

HSUS Helps in Katrina's Wake

As the National Guard entered New Orleans to quell civil disorder coming in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, members of the HSUS National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) worked their way into the nearly obliterated regions of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. The situation could not have been more urgent, with reports of animals locked in homes, kennels, veterinary clinics, and other locations. It was a race against time for our first responders on the ground in the stricken areas.

The presence of HSUS personnel was good news for nearly 130 dogs and cats in Gulfport, Mississippi. There, HSUS team members rescued these animals from the animal shelter of the Humane Society of South Mississippi, which was flooded by the combination of a storm surge with an overflow discharge of human waste from the sewage treatment plant next door. Some animals swam in their cages for hours, somehow managing to keep their heads above water. Others were not so

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An airboat moves down a flooded New Orleans street September 5 with animal rescue workers, a rifle-toting guard, and several rescued dogs. With thousands of stranded pets in the city, HSUS rescuers were frantically trying to reach as many animals as they could.



KATHY MILAN/HSUS

NRRO is Protecting Yellowstone Bison

If you've read past newsletters, you know that our office has helped bison herds on private and tribal lands, and worked on a project involving bison transferred from Teddy Roosevelt National Park to North Dakota's Three Affiliated Tribes.

Many of NRRO's activities have supported other bison organizations such as the Buffalo Field Campaign and its efforts to protect bison and bison habitat. We also joined other groups and coalitions such as the Greater Yellowstone Wildlife Alliance to promote national bison protection legislation last year. This year, we again networked with several environmental groups for an in-depth review of National Park Service (NPS) and Montana Department of Livestock animal handling techniques.

However our major concentration has been in working to protect Yellowstone bison and to help deal with the complex issues involving bison, brucellosis, and public lands policy. The brucellosis scare is at the heart of bison "management." Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that can cause abortions in bison and cattle. Although transmission of the disease from wild, free-roaming bison to cattle has never been documented, the fears of cattle ranchers outside the park fuel the program of containing bison herds on Yellowstone lands and of shooting or sending to slaughter those bison who stray out of the park.

Our office's involvement with bison goes back to 1997, when NRRO Director Dave Pauli was an invited member of Gov. Marc Racicot's Humane Bison Handling Task Force. Pauli toured Yellowstone's Stephens Creek facility with the other task force



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

NRRO has a long history of helping bison. Efforts to protect herds in Yellowstone National Park are the latest.

members, reviewed media reports, and interviewed officials with the Park Service, Montana Department of Livestock, and other agencies. It was a balanced and fair committee that included private, state, and U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians, and a professional bison manager. A summary to Gov. Racicot made it clear that there were many problems with the handling of bison at the Stephens Creek facility, including the primary concern that the bison were being handled, fed, processed, and transported like cattle rather than wildlife; these handling techniques may be unnecessarily stressful—and dangerous—when used with wild animals. Our report made a variety of recommendations.

The next few years saw fewer bison leaving the Yellowstone Park borders, and the issue of volume park bison handling did not come up. But in late 2003, projections of greater out-migration of bison and some additional proposed brucellosis testing and slaughter of all bison captured brought the issue back full force. In 2004, reports, complaints, and even videotapes came to light that showed many of the same poor handling techniques that had been practiced

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Improving Crow Rodeo

It's billed as the Teepee Capital of the World. It's the Crow Fair, one of the largest powwows in the United States. This past July, the Crow Rodeo Committee contacted NRRO and asked us to assist them with public awareness about the humane treatment of animals during the Crow Fair Rodeo.

Our staff provided signs, animal protection gear for livestock, and consulted with committee members to make events more humane. Calves wore protective collars during the men's roping event, and the women participated in a "breakaway" event in which the rope breaks when the loop goes over the calf's neck. These measures help protect calves from injury during those events.

This recent networking with the Crow Rodeo Committee and tribal law enforcement has sparked renewed interest in implementing humane treatment of rodeo livestock and in pursuing enforcement of animal cruelty and neglect under the existing Crow Nation cruelty law. Animal issues have been a huge concern for Indian reservation residents within the Northern Rockies Region. State laws and county and city ordinances do not have jurisdiction on tribal lands, and animal cruelty and neglect often go unreported and unpunished. We look forward to working with the Crow and other tribal communities in the future to address these issues.



Barry Real Bird with a NRRO-provided sign requiring humane treatment of animals during the Crow Fair Rodeo.

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lucky. Those rescued went to Jackson, Mississippi, where the HSUS logistical team worked to place them with humane societies around the country.

Phones began ringing at The HSUS almost as soon as Katrina struck. The HSUS moved quickly to set up a dedicated Disaster Call Center at its headquarters in the nation's capital, and dozens of staff members suspended their normal duties to handle thousands of telephone calls and e-mails from around the country—many from people seeking urgent assistance as they tried to locate, recover, or keep their animal companions in the midst of the disaster.

