Helping FL Hurricane Victims

Charley and Frances had already pummeled Florida on both coasts. Next it was Hurricane Ivan, the strongest storm yet, which tore through the Panhandle. As part of HSUS’s disaster services, NRRO Director Dave Pauli and Program Coordinator Colin Berry joined Richard Stockdale, director of Flathead County (MT) Animal Control, and Jeff Gustafson, animal control officer for Charles County Animal Services, in rescue efforts in hard-hit Gulf Shores, Alabama.

When they arrived, they found desolate streets strewn with debris and fallen power lines. After making contact with officials to gauge animal needs, the team made plans for pet food distribution, expanded community outreach, and animal rescue. They also visited local vet clinics to assess the damage and to see what resources they needed. At one clinic, which was still closed because of the storm, they found a couple sitting in their car, unsure of what to do with an injured gannet they had found in their yard. The continued on page 2

NRRO’s Colin Berry rescues an injured pelican after Hurricane Ivan. She is joined by Richard Stockdale.

Billings to Sri Lanka: An Incredible Journey

By NRRO Director Dave Pauli

Every time I participate in an HSUS disaster services or Humane Society International (HSI) project, I grow personally and professionally. But my February 2005 trip to Sri Lanka was perhaps the most profound experience. Sri Lanka, just south of India, is about the size of West Virginia, and the residents of the southern and eastern shores lost at least 31,000 neighbors, family members, and tourists to the tsunami.

My role was to join an HSI team after a 10-hour jungle drive from the airport to a base camp clinic set up in villages near Arugam Bay. This area was devastated on December 26, 2004, and about six weeks later, relief workers were still setting up tent refugee camps. Power was sporadic and water unsafe. The daytime temperatures were in the low 100s with high humidity, so just moving about the devastated neighborhoods in the middle of the day was a chore. Washed out bridges made daily boat or barge rides a necessity, and obtaining safe food for clinic staff proved an ongoing challenge.

My job was to patrol neighborhoods and net or live-trap dogs and bring them in for surgery and vaccinations. My capture teammates were from Bali and Japan. We quickly learned to get around our language barriers with hand signals and the words “belli,” “bala,” or “nye,” which all mean “dog” in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages. Considering the extent of the disaster, the dogs were in pretty good shape. Most were surviving, but the stress of finding food was taking a toll.

The local school children attended classes until 1:30, when it becomes too hot in their outdoor classrooms. So we focused our capture efforts during this time; once school was out, 20 to 40 kids would follow us trying to help. In reality, they made so much noise that the dogs would leave before we got there!

The local people were amazing. Despite their losses of homes, family, and jobs, they offered us shade, hot tea, rice, and help in locating dogs. One Sinhalese man lost his 10-year-old son and his home, but when I offered him condolences, he said, “It’s okay, maybe people have lost more.” This man was also providing shelter and scarce scraps to a stray dog who had five puppies in the damaged home where he and his 14 extended family members were living. We spayed this dog, wormed the puppies, and supplied him with canned dog food to help wean the puppies and give mama dog some additional energy.

The good spirits, resilience, and friendship of the Sri Lankans will be with me for the rest of my life. The HSUS and all those who supported this humanitarian effort can be proud of relief we brought to the people and animals of the eastern shore of Sri Lanka.

Despite losing their home and a son to the tsunami, this Sri Lankan family (shown here with NRRO Director Dave Pauli) took in a dog and her five pups.
Safe Cats Conference

A major event for our office this year is the Safe Cats Conference to be held September 7–9 at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. This conference will bring together animal welfare professionals from six Western states for training to promote HSUS's campaign that encourages cat owners to keep their cats safe from the dangers of roaming outdoors. Safe Cats will feature a host of nationally known speakers, including Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald of Animal Planet’s “Emergency ER.” The exhibit area will include a Safe Cats technology demonstration site, featuring the latest in fence, housing, toys, and identification.

The highlight of the conference will be a panel discussion about the effects outdoors can have on wildlife. This discussion will bring together people on all sides of the issue—including Montana Audubon Society; feral cat advocates; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and animal shelter personnel—for what promises to be a lively discussion on this controversial topic.

By the Numbers

We’ve been busy in the field! We thought you might be interested in hearing about just some of the animal rescues we’ve worked on (sung roughly to the tune of “The 12 Days of Christmas”).

In the last six months, your Northern Rockies office helped: 767 goldfish, several basset hounds, and a rabbit; a lost parakeet, a crow with a broken wing, a squirrel hit by a car, seven Rottweilers, one injured doe, five domestic rabbits! A great horned owl, a tail-less iguana, two bull snakes, and an orphaned baby fox.

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The evening of September 7, the conference hall will open to the general public for a household cat show sponsored by the Yellowstone Valley Cat Club. There will also be training sessions on grooming, cat care, and youth involvement in feline issues. The first 300 people to attend this event will receive a free kitty condo!

The NRRO team is excited to host this first-ever regional conference, and we’re looking forward to a productive and educational training event! For more information, contact our office.

Make Your Pet a Star, Win an Original Pet Portrait

Our office has a wonderful opportunity to work with one of Montana’s most talented artists and to help animals in the region at the same time.

