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INVOLVEMENT OF ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS IN DISASTERS

Abstract

It is a social need to protect animals in the XXI. Century. In my research, I examine the relationship between civil animal rescuers and Disaster Management. Animal rescue is a technical rescue, so it is a duty of Disaster Management. Act No. CXXVIII. of 2011 allow the Rescue Manager to involve voluntary organizations in disasters, and to consider rescuing animals, when the absence of intervention causes the death of the animals. My experience in this direction shows, the animal rescue organizations have such a specialized knowledge and tools, that the integration of these organizations in to the education would be timely, all so in the rescue and alarm order. I present and prove through my own experiences in such cases.

Keywords: animal rescue, Disaster Management, technical rescue, flood, red sludge

AZ ÁLLTAMENTŐ SZERVEZETEK RÉSZVÉTELE KATASZTRÓFÁK SORÁN

Absztrakt

A XXI. században társadalmi elvárás az állatok mentése katasztrófák során. Kutatásomban vizsgálom a civil állatmentő szervezetek és a Katasztrófavédelem kapcsolatát. Az állatmentés a műszaki mentés témakörébe tartozik, ennél fogva a Katasztrófavédelem feladata. A 2011. évi CXXVIII. katasztrófavédelmi törvény lehetővé teszi önkéntes szervezetek részvételét katasztrófák során, a mentésvezető kezébe adva ennek lehetőségét, valamint utasítja a hivatásos állományt a beavatkozásra, amennyiben az állat élete ennek hiányában veszélybe kerül. Ezirányú kutatásaim rávilágítanak, hogy az állatmentés szaktudást igénylő mentés, ahol



speciális eszközök is szükségeltetnek. Ennek integrálása, oktatása és a riasztási rendbe való beillesztése időszerű. Több, mint húsz éves állatmentő tapasztalatom késztetett, hogy ezt vizsgáljam, így saját tapasztalataimon keresztül mutatom be és igazolom állításaimat.

Kulcsszavak: állatmentés, katasztrófavédelem, műszaki mentés, árvíz, vörös iszap

1. INTRODUCTION

The circumstances employing of volunteer ambulances have changed a lot over the years, as has the attitude of the professional staff towards animal rescuers. In connection with four disaster cases, I present the activities of animal protection organizations and their operation with disaster management authorities. It is of significant importance that I place the backups in chronological order.

There has been a change in the use and supply of overheads, and I will indicate this in the description of each case. It is unfortunate that an organization specializing in animal rescue has not been certified by INSARAG, so their involvement in disasters is uncertain, and this area of technical rescue will continue to be a challenge for Disaster Management. An important element of preparing for the defense and participating in the defense is to get to know the activities, tools, organizational structure and management of the participating organizations. According to my proposal, it would be important to establish a national animal rescue organization with county organizations, automatic involvement of active animal rescue organizations in case of disasters, setting up a voluntary veterinary duty service, reforming firefight training with the participation of animal rescuers, hunters and veterinarians [4].

2. FLOOD GEMENC, 2002.

In August 2002, due to heavy rains, the Danube exited the riverbed. Representing 7 organizations, 45 staff took part in the flood animal rescue in Gemenc. Animal defenders visited a significant part of the flood-affected forest area with the permission of local authorities and



the National Directorate of Disaster Management, led by local forestry professionals, and rescued many injured and weakened animals. The team of agricultural engineers, vet assistants, hunters, biologists and veterinarians provided professional care for the rescued animals at two locations with two equipped boats and a well equipped background base.

The foresters welcomed our application as the rescue hills proved to be few. On one occasion, an officer from the professional staff of Disaster Management came to our station who was interested in advancing or hindering the work of the forester. We did not receive any supplies or protective equipment. The four-person rescue team I led worked for four days under the direction of the Gyöngyösoldal forester, with full self-sufficiency.

Special tools:

- motor boat
- Straps
- Nozzle with narcotic for vets only
- Loop stick
- Boxes
- Warming blankets
- Bags
- Infusions and other veterinary first aid equipment
- Protective clothing
- Life jacket
- Clamping net
- Binoculars
- Flashlights, headlamps, reflectors
- Wire cutters and other hand tools

After the flood, the animal rescuers sent an open letter to the Disaster Protection, nature conservation authority, water management authorities and forestry, in which we described proposals for the future. These included forestry-related proposals, but we also shared our views in which disaster and law enforcement can take action in the future. These include preventing transit traffic and setting up related restrictive measures.



3. RED SLUDGE DISASTER, 2010.

On the evening of October 4, 2010, we were given permission to enter the area flooded by red mud. We have a direct contact to the mayor and the authorities, he was the civil animal rescue coordinator. He was notified by the National Directorate of Disaster Management. We had to provide our full name, ID number and contact information in order to participate in the rescue. Each time we entered the area, we had to apply to the Mayor's Office and we were given permission to enter the already closed areas by naming the direct contact person. Our task on the first night was to provide veterinary and first aid according to need-based principle, to transport and secure the injured animals according to our capacity, and to prepare a photo document. Over time, the nature of the rescue changed, because while on the first day the solution to those in crisis was primary, later we rescued of the animals that had been hidden by fear. One thing did not change: in each case we wore protective clothing, dust masks, rubber gloves - we could buy this from the Civil Protection, and the contaminated animals had to be washed with water as the very first step - we used the help of the fire department.

(Photo 1.). Although it is right and obligation to provide first aid, as animal rescue is a special topic, our many years of experience seemed worthwhile - in a disaster situation it is extremely important to know the behavior and reactions of animals [5]. However, the basic principle is that in the event of a disaster, the priority is to save human life, to prevent economic damage - but this must be followed by the rescue of animals under the growing social pressure of recent years. Unfortunately, this is compounded by the fact that there are few well-trained animal protectors and there is currently no apparatus within the authorities.

As a long-term goal, I would consider the importance setting up an animal rescue unit for emergency use within disaster management. The team would perform a complex task: prevention-response, rescue-transportation, placement-care, rehabilitation-repatriation. Documentation is a very important and unmissable step: checking the microchip, taking on-site photos, accurately recording the location, placing the animal in a transport box.



Photo 1 - In cooperation with disaster management at Devecser - Dankó site (Photo: author, 2010.)

Quick information

There are 62 factory classified as dangerous in Hungary, which have a disaster plan. It was important to have a basic knowledge of the nature of the material, the evening news of the public service channel helped us - at least we learned that the slurry is alkaline, highly corrosive, so we left Budapest already equipped with rubber boots and gloves. This preliminary information also mattered a lot in knowing what injuries we could expect, what kind of first aid kit to prepare. We had a large amount of water and physiological saline, sedatives, transport boxes, fasteners. In the event of a disaster, you must always be prepared for the unknown source of danger, which can even mean an fear-aggressive animal! In case of damage caused by alkaline substances, a long rinse and vinegar neutralization are required, as well as hair removal of the soaked area as soon as possible - if this can be solved on the spot. At the Mayor's Office in Devecser, lukewarm water was made available to the rescuers on a permanent basis if we arrived with an injured animal.



Accomodation problems

We also had to clarify the issue of the accomodation of the animals. The animal must be quarantined for the first 14 days of care, during which time food and health care must be provided. Most of the animals we rescued were taken care of by the Rex Dog Home Foundation, where they were under 24-hour veterinary supervision [7]. Due to the special nature of the disaster, the mortality rate was very high, as this type of heavy metal poisoning is not reported in the veterinary literature, so there is no experience. A total of about 600-800 animals were housed or provided on site by animal rights activists. In addition to the returning owners, the animals remaining on the evacuated Kolontár (both farm and companion animals) were also fed in a precise schedule by the animal owners [1]. As the mayor of Devecser, Tamás Toldi, who was also the chairman of the defense committee, was responsible for the remaining livestock, we were able to get to the area of operation, which was guarded by police officers (Photo 2).



