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OF THE UNITED STATES

# THE Humane Society

## CLOSE-UP REPORT

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## Roadside Zoos Are Not Zoos

### HSUS Launches Campaign Against More than 1,000 Menageries of Misery

Joe is an American Black Bear. No one is really certain just where Joe came from, but there are some facts about Joe's life that we do know.

For six years, Joe lived in a cage that was so small he could not stand up on his hind legs without hitting his head on the wire that enclosed the top.

The bottom of the cage was seldom cleaned thoroughly, so Joe spent much of his time standing in old straw, candy wrappers, and his own waste, causing ulcers to develop on his feet.

Instead of having a balanced diet, Joe lived mainly on doughnuts and sodas, resulting in medical problems that stunted his growth.

Fresh air, clean water, and room to exercise were strangers to Joe. His task in life was to sit in his cage and attract the attention of the people who patronized his owner's riding stable.

After months of pressure and insistence by HSUS staff members, the owner of the riding stable finally agreed to let us find Joe a new home. When the time came for him to leave, however, he had to be sawed out of his cage because the lock on the door had completely rusted over.

Today Joe is living in an animal orphanage in California, where he is well fed and cared for. Thousands of other animals like Joe are not so lucky. They remain imprisoned in so-called roadside zoos, under grossly inhumane conditions, where the best thing that could happen to many would be a painless death.

### A Widespread Problem

No corner of the country is free from these menageries of misery. The Humane Society of the United States estimates there are more than 1,000 such establishments nationwide.

Unlike zoological gardens, these menageries are run by amateurs whose prime motives are economic. Roadside



BEACON JOURNAL

It took months of persistent pressure by HSUS officials to persuade the owner of this black bear to let us move him to a suitable home. The animal orphanage in California which accepted him specializes in reintroducing animals to the wild, but the bear's poor medical condition, after 6 years in this cramped cell, prevented a complete rehabilitation.



menagerie operators lack the knowledge and expertise to care for their animals properly. Good zoological gardens employ highly qualified professionals who are eager to work in respected institutions.

A good zoological garden, in addition to providing proper food, housing, and medical care for its animals, is an educational institution. The good zoo maintains an outreach program linking it with institutions of higher learning, and provides an environment for breeding rare and endangered species.

Concern for the welfare of animals and a dedication to learning and wildlife conservation is what distinguishes the zoological garden from the roadside menagerie.

The roadside menagerie is usually a place created to attract and entice people to other facilities such as amusement parks, service stations, diners, motels, and gift shops.

Some municipally operated zoos fall into the category of roadside menageries, too. We do not dignify them by calling them zoos because they have no potential for improvement and convey a negative message to the public about wildlife.

These municipal menageries were often started by well-meaning people who lacked the expertise to undertake such a complex venture. A parks and recreation person may have suggested a collection of animals to "improve" the local parks in the belief that a zoo would provide an educational and enjoyable experience for local citizens. The end result is a menagerie that has not been planned, is not staffed by professionals, and receives inadequate financial support.



The bare patches on this Chimpanzee's arm and leg are the result of the animal pulling out its own hair. Wild animals in captivity, when deprived of opportunities for proper exercise or companionship, often exhibit frustration reactions such as this.

## Miserable Living Conditions Common to Roadside Menageries

CROWDING can be a major problem in cages and enclosures. Each wild animal requires space for rest, exercise, and privacy. Amateur zoo keepers seldom consider the special needs of the animals. Crowding inevitably leads to poor mental and physical health and can result in unnatural conflicts between cage mates.

HOUSING is often built with no consideration for the specific needs of individual species. Animals which are swimmers, such as polar bears, often have no pool. Climbing animals, such as monkeys, may have no trees or bars to climb and swing on. Some animals actually live in cages which do not allow them to stand to their full height. Enclosures often provide no shelter from the elements.

FILTH is readily apparent. In many menageries, cages are seldom cleaned. They are littered with feces, rotting food, candy wrappers, and other garbage. Flies and other organisms which breed there spread disease. Such conditions reflect a lack of respect for animals on the part of the exhibit owners and can only inspire negative reactions from the public.

POOR DIETS are commonplace. Frequently fed on cheap carbohydrates, menagerie animals routinely develop symptoms of malnutrition. It is not unusual to see primates drinking canned soda pop or eating a candy bar. The message is clear. The animals are not being fed properly.

MEDICAL CARE is almost nonexistent at menageries. Because they don't know about or understand the specific medical requirements of their animals, the amateurs who run menageries usually fail to recognize symptoms of illness or disease at the early stages when conditions are easier to treat and cure. Thus, sick animals usually suffer for long periods before they either receive treatment or die.

You may find a menagerie where animals are provided with clean cages and adequate food. Good sanitation and a balanced diet, however, do not satisfy the complex requirements of wild animals in captivity. They also need companionship, exercise, and privacy, and when these needs are not met, not only are the animals maladjusted, but the public which views them gets distorted ideas about their behavior and appearance. Any facility which keeps wild animals for the purposes of entertainment and amusement is exploiting animals and doing nothing for the public.



