



The HSUS cared for one family's pug, named Sweet Pea, along with their two cats and rabbit, as they worked to rebound from Hurricane Irene.

# TO THE *Rescue*

by MICHAEL SHARP

**LOCATIONS:** North Carolina; Vermont

**ANIMALS HELPED:** Hundreds of pets affected by Hurricane Irene

Berkley Hill, animal control officer for North Carolina's coastal Pamlico County, sat in the front seat of his truck on a hot September afternoon, reflecting on a week unlike any other.

His home had been hit hard by floodwaters from Hurricane Irene, and he figured the floors, like so many other personal items, would have to be replaced. He was crashing with his parents at that point—his dogs staying with relatives and his cat, Dorothy, in a temporary shelter.

Still, he poured himself into long days on the job.

"It's been very tough for me," Hill said, "with me losing everything that I own and then not being able to do anything about it—except come out here and work and help the animals of the community. And then at nighttime, I'll run EMS and help the

people of the community."

It was a dizzying, draining time, but the HSUS Animal Rescue Team was there to stand alongside him. Team members helped respond to concerned calls from people who had been forced to leave their pets behind as the hurricane rumbled in. They helped deliver pet food and fresh water, and they established an emergency shelter that took in about 75 pets—dogs and cats, plus a parrot, rabbit, turtle, and horse.

As Irene moved north, so did the HSUS response: A second team helped in flood-ridden Vermont, where nearly the entire state was declared a major disaster zone. HSUS officials helped coordinate the distribution of pet food throughout the state and established a shelter for pets in need—arranging for two cats to be neutered and others to receive flea treatments and vaccinations.

"It was nice to be able to offer pet owners services for their animals, beyond just sheltering them," says Joanne Bourbeau, HSUS senior state director for Vermont and New Hampshire. "And they really, really do appreciate that."

**LOCATION:** Gordon, Nebraska

**ANIMALS SAVED:** 19 llamas, 12 cats, 1 puppy

Lisa Saunders packed up her motor home, attached a 23-foot trailer, and drove some 16 hours northwest from Illinois to Nebraska. This certainly wasn't her first rescue, but as she relayed later, "This was probably the best one I had ever done."

A volunteer with Southeast Llama Rescue, Saunders was responding to The HSUS's call for help placing 32 animals surrendered in August by an owner who no longer was able to care for them. Saunders provided temporary shelter for 10 llamas, including one who gave birth shortly after the rescue and an undersized male who quickly stole her heart.

"He's an adult, but he's still very small," Saunders says, noting the owner kept him protected from the other males. "They're territorial, and they can pick on each other, and this guy was little, so he lived with the girls. And he was just the sweetest little thing we've got."

The case began with a concerned call from the owner's daughter, who was seeking help placing the animals. Jocelyn Nickerson, Nebraska state director for The HSUS, eventually received the go-ahead from the owner, and from there, it became a testament to teamwork: The Central Nebraska Humane Society and Kearney Area Humane Society took in the cats, and Midwest-based Wonder Weims Rescue took in the puppy. Both Southeast and Southwest Llama Rescue arrived for the llamas, who were normal weight but in need of shearing and foot care.

As of mid-September, Saunders was preparing to transport nine of the llamas in her group—all but the newborn and his mother—to a coordinator in Indiana, where adoption efforts were already under way. As Nickerson says: "I think their future is very bright."

**Nineteen llamas in need of grooming and foot care awaited rescue in Gordon, Neb.**



**HSUS responders worked to free this dog from a heavy chain.**

**LOCATION:** Pamlico County, North Carolina

**ANIMALS SAVED:** 47 dogs

The number was just too low. Somewhere, there had to be more dogs.

On the morning of Aug. 4, a caravan of vehicles pulled up to a vacated house in North Carolina's Pamlico County—the culmination of a three-year investigation into an alleged dogfighting operation. But when officials began searching the wooded area out back, they were surprised to find just 17 dogs affixed to heavy tow chains.

