

# A tale of rescue from the floodwaters of South Carolina

**On Tuesday,** The Humane Society of the United States integrated its Animal Rescue Team field response and water rescue responders with animal control officers from the Horry County, South Carolina, police department to aid in water rescues throughout the county.

Their last call of the day was in an area significantly impacted by the flooding as a result of Hurricane Matthew, with homes under more than 15 feet of flood water. An elderly homeowner, who barely made it out himself as the flood water was rising, contacted authorities regarding his four cats and one dog (three cats and the dog were in a school bus, and the fourth cat was inside the home) he was unable to remove as the water was quickly rising.

As The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Rescue Team, along with Horry County Animal Control and Fire Department, set out in boats to locate the man's home, they passed homes and vehicles completely submerged in water.

While rescuers navigated their way through the flooded streets, it seemed less and less likely his animals could have survived the treacherous and life-threatening conditions. Responders with The HSUS arrived at the bus and found it nearly submerged under water, with only inches to spare.

Rescuers made their way to the bus and attempted to see inside or hear any movement. Below is the first-hand account from HSUS animal rescue responder Chris Schindler:

*"After a few minutes we heard nothing, but wanted to be sure, so we forced the door open.*

*A few moments passed and suddenly a little white dog dove out of the door and began swimming to our boat. We pulled her to safety, shocked she survived these conditions for nearly 12 or more hours.*

*Next, one of the Horry County firefighters climbed into the bus to see if the cats survived. Shockingly, he found three cats floating on debris inside the bus—one precariously floating on an old tool box. The team safely recovered the three cats, who were clearly happy to have been removed from the cold, wet environment.*

*Then, we moved to the house. We struggled to push the door open against the force of the water, but were able to make our way in. The water was waist deep inside, and it was evident it had been much higher earlier in the day by the water lines in the home.*

*Once inside, the cat immediately began meowing, leading us to him. We found him on the kitchen counter, where he went to ride out the flooding. Once we arrived back to dry land, the owner was awaiting our return. When we unloaded the animals, the owner dropped to his knees at the rescue truck in front of the carriers to give his animals love and attention. He told us his little dog, Cootie, goes with him everywhere and spends every moment by his side."*

Once back at Horry County Animal Care Center, veterinarians determined the animals to be in good health and clearly happy to be in a warm space.

The Humane Society of the United States' [Disaster Relief Fund](#) makes it possible for our responders to assist in disaster relief efforts.

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