CSRO Helps North Carolina Animals Stranded by Isabel

When the HSUS-led disaster animal response team noticed several chickens wandering aimlessly near two North Carolina chicken houses in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel, they knew something was wrong. The crew immediately made a U-turn and discovered that the houses had suffered extensive damage, their protective roofs blown far afield. The team found as many as 400 young chickens still alive, although some were clearly injured or near death, as well as many more who had died during the storm or sometime thereafter. The stench of rotting animals was overwhelming. There was no food or water available for the surviving chickens.

The team found a grain silo with feed and promptly distributed it to the chickens. Members also dug shallow trenches, lined them with plastic bags, and filled them with water for the animals. They then notified the North Carolina State Animal Response Team (SART) so that the state could take control of the situation. This example is one of many ways The HSUS contributed to the rescue efforts.

Isabel caused more than 150,000 people to evacuate the coastal regions of North Carolina and Virginia as it approached land last September. It was the largest storm to threaten North Carolina since the devastating Hurricane Floyd in 1999. At SART's request, The HSUS deployed our disaster animal response teams to Raleigh as Isabel's 100-mpg winds battered coastal communities and caused power outages. HSUS vehicles carried necessities such as leashes, collars, pet food, and supplies to establish a temporary animal shelter.

HSUS Vice President for Field and Disaster Services Melissa Seide Rubin asserts, "We have one of the most experienced and professional search and rescue teams in the country. That's why states look to us when the major disasters strike."

While volunteers performed widespread damage assessment, they also provided rescue services. CSRO Director Phil Snyder said that, from an animal perspective, luck and preparation kept the situation from being much worse. Snyder, a long-time proponent of disaster planning and training in North Carolina, coordinated the search-and-rescue teams on behalf of SART.

The teams' work did not escape SART's attention. "The HSUS played an essential role in the effectiveness of SART during Hurricane Isabel," noted Jodi Jackson, SART's executive director. "They provided leadership throughout our assessments and animal search and rescue efforts. Their contributions were invaluable."

State, county, and local governments were continued on page 2
Rewards Can Help Bring Abusers to Justice

The black Lab had been sealed in a 55-gallon drum for at least five days before someone found him. The poor dog had suffered chemical burns and other injuries but survived the ordeal to be adopted into a loving home. Now Miracle is doing great, and the person responsible for his torture turned himself in. Only more animal cruelty cases turned out so well.

CSRO has been involved in many cases over the past year involving animal neglect and cruelty. When our office gets a request for help, we immediately contact those involved in the case to see how we may be of assistance. This typically includes working with local humane societies, animal care and control staff, local humane investigators, law enforcement officials, and prosecutors. We can provide expert testimony to prosecutors to help strengthen cases, resource materials for animal care agencies, and other expertise.

Very often in cases of intentional cruelty, the perpetrators are unknown. If investigators are fortunate, some details may be known about the identity of the alleged offender. But often, there is no information at all. Without a perpetrator, prosecutors can’t pursue a legal case. In those instances, a reward may be the most effective means of gathering information. In the past year alone, CSRO staff have assisted with hundreds of cruelty and neglect cases, and offered rewards up to $2,500 in more than 20.

Increasingly, the media has played an important role in bringing these horrific cases to the public’s attention. This was what happened in Miracle’s case. Entire communities express outrage at the stories they read in the newspaper or see on television. We are eager to offer guidance to local officials and rewards as incentive to help bring animal abusers to justice. If you are aware of cases of intentional animal cruelty, please contact CSRO.
Director's Report

By Phil Snyder
Director of the Central States Regional Office

Fifty Years of Good Work

This year marks the 50th anniversary of The HSUS and my 15th year as a regional director. Having spent 20 years as executive director of local humane societies in Indiana, Texas, and Florida, I benefited greatly from the support of The HSUS long before I became a staff member.

Founded in 1954 by a small group of visionaries, The HSUS has emerged as the world’s largest animal protection organization. We have an international arm, Humane Society International; a global environmental arm, EarthVoice; a youth education division, National Association for Humane and Environmental Education; and of course, 10 regional offices. HSUS staff members include veterinarians, wildlife biologists, attorneys, animal behaviorists, and other dedicated animal specialists and professionals. More than eight million people now support the work of The HSUS.

The HSUS has initiated numerous major campaigns and programs over the past half century to protect America’s most beloved companion animals, dogs and cats. We have also worked to promote the protection of all animals, domestic and wild, through investigation, rehabilitation, public education, political and consumer advocacy, and litigation.

This regional office is proud to have played a role over the years in improving conditions for animals in the states we serve. A few key accomplishments come to mind.

CSRO has actively pursued the passage of important legislation throughout the region, including laws that now protect guard dogs from inhumane treatment, the banning of horse tripping at rodeos, and student choice on dissection in high schools in Illinois. Increased penalties for animal cruelty have passed in many of our states. Dogfighting laws now carry stronger penalties. License plates to benefit animal programs can now be purchased in Tennessee and Illinois.

A local television exposure on the shooting of homeless shelter animals in Kentucky prompted CSRO staff to lead a campaign to improve euthanasia methods. After meeting with local officials, we offered financial assistance and training of animal control personnel. These efforts led to the passing of legislation to improve humane euthanasia methods in both Kentucky and Tennessee.

Following increased reports of the cruel and barbaric activity of animal fighting, CSRO initiated the formation of the North Carolina Task Force to Abolish Animal Fighting. Members include representatives from law enforcement, judicial groups, and animal care and control professionals. I am proud to have the privilege of heading the steering committee. Dogfighting is now a felony in each of our five states.

After providing disaster assessments, temporary sheltering, and search and rescue for more than a month during the Midwest floods in 1993, CSRO led efforts to write the Illinois Disaster Plan for Animals, which now stands as an official annex to the Illinois Emergency Management Plan.

We have played an active role throughout the years in developing animal disaster plans and providing disaster response. Most recently, CSRO headed animal search and rescue efforts during Hurricane Isabel in North Carolina, which helped save countless animal lives.

More than 600 law enforcement officers attended HSUS’s bite prevention and dangerous dog training in Tennessee and Kentucky. The classes were CSRO’s response to public outcry after high-profile cases were publicized in which police officers unnecessarily shot and killed family pets. The classes were so successful that HSUS created an online course for first responders.

It has been an exciting past, but there is much more work to be done. Rest assured that we will not stop to celebrate; rather, we will strive even harder to help create a more humane environment for people and animals in this region.

Contacting HSUS

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Promoting the protection of all animals

As CSRO director, Phil Snyder has met various celebrities, including Morris the cat and his trainer Dawn Haney.

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