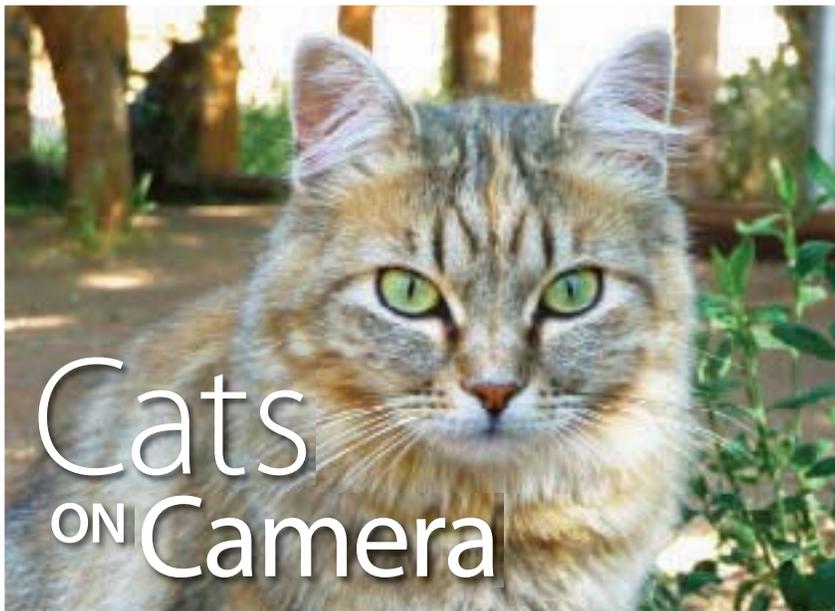
"From the sources we had, and from previous folks who had been to that property, we were expecting a lot more dogs," says Chris Schindler, HSUS manager of animal fighting investigations.

As it turned out, it would take just hours to find them.

Acting on a tip gleaned from a follow-up interrogation with the owner, HSUS officials traveled some 40 miles inland to Jones County, where they met law enforcement at the home of a suspected partner. There, deep in the woods, past a guard dog and over a small footbridge, they found 30 additional dogs—many suffering from heavy scarring and infected wounds. The canopy of trees overhead made for a torturously hot, wet environment, and the dogs were so infested with ants and ant bites that HSUS staffers later soaked them in Epsom salts.

The timing of all this proved critical: Three weeks later, deep floodwaters from Hurricane Irene washed through both areas where the dogs had been chained.

At the temporary shelter set up to care for the rescued animals, Schindler and two HSUS colleagues hunkered down with the dogs as Irene rumbled through. "They were not stressed," Schindler says. "I feel like they knew this was the first time that they weren't going to have to be out in a storm."



**With the click of a mouse**, the camera swings down and focuses on a hollowed-out tree trunk. A cat sleeps just inside, head resting on his outstretched left arm.

Additional clicks move the camera's focus to a wooden platform, then a second log, and finally the front corner of the enclosure where 42 former island cats reside at The HSUS's Fund for Animals Wildlife Center in Ramona, Calif.

The recently launched interactive webcam gives the public a front-row seat as the cats grow more comfortable around humans,

helping staff find homes for personable felines like best friends Candy (pictured at left) and Miranda.

The cats arrived in 2009 from San Nicolas Island, some 60 miles off the Southern California coast, where their presence had been deemed a threat to the island's native species. The HSUS offered to build a shelter at its Ramona sanctuary as an alternative to the government's initial plan of trapping and euthanasia.

Now spayed and neutered, the cats spend their days climbing trees, sleeping, and trying out foraging bowls—problem-solving setups that challenge them to paw food out through holes. The peacocks who roam just outside the enclosure in search of bugs provide endless entertainment, and staff members have clicker-trained some of the cats, offering positive reinforcement for actions like entering a travel carrier.

About half the cats will even take treats out of a caregiver's hand.

"We offer them the opportunity to interact with us," says director Ali Crumpacker, noting volunteers will sometimes just spend time reading a book in the enclosure. If they choose to accept human attention, "then we work on them," she says. "If they don't, there's plenty of places for them to just watch what we're doing." Now, a whole new audience is watching as well. — *Michael Sharp*

➤ **CHECK OUT THE WEBCAM** at [humanesociety.org/catcam](http://humanesociety.org/catcam).

