Hawaiian tuna longlining and California drift gill net fleets to times and areas that reduce turtle catch. Now it’s time for the rest of the world to act.

Get involved in this urgent campaign: www.seaturtles.org/actionalertdetails.cfm?actionAlertID=43.

Japan, Norway, and Now Iceland
The Whaling Axis of Evil

Despite international condemnation, Iceland has become the latest nation to resume hunting whales. Like Japan, it justifies this indefensible action under the guise of “scientific whaling.” On August 18, Icelandic whalers killed a minke whale, the first such slaughter in almost 15 years.

At the most recent meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Berlin, the Government of Iceland outlined its scheme to resume whaling, claiming its intention to do so for scientific purposes. One hundred minke, one hundred fin, and fifty sei whales are to be slaughtered during Iceland’s renewed killing spree.

The objective, according to the proposal, “is to increase understanding of the biology and feeding ecology of important cetacean species in Icelandic waters.” In reality, Iceland is merely mimicking Japan’s most recent disingenuous claim that whales eat too much fish and they must be hunted to preserve the long-term viability of its commercial fisheries.

The U.S. Department of State officially has opposed Iceland’s decision, claiming “that lethal research on whales is not necessary, and that the needed scientific data can be obtained by well-established non-lethal means.” The U.S. is not alone in this opinion. A démarché sent to the Icelandic Government by the U.S. and 22 other countries notes that “equally good data can be secured in almost all cases by non-lethal techniques.” The statement goes on to reject Iceland’s claim “that the research will provide useful data on the amount of fish whales eat.”

The underlying threat is clear: Iceland is setting the stage for a return to full-scale commercial whaling, which reports claim could begin in three years.

Iceland actually left the IWC in 1992 and rejoined last year with a reservation on the whaling moratorium. Absurdly, Iceland was allowed to vote in favor of its own readmission. According to Dr. Sandra Altherr of the German non-governmental organization Pro Wildlife, Iceland has killed over 35,000 whales since 1883, and its current intention is to open up a commercial international trade in whale meat with Japan. In a world in which whale-watching is an increasingly lucrative business it is truly amazing that more countries do not summarily reject whaling in any form.

Dr. Altherr notes that Iceland is “one of the best areas for whale watching in the world…. In 2002, 62,050 people—30% of all visitors to the country—went whale watching … contributing an estimated U.S. $14 million in 2002. Whaling, by contrast, yielded a maximum revenue of U.S. $3.5 million in 1989.”

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Write to the Embassy of Iceland urging an immediate end to any whaling whether for commercial or scientific purposes. Remind them that whale-watching is much more lucrative, and that you will not vacate in countries that promote or allow the massacre of majestic sea creatures such as whales. Write to: Ambassador Helgi Agustsson, Embassy of Iceland, 1156 15th Street N.W., Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005-1704.

Images of fished minke whale carcasses in Iceland are sure to drive whale-watching tourists away from the country. Whale-watching is much more profitable than whale killing.
The Narwhal—Still Falling Through the Cracks

By Sue Fisher
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

The mysterious narwhal is killed for its protruding tusk in a poorly managed, wasteful, and inhumane hunt. The narwhal must receive international attention and protection.

Greenland in Hot Water

Greenland’s narwhal hunt is just one aspect of an appalling conservation record. WDCS’ new, in-depth examination of Greenland’s aboriginal whaling of minke and fin whales under subsistence quotas revealed a catalogue of problems including: illegal hunting of humpback whales and targeting of killer whales; killing of almost exclusively female whales in East Greenland; use of inadequate weapons and long killing times; and the list goes on. Many of the illustrations are brilliant in their subtlety: the boy’s pet hamster slowly sprouts fins and eventually, an entire fish body; a grown-up manatee holds a mirror to the boy who sees his reflection as the young manatee he dreams he is; and there are even images of a child’s drawing of a boy and a manatee on the boy’s wall.

"I’m a Manatee, I dream that I’m a manatee, undulating underneath the sea."

Actor John Lithgow’s latest children’s book explores the fantasy world of a young boy who wishes he were a manatee. As he lies in slumber dreaming, the world around him is transformed into a watery paradise. Lithgow’s tale is written in rhymes that will appeal to the youngest readers, with most words altered to end in -atee.