Billings artist Sandra Merwin approached our staff with the idea of co-sponsoring animal photo contests. Merwin has won numerous awards, and her work has been featured on the covers of magazines. Each first-place winner in the contests will receive an original 8” x 10” Merwin portrait of their pet like the one shown here. Second-place winners each receive an original 4” x 6” portrait. All contest entry fees benefit NRRO’s rescue fund and will be used to purchase a trailer to aid in cruelty cases, disasters, and other rescue needs throughout our six-state region.

Upcoming Contests: Enter Your Pet’s Photo Now!

The Pets for Life Photo Contest highlights dogs who have earned the honor of being a pet for life in their families. Because every year, 8 to 10 million pets are surrendered to our nation’s animal shelters, including an estimated 4 to 5 million who are euthanized, this contest celebrates the mature dogs in our community who have enjoyed living their whole lives with their families. All entries in this contest must be postmarked no later than June 8, 2005. Visit www.hsus.org/petsforlife to learn more about The HSUS Pets for Life campaign.

The Safe Cats Are Happy Cats Contest celebrates cats who enjoy the many benefits of living indoors only. Because free-roaming cats are more susceptible to suffering, injury, and disease, felines are safest, happiest, and healthiest when living indoors. Indoor cats also help protect your community’s wildlife. All entries in this contest must be postmarked no later than August 15, 2005. At www.hsus.org/safecats you can learn more about the advantages of having a cat who lives strictly indoors.

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.
• Promoting my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

Using charitable gift annuities and endowed gifts to support The HSUS.

DIY: Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

The Pets for Life Photo Contest: A photo contest to help cats find their forever homes.

NRR0's rescue fund will be used to purchase a trailer to aid in cruelty cases, disasters, and other rescue needs throughout our six-state region.
Dear Friends of Northern Rockies Animals

Each year in this issue I write about the accomplishments of the previous year and our goals for this one. And each year it becomes more and more difficult to list all the accomplishments in one article, or to predict what our goals for next year will be. After some reflection, I realize that NRRO cannot possibly address all the animal issues in our six great Western states and that we have to prioritize our efforts and utilize all the local and statewide volunteers to make good things for animals happen. So this year I will give a briefer summary of 2004 and ask you to help us spread our message to your friends and family so we can accomplish even more. For starters, consider passing this newsletter on to any animal loving neighbor or co-worker so that we can get them active in our legislative efforts or rescue projects.

For 2004, I am happy to report that we helped more animals and had a higher caseload than any other in the 15-year NRRO history. Some of the individual rescues—the starving horses, fox cubs, and tortoises—you read about in our news-

letters. But hundreds of rescues—from the crow with a broken wing to half a dozen bushy-tailed wood rats—do not routinely get reported to you. Rest assured that if a call comes in to help any animal, we will provide the assistance needed.

We also had our share of cruelty cases in 2004, with some court proceedings carrying over into 2005. Volume cases involving dogs, cats, and horses were the norm, but we also handled cases involving nearly 800 goldfish, and others with snakes, rabbits, and birds. Our 2004 RAVS native nations outreach and some other Native American assistance programs such as our pilot Certified Rez Dog adoption program were other positive projects. The only thing preventing us from having even more success in 2004 was a limitation of time and resources to address other requests for assistance.

For this year, I want to tell you that we are planning great things: an improved RAVS native nation outreach with clinics in Colorado and Utah, a Safe Cats regional conference in Billings in September, and some real successes in all six state legislatures. But in animal protection, while we try to be proactive, we still have to be reactive to the yet unseen cases of animal cruelty, hoarder cases, and disaster and emergency situations that come up each year and test the mettle of your NRRO team.

So my message for the remainder of 2005 is first and foremost a thank you for your support, which allows us to help our non-human neighbors. I also want to challenge you to consider becoming more involved. Think about getting on our legislative e-mail lists, or attending one of our dozens of field events. Again, pass this newsletter along and get more people from your community involved in helping animals. Or if you have orphaned wildlife, feral cats, need a spay/neuter clinic, whatever—give me a call, and I can discuss with you ways you can help.

Contacting HSUS

Write: 
HSUS Northern Rockies Regional Office
490 N. 31st St., Ste. 215
Billings, MT 59101

Call: 406-255-7161

Fax: 406-255-7162

Web Page: www.hsus.org/nrro

Promoting the protection of all animals

The HSUS and The Fund for Animals (The Fund) officially joined forces in an unprecedented and historic combination on January 1, 2005. This is the first time in the history of the animal protection movement that two national, high-profile organizations have united in order to advance their common mission.

“Our groups have decided to join forces not out of necessity, but because we believe we can do more to help animals together than we can do operating separately,” said David O. Wiebers, M.D., chair of The HSUS’s board of directors.

The two groups plan to operate their advocacy programs under the banner of The HSUS, building a new external affairs department to focus on major defining issues such as fur, sport hunting, factory farming, and malicious animal cruelty, including animal fighting. They will pursue these goals with a multifaceted approach involving investigations, litigation, communications, and professional campaigning.

“With our new campaigns, we will create meaningful social change for animals,” said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The HSUS. “Our goal is nothing short of a kinder society, where compassionate individuals join with us to ensure that animals are not abused either in random acts of cruelty or in institutional settings, such as industrial factory farms.”

The NRRO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Northern Rockies Regional Office, 490 N. 31st St., Ste. 215, Billings, MT 59101; 406-255-7161. Dave Pauli, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

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