

Bird campaign aims to stop trapping

Brazil WSPA has teamed up with wildlife agencies in Brazil to raise awareness of the damage caused to wild birds by their continued trapping, selling and use as pets.

The domestic sale of birds in Brazil is, mainly, for the pet trade and occurs all over the country. The birds are normally captured in remaining patches of forest or in parks and sanctuaries. They are either caught in their nests or in small traps. In most houses and small shops in Brazil, birds are kept as pets in small cages. Most of the birds have had their eyes pierced to make them easier to handle and, according to bird traffickers, sing more.

When wildlife agencies successfully confiscate birds they do not often have the facilities to rehabilitate and release the animals back to the wild. In many cases this would be impossible anyway because the bird is either impaired or has spent so much of its life in a cage that it can't readapt to nature.

A massive public awareness campaign will be a main factor in putting an end to

this practice and reducing the capture of birds to save some species from extinction.

The campaign, organised by WSPA, the National park of Serra dos Orgaos – PARNASO/IBAMA and the Sociedade Amigos da Serra dos Orgaos, aims to raise public awareness of the capture and sale of wild birds. It will do this by making the public aware of the poor conditions of birds in cages and the decrease in the numbers of certain species and the extinction of others. It will use material designed by students of Federal Fluminense University under the supervision of Professor Miguel Freire.

The campaign will also encourage the public to give up their birds for release and to stop capturing and trading in wild birds. Hamilton Casara, president of IBAMA, a partner of WSPA in several projects in Brazil, attended the launch of the campaign at a special cocktail party held in Teresopolis.

WSPA's Elizabeth MacGregor said: "Worldwide, the value of the illegal trade

in wildlife is estimated to be \$10billion a year. Federal agencies in Brazil estimate that their portion of that illegal trade is around \$400million. That's second only in



The campaign hopes to help Brazil's birds

value to the country's export of minerals and precious gems.

"It is our hope that by educating the public about the dangers and cruelty of this trade, they will come forward and help us stop it, once and for all."

Flood prompts rescue mission

Hungary In March this year, floodwaters reached their highest level in more than a century in Eastern Europe, drowning more than 130 square kilometres of rural land and villages in Hungary. Thousands of people were forced to evacuate their homes, leaving pets and livestock to fend for themselves.

WSPA Hungarian Member Societies, the E-misszio Association, the REX Foundation, and the White Cross, coordinated efforts to feed and rescue the animals left behind, helped by funds from WSPA. The funds equipped rescue volunteers with a motorboat to negotiate flooded streets, gardens, and farmland to gather stranded animals.

Sandor Pap Inantsy of E-misszio Association told *Animals International*: "With 15 volunteers, we launched a rescue operation with the local Defence Committee to move animals – alongside people – from flooded areas. We have been in the field everyday, rescuing and feeding animals with our motor boat and six canoes."

Volunteers distributed eight tonnes of food to isolated wild and domestic animals. This fed around 500 dogs, 500 chickens and poultry, 50 cats, and 60 goats, pigs, and cows. Temporary shelter was found for 80 dogs rescued from flooded areas.

Inantsy said: "Work included gathering donations, food, and volunteers, co-ordinating the help of other NGOs, and making sure that we are prepared for similar situations in the future, as serious floods occur annually in Hungary. Rebuilding settlements and organising media events to expose the difficulties that animals face were also an important part of our work."

Crufts boost for Saint Bernards

U.K. WSPA staff visited the 2001 Crufts dog show to highlight the St Bernards' plight to an audience of dog lovers from around the world.

Crufts is the world's biggest dog show and is attended by 20,000 breeders and visitors each year. This year was the first time that Crufts had been open to international competition.

On the show's opening day, WSPA attended to hand out leaflets to visitors and exhibitors. Their presence, including two larger than life St Bernards, plus some real ones, gained a lot of attention from passers by and the media. At one stage they were joined by Pam St Clement, better known as Pat Butcher in the TV soap *Eastenders*.

Jonathan Owen, WSPA's head of media, said: "Our appearance at Crufts went very well. We attracted the attention of the *Evening Standard*, *The Times*, *Dog World*, *News International* and *Images San Frontiers*. We distributed more than 6,000 leaflets and the UK St Bernards Breed Club agreed to distribute out leaflets throughout the four day event."



Eastenders' Pam St Clement lent her support to WSPA's Campaign

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