

## Majority of Pets Reunited With Owners After Gustav

**Cats and dogs are being picked up at local shelters after waiting out the hurricane.**

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Photos courtesy IFAW/M.Booth Since Hurricane Gustav made landfall, animal welfare organizations were busy taking in pets, providing food and shelter for more than 1,300 cats and dogs. Now, a few hundred companion animals remain in the Shreveport, La., shelter, according to Michael Booth of the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

The great majority of pets have either been reunited with their owners or sent to the local shelters in each parish by truck so that owners in those areas can pick them up, Booth said. "All in all, a very successful and efficient operation to protect and shelter these animals, beloved and integral part of the families forced to evacuate in the days prior to Hurricane Gustav's landfall," he said.

As Gustav approached, millions of people evacuated their homes in New Orleans and surrounding areas. North Shore Animal League America sent its first rescue team to Birmingham, Ala., where staff worked alongside shelter partner, Greater Birmingham Humane Society.

While animal rescue groups reported that Gustav was not as destructive as expected, many evacuees took their pets along. Rescue teams helped meet any pet needs as people arrived, and remained during and after Gustav hit, according to the Animal League.

Now, Animal League and others are keeping close watch over Hurricane Ike, and although Ike has been downgraded to a Category 2 hurricane, rescue workers will continue to assess emergency rescue plans accordingly.