## ROADSIDE MENAGERIES

### What is The HSUS Doing? What Are We Planning to Do?

The HSUS was one of the first national animal welfare organizations to take a long, hard look at all zoos, including roadside menageries. During the last nine years, we have worked intensively, conducting zoo inspections, public education and awareness programs, and developing a working relationship with the professional zoological community as well as U.S. Government agencies charged with the welfare of animals.

The HSUS is:

- Inspecting zoos. To date, we have inspected a total of 395 major and minor zoos and menageries. Most have been inspected several times.
- Reporting violations of the Animal Welfare Act to USDA officials and pressuring them to correct substandard conditions.
- Teaching sections of the USDA training program for zoo inspectors.
- Working for the passage of additional amendments to the Animal Welfare Act which would further protect zoo animals.
- Stimulating public pressure to bring about change at zoos where laws are not specific enough to obtain convictions.
- Taking legal steps to improve or close zoos where other action has not worked.

The HSUS is planning to continue our work with greater intensity, adding more personnel, stepped-up inspection schedules, and highly visible publicity campaigns. In addition we will be:

- Accompanying USDA inspectors on many zoo inspections.
- Actively working to close menageries. Several have already been targeted for action. Evidence has been collected and we are now preparing cases for presentations to public sector groups charged with overseeing the selected menageries.
- Working with USDA Washington, D.C. staff on a day-to-day basis.
- Making use of state anti-cruelty laws and other state laws protecting zoo animals and native wildlife.
- Pressuring local officials to shut down roadside menageries in their jurisdictions.
- Using the Freedom of Information Act to obtain USDA inspection forms to document our case alleging uneven enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.
- Following up on USDA inspections. If an inspector sanctions conditions we find unacceptable, we will go to USDA superiors and demand remedies.
- Petitioning USDA to strengthen its regulations for the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.

Careful planning has gone into the development of these investigative, legal, and educational efforts. It is our hope that they will help us win the war against the cruelty of roadside menageries. As you read this report, the first steps in this stepped-up campaign have already been taken.

## Case Studies In Cruelty

### Cruelty in North Carolina

Following up on a complaint by a concerned citizen, an HSUS investigator visited a North Carolina roadside menagerie. Upon arrival, our investigator found a variety of animals kept in small, filthy, ramshackle cages. Many animals were kept isolated with no cage mates for play, grooming, or communication. The enclosures were devoid of trees or other things to climb on. A foul odor, caused by the piles of feces and fly-covered, rotting food, filled the air. A chimpanzee sat alone in a tiny dark cage, eating doughnuts and drinking soda pop. Two lions were packed into a 8' x 5' enclosure—barely 1/4 of the space they would need for a minimum—with no water to drink. About 25 waterfowl were living in a stagnant 20' x 30' pond.

Thinking these conditions were in violation of the Animal Welfare Act, the HSUS investigator requested a USDA inspection of the facilities. The USDA followed up on our complaints but their approach was one of compromise and conciliation rather than tough enforcement. USDA officials seem to believe that with temporary measures a facility such as this one can become a functioning zoo. We believe that by licensing such deplorable establishments, our federal government sanctions their existence.

During a recent visit to this menagerie, HSUS Director of Wildlife Protection, Sue Pressman, requested that a USDA veterinarian accompany her. Among the many problems Pressman pointed out to the veterinarian was a wolf kept in a cage with bars for walls, floor, and ceiling. "This cage will have to go," Pressman said. "The wolf has to walk over bars all day and cannot lie down in a normal posture." She was amazed when the USDA veterinarian replied that it was good therapy for the wolf to have to contend with the bars.

### Cruelty in Kansas

During the winter of 1979-80, a USDA licensed exhibitor in Kansas abandoned his animals because he could no longer afford to feed them. An HSUS investigator found the animals without food, water, or heat in the middle of the night during a heavy snowstorm. Most were near starvation, except one tiger, who had been fed an ostrich from a nearby cage before the owner fled.

Our investigator arranged for the animals to be rushed to the Topeka Zoo's hospital to receive emergency care. Some of the animals were eventually placed at the Topeka

Zoo. Unfortunately, some of them were returned to their owner following a trial for animal cruelty which ended in a hung jury. The law in question was so vague that 9 of the 12 jurors voted for acquittal. The district attorney's office chose not to refile the charges.

### Cruelty in New Jersey

Four years ago, The HSUS was called in to inspect the Trenton, New Jersey municipal zoo after some of the so-called zoo's animals had been killed by roaming dogs because of poor security and substandard fencing. During the inspection, The HSUS investigator found a lone bear lying in a small pit among beer cans, deer trying to graze in a grassless paddock, and monkeys sitting alone in dark, damp shelters.

