

At any given time, she says, about 60 percent of Virginia's rural shelter/ACF population will be hounds. "I can recall one day recently when 32 of the 40 dogs in one ACF were hounds—it looked like a kennel club," she says.

But this trend is evident in urban areas, too. About one-fourth of the dogs the Richmond (Va.) SPCA receives are hounds, according to chief executive Robin Starr, adding that the number rises to 30 percent during hunting season. Starr's organization has a partnership with Kilgore's agency; the SPCA will take as many healthy, adoptable pets from the Hanover County animal control facility as it can handle.

Hunting dogs can be far more costly to care for and rehabilitate than other shelter dogs. Because they spend so much time outdoors, they are at high risk of contracting heartworm. In some areas of Virginia, Higgins says, 50-75 percent of all stray dogs received at shelters have heartworm. Many hounds also have ticks or mange, and they remain unsocialized due to abuse or lack of human attention.

Furthermore, in many areas, people have a stigma against adopting hunting breeds, viewing them strictly as "hunting dogs" rather than companion animals.

Most Virginia shelters don't actively oppose hound hunting, but The HSUS is concerned about not just the dogs used in hound hunting, but the overall effects the practice has on wildlife.

"Not only are hunting dogs treated as little more than disposable hunting equipment—often intentionally starved, denied basic veterinary care, and sufficient food and water—but wildlife suffers as well," says Megan Sewell, deputy manager of The HSUS's Wildlife Abuse Campaign. "A number of rank-and-file hunters have contacted The HSUS, disgusted by the treatment of both hounds and wildlife by many hound hunters, pleading with us to help prevent these abuses."

The HSUS is working with local groups to solve a problem that's consuming a large portion of Virginia shelter resources, Sewell says. "Responsible hunters provide adequate care for their animals; it's the irresponsible owners who allow their dogs to suffer and then expect shelters, often at taxpayer expense, to handle the problem for them."

Looking at a Hoarder

New book provides insights into the problem of animal collecting

Over the past decade, animal hoarding cases have increasingly made the news—but that may not mean there are more hoarders now than there were 20 years ago. It may simply mean that people have become more aware of hoarding as a community problem, one affecting vulnerable animals and vulnerable people.

That's a relatively recent viewpoint. The cultural understanding of hoarding has grown, and more communities now realize that intervention in an animal hoarding situation will often require the expertise of multiple agencies and organizations.

The latest contribution to the growing perspective on hoarding is *Inside Animal Hoarding: The Case of Barbara Erickson and Her 552 Dogs*. The two-part narrative—the first written by a social worker, reporting on a particular Oregon hoarding case, the second by a sociologist who provides a broader perspective on that case and the general issue—is a compelling read.

Celeste Killeen, the social worker, tells the story of Barbara Erickson, whose farmhouse was raided in 2003. "Based on preliminary investigation and rumors, the deputies expected to find fifty to one

hundred dogs living on the tiny farm. Instead ... the officers found over five hundred diseased and emaciated dogs suffering under conditions that could only be described as otherworldly," Killeen writes.

Killeen uses some unusual tactics to tell Erickson's tale. While much of her part of the book is straight reporting based on her experiences researching the case and her interviews with the Ericksons, their neighbors, and local authorities, at times Killeen also draws on interviews to reconstruct incidents and conversations from Erickson's childhood. These scenes provide terrific narrative tension and insight, but may make readers wonder about the accuracy of the events they depict, many of which took place decades prior to the 2003 raid.

Sociologist Arnold Arluke draws on previous research into hoarding to expound on Killeen's account of the Erickson case, providing a broader scope and linking the specifics of Erickson's experience to the evolving cultural understanding of hoarding and a variety of theories on causes, prevention, and treatment.

Inside Animal Hoarding (235 pages; \$34.95) is available from major retailers.

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Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society in Gloucester, Va., is taking steps to improve outcomes for the hounds it receives. The private shelter has a fledgling hunting dog rescue and rehabilitation program designed to nurse sick or injured hounds back to health, work on socialization with those who need it, locate foster homes, and, ideally, match the dogs up with adopters.

"We've always had the issue of hunting dogs, and it's always been a challenge for us, because they have a longer journey than a typical pet to get adopted," says Ellen Thacker, executive director of the shelter.

The Orvis Co., a retail and mail-order business specializing in high-end fishing, hunting, and sporting equipment, provided \$500 to the humane society as seed money for the shelter's hunting dog program.

The program's working, according to Thacker. "We've had hounds that came in here so afraid of human beings, and someone will take them for a few months [in a foster home], and it's a different animal. That's the good news of what we're able to do." AS