**HSUS Helps FBI in Raid**

It is believed to be one of the nation’s largest illegal cockfighting pits. And in June 2005, HSUS staff assisted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in raiding the Del Rio cockfighting pit in Cocke County, Tennessee, while a fight was in progress. Authorities arrested 144 participants on site for illegal gambling and cockfighting, confiscated $40,000 in cash, and seized more than 300 gamecocks. According to law enforcement, hundreds of cockfighters regularly came to Del Rio from all over the country to fight their birds and gamble on the matches.

The pit was believed to be owned by the former president and current secretary of the United Gamefowl Breeders Association (UGBA), a tax-exempt organization continued on page 5.

**HSUS’s Melissa Forberg with one of the 300-plus birds rescued in an FBI raid.**

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**HSUS’s Massive Rescue Effort in Wake of Hurricane Katrina**

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

The rescue in Gulfport occurred as dozens of HSUS relief workers extended their reach into devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, working to establish pet-friendly shelters, coordinating animal relief activities with local partners in both government and the nonprofit sector, and improvising solutions to a host of animal-related emergencies.

But the devastated city of New Orleans was still waiting.

**Answering the Call**

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 external communications, logging 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.

Many of the calls came from the afflicted city of New Orleans: A man who couldn’t continued on page 2.
An Overwhelming Task

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.

Throughout the weekend, reports of animals in need for rescue continued to pour in. An executive director of the Louisiana SPCA, together with animal rescue workers, faced a grim and urgent challenge. The owner of the HSUS DART, saying he would rescue his stranded dog “by any means necessary.”

Animals suffered in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The separation of people and pets in an animal cruelty investigation involving thousands of people and animals still stuck inside their homes. The HSUS has been working with local shelters to adopt those pets people may be forced to give up. It’s always hard, said SERO Director Laura Bevan, who is directing the Mississippi effort. “But sometimes it’s necessary.”

Animal abuse is found in many forms and in many places. In June, SERO, joined by HSUS and Earth Animal, accompanied by in The HSUS’s first priority in the weeks ahead. “We’re just beginning to get a sense of the work that lies ahead of us,” he said. “But we’re committed to doing all we can. We know that it’s something that our members support, and we’re confident that they’ll demonstrate their faith by contributing in every possible way to the work that we’re doing.”

Animal care professionals removed 30 dogs, a rabbit, a duck, a pig, two horses, and three cats from a property in Mobile, Alabama. Because Bledsoe County has no animal control or humane shelter, the animals were transported to the Young-Williams Animal Center in Knoxville, where veterinarians and veterinary students conducted health assessments, and volunteers gave each animal affection and good food. Unfortunately, 11 of the dogs were in such poor health that they had to be humanely euthanized. The remaining animals, however, were transferred to other shelters, including the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley, for rehabilitation and adoption.

The animals appeared to be victims of a condition known as animal hoarding. Animal hoarding is a tragic situation in which an individual acquires more animals than he or she is able to provide with even basic sanitation, shelter, medical care, or veterinary care. The result can be starvation, illness, and even death. Often the persons involved are in denial of the magnitude of the neglect and its impact on the animals, the household, and the humans living in the home.

Hurricane Dennis Proves a Menace

The Southeast was impacted early this hurricane season when Hurricane Dennis came ashore along the same Florida coast devastated by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. In the end, Dennis proved menacing but not as damaging as “Ivan the Terrible.”

In early July, when Dennis was churning in the Caribbean, HSUS Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) members mobilized and went to work identifying and preparing for critical needs such as food, rescue teams and sheltering locations. They also tapped established partnerships that provide coordination among animal protection organizations, disaster relief agencies, and state and local governments.

More than 100 animals were moved out of the Humane Society of South Mississippi to the safety of shelters in Alabama and Georgia. At the same time, SERO worked with the Louisiana SPCA in New Orleans to help coordinate the evacuation of hundreds of its animals to shelters in Texas. The disaster team also hailed its newest resource into action: a mobile unit that will stay in the Southeast throughout the hurricane season. The new HSUS disaster truck and trailer serves as a mobile command post and medical suite.

