

Disaster Update # 4

Event: Hurricane Katrina
Date: August 29, 2005
Time: 7:00PM Update (Central Time)
Situation: Outside Reports on Hurricane Katrina Response

The Humane Society of the United States Situation Report - Hurricane Katrina Monday August 29, 2005, 8:00 PM EDT

CURRENT SITUATION:

Having hit the Gulf Coast with 175 mph winds and many inches of rain, Hurricane Katrina is still grinding the area with wind and rain, and will continue its way up the Ohio Valley to visit destruction on many more states. Tropical storm force winds extended out more than 150 miles (300 miles across) and hit southeast Louisiana and Mississippi the hardest.

Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco has urged all people who evacuated the New Orleans area in anticipation of Hurricane Katrina to stay where they are, saying that people who attempt to return to the city will be stopped. Only official emergency personnel will be allowed in. State officials say that it is too early to say when people will be allowed to return to the city, saying they haven't even begun to make initial assessments of the damage.

With no power, water or enough food, it doesn't make sense for people to return to the New Orleans area, the governor said. Blanco said the elevated highways need to be assessed to see if they're able to support traffic back into the city.

Blanco said there is believed to be widespread flooding in St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes, with the water as deep as 10-12 feet in some places. Local officials at the St. Bernard courthouse have said that they are trapped on the second floor, and that water is rising to that level.

State officials have received reports of as many as 20 buildings in New Orleans that have collapsed or toppled from the winds, Blanco said. An observer in a fire station across the street from the 17th Street Canal reported seeing water leaking from the levee, she said.

Apparently, many residents heeded pleas to take their pets with them when they evacuated. Reports from the Comfort Inn in Memphis, for example, indicate that more than half the rooms were taken by people with pets.

The Louisiana SPCA evacuated its entire shelter according to their plan which has been developed over the course of several tropical storms and hurricanes. Reports are that while the shelter itself is currently under water, all the animals were evacuated. The HSUS has been asked to work to help place adoptable animals evacuated into adoption programs in Texas. According to the State Veterinarian's Office, a levee had apparently broken near the shelter and the entire area is currently inaccessible.

There is a pet friendly shelter set up at the Coliseum in Jackson and run by Mississippi Animal Rescue League (MARL) and staff of the Louisiana SPCA, who evacuated to that area. MARL also took some animals in at its shelter. As of Tuesday morning, the two locations were sheltering over 100 animals for evacuees.

According to news reports, it appears that New Orleans, though damaged and flooded, was spared from the worst case scenario. However, it appears that Mississippi might have taken the brunt of the storm. We will know more as the day goes on.

HSUS ACTIONS TAKEN and PLANNED:

Several HSUS response units are perched on both the eastern and the western edges of the impact area ready to respond to areas hardest hit as soon as the winds subside.

- * The HSUS Southwest Regional Office has been supporting the LA SPCA evacuation of animals to the Houston SPCA by offering to receive hundreds of adoptable pets and organizing their distribution to animal shelters throughout Texas, where they can be adopted.
- * The HSUS Disaster Response Program Coordinator, HSUS Southeast and Southwest regional office staff, and members of our National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) have been staging our resources until after the worst of the storm has passed. The HSUS headquarters Disaster staff, and additional staff from the Southeast and Southwest regional offices are supporting the response and coordinating with national, state, and voluntary organizations from their respective offices.
- * The new HSUS Disaster Response Unit (a four-wheel drive truck and 38-foot air-conditioned trailer with rescue, sheltering, and communication equipment as well as pet food and supplies) has been stocked with even more equipment and supplies to help with rescue and recovery from this massive storm.
- * The HSUS-affiliated response unit, comprising a 40-foot long livestock air-conditioned trailer outfitted for response and sheltering, motor home and large multipurpose truck from the HSUS-affiliated Sumter County (FL) DART, is part of our response, as is a sheltering team complete with vehicles, equipment, and personnel from South Carolina and a mobile vet unit from Georgia.
- * Another HSUS DART responder in FL has picked up crates and other supplies from The HS of Vero Beach and Indian River County, as well as a boat, and taking them to the Panhandle staging area.
- * Day's End Farm Horse Rescue (Maryland) disaster response unit will be joining the HSUS response, including their truck and horse trailer, with rescue and sheltering equipment especially for large animal - horses and livestock.
- * Another HSUS-trained and affiliated team, the Okaloosa (FL) Animal Services/DART team, will also respond as part of the HSUS team.
- * Florida's Governor has already offered impacted states any of

FL's resources and Mississippi has requested their technical assistance and management of animal issues. Our Southeast Regional Office is partnering with the Florida State Agricultural Response Team, to assess animal needs and to provide rescue and sheltering in south Mississippi

* Our Southwest Regional Office is working with response teams from Texas to provide assistance on the west side of the impact area. The HSUS SWRO is working with the Louisiana State Veterinarian.

* Most of our responders have valuable experience from the marathon response to the four Florida hurricanes of 2004, so we will be bringing a lot of knowledge along with our equipment and supplies.

* We have been coordinating (and will continue to) with other voluntary organizations through the Department of Homeland Security, the American Red Cross, the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD) which comprises many faith-based and voluntary groups, and many other organizations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on disaster preparedness, training, and response for animals for individuals, animal facilities, and communities, or to support our efforts, please refer to www.hsus.org/disaster.

Thank you very much.

PalmBeachPost.com Storm 2005 Advisory

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BULLETIN

TROPICAL STORM KATRINA INTERMEDIATE ADVISORY NUMBER 28A NWS

TPC/NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER MIAMI FL

7 PM CDT MON AUG 29 2005

...KATRINA NOW A TROPICAL STORM BUT STRONG WINDS AND HEAVY RAINS REMAIN A THREAT...

A TROPICAL STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT FOR LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN AND FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PEARL RIVER EASTWARD TO THE ALABAMA/FLORIDA BORDER. THIS WARNING WILL LIKELY BE DISCONTINUED LATER THIS EVENING.

AT 7 PM CDT...0000Z...THE CENTER OF TROPICAL STORM KATRINA WAS LOCATED ABOUT 30 MILES NORTHWEST OF MERIDIAN MISSISSIPPI.

KATRINA IS MOVING TOWARD THE NORTH-NORTHEAST NEAR 21 MPH...AND AN INCREASE IN FORWARD SPEED IS EXPECTED DURING THE NEXT 24 HOURS. ON THE FORECAST TRACK KATRINA WILL BE MOVING OVER NORTHEASTERN

MISSISSIPPI AND NORTHWESTERN ALABAMA TONIGHT AND ACROSS WEST-CENTRAL TENNESSEE BY EARLY TUESDAY.

MAXIMUM SUSTAINED WINDS ARE NEAR 65 MPH...WITH HIGHER GUSTS. CONTINUED WEAKENING IS FORECAST DURING THE NEXT 24 HOURS.

STORM TOTAL RAINFALL ACCUMULATIONS OF 4 TO 8 INCHES...WITH ISOLATED MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF 10 INCHES...WILL ACCOMPANY KATRINA FROM THE GULF COAST THROUGH THE TENNESSEE AND OHIO VALLEYS.

FORECASTER FRANKLIN