



LOCATION: Stokes County, North Carolina

ANIMALS SAVED: More than 150 dogs

The HSUS's Ashley Mauceri maneuvered her way around an outdoor pen, trying to corral several schnauzers during a February rescue at a North Carolina puppy mill.

Terrified, the little dogs ran circles in their dirt enclosure, and one by one, she tried to calmly corner them—all the while staying cautious of jerry-rigged electrical wires strung across the pen at waist height. "It was," she says, "just really not a habitable place for animals to be."

Both Mauceri and HSUS North Carolina state director Kim Alboum had received complaints about the property. Local law enforcement obtained a search warrant, and The HSUS moved quickly to assist Stokes County Animal Control and other area organizations with collecting evidence and removing more than 150 dogs.

Some suffered scalded skin from sitting in their own urine; untreated wounds; and mouth, eye, or ear infections. Unused to human contact, some were afraid of the rescuers, while others were "just begging for attention," Mauceri says.

The dogs were transported to the Guilford County Animal Shelter and SPCA of Wake County, where many have already been adopted. A month later, Mauceri still revels in their changed circumstances, especially the older animals who had suffered the neglect for years. "If we hadn't gotten involved, they would have lived out the rest of their lives in those filthy pens, never knowing grass, or love, or real food and water," she says. "And to me, that is one of the really awesome parts about this case, is that these older dogs finally had a chance to be a real dog."

LOCATION: Collierville, Tennessee

ANIMALS SAVED:
8 Tennessee walking horses

For 49 days, an undercover HSUS investigator worked alongside noted Tennessee walking horse trainer Jackie McConnell, documenting stomach-turning abuses.

Walking horses are judged in competitions based on their high-stepping gait, known as the "big lick," and the investigator found McConnell and associates using the illegal practice of soring to exaggerate their horses' gaits.

Time and again, they applied caustic chemicals to the horses' legs so they would pick up their feet as high as possible to relieve the pain. Trainers smacked horses in the face with heavy wooden poles, shocked them with a cattle prod, and sliced into their tails, ostensibly to force a showier arch; some of the cuts became infected and oozed puss.

On March 1, McConnell and three associates were indicted on 52 counts of violating the federal law against soring and were charged with violating Tennessee's animal cruelty law. HSUS staff helped law enforcement develop the case, assisted in evidence collection, and removed eight afflicted horses from the facility.

It was another landmark in the campaign against soring, proving that it's still practiced by more than just a few rogue trainers, notes Keith Dane, HSUS director of equine protection. "This was a leading, winning trainer in the industry who had in his barn a horse that was considered a top contender for the World Grand Championship last year. And this removes, once and for all, the myth that soring is a thing of the past."



Since June 1 of last year, more than 800 dogs have been rescued from eight puppy mills in North Carolina, a state with no laws regulating most commercial dog breeders.



A day after being tranquilized and carried out of her barren, chain-link pen at the Collins Zoo in Mississippi, this tiger stepped into a new enclosure at The HSUS's Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Texas.



LOCATION: Collins, Mississippi

ANIMALS SAVED: 3 tigers, 2 cougars, 2 leopards, 2 wolf hybrids, 1 macaque

Adam Parascandola has deployed on dozens of rescues in his two-plus years with The HSUS. None had the potential for danger like this one.

But on a day that saw cougars, leopards, and wolf hybrids rescued from an unaccredited roadside zoo—and responders carrying a tranquilized tiger out on a stretcher—the enduring image for Parascandola was simply this: a lone macaque monkey, living in an empty enclosure.

“Just dirt and bars,” he remembers. “There was absolutely nothing in there for him to do. It seemed to be a very bleak existence for him. So for me, getting him out of that situation and into a better situation was one of the real highlights.”

The rescue stemmed from a 2009 HSUS undercover investigation that revealed inadequate care and housing for the animals and dangerously few safety measures for the visiting public at Mississippi's Collins Zoo.

The state Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks served a search-and-seizure warrant at the facility in late January, kicking off a well-coordinated rescue effort. Jackson Zoo officials tranquilized the big cats and macaque with darts, and as the animals slept,

responders carried them to transport cages, where they were evaluated by veterinarians. At one point, a tranquilized tiger lifted his head, sending staff scurrying.

Meanwhile, some seven hours away in Murchison, Texas, staff at The HSUS's Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch had been preparing for this day since before Thanksgiving, designing and installing several multipurpose enclosures. The morning after their arrival, the tigers stepped into their new temporary homes—featuring grassy yards, large dens, and logs for scratching.

The two females took quickly to their new surroundings, pouncing on logs and rubbing against plants, notes Black Beauty director Ben Callison. The male, meanwhile, stayed in his den for about a week: “He needed to relax, and that was something he'd never had in his life. So we just absolutely gave him that time for a little R and R.”

The wolf hybrids were placed in a third new enclosure, while Carolina Tiger Rescue took in two leopards and a cougar, and Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation took in another cougar. As for the next time Parascandola saw that macaque? The image came via an email from the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary, showing a happy face munching on a leaf of lettuce.

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