



Pawprints of Katrina: Pets Saved and Lessons Learned

Cathy Scott

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In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many animals had to fend for themselves because their owners lost them or were unable to care for them. In *Pawprints of Katrina: Pets Saved and Lessons Learned*, Cathy Scott documents her experience working with the Best Friends Animal Society triage center to rescue lost animals and reunite them with their owners. Over two hundred stories with accompanying photos describe dramatic and challenging rescue cases with details about the rescues, the examinations, treatment, and follow-up care by the selfless volunteers who worked to save beloved best friends.

Pawprints of Katrina: Pets Saved and Lessons Learned Details

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From Reader Review Pawprints of Katrina: Pets Saved and Lessons Learned for online ebook

Christopher says

I'm a volunteer with a disaster animal rescue team, I have a degree in emergency management and I write a disaster preparedness blog. So, I started this book with the intent to gain some insight to large scale disasters because while I haven't been on something the scale of Katrina I have done quite a bit here in Florida. I was disappointed in reading a series of disjointed stories that seem to have little regard for any type of time line continuity. Even the final chapter, Lessons Learned, was vaguely written barely acknowledging the roles of groups and almost completely glossed over the PETS Act which came out of Katrina. The PETS Act sharply changed how communities plan their shelter operations concerning those with animal companions. Finally, the one point that I will not cut any slack on is her appendix on Pet Disaster Planning. In it she writes, "If you have to leave your pets, make sure they have access to the food. Leave the toilet lid open in case the bowl is their only source of water." NO RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER SHOULD BE EVEN THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTARILY LEAVING ANIMALS BEHIND. PLAN AHEAD AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY, IF YOU CAN'T DO THOSE TWO THINGS THEN DON'T GET AN ANIMAL COMPANION. THEY DEPEND ON YOU AND ABANDONING THEM IN A MOMENT A DANGER IS CRUEL AND INHUMANE.

I'll now step off my soapbox.

Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

Pawprints of Katrina documents the massive animal rescue effort that went on for months following Hurricane Katrina. It was quite possibly the largest animal rescue in history and a highly unusual and challenging situation. This is because few pet owners were allowed to take their furry friends with them when they evacuated. Some tried to stay behind to save their pets, but eventually they were forced to evacuate, some even at gunpoint, while others were more gently coerced with false promises that their pets would be taken care of, if only they would leave with their rescuers. It's estimated that between 100,000 and 250,000 pets were left behind. Many animals died as a result, due to flood waters and other factors, while those who survived were left to fend for themselves in locked homes, garages, or storage sheds. Others who were left free or managed to escape roamed the deserted, disaster-ravaged streets of New Orleans, some for months, until rescuers were able to get to them.

Journalist Cathy Scott came to New Orleans at the behest of Best Friends Animal Society, one of the largest and most organized pet rescue groups to bring volunteers to the area. They wanted her to document their efforts via articles on their website, but she ended up staying and helping with the rescues as well. Best Friends stayed in the area nine long months, several months longer than most other rescue groups who weren't local. *Pawprints of Katrina* is primarily about the rescue stories of Best Friends volunteers, but also included are many other organizations that partnered with them in these efforts, most notably St. Francis Animal Sanctuary, near Tylertown, Mississippi. They loaned their grounds to Best Friends for the duration and became the site of Camp Tylertown, the huge base camp for volunteers and animals alike. It was the primary location where animals were triaged, given medical care if needed, housed, fed, distributed out to temporary foster homes, and meticulously documented in hopes of eventually reuniting them with their

original owners. Overall, it's estimated that all animal rescues combined were able to save about 20,000 pets, for which Best Friends was responsible for about half, but sadly, despite Best Friends' diligence, only about 15% of the animals' original owners were ever found. This may be because many of the owners themselves were killed in the storm and the resulting flood, while those who weren't had nothing to return to and may have felt it best to leave their pets with rescuers.

Pawprints of Katrina was an excellent and engaging read that delves into specific cases, giving detailed accounts of individual animals from how they ended up in their circumstances to their happy ending. The author also takes a look at some of the rescuers themselves, volunteers who left jobs and lives behind and traveled long distances to be a part of this extraordinary effort. It's not just dogs and cats who were rescued either; there was also an odd assortment of other animals – a squirrel, pigs, an iguana, a goose, an emu, and even several tarantulas, to name a few – who benefited from the volunteers' selflessness. Not all the stories are happy ones. Many of the volunteers who went in search of animals found only dead bodies, and then there was the heartbreaking story of sheriff's deputies who promised to care for dozens of pets owners were forced to leave behind but who allegedly brutally shot them promptly upon their owners' departures. The great thing to come out of all this, though, is that with the help of Best Friends and other animal welfare organizations, national legislation stating that companion animals must be included in any future disaster evacuations was passed and signed into law by President Bush. Now animals won't have to be left behind to suffer in such huge numbers ever again.

By turns heartbreaking and heartwarming, *Pawprints of Katrina* captures the indomitable spirit of both the rescuers and the rescued. It covers this epic tragedy with a combination of compassion and insight, right from the front lines of the rescue efforts. As I read it, I cried tears of happiness for the animals who were either reunited with their people or found new lives in other loving homes, and I cried tears of sadness for the animals who tried to hang on but didn't make it and for all the lives that were senselessly lost due to poor planning, unfair evacuation standards, or outright cruelty. I've had this book on my TBR list for quite some time, and chose to pick it up now as research material for the next book I'm planning to write. It was more than worth the read and gave me some great insights into rescuing animals following a natural disaster, while also tugging on my heartstrings. Overall, it was a wonderful book that I highly recommend to animal lovers like myself who might want to learn more about the animal rescue efforts in the weeks and months following Hurricane Katrina or for anyone who might just be looking for a great animal-related read.

