

Rescuers Need Space for Katrinas Crowded Homeless

Adoptions encouraged as U.S. shelters run out of room for more animals, and puppy boom continues.

The shelters are almost full, but countless dogs and cats are still stranded in New Orleans.

Rescue groups are quickly running out of places to send homeless animals displaced by Hurricane Katrina, so they have launched a new campaign for people to adopt pets any pet, whether it was found roaming the streets of Louisiana or hanging out in your neighbors backyard.

A crucial link in the rescue chain has broken because we have so few places around the country left to send these pets, so we need people to adopt any pet from their local shelter to help make more space, said Michael Mountain, President of the Best Friends Animal Society.

Rescuers say that since the storm hit, about 16,000 dogs, cats and other animals were evacuated from abandoned homes or picked up from the streets. Some were reunited with owners, but many wound up in shelters, often shipped out across the United States because New Orleans facilities were overloaded.

There are still many animals out there, but five months after the hurricane left its destruction, most strays left in New Orleans are the elusive ones, who hide most of the day and come out at night for food, shying away from trappers. Many dogs roam the streets in packs, while cats remain unseen to stay out of their way.

Best Friends, which operates a holding facility in the city called Celebration Station, announced on Feb. 6 that although they are still finding animals, the influx of homeless pets has slowed down considerably.

Its getting harder and harder to find animals, said volunteer Barb Davis. That's a good thing. It means were doing our jobs.