



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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PET-FRIENDLY SHELTERS

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You asked for information on how shelters accommodated pets during Tropical Storm Irene in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island.

SUMMARY

None of the states surveyed require shelters to track or report to state agencies information on the number and type of pets they shelter during emergencies. As a result, information we received is incomplete and anecdotal.

During Tropical Storm Irene, there were 203 pet friendly shelters located throughout Connecticut, according to the Department of Agriculture (DoAg). But because these shelters are not required to report activity to DoAg, we do not have the total number of animals they sheltered. There are five Connecticut State Animal Response Teams (CTSART) led by volunteer veterinarians throughout the state. Based on the information CTSART provided DoAg, we provide a sample of shelter activity and number of pets accommodated during the storm. For example, Stratford sheltered 25 animals and Bridgeport sheltered 38 animals.

Massachusetts opened 20 regional shelters in preparation for the storm, 12 of which co-located animals and people. The 12 shelters accommodated approximately 45 animals (three or four each, with one serving 11 animals). Towns may have had additional local shelters available, but the state does not track their activities.

New Jersey animal response teams work at the county level with some level of coordination done by the Department of Agriculture. As of the date of this report, the counties had not yet reported activity to the state agency. Therefore, information is unavailable at this time.

The New York Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Animal Industry, does not track pet sheltering activity, which takes place at the county level. We contacted the New York City Office of Emergency management for information specific to New York City. For Irene, the city opened 89 shelters, all of which co-located people and animals. Over 200 pets were sheltered in the city.

In Rhode Island, the Animal Health Unit of the Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture does not routinely track pet sheltering activity. After Irene, it solicited pet sheltering information from emergency management officials throughout the state, but received incomplete information. As of the date of this report, only 10 shelters out of 82 provided data. Of those 10, eight were set up to accommodate animals but only three actually sheltered any. Those three took in 24 animals during the storm. Additionally, the Rhode Island Disaster Animal Response Team (RIDART) opened two emergency shelters solely for companion animals. RIDART did not return our calls for information, so we do not know how many animals were accommodated.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut does not require tracking and reporting of pet sheltering activity during emergencies. However, the CTSART provided limited information to the Department of Agriculture. Table 1 includes information for the towns that reported to CTSART.

Table 1: Connecticut Pet Sheltering During Tropical Storm Irene

Region	Town	Shelters Opened	Number of Animals Sheltered
1	Stratford	One co-located shelter	25
	Bridgeport	Two co-located shelters (Harding High School and Bassick High School)	38 (Harding: 15 dogs and one cat; Bassick: 16 dogs, four cats, one guinea pig, and one ferret)
2	Milford	One co-located shelter (Jonathan Law High School)	Six
3	East Hartford	One animal shelter (East Hartford High School)	Two
4	Groton and Ledyard	Regional co-located shelter	16 (eight dogs, six cats, one rabbit, and one guinea pig)
	Stonington	(unreported)	Eight (six dogs and two cats)
	Waterford, East Lyme, Old Lyme, and Lyme	Regional co-located shelter	Six (two dogs and four cats)
	Montville and Salem	Regional co-located shelter	Six (three dogs and three cats)
	Killingly	(unreported)	Two dogs
5	Torrington	(unreported)	14 dogs
	Ridgefield	(unreported)	Three dogs
Total Animals Sheltered for Towns Reporting to CTSART			126

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