Abby says

This was such a touching book. After Hurricane Katrina, you heard so much about the people, the economy in New Orleans, the homes lost, ect ect ect, but they never talked about the animals. In this book they talk about nothing but, and I tip my hat off to everyone involved in the rescue organization who stayed there to help rescue all of the pets there that they could while everything was underwater. I was so glad that Red was taken care of in the end!

Christina maki says

The stories will make you cry even the ones with the happy endings. What these poor animals and their people went through is heartbreaking. I cannot imagine being told that I would have to leave my home and my pets behind. Not knowing if you would have a home to return would be hard enough, but then to not

know if your pets have made it through the storm would be devastating. I command all those who took the time to help rescue, reunited and foster the animals that made it through the storm. It is good to know in the future that no one will be told that they must leave their pet(s) behind.

Kirsti says

Although the stories in this book are good, sad and beautiful, they are told in a strange disjointed way that really distracts from what should be a really good book. You are either given too much information on certain things, or not enough about different animals or people you want to know more about. I gnashed my teeth in frustration over the narration, and it was only the animals that pulled me through. They make this book worthwhile, and the four stars are for the animals and the volunteers. I would like to know the fate of many of the animals mentioned today, and realize that the feral population of animals in New Orleans must be huge. A sad circumstance not just for humans, but the animals they once loved so dearly.

Elizabeth says

Highly recommend this book. Full of great stories about the dedication of volunteers rescuing thousands of pets in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It could be confusing at times and a bit repetitive but you can definitely overlook that and take the stories for what they are. Has tips at the end for what to do during a natural disaster. All animal lovers should read this book.

Betty says

Although heartwrenching, thoroughly enjoyed reading this book from a rescuer / emergency responders' points of view thank GOD for those rescuers and Best Friends and other rescue organizations who helped thousands of animals during this crisis. Thank goodness a law was put into effect that people will not be separated during evacuations.

Judith A. says

Cathy Scott loves animals, and you can tell by reading her words. Katrina was so horrific I cannot believe the media and - it seems - everyone else has forgotten it. Such horror. I remember reading a column of posts that were from people begging others to check on the pets they were forced to leave behind...I cried for days...and vowed next time I WILL volunteer to go help.

The photos alone will put a lump in your throat, but together with Scott's gift for storytelling, this one's a keeper. because if we forget the lack of humanity during the bad times, we will repeat it again.

Cory Ruckman says

I read this book for English class. the book is full of heart warm story's. however there are a lot of them. the

book gets confusing if you can't keep track. I recommend this book because of its fluffy filth courage and all the bold hearts of all the rescuers who risked their life at the day to day operations that is called the best friends origination. For the people who have trouble reading this book will be a challenge however it will be worth it. I personally enjoyed this book because I can relate to it myself. If you don't have patience, then this book isn't for you.

Mary Jane says

The stories of the abandoned pets of Katrina are one that, in my opinion, absolutely had to be told. As I read these words, I kept asking myself why I hadn't even given a thought to volunteering in the rescue and follow-up treatment of these many canine and feline victims.

I was only able to rate the book with 3 stars, however, as I thought this was not a very cohesive read. About halfway through, I thought the author began her chapters with a thematic opening paragraph followed by stories fitting that theme. However, I thought she also abandoned that idea rather quickly.

I do understand that the times were erratic and mumbled. I just would rather have read the stories with a bit more clarity.

Darcy says

Heartwarming stories. I could not even imagine being placed in the situation of leaving our beloved pets behind as you are being rescued. And the real heroes of the book are the volunteers who gave their time and hearts to help these animals and get them back to their families or placed into a new family.

Sidney Rodriguez says

This is the type of book which upon finishing makes you want to give up your silly cubical job, throw away your pencil skirts and run off to Nowhere, Utah to get your hands dirty with like-minded individuals. Thank you, author, for the swift kick in the pants and the good reminder of what is important in life.

Robin says

While I was reading this book I was comparing it in my mind to the events I remembered from following online the efforts of the rescuers. I read "Rescued, Saving Animals from Disaster" by Allen & Linda Anderson several years ago and "Pawprints" is in a much dryer and less informational style so "Saving Animals" is definitely the one I would recommend over this one. If you read a lot and you want to know everything read "Pawprints" but if you have time for only one then read "Rescued".

Kelli says

Hopeful and heartbreaking at the same time. The agony of families being forced to leave their beloved pets behind, dogs snatched out of the arms of screaming children, the dogs gunned down by St Bernard Parish deputies, the suffering of the pets and their families far exceeded what I thought I knew.

The stories of the reunions makes this book, overall, joyful and hopeful. Now many states have laws that require that emergency services consider the needs of pets.

Kathi says

Inspiring and heartbreaking at the same time. When I saw the stories on TV about the animals left behind, I would think that I could never do that and those people don't care about their pets at all. But some people were forced at gunpoint to evacuate their homes and had to leave the pets behind. The stories of reunions brought me to tears - I can only imagine how it felt to find their much loved furbabies again.
