

Rescuers Save 29 Cats From Floodwaters

Best Friends Animal Society rescuers retrieved cats from flooded homes in Oakville, Iowa.

By Stacy N. Hackett

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Twenty-nine cats were rescued from floodwaters in Oakville, Iowa. During a nine-day mission in Oakville, Iowa, the Best Friends disaster response team rescued 29 cats and one dog from flooded streets, homes, barns and trees, and also helped Farm Sanctuary of New York rescue nine pigs stranded on a levee.

The rescued cats ranged from three barn cats perched in the rafters of a flooded barn to a mother cat and her kittens perched on a ladder in a garage. One cat, dubbed Squirrel, was plucked from the branches of a tree, while a housecat was found huddling in the cabinets of a flooded kitchen.

Rescue workers reported that many of the cats were reunited with their owners almost immediately, as was the case with Gizmo. His owners, Felisia and Michael Reynolds, believed the levee would hold back the floodwaters and did not take Gizmo with them when they evacuated. Luckily, the family has been reunited.

When the floodwaters recede, Best Friends rapid response manager Rich Crook plans to return to Oakville to help start a trap-neuter-return program with the town's barn cats that have been displaced by the floods. Crook and Shelly Kotter, a Best Friends feral cat worker, will meet with local authorities to explain the program and will help establish a clinic for spaying, neutering and vaccinating. "We're going to give them options to move forward," Kotter said.

Click the play button to watch the Best Friends disaster response team in action: