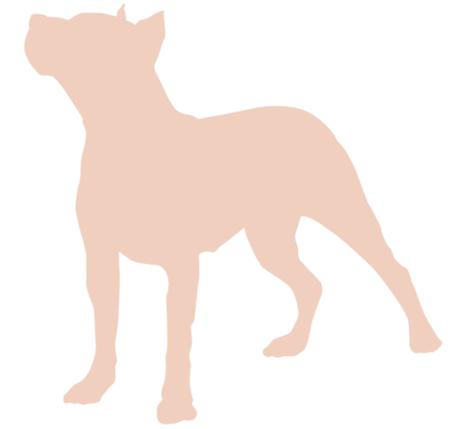




A bloodstained fighting circle, a crater full of dead birds, and 197 roosters on the day's fight docket were among the horrors discovered in June at a South Carolina property. In August, The HSUS helped rescue nearly 200 fighting pit bulls in Ohio, sending them to rescues and shelters around the country (opposite).

[Ending Animal Fighting]



- ▶ **5 states** strengthen laws against animal fighting
- ▶ **6,389 animals** are helped by The HSUS's work on animal fighting raids and investigations
- ▶ **1,300+ law enforcement officials** are trained in animal fighting and cruelty investigations
- ▶ **300 prosecutors and 100 judges** attend seminars on the complexities of animal fighting and cruelty cases
- ▶ **835 calls** are made to the animal fighting tip line; 24 rewards are paid for information leading to arrests
- ▶ **The End Dogfighting program**—a comprehensive approach to combat urban dogfighting—launches in Philadelphia
- ▶ **470+ schoolchildren** participate in an eight-week anti-dogfighting humane education course

“ [HSUS teams] made it a lot easier and a lot less stressful to do this. [They were] a can-do, 'we're-going-to-get-it-done' group of people. You could tell they were focused, they were interested in what they were doing, and it meant a lot to them to do it. And that's what we're looking at for people who are going to help us. ”

—Lt. Jim Burriss, describing how The HSUS helped the Greenville County (S.C.) Sheriff's Office investigate and raid a notorious cockfighting pit



The Good Fight

"This program is about the dogs," says Ralph Hawthorne, community organizer for The HSUS's End Dogfighting program in Atlanta. "But it's just as much about the people, and helping them through the life changes that they experience while we're working with them."

In 2010, The HSUS continued reaching out to communities plagued by dogfighting, working to bond owners and pit bulls and change perceptions of a misunderstood group of dogs. The End Dogfighting program expanded its work in Chicago and Atlanta while launching in a third location, the Hunting Park neighborhood in North Philadelphia.

"It's a city that's very much in need, as are most of the large cities across the country," says Amanda Arrington, associate director of The HSUS's Building Humane Communities Program. In more than a dozen other cities, The HSUS helped groups plan their own End Dogfighting programs.

In Atlanta, one success story was the transformation of DeAndre Weaver. He'd fought pit bulls for four years, since age 16, until a dog he had grown close to was killed in a fight. "That's what really opened up my eyes," remembers Weaver.

The day he learned about free dog training classes through The HSUS, his interest was piqued. And with Hawthorne encouraging him to stick with the weekly

sessions, Weaver and his dog, Champ, made such a strong impression that he was hired last summer to serve as an anti-dogfighting advocate.

Nowadays, Weaver recruits students for the program by walking the streets and speaking at schools, the YMCA, and Boy Scout meetings. With his two well-behaved dogs in tow, he's a model for young people who've previously only viewed their pit bulls as fighting dogs.

"They don't know exactly what to do with the dogs ... so what they do now is they're fighting just for the heck of it," Weaver says. But the agility and obedience skills learned in HSUS classes provide options: "They want to impress people with their dogs, so now we have a positive way to impress people."

The training sessions are just one aspect of a campaign that also includes humane education and community outreach focused on pet wellness and spay/neuter. Canines & Communities, an eight-session anti-dogfighting curriculum featuring mock game shows and field trips to animal shelters, reached more than 470 Chicago and Atlanta youths in 2010. At a summer camp, 19 kids helped produce *In the Company of Dogs*, a video featuring a rap song written by 15-year-old Demetrius Ware about canine care and approaching dogs safely.



The Law on Our Side

When John Goodwin recalls the June 2010 raid of a suspected cockfighting operation in Tennessee, what stands out in his mind even more than the 100 people charged and the 150 birds seized is the image of a little girl crying amidst the chaos. "Her sorry dad brought her to a cockfight that got raided, and then he started just yelling at her and chastising her for being upset," says Goodwin, HSUS director of animal cruelty policy.

Last year, Goodwin and fellow HSUS experts helped law enforcement officials bust 33 animal fighting operations, while their advocacy work focused on preventing cruelty in the first place: Minnesota and Nebraska banned animal fighting paraphernalia, Delaware increased penalties for animal fighting participants and spectators, Illinois strengthened penalties for dogfighting near schools, and Louisiana outlawed attendance at a cockfight.

The immediate rewards of the campaign and investigative work—animals freed from suffering and perpetrators facing heavy fines or even jail time—are significant, but the long-term effects are equally important, says Goodwin: "These people have to be shut down because they're teaching a whole generation that it's OK to be cruel."

Out of the Ring, Into Loving Homes

What started as a narcotics bust at a southeastern Ohio home soon turned into one of the largest seizures for alleged dogfighting ever documented on a single property. Last August, when The HSUS was asked to assist law enforcement with an investigation involving nearly 200 pit bulls, teams arrived to find more than 500 animals, including chickens, roosters, boars, hawks, and the desiccated remains of starved-to-death snakes. Weighted down by logging chains attached to buried car axles, many of the dogs had no shelter and suffered from mange, ringworm, infected wounds, and broken bones.

Help came from volunteers, including more than 30 from Pittsburgh-based Hello Bully. The HSUS's new mobile crime lab served as a space for treatment and evidence collection. A horse arena served as a shelter for nearly three months as the dogs were readied for adoption. "These dogs never had any normal companion dog experiences," says HSUS manager of animal fighting law enforcement Chris Schindler (shown above), who often lay in a horse stall with a dog named Delilah because she refused to move or even eat. "A lot of them were so scared."

Now eating and in a foster home, Delilah is one of nearly 6,400 animals helped by The HSUS's work on animal fighting raids and investigations in 2010.