On their first foray into the embattled city of New Orleans on September 4, members of the HSUS DART, together with animal control staff from the Louisiana SPCA, targeted animals stranded at the Superdome as their priority. There, they rescued dozens of animals relinquished or abandoned by desperate evacuees who fled the city to escape Katrina's rage.

The HSUS is helping place evacuated animals into adoption programs in Texas and other states. Working with local humane groups, rescuers saved more than 6,000 animals on the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast.

The HSUS has been working with local shelters to adopt pets people may be forced to give up. "It's always hard," said HSUS's Laura Bevan, who is director of HSUS's Southeast Regional Office and head of the Mississippi rescue effort. "But sometimes it's necessary when large numbers of people have lost their homes."

But there is good news too. "I spoke with a gentleman today who evacuated with four cats and thought he was going to have to euthanize them, but we found them all a home in Galveston, Texas," said Lou Guyton, director of HSUS's Southwest Regional office and head of the Louisiana effort.

"The total number of animals lost to the storm will be difficult to detect for months," said Bevan. Tens of thousands of people and animals are still waiting for rescue and assistance. "This is going to require a massive, long-term effort," she said. But The HSUS is committed to the task.

To support The HSUS's animal protection efforts, go to www.hsus.org/join.

"Off the Chain" Reveals Betrayal of Man's Best Friend

President Theodore Roosevelt owned one. So did Helen Keller. This breed of dog was the trademark of Buster Brown shoes and RCA Victor. Petey was the canine star of television's "Our Gang." And Stubby was the most decorated dog in American history, having received numerous medals and the honorary rank of Sergeant for his services during World War I. What do these famous dogs have in common? They were all American pit bull terriers.

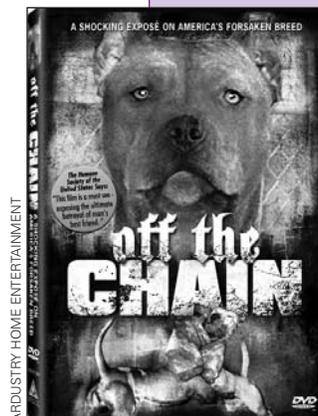
How did such a beloved breed come to be feared as a "public enemy" that is now banned in more than 200 counties and the entire province of Ontario, Canada? That's what director Bobby J. Brown seeks to show in his new film "Off the Chain," available on DVD from Ardustry Home Entertainment.

The film explores the evolution of the breed and gives viewers a disturbing look into the minds of the dog owners and trainers who participate in the gruesome world of dogfighting. Brown spent three years infiltrating the underground subculture of pit bull fighting, gaining the trust of well-established "dog men" who allowed him to film behind their veil of secrecy. But he also captured another side: the loving nature of the dogs and their brutal misuse by those who are supposed to

be their caretakers.

Brown is donating to The HSUS one-third of the proceeds from sales of "Off the Chain" DVDs sold through The HSUS.

To order, go to www.offthechainproductions.com/store and use the redemption code: HSUSOTC.



Rez Dogs: Adopting the Best of Both Worlds

Our office has the amazing fortune of being able to help thousands of animals on the nearly two-dozen Indian reservations in our region. Because of our work, we have come to know—and befriend—hundreds of American Indians who share concern for our four-legged friends. While we are oftentimes called to assist people with the care of their own animals, we also visit the reservations on our own to help the unwanted strays—dogs we have affectionately come to call Rez dogs.

One way we try to help these dogs is by spending the majority of our summer teaming up with Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS), a program of The HSUS that helps teach veterinary students surgical and animal treatment skills through spay-neuter surgeries provided free to needy pet owners. Carefully supervised students in this program sterilize, vaccinate, and treat thousands of animals in our region every year.

Consequently, we come across dozens of animals in search of new homes, either because their families do not want them anymore or because they are struggling to survive on their own. We have transported these animals to shelters for adoption for years, but it has become more evident that these are not just ordinary dogs.

Reservation dogs are special animals who have an incredible will to live. They are gentle, intelligent survivors, which makes



HSUS

Shay is a Rez dog adopted from the Crow Reservation.

them excellent lifelong companions and family members. Because of our continued amazement with these animals, we decided to launch a very special program called the Rez Dog Adoption Program. Every animal we take to a shelter has a certificate that identifies him or her as an official Rez dog. It tells the animal's name, which native nation he or she came from, and the unique qualities of a Rez dog.

Although it may not seem like much, we hope that this official Rez dog certificate reminds the animal's new caretakers how honored and blessed they are to have such a survivor as part of their family.