## Moved by the Spirit

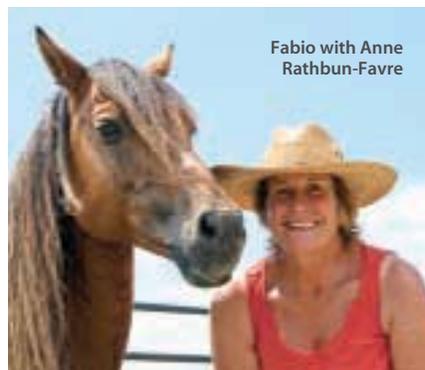
**When it came to food**, Fabio wouldn't take no for an answer. The top horse in his band at Assateague Island National Seashore, the 18-year-old stallion would kick, bite, and charge when campers and picnickers tried to ward him off from their meals.

"It's the typical reaction of a dominant horse telling others to wait for him," says National Park Service biological technician Allison Turner.

The situation was exacerbated by tourists who ignored the Maryland park's rules against feeding, petting, and getting within 10 feet of horses. So Turner had Fabio moved to The HSUS's horse facility at the Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Texas. "We figured we couldn't go wrong with The Humane Society of the United

States as long as they could take him," she says. "We knew he would get the care and respect he needs."

At the sanctuary's Doris Day Horse Rescue and Adoption Center, staff began assessing the newly gelded horse's adoption potential. "Alone for probably the first time in his life—and stallions are very



social—he has been quite needy of human contact, which makes training very easy," says center director Anne Rathbun-Favre.

Initial socialization efforts incorporated lots of cookies and scratching as the semi-wild horse was taught how to accept a lead and halter and pick up his feet for farrier care. Staff poured molasses and sweet-tasting baby food on his feed to induce him to expand his diet beyond grass. It worked, and now his tastes also include hay and alfalfa.

Next up was turning Fabio out into a big herd to test his new social skills. Rathbun-Favre says he'll do best in a home with experienced horse handlers; she describes him as a mild-mannered, left-brained, inquisitive extrovert who likes to test people's horsemanship—just for the fun of it. — *Pepper Van Tassell*



The HSUS's Chris Schindler with Jane Grey from the Ohio 200

**Plastic bins held** the decayed bodies of dozens of starved-to-death snakes, while hundreds of animals languished on the southeastern Ohio property—ill-kept pigs, hawks, quails, roosters, and chickens. Hello Bully volunteers came for the dogs: 200 pit bulls seized during the August 2010 narcotics-turned-dogfighting arrest.

While HSUS staff called on responders nationwide to care for the other animals, the Pittsburgh-based group helped rehabilitate those who'd been deemed the "Ohio 200." Bred and trained to fight, most had been weighted down by logging chains attached to buried car axles; they suffered from mange, ringworm, and untreated infections and injuries. But overcoming poor health was only part of their journey from victim to survivor. "These dogs never had any normal companion dog experiences," says Chris Schindler, HSUS manager of animal fighting investigations. "A lot of them were so scared."

### Support Your Local Hometown Heroes

Find resources for adopting from a shelter or rescue group at [shelterpetproject.org](http://shelterpetproject.org).

For more than two months, 50 Hello Bully volunteers rallied to the challenge, many carpooling 1½ hours each way on their days off. Inside a horse facility donated by an HSUS supporter, they built kennels and helped the dogs work through their scarred past. For volunteer Robin Bower, her time there every Thursday softened the grief from her brother's recent death. "That's the most rewarding work I've ever done in my life," she says. "... I expected them to be shy of humans and maybe even a little defensive ... but most of the dogs were excited to see everybody and to be petted."

Bower and fellow Hello Bully volunteers are dedicated to reshaping the image of pit bulls. Every morning, she runs her two rescues, Horace and Hazel, on leashes looped over the shoulder bandolier-style. The unusual running team draws curiosity and friendly greetings from passersby.