An HSUS team member bathes a dog rescued from flood waters.

The HSUS has been tireless in trying to reunite displaced pets with their owners. The organization’s previous major disaster responses, which include aiding the animal victims of last year’s Asian tsunami and responding to the four hurricanes that hit the United States last season, have been well received by individuals and corporations alike. The HSUS has received a steady stream of donations that will stay in the Southeast throughout the hurricane season. The new HSUS disaster truck and trailer serves as a mobile command post and medical suite.

The costs associated with The HSUS rescue efforts are expected to vasty exceed the organization’s previous major disaster responses, which include aiding the animal victims of last year’s Asian tsunami and responding to the four hurricanes that hit the United States last season.

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Florida's Animal Friend license plate is now making an appearance on vehicles around the state! After nearly three years of effort, the license plate is being sold at county tax collector's offices for an additional fee of $25 a year, which will help fund future programs statewide to sterilize animals and, hopefully, reduce the state's pet overpopulation problem.

So far, the Animal Friend license plate is a hit with the public, becoming the highest seller of the 12 new license plates available in 2005. There is stiff competition though, with Florida offering drivers a choice of nearly 100 specialty license plates for their cars.

In May, Florida Animal Friend, the coalition of groups and individuals who worked so hard to make the plate a reality, celebrated with a gala event in Fort Lauderdale. The event brought together 300 people to honor State Sen. Nan Rich, who shepherded the Animal Friend license plate through its approval by the Florida Legislature in 2004. HSUS President and CEO Wayne Pacelle provided the keynote address and presented Sen. Rich with awards for her efforts on behalf of the plate and animals in general. Local media celebrities presented awards to SERO, the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, and the Florida Animal Control Association for their work as coalition members.

If you are a Florida driver, look for the Animal Friend license plate at your Department of Motor Vehicles office when you renew your annual registration. Your purchase of the plate could help save dogs' and cats' lives!

For more information on the Florida Animal Friend license plate, visit: www.floridaanimalfriend.com.

Protecting FL Black Bears

A coalition of conservation and animal welfare organizations and individuals, including The HSUS, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Sierra Club, is taking legal action to force greater federal protection for Florida's black bears.

In June, the coalition notified Secretary of Interior Gale Norton and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that it will legally challenge the agency's most recent decision to deny protection to Florida black bears under the Endangered Species Act. The Florida black bear, a distinct subspecies of American black bear, historically lived throughout Florida and into Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Now an estimated 3,000 bears live in nine isolated populations, occupying only about one-quarter of their former range.

The primary threat to the Florida black bear is habitat destruction caused by increasing urbanization and other human development. In addition, bears are killed on roadways, by illegal hunting and poaching, and by sport hunting in Alabama and Georgia. The coalition hopes that a listing under the Endangered Species Act will provide Florida black bears with essential protections necessary to prevent further population losses.

"Once again, the Fish and Wildlife Service is relying on state agencies and local officials to protect these bears, even though entire populations of this subspecies are being exterminated on the state's watch," said Jonathan R. Lovvorn, vice president of animal protection litigation for The HSUS. "Without federal protection, bears in Florida will have no meaningful defense against a multitude of threats, including habitat loss, poaching, and even future trophy hunts."

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)

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

1624 Metropolitan Circle, Suite B

Tallahassee, FL 32308

Promoting the protection of all animals
"Godfather" of Louisiana Dogfighting Goes Down

One of Floyd Boudreaux's dogs, whom HSUS teams helped rescue.

While authorities collected evidence for Boudreaux's prosecution, animal care professionals removed the dogs and documented their physical condition. Industrial bolt cutters were needed to cut the heavy logging chains shackled to most dogs' necks. Later dogs were transported to the Louisiana SPCA in New Orleans, where veterinarians evaluated them and cataloged their scars and injuries. Unfortunately, because the dogs were trained fighting dogs and a threat to one another, they were humanely euthanized.

