



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reward Offered in Bear Poaching Case in Pennsylvania

(May 11, 2010) — The Humane Society of the United States and The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust are offering a reward of up to \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for illegally killing a bear in Luzerne County, Pa.

The Case:

According to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, on May 1, the remains of a black bear were discovered by a hiker on a trail near Lake Frances in Nescopeck State Park.

It appears that the bear died of a gunshot wound from a small-caliber rifle. An examination by Game Commission personnel revealed a punctured lung and a severed artery. It is believed that the bear suffered a slow, painful death.

“The unnecessary suffering inflicted on this bear by a callous criminal is truly appalling and demonstrates the urgent need to pass H.B. 1859 and S.B. 1200, two bills pending in the Pennsylvania legislature that update the state’s antiquated poaching laws,” said Sarah Speed, Pennsylvania state director for The HSUS. “The Humane Society of the United States applauds Pennsylvania Game Commission for their efforts find those responsible for this reprehensible crime.”

The individual or individuals responsible for this crime potentially face charges of unlawful killing or taking of big game and unlawful devices and methods. The person could face more than \$1,000 in fines and \$5,000 in restitution.

Poaching:

- S.B. 1200, currently awaiting action in the House Appropriations Committee, would allow Pennsylvania to join the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, a nationwide law enforcement network aimed at keeping poachers who have lost their hunting privileges in one state from hunting in another. Since its institution in 1989, 34 states, including Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia and New York, have joined the Compact.
- Pennsylvania has some of the weakest penalties for poaching in the country. H.B. 1859, legislation currently awaiting action in the Pennsylvania Senate, would increase penalties for a wide range of wildlife crimes, from killing endangered species to operating commercial poaching operations. It also elevates habitual poaching to a felony and for the first time imposes the possibility of jail time for many wildlife crimes.

- Wildlife officials estimate that for every wild animal killed legally — tens of millions of animals per year — another is killed illegally.
- Every year, thousands of poachers are arrested nationwide; however, it is estimated that only 1 percent to 5 percent of poachers are caught.
- Poachers kill wildlife anytime, anywhere and sometimes do so in particularly cruel ways.
- The HSUS works with state wildlife agencies to offer rewards of \$2,500 for information leading to arrest and conviction of suspected poachers.

The Investigators:

Anyone with information about this case is asked to call the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s North Region Office at 570-675-1143 or Turn in a Poacher (TIP) hotline at 1-888-742-8001. Callers may remain anonymous.

The HSUS Media Contact:

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The HSUS works to stop wildlife abuse across the country. Visit humanesociety.org/wildlifeabuse for more information.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty — On the Web at humanesociety.org.

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Since 1993 the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, alone or in partnership with other conservation groups, has participated in the protection of more than 1.8 million acres of wildlife habitat in 37 states, including 172 acres in Pennsylvania, and seven foreign countries. On all properties owned by the Trust or protected by the Trust's conservation easement, both here and abroad, we prohibit recreational and commercial hunting and trapping and restrict logging and development. The Trust's commitment to these principles will never change as we continue to assist caring landowners to make their property permanent, safe homes for wildlife. Join our online community at wildlifelandtrust.org.

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