“I’m a manatee, I’m a manatee, I keep my reputation spick and span-atee.” But older readers will also surely appreciate Lithgow’s lighthearted language: “Unshackled by the chains of idle vanity, A modest manatee, That’s me.”

The full-page color illustrations enhance the book immeasurably, with terrific graphics of the manatees dining with huge red bibs, coral, jelly fish, and other underwater companions, and the lad’s room from which his bedtime adventure is launched. Many of the illustrations are brilliant in their subtlety: the boy’s pet hamster slowly sprouts fins and eventually, an entire fish body; a grown-up manatee holds a mirror to the boy who sees his reflection as the young manatee he dreams he is; and there are even images of a child’s drawing of a boy and a manatee on the boy’s wall.

I’m a Manatee

Includes book and CD by John Lithgow, illustrated by Ard Hoyt

Bequests to AWI

If you would like to help assure the Animal Welfare Institute’s future through a provision in your will, this general form of bequest is suggested:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Animal Welfare Institute, located in Washington, D.C., the sum of $__, or a (specify) property.

Donations to AWI, a not-for-profit corporation exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), are tax deductible. We welcome any inquiries you may have. In cases where you have specific wishes about the disposition of your bequest, we suggest you discuss such provisions with your attorney.

"I’m very concerned for the future of the earth and its amazing creatures. We’ve got to be careful and make sure we don’t foul our own nest."

He has created a story that with its rhymes and pictures is quite hysterical and that humor helps reach his adolescent audience. Lithgow adds in the interview that “the manatee is such a wonderful animal, gentle, graceful, a little comical. It’s important for everyone to know about them. The more they know the better chances this great beast has of surviving.”

John Lithgow’s previous children’s books include two releases in 2000: Mesopher, about a creative Central Park squirrel who recreates the art of some of the masters of painting after seeing their works in a New York art museum; and Marsupial Sue, about a young kangaroo who couldn’t stand all the pounding around that kangaroo does.

—by Adam M. Roberts

I give, devise and bequeath to the Animal Welfare Institute, located in Washington, D.C., the sum of $__, or a (specifically described property).
On August 26, 2003, United States Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of California, Elizabeth D. Laporte, imposed a “tailored” injunction on the Navy, preventing unfettered deployment of its Low Frequency Active sonar (LFA).

Although the Judge was unwilling to ban the Navy from using LFA under any circumstances, especially in these days of heightened terrorism alert, she does make it quite clear that a drastic curtailment of the Navy’s plans was vital to the protection of all ocean life. She concludes, “It is undisputed that marine mammals, many of whom depend on sensitive hearing for essential activities like finding food and mates and avoiding predators, and some of whom are endangered species, will at a minimum be harassed by the extremely loud and far traveling LFA sonar. Further, endangered species including whales, listed salmon and sea turtles, will be in LFA sonar’s path. There is little margin of error without threatening their survival.”

Her detailed 73-page decision weighs the harms to the marine environment and its inhabitants of full deployment and to the United States Navy of banning deployment, and concludes that a permanent injunction could be “carefully tailored to reduce the risk to marine mammals and endangered species by restricting the sonar’s use in areas that are particularly rich in marine life, while still allowing the Navy to use this technology for testing and training in a variety of oceanic conditions.” Representatives for the environmental plaintiffs and Naval defendants have been ordered to meet on October 7 to iron out the details of the injunction.

Judge Laporte’s decision notes that the buffer zones around biologically-rich coastal areas, in which LFA deployment would be prohibited, must be extended beyond the current limit of 12 miles. Additionally, the Navy will be prevented from deploying the sonar when marine mammals and endangered sea creatures such as turtles are known to migrate, breed, or feed, during certain times or in certain areas.

The Judge’s decision came after years of rulings by the National Marine Fisheries Service in support of authorizing the Navy’s LFA deployment and subsequent legal challenges by environmental and animal protection organizations.

“The Marine Mammal Protection Act, for example, reflects the public’s profound interest in safeguarding whales, dolphins and other magnificent mammals that still live in the ocean. Unfortunately, the populations of many of these creatures, once abundant, have shrunk and some are on the verge of extinction.”

—U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth D. Laporte