



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Reward Offered in Sea Otter Shooting in California

(July 6, 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 shooting a sea otter in San Luis Obispo County, Calif. The HSUS offer adds to an existing \$2,500 reward from Defenders of Wildlife and up to \$1,000 from Californians Turn-in-Poachers and Polluters (CalTIP).

### The Case:

According to the California Department of Fish and Game, on June 24, a young female sea otter was found dead just north of Morro Strand Campground along the beach in Morro Bay. It is believed that she was killed between 9 a.m. and noon. A necropsy revealed that she had been shot in the head with a pellet gun.

“This was a senseless act of violence on a protected species. Someone knows who did this and we need them to assist us in bringing this person to a judge and jury,” said Nancy Foley, chief of law enforcement at the California Department of Fish and Game.

“This tragic case demonstrates how important it is to provide adequate resources to the hardworking wardens at the California Department of Fish and Game — the state agency charged with enforcing the wildlife protection laws that poachers callously disregard,” said Jennifer Fearing, California senior state director for The HSUS. “The Humane Society of the United States thanks the CDFG and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their tireless efforts to solve this case.”

Sea otters are federally protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Code of Federal Regulations. If convicted of shooting an otter, the perpetrator or perpetrators could face up to \$10,000 in fines.

### Poaching:

- Poaching is a rampant problem in California and across the United States. 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 wildlife criminals are ever apprehended by law enforcement.
- Wildlife law enforcement resources are extremely strained in California. The state has lowest ratio of game wardens per capita of any state or province in North America — one warden for every 198,000 Californians. The California Department of Fish and Game wardens are the only law enforcement officers not exempted from furlough days.

- The Humane Society of the United States sponsors a team of rescued dogs who help wardens catch poachers in California. It is estimated that one trained dog can save more than 800 personnel hours each year.

**The Investigators:**

Anyone with information about this case is urged to contact special agent Mona Iannelli of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (310) 328-1516, Ext. 229, or DFG Warden Hank Hodel at (805) 610-3920. An anonymous report can also be made by calling DFG's CalTIP line, 1-888-DFG-CALTIP.

**The HSUS Media Contact:**

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The HSUS works to curb poaching across the country. Visit [humanesociety.org/poaching](http://humanesociety.org/poaching) 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](http://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 1,827 acres in California, and eight 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](http://wildlifelandtrust.org).*

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