This program has already been a huge hit in Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota shelters, and we can't wait to see the response in our other states. If you would like more information about RAVS or our Rez dog program, please contact our office.

continued from "Bison," page 1 in 1997. Some graphic footage showed stressed, overworked, and injured bison. Our office established a small team to visit the park. Some of the previously recommended structural improvements had been made, but the hazing, capture, and processing protocols were still livestock-based and now included even more invasive and stressful procedures than before. We immediately wrote a letter to NPS detailing our concerns.

This letter, plus a follow-up request to visit the park and videotape the capture corrals in June 2005 resulted in a series of meetings with NPS that will end in a multi-agency conference on Yellowstone bison handling protocols.

We need your help in providing additional protection for this iconic herd of bison. Please support any federal legislation to protect Yellowstone bison, and be prepared to make phone calls, write e-mails, and speak out for bison if we ask you to put pressure on NPS to finally meet the recommendations of the 1997 Humane Bison Handling Task Force.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about

- Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
- Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency.
- Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

- Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
- Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DAYTIME PHONE _____

E-MAIL (OPTIONAL) _____



Promoting the protection of all animals

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
 NORTHERN ROCKIES REGIONAL OFFICE
 490 North 31st St., Suite 215
 Billings, MT 59101

Dave's Dialogue



By Dave Pauli

Director of the Northern Rockies
Regional Office

What Have I Done for Animals Today?

What have I done for animals today? It's a great question, and one that I find myself using as a litmus test while talking to someone about a potential project. At the end of the day, will this project actually be a step in the right direction towards helping animals? The question also is a constant reminder that while some projects help animals directly, yielding instant benefits, others—such as legislation improvements—might just be seeds that won't bear animal protection fruit for years.

In this vocation it is common to become heavily involved on far-reaching issues that foster long-term changes such as agriculture reform. I find it motivating to try and imagine the actual day-to-day benefits to animals that come from this work. This has made some slowly developing long-term projects seem a bit more immediate as they compete for my time. But sometimes the process works in reverse.

Here's an example. We saw an ad for an alligator for sale in a Montana newspaper. We knew the animal would probably end up as a mascot for some fraternity. So we called the

seller to advise that selling the gator may be legal, but the way the gator got into Montana in the first place probably was illegal. The seller quickly offered to give us the gator so that we could ship him to a Florida rehab center. Ironically, someone else heard we had an alligator and offered to surrender his own animal as well. In speaking with that gator owner, we learned about a Montana pet store that was illegally importing and selling gators. When we called the Department of Livestock and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, we were told that these two incidents were enough to get alligators included on the "not allowed" species list for Montana and that the pet store would be told it could not import or sell any more alligators. The point is that sometimes small efforts to help one animal turn out to be catalysts that help the breed, group, or entire species. In this case, both reptilian "catalysts" were recently flown to Florida and are sunning themselves in outdoor ponds there.

I admit that sometimes when bogged down on an administrative conference call or buried in endless pages of budget documents, the answer to my question may not be obvious. But for the past six months, I can honestly say that at the end of each day, I have been able to list at least one thing that has had a direct and positive impact on animals. And that is a great feeling.

One of two NRRO-rescued alligators who helped prevent other gators from becoming pets in Montana.



Contacting HSUS

Write:

HSUS Northern Rockies Regional Office
490 N. 31st St., Ste. 215
Billings, MT 59101

Fax:

406-255-7162

Call:

406-255-7161

Web Page:

www.hsus.org/nrro

Promoting the protection of all animals

2005-2006 Law Goals

There are only two states in the country in which dogfighting is still a misdemeanor; one is Wyoming. But this may be about to change. Concerned Wyoming residents have contacted NRRO with the desire to amend the cruelty statutes to make dogfighting a felony offense.

This brutal crime is not listed as an illegal offense in many American Indian reservations' ordinances. This lack of strong enforcement and weak laws within Wyoming could be the reason the number of pit bulls has increased and why, on April 5, 2005, five pit bulls were stolen from the animal shelter in Douglas, which was holding the dogs as evidence in a cruelty case. The HSUS has offered a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for stealing the dogs.

Felony animal cruelty laws have been passed in 42 states, but North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah are not among them. Cruelty seizures and complaints in these states have escalated. Some agencies hesitate to go forward with a cruelty investigation because of minimal penalties and the high costs of animal care during a trial. Felony status for animal fighting and acts of egregious cruelty elevates the seriousness of these crimes and increases the incentive of law enforcement and judicial officials to investigate and prosecute them.

NRRO is working to propose and pass felony legislation in all four states. If you would like to assist, contact our office. You can help make phone calls, write letters, and voice support to legislators.

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