Photo 2 - Feeding the remaining animals in protective clothing in Kolontár (Photo: author, 2010.)

Accommodation and care of rescued animals



Animals housed in shelters and shelters required daily veterinary care. It consisted of bandaging, disinfecting, infusing their wounds. Artificial feeding of corrosive animals, even by gavage, is a time-consuming and demanding task. It is important to emphasize that animal rescuers worked exclusively on their own funding, commitment, professionalism and although they were not trained in disaster / civil protection, they instinctively did everything calmly. Make human life a priority, the obligation to register, cooperation with the authorities. I worked with Civil Defense myself all the way, I could to a dangerous area only by their instruction, permission and help [6].

Partial conclusion

The conclusion can be stated and drawn:

The first successful cooperation of the Hungarian animal welfare authorities with the authorities was the 2010 red mud disaster. The authorities, be it the Police, the Civil Protection, the Fire Department, considered the rescuers as partners. They helped us keep the animals on site, notified us of the animals in distress, firefighters washed the muddy animals and the police escorted us to the evacuated Kolontár for feeding. As the national chief veterinarian [2] is a member of the Coordination Committee is, it can be said that animal protection, rescue and veterinary organizations also have the right and obligation to take part in the rescue, but this has a strict protocol. We must acknowledge that the work of a given organization is directed by the mayor and the operational tribe.

Arriving at the venue

It needs to be examined what the incident is, is there a specific discharge plan?

If not: according to the principle of need, the injured must be taken care of, placed and transported in the order of injury. On the spot, we had to consider who the individuals in need of immediate care and removal were and who we could secure on the spot.

Geographical zones must be defined. Local knowledge is essential!

Equipment should be surveyed and purchased. On the first night we worked with our own equipment, according to the information we received, we provided ourselves with protective equipment. Later, we were able to equip ourselves in the Civil Protection distributors, at these



distribution points were also accumulated the pet foods that were sent by the donors and from which we had to supply.

A mobile or stable base must be developed. Our mobile base was the ambulance, where the transport boxes and the first aid box traveled with us, and the yard of the Devecser's Mayor's Office served as a local stable base.

Change needs to be organized as well as communication taken care of. In our case, it worked by notifying us or notifying each other on the phone numbers we provided at the Mayor's Office. In my view, a locally usable radio transceiver would have been more practical and cost-effective, which would have been recorded or handed over by the rescuers at the end of the work.

Medical devices must be provided. We also made this our own foundation, be it disinfectants or bandages. The veterinary care of the animals housed in the shelters was carried out by a veterinarian contracted to the shelter.

Means of transport and cordons must be provided. Transport, light, and race characteristics must be taken into account during transport! We transported the injured with our own boxes and secured them with trusses and straps. It would have been more practical and cost-effective to be able to build a quarantine yard on site made up of cordons. The constant involvement of nursing staff and veterinarians is essential for this.

In the future, care must be taken to resettle the animals and to keep in touch with the owners. Reinstallation can occur when conditions are optimal. In case of doubt, the decision is within the competence of the clerk. The return and its circumstances must be documented!

4. THE FLOOD OF THE DANUBE IN 2013, THE “FLOOD OF THE CENTURY”

I was assigned to the in Lakitelek - Üdülőtelep. Even at the beginning of the flood, I applied for admission to the volunteer line and was then referred to Lakitelek. Here, no one could enter the area of operations without prior data reconciliation and registration in the disaster management



tent. Here it was possible to buy rubber boots, rubber gloves, take mineral water with us, free kitchens and rest areas were set up here for professional authorities and volunteer ambulances.

