

## Best Friends to End Hurricane Rescues

### **National organization will allow local groups to continue animal welfare.**

As less strays are found in New Orleans, the last national animal welfare organization working in the hurricane-ravaged city announced that it will pull out by the end of February.

The number of displaced Katrina pets being brought in to our rescue center has dropped from up to 40 a day in late December to as few as five a day now, so we will be able to end trapping efforts within a week, said Michael Mountain, president of Best Friends Animal Society. And even though large areas are still devastated, the people of New Orleans are reclaiming their city more and more each day.

There are still many pets roaming the area most of them difficult to trap so local organizations such as Animal Rescue New Orleans will continue relief work, such as setting up feeding stations for dogs and cats that often appear only at night. St. Francis Animal Sanctuary in Tylertown, Miss., where Best Friends had set up a relief center, will continue its animal welfare work.

Best Friends will end its animal rescue efforts on Feb. 28, but still plans to provide support for the groups remaining in New Orleans.

The organization is also part of a new national campaign called 1-800-Save-a-Pet.com, which is encouraging people to adopt any pet, opening up space in shelter crowded by animals saved from Hurricane Katrina.

Humane groups estimate that they rescued 16,000 animals from the hurricanes destruction, 4,000 of them through Best Friends efforts.

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