

Resources for Reuniting Owners with Pets Displaced by Hurricanes

It's not too late for pet owners to reunite with animals displaced by Hurricanes.

October 18, 2005 Its not too late for pet owners to reunite with animals displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, said Dr. Emily Weiss, senior director of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Updated information on rescued animals is posted daily on several websites, and pet owners should continue to check the sites, even if initially they were not having any luck, she said.

Please keep seeking, she said. If owners didn't find their pet early on, they could be there now.

In fact, several national animal welfare agencies, including the ASPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, United Animal Nations and the Best Friends Animal Society, have asked rescue groups and shelters to extend the holding period for animals from the hurricane-stricken area to allow more reunions to occur.

As the rescue and recovery efforts draw to a close, we are faced with the daunting task of reuniting as many Katrina pets with their owners as possible, said Julie Morris, senior vice president of ASPCA National Outreach. As these owners lives have been completely turned upside down, we would like to extend as long of a window as possible for them to locate their pets.

The shelters were asked to keep pets for a minimum of 30 days, and many shelters are adopting out pets with a contract that says that if the owner is found, the animal will go back to the owner, Weiss said.

For information on pets, the ASPCA said pet owners should monitor PetFinder.org, the largest database of rescued animals; Pet Harbor, another database of rescued animals; Lost St. Bernard Pets, a database of animals rescued from St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana; and ASPCA, which lists resources on reunification. Owners can also call Petfinder.com at (800) 485-5152 and the Humane Society of the United States disaster call center at (800) HUMANE1 for help with the reunification process.