Even as the Mississippi River began to spill over its banks in June, few anticipated the Great Flood of '93. Before subsiding, the floodwaters would build into the greatest natural disaster in the history of the Midwest, demolishing homes, fragmenting communities, leaving behind the homeless and the helpless—including thousands of animals.

As the floodwaters rose, The HSUS focused on protecting the flood region's animals. Our experience with natural disasters—most recently, Hurricane Andrew—had taught us that animals' needs are often overlooked in the midst of pressing human needs. HSUS North Central Regional Director Phil Snyder began calling animal shelters, animal-control agencies, wildlife experts, and others along the Mississippi's route in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois to ask if they needed help. Everyone appreciated the call but couldn't foresee the impending calamity. When HSUS Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox started contacting those involved in animal work throughout Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, the consensus was that the situation seemed manageable.

As the Mississippi continued to overflow, however, the Missouri River and other smaller waterways approached flood level. Messrs. Snyder and Maddox set out for the flood area. While Mr. Snyder traveled through southern Illinois, Mr. Maddox set out for Davenport, Iowa, beside the Mississippi River.

Early in July the staff of Davenport's Scott County Humane Society knew the flood would hit their facility. They prepared to relocate more than a hundred animals—a subset from foster homes, others to temporary shelter at the Iowa Fairgrounds. When water from the Mississippi crept over the shelter's parking lot, they moved the animals out. Eventually the entire

SAVING ANIMALS FROM THE FLOOD
HSUS consultant, worked the phone re­Dorothy Weller and HSUS Southeast Re­force members returned home. HSUS
After two grueling weeks, some Task
Alton, Collinsville, Edwardsville, Granite
Snyder and Ms. Fekety contacted and
needed help.
Psycho­professional services consultant, Companion
animal rescues in communities including
areas and agencies in greatest need. While
mally quiet and gentle streams raged. Sud­
the flood areas spun out of control. Relent­
good for four harrowing
weeks; organizations
which was suddenly restricted due to dan­
ger from a propane explosion, some 600
companion animals were rescued and tak­
en to temporary shelter at the Humane So­
ciety of Missouri. Within two days most
had been reclaimed by their human com­
panions; many others found sanctuary in
foster homes.
Mr. Snyder recalls one family who
brought his dog, Camilia, to the safety of a
relative's home seventy miles away. With­
out Camilia family members then returned
to the flood area, only to find themselves
homeless and destitute. Anxious to be re­
united with Camilia, they were unable to
retrieve her until Mr. Snyder provided as­
sistance.

In some cases, however, people respon­
sible for animals had to be persuaded to
get them to safety.

Early in the relief efforts, Mr. Maddox
learned that rising waters had stranded six
ows. Approximately four miles of flood­
waters separated them from dry land, and
there seemed no easy way to move them.

As an interim measure, Mr. Maddox
helped the owner move the cows to the top
of a flat­bed trailer inside a barn and en­
circle them with a tempo­
rarily fence. The owner said he in­
tended to relocate the cows.

Nearly two weeks later, how­
ever, Mr. Snyder learned that the cows had not been moved. Meanwhile, the
water had risen several feet; one
ow had already drowned.

Accompanied by the cows' own­er, Mr. Reder and a local vet­
ernarian went by boat to inspect
the cows' condition. The cows showed early signs of pneumonia, so the veterinarian administered
antibiotics. Mr. Reder recalls the sight of
the cows as "heartbreak­ing." Shaking from
cold, they attempted to hold their heads in
muddy water.

Mr. Reder told the owner that he must
remove the cows in order to save them.
When the owner proved reluctant to do so,
Mr. Reder advised the owner of his re­
 sponsibilities to his cows.

The next day, by barge and boat, the
owner moved the cows to dry land. Mr.
Reder recalls, "The farmer looked sur­
pri­
ed to see us when he reached shore. But we wanted him to know we meant matterseriously and would do whatever we had to do to make sure he fulfilled his responsibilities."

Opposite: Wendell Maddox, Robert T. Reder,
and Phil Stoddard of the HSUS disaster relief
vehicle. Left: Disaster workers, including Sally
Fekety and the Coast Guard's Bob Craig and
Peter Fawcett, unload rescued cattle into a holding pen.

Attempts to rescue
described kinds of animals for the moment, and
that is for animals
in the flood area. The next challenge will be
rescuing wildlife, especially fawns stranded in the floodwater — and will need medical care. More than six shelters have
already been deployed or at least temporarily relo­
cated, making their job of helping animals
even more difficult. The HSUS will continue to work with local
agencies and animal-control authorities during the flood’s aftermath. By working
together, we can speed the recovery of num­
cersous animals who suffered in the disas­
ter and help shelters be better prepared for disasters to come.