A couple of animal rescue colleagues and I visited the edge of the settlement near the water, which is projected to be flooded by the Danube. We walked from street to street and conducted a survey of where, how many and what kind of animals are found. The owner goes or stays, can take the animal with him, puts him in safety, or leaves him to his fate.

It was important to know what to expect if the power was turned off and evacuation began. For the rescued animals, we were given a temporary area in the area next to the registration tent, where we would have had the opportunity to place the animals either in boxes or moored during the rescue.

Despite the survey and ongoing information, we were once notified at night that someone could hear the sound of an animal drowning from a flooded garage. The area was already de-energized, so we got on the water with the help of disaster relief, the police, and a rescue association on site.



Photo 3 - The saved animal must be placed in a lockable box! Created by the Author 2013.)

We carried out our work on this rescue, under the direction of the Disaster Management and the Mayor's office, with a free hand, once with the help of the police: the owner refused to place his breeding rabbits in a sheltered place, despite the call, he wanted to leave the property. We immediately asked for and received police assistance, as well as ten main volunteers who loaded the rabbit cages to a high point. And on one occasion, we had to go into the water in an already



columns, we asked for help from Disaster Management. Their job would have been nothing more than to lift up a colleague of ours to reach to the nest.



Photo 5 - The soaked nest. Source: Stork Exchange International, 2019.

In the case of a red listed animal, the competent National Park may officially intervene or a registered rescue station registered with their approval. This time it was available, however, we received a negative response from Disaster Management citing the high cost of disembarkation. Being Friday afternoon, the electricity supplier did not respond. This caused difficulties in recovery [9].

Partial conclusion

Uncertainty could be experienced in the case, i.e. the offices and authorities are in many cases unaware of the specifics of the situation. What would have been expected here - limited to Disaster Management:

- Being a highly protected species, the issue of the white stork's nest receives special attention
- the principle applies, if the animal dies in the absence of intervention, rescue is required!



- assumes other dangers: windy weather may have been dangerous for soaked nests of up to 500 kg, more specifically the syren and e-on pylon.

It can be seen that the civil ambulances were ready with a concrete plan in the knowledge of racial peculiarities, physiological and anatomical specialties, the cooperation failed due to the lack of knowledge of the legislation [8].

6. CONCLUSIONS

The actuality of the topic of my dissertation is given by the fact that the disasters of recent years have also affected the fauna, and as a committed volunteer I consider importance of paying attention to this loss as well, and that animal rescue tasks be precisely regulated. I emphasize the participation of volunteers as well as the importance of complex education. The handing over of these tasks is a priority in events where, in addition to human life and property damage, the rescue of animals is not negligible.

This activity is a technical rescue, but it can be classified as a special rescue, as it requires special, above-average training, knowledge and experience.

Discussing four incident, I described separately the ways in which animal rescuers participated, the issues of staying there, and the follow-up work. I explained the importance and specificity of each step.

According to my proposal, the current Hungarian Animal Rescue Association should be included in the alert system, as its goal is to effectively serve the protection of man, animal and the environment in case of disasters and extraordinary events - operating in strict order with the professional herd!

Under the guidance of the authorities this organization could go through the National Qualification Procedure and be officially alerted in cases where an animal is endangered or endangered by an animal.



The case studies show the special equipment used by rescuers in some situations, which are not on emergency vehicles, but are essential for the professional handling of animals and the background work required for the safe transport and accommodation of rescued animals.

I also recommend extending the education to animal rescue information on the basis of a foreign sample, since the XXI. century, it cannot happen that an individual of a highly protected species remains without state aid! In addition to Disaster Management, representatives of hunting companies, veterinarians and non-governmental organizations can take part in this training, where they would supplement the training in accordance with their own fields of expertise. In the cases listed, it can be seen that different animal species are saved and these animals have different needs and patterns of behavior.

My highlight and my heart's concern is the priority given to wildlife, in addition to being qualified by law, it is important to save every individual in the shadow of a climate disaster!

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