Boudreaux's lineage of dogs dates back almost 60 years. The dogs, who are held legally in Louisiana for thousands of dollars, are bred and trained to compete in vicious fighting matches. The HSUS estimates that more than 40,000 people across the country buy and sell fighting dogs and are involved in organized dogfighting. Many registered pit bulls currently used for fighting have allegedly come from Boudreaux's stock. Known as "ESI" dogs, the bloodline is considered the top choice for dogfighters. It is hoped that his arrest will lead to the eventual elimination of his line of dogs, and the "sport" of dogfighting altogether.

continued from "FBI Raid" on page 1

representing the interests of cockfighters nationwide. The HSUS has asked the Internal Revenue Service to revok...Eftier this year, the national dogfighting industry suffered a huge blow with the arrests in Louisiana of Floyd Boudreaux, purported to be one of the most insidious dogfighters and breeders in the United States, and his son. A task force comprised of Sandy Christopherson and SERO's Jen Hobgood; HSUS staff from Washington, DC, Texas, and Montana; Louisiana SPCA employees, and state and federal law enforcement officers pooled resources and information to execute the raid. Fifty-seven pit bulls were seized from Boudreaux's premises, many showing scars and injuries consistent with this brutal blood sport.

President Theodore Roosevelt owned one. So did Helen Keller. This breed of dog was the trademark of Buster Brown shoes and RCA Victor. Peleiy was the canine star of television's "Our Dug." And Shubby 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? DVDs sold through Hobby J. Brown seeks to show in his new film "Off the Chain," available on DVD from Ardustry Home Entertainment.

This story is supposed to be the evolution of the breed and gives viewers a disturbing look into the minds of the dog owners and trainers who participate in the brutal dogfighting sport. The man who has spent three years infiltrating the underground subculture of pit bull fighting, gaining the trust of well-established "dog men" who allowed him to be found behind their veil of secrecy. But he also captured another side: the loving nature of the dogs and their brutal misuse by those who use them for their own entertainment.

Director's Report

By Laura Bevan

Director of the Southeast Regional Office

More Goodbyes

In my last newsletter I wrote about all the changes that SERO had experienced in past months, and the hope that things would quiet down a bit. Well, that didn't happen, and more change, both good and sad, took place.

In April, SERO Regional Coordinator Sandy Christopherson resigned to become executive director of the Spartanburg Humane Society in South Carolina. It was a blow to our small office, with two employees new to the job since January. Nancy and Jen, the new staff, have jumped in feet first and done excellent work, but we still miss Sandy and his expertise in dealing with cruelty cases and animal fighting issues.

In May, the night of the gala kickoff for the Florida Animal Friend license plate, my dog Pepper, whom I adopted after Hurricane Andrew, passed away. I left her that morning with the traditional doggie biscuit and instructions to eat in it her bed. She trotted off, and that is where she was found later. It was a shock for me, but a peaceful passing for Pepper, who was 15. We traveled a long road together since 1992. She had a great life, but it is still hard to believe she is gone. A happy goodbye came with the adoption of a little dog. I listened from Levy County Animal Control in Florida. A smooth-coated Jack Russell terrier, Lily had a history of abuse and had to be in a rescuer condition due to untreated ear infections. The Fosters and I are thrilled with her and say, "Lily, you are a good girl."

In June, Laura Bevan's mom holds Lily before she went to her adoptive home. The SERO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Southeast Regional Office, 1624 Metropolitan Cir., Ste. B Tallahassee, FL 32308; 850-386-4045. Laura Bevan, Direc-

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

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"The Godfather" of Louisiana dogfighting had a bad reputation. He was one of Florida's most decorated dogs, but his career was cut short by an accident in 1992. The HSUS has asked the Internal Revenue Service to revoke the UGDA's tax-free status because it promotes illegal activities. Staff from the HSUS and HSUS headquarters in Washington, DC, joined animal handlers from the Spartanburg Humane Society in South Carolina to participate in the raid. "We found more than 30 birds that had already been fought into the trash. Another 300 were waiting to be fought over the weekend," according to SERO Director Laura Bevan. "The Del Rio had to be booked to the animal caretakers. The HSUS's Eric Sakach is featured in the documentary. Brown is generously 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.offthechainproduc-
tions.com/store and use the redemption code: HSUSOTC.