

Two persons are cited for animal cruelty

Criminals and criminals

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More than 50 dogs and cats were confiscated from two small cottages at a Capitola resort Thursday afternoon in what is being called the second worst case of animal cruelty in Santa Cruz County history.

For Elizabeth Blodgett, long-time owner of the El Salto Resort in the Depot Hill area where the two separate raids took place, it is the second time in less than a year she has been cited with cruelty to animals. A caretaker who lives on her property was also cited.

Last December, more than 200 dogs — many of them sick and diseased — were discovered in a private kennel she owns in Mountain View. Thirty-four dogs had to be destroyed in that case, which has criminal charges still pending.

Of the 20 dogs confiscated this time, "about 75 percent of them were in very bad condition with skin diseases, malnutrition and ribs sticking out," according to Capitola Animal Control Officer Bruce Ink. He predicted many of them might have to be destroyed.

Thirty-two cats were discovered later in the upstairs portion of another cottage. All were crowded into two "traveling" cages, which are about five feet long and three to four feet wide, said Ink. Most of them, however, "appeared to be in fair shape."

All the animals are at the county Animal Shelter today, according to Executive Director Gail Willis, who refused to say what he felt their fate was.

He did say, though, that they had "full intentions" of following through in the case. Cruelty to animals is a misdemeanor and is

punishable by a maximum six months in jail and/or a \$500 fine.

Both Blodgett, 63, and Richard Tarmey, 64, a caretaker at the resort, were issued citations for cruelty to animals. Tarmey also was cited for resisting arrest and obstructing justice when he had to be physically restrained from attacking news media at the scene.

When contacted by The Sentinel this morning, Blodgett contended she "didn't know the animals were here," and that the animals belonged to Tarmey.

She said Tarmey was in the process of transporting the animals to another kennel and had apparently been at the site "only two days." She also said the animals had their shots and were under the care of a veterinarian in another area.

Larry Kemp, a senior investigator for the Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley, told The Sentinel there was a "definite link" between the

animals found at El Salto and the animals at Blodgett's Frolic Farms Kennel in Mountain View.

He said it is felt that Blodgett has moved animals from one area to another in order to hide them.

"I'm disgusted that more were found," Kemp said.

It is his intention, he said, to make Blodgett get out of the kennel business and not be allowed to possess any more animals than allowed under the law.

Both Ink and Willis expressed sympathy toward Blodgett, who they said was an animal lover.

"They love animals, but it's pathetic that they go about 'saving' them this way," said Willis. "The question of rescuing or keeping lost animals is beyond the capacity of one individual."