After the Ohio case was over, Bower adopted Pedro, one of the more than 100 dogs who have found homes so far. Eight years on a chain had rubbed bald patches around his neck, and he walked with a shy crawl around people. But Pedro blossomed in his new home. He now runs alongside Horace and Hazel and cuddles with them on winter days. Though his missing neck hair is a permanent reminder of the past, his once ashy coat now glistens like coal.

—Ruthanne Johnson

## Hometown Heroes: Hello Bully, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**▶ IN THE BEGINNING:** Crediting her late pit bull Kaneda with grounding her after a rebellious youth, Daisy Balawejder knows what it's like to be misunderstood: "I always tell people I was raised by a pit bull." Volunteering at an animal shelter exposed her to his breed's plight and sparked her mission to dispel the myths and promote adoption.

**▶ GROUNDWORK:** With more than 130 volunteers, Hello Bully runs a foster home network, teaches free Pit Bull 101 classes, and helps owners turn mischievous pets into role models. Fundraisers have enabled free spay/neuter and vaccinations of more than 1,000 pit bulls.

**▶ ALL HANDS ON DECK:** Since 2010, Hello Bully has assisted The HSUS with dogfighting rescues in Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina. Balawejder praises the volunteers' commitment: "We are trying to make this a better place for these dogs, and so there's an amazing spirit of cooperation."

**▶ I'M A SURVIVOR:** When Jennifer Brown first met Ferdinand from the Ohio 200, it was love at first sight. Later, as he slobbered down treats on her couch, Brown understood why his Hello Bully foster mom had referred to him as "a bit of a pig." "He was smiling away ... and there were crumbs everywhere!" To prove his sweet nature, she showed her landlord recommendations from his trainer and vet. Once the landlord met Ferdinand in person, the adoption was complete.



## Coming of Age

Cage-free campaigner takes on new challenges at The HSUS

**Her junior year of college,** Lena Spadacene returned to campus with a plan hatched over the summer. Soon after the academic year started, she and another student at Michigan's Grand Valley State University met with the campus dining advisory group and got a verbal commitment that GVSU would switch to cage-free eggs. But seven months passed and nothing happened.

It turned out that staff were wary due to the cost—the prices of eggs from hens

not confined in cages can be at least 25 percent higher. Impatient for action, Spadacene and other students collected more than 1,000 signatures supporting change. That got Spadacene invited to a meeting of dining services staff in March 2010. She had to persuade around 30 people that they should look beyond the bottom line. And she did.

"She gave a very convincing presentation," says Deb Rambadt, marketing manager for campus dining. "... [In the end] we

felt that it was a cost we had to absorb." By the next fall, every dining hall on campus was serving cage-free eggs.

The effort earned Spadacene The HSUS's Student Leadership Award, and after graduating this spring, she started working for the organization's Wildlife Abuse Campaign, where she had interned during the summer of 2010. She's using the same skills that helped her succeed at GVSU to broaden and strengthen The HSUS's coalitions with government agencies and other nonprofits nationwide.

"Do something about it, because it's possible," she says of her approach to animal protection. "I didn't set out to change the world. I set out to change something very specific."

Spadacene's new office is in a warren of cubicles in the organization's Gaithersburg, Md., headquarters. On the nearly bare wall is tacked a thank-you note for arranging donated prizes for a fur-free fashion show put on by the university's animal advocacy group and fashion club. Days into the job and still settling into her new apartment in Maryland, she couldn't be happier.

"The Campaigns department is like no other place," she says. "They're inspired and passionate and so hardworking."

Spadacene studied biology and psychology during college but came of age through The HSUS. In 2007, when she was 18 and just out of high school, Spadacene attended the Taking Action for Animals

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: SARAH RICE; BRANDON COLE; OPPOSITE PAGE: THE HSUS



## Freeing Morgan

A judge keeps alive an orca's chance to return to the wild

**In June 2010,** fishermen spotted a lone female orca in the Wadden Sea off the Netherlands, hundreds of miles from where killer whales normally roam. Rescuers took the emaciated animal, dubbed Morgan, to the Dolfinarium Harderwijk theme park, a kind of Dutch SeaWorld, to be rehabilitated and returned to the wild if possible, as the country's laws require.