The HSUS investigator declared the zoo to be "the most archaic prison for animals I have ever seen." The investigator urged the city to hire a professional zoo administrator, reduce the animal inventory, and start renovation plans immediately.

When the city showed no indication of cooperating, The HSUS took the case to the media. For months, articles, editorials, and letters appeared in local newspapers decrying the situation. Finally, following a threat of legal action by The HSUS, the city took some belated action to deal with the zoo's problems.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. These examples are typical of situations which exist all over the country.



Rotting debris, lack of sunlight, and insufficient cage size are all hallmarks of menageries. This lion, found in a menagerie in Kansas, was living in the back of a converted truck.



## Animal Welfare Act Not Working!

When captive wild animals were included under the Animal Welfare Act in 1970, it was our belief that menageries such as those already described would be found substandard and closed permanently. Indeed, it was the intent of Congress to put an end to roadside menageries. The law was written to cover most warm-blooded zoo animals and set minimal standards for such things as transportation, food, water, sanitation, shelter, ventilation, and veterinary care of animals. Enforcement of the act was delegated to USDA veterinarians and inspectors who conduct routine inspections of all licensed animal facilities. Violators of the Act can receive letters of warning, cease and desist orders, fines, have their licenses revoked or suspended, or be imprisoned. While the intent of the law was good, there

are several reasons why it is not working:

- ✓ It sets only minimal standards.
- ✓ It is vaguely worded and open to wide interpretation, which has resulted in uneven enforcement.
- ✓ USDA veterinarians who enforce the law are oriented toward domesticated animals and do not always appreciate the special needs of wild animals.
- ✓ The USDA has not been provided with sufficient funds to adequately enforce the law.
- ✓ The USDA has failed to act strongly against violators. Too often, inspectors get wrapped up in the problems of menagerie operators, and seem to forget that their job is to look out for the welfare of the animals.

As a result of the ineffectiveness of the Animal Welfare Act and a lack of enforcement as it applies to these roadside menageries, The HSUS has intensified its efforts to close these institutions.

## Help The HSUS End the Misery

You can do a lot to help The HSUS end the misery of animals imprisoned in menageries. Join our nationwide campaign to close the menageries! By becoming aware of the problem and educating yourself, you will become an extension of our educational efforts through conversations with people around you.

Your financial support will help enable The HSUS to continue zoo inspections. Our professional investigators are a necessary part of the process if we are to put an end to all menageries.

Our investigators serve two distinct purposes. First, they report violations and seek redress on behalf of the animals. Second, they serve as watchdogs for U.S. Depart-

ment of Agriculture inspectors who are supposed to be enforcing the law and protecting animals from the kinds of things we've told you about within this brief report.

We firmly believe that without our presence, our programs, and our pressure, The USDA and state government agencies would take no action to stop the cruelties found behind the rusty bars of menageries. We know that fewer animals are suffering because of our zoo program. Your membership and support makes this continuing effort possible.

Please use the enclosed postage paid envelope to send your tax deductible contribution today.

## Join Our Campaign To Close Roadside Menageries

Zoos have been an accepted part of the American culture for so long that they have taken on an aura of respectability. The amateurs who run menageries are taking advantage of this situation. They have created animal prisons and call them zoos!

Sometimes dressed in their khaki safari outfits, they try to convey an image of jungle veterans who have personally tracked down, captured, and transported their captive beasts across the seas for us. They'd like us to believe that they understand the habits and habitats of their captives. Don't be fooled!

Join our campaign to get rid of these miserable menageries. Work with us. Use our three step program to end the misery.

### What You Can Do

#### 1. Go to the Menagerie

If you find a roadside or municipal menagerie in your area, pay a visit. Look for signs of crowding, filth, poor housing, inadequate diets, and bad medical care. Take photos and notes.

#### 2. Contact Authorities

Take your evidence to local authorities such as fish and game commissioners, humane agents, and political leaders (especially if it is a public facility).

If local authorities fail to respond, contact the nearest USDA office. You can also contact state officials who administer laws pertaining to captive wild animals, or call the county attorney's office.

Report your findings to The HSUS. If local authorities refuse to take action, we may be able to help. But you must help in the battle by keeping us informed.

#### 3. Talk to Others

Tell your friends and associates about menageries you have found. Ask them to join you in not patronizing or supporting such places. Give copies of this report to interested parties.

Naturally, when inspecting or evaluating a menagerie, you should not represent yourself as an agent of The HSUS. Our investigators have had many years of training and experience to draw upon. Your views, as a resident of the area, will carry plenty of weight.

**Roadside "zoos"  
Waste Wildlife!**

The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, D.C. 20037



All contributors of \$10 or more will receive this bumper sticker. By displaying the bumper sticker on your car you will be helping The HSUS publicize the roadside zoo problem. Who knows, perhaps your bumper sticker will make someone choose not to enter a menagerie of misery.



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