Trouble was that Dolfinarium staff—believing Morgan was too

conference in Washington, D.C., at the suggestion of an aunt who had long supported The HSUS.

“It was an eye-opening experience,” she says. “Before, I had no idea factory farming existed. Nobody was talking about it—not in my hometown, not at my college. I had never seen it on the news.”

In the summer of 2009, Spadacene interned with The HSUS’s Government Affairs department. Afterwards, back at GVSU, Spadacene took on the cage-free switch and a tougher challenge: encouraging students to leave meat off their plates one day a week. In March, the campus dining department partnered with the Humane Society of GVSU to launch a Meatless Monday campaign.

Spadacene wishes her grandfather were still alive so she could talk to him about her work. A small-town doctor in Northville, Mich., he accepted sacks of potatoes and flowers as payment when patients didn’t have cash. He passed his reverence for all life on to his children and eventually to his grandchildren.

“I do feel a sense of responsibility, not just to my human neighbors, but to my non-human neighbors,” she says. “We’re not the most important thing on this planet.”

— *Karen E. Lange*

young to hunt on her own and couldn’t be reunited with her family—tried to ship her to Loro Parque, a Canary Islands theme park that displays orcas. Animal welfare groups filed a legal complaint to block the transfer, helped by documentation from Humane Society International. The case would have been tossed out of a U.S. court. But a Dutch judge temporarily blocked Morgan’s transfer.

“This is the little whale that could,” says HSI senior scientist Naomi Rose, Ph.D. “The precedent they’re setting is really pretty amazing.”

HSI and other animal groups would like Morgan to be rehabilitated in a sea pen, just as with Keiko (the orca featured in *Free Willy*). She would be free to come and go, rather than being confined in a

concrete tank. If she proved unable to find her family or food on her own, humans would continue to care for her.

While the judge did not address those arguments, he ruled that Dutch officials had approved the move without checking whether it complied with the law, including a stipulation that it be made for the purposes of scientific research. Rose had submitted a letter suggesting very little scientific research with orcas has been done at Loro Parque.

The ruling will have worldwide impact, Rose says, by discouraging officials from rubber stamping commercial parks’ requests to import or export cetaceans. “The paradigm has shifted a little bit for the next whale that comes along.”

— *Karen E. Lange*

## Capital Offenses New law targets wildlife abuse in Washington, D.C.

**A 17-year veteran of the Massachusetts SPCA**, Scott Giacoppo was no stranger to animal cruelty cases when he joined the Washington Humane Society in 2007. But what he discovered in his new employer’s case files shocked and sickened him.

One report described what happened after a homeowner hired a nuisance wildlife control operator (NWCO) to get rid of the squirrels scampering across her roof. The company could have instructed her to trim the branches that made the housetop an inviting thoroughfare; instead, it chained body-gripping conibear traps along the roofline.

One trap left its victim dangling off the roof, screaming in pain. The trapping company never responded to the homeowner’s pleas for help. More than three hours passed before a WHS field officer euthanized the suffering animal.

Such scenarios have been all too common in the district, which until recently had no laws regulating NWCOs. “It’s the wild, wild West,” says Giacoppo, WHS’s vice president of external affairs. “Anything goes.”

“Anything” included trapping indiscriminately, charging customers according to the number of animals caught, and killing wildlife by bludgeoning or drowning. “It’s not the way to resolve a conflict,” says John Griffin, director of The HSUS’s Humane Wildlife Services. “Animals are dying for no good reason.”

To change this reality, Giacoppo and Griffin worked with concerned residents and D.C. councilmember Mary Cheh. D.C.’s Wildlife Protection Act, passed unanimously in December 2010, requires NWCOs to be trained and licensed, bans cruel traps, mandates humane euthanasia methods, and establishes consumer protections—a model for the nearly 20 states that don’t regulate NWCOs and those with only minimal requirements.

While industry lobbyists have been working to overturn D.C.’s law, Giacoppo is determined to hold NWCOs to higher standards. “They’re used to coming in and doing what they want,” he says. “... Those days are gone.”

— *Julie Falconer*



After removing baby raccoons from an attic, The HSUS’s Humane Wildlife Services biologists reunited them with their mother.