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The ASPCA: Just the Facts

- Founded by New York aristocrat Henry Bergh, the ASPCA[®] (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals[®]) was the first organization in the United States devoted to the prevention of cruelty to animals.
- As part of its original charter from the State of New York in 1866, the ASPCA was given the legal authority to investigate and make arrests for crimes against animals.
- One of the earliest convictions of animal cruelty occurred in 1867, when David Heath was sentenced to 10 days in prison for beating a cat to death.
- The ASPCA prompted the New York State legislature to pass the country's first effective anti-cruelty law.
- In 1874, Henry Bergh helped organize the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), which grew out of the abuse of a nine year-old girl named Mary Ellen.
- The ASPCA's Humane Law Enforcement department (HLE) is the only law enforcement group in New York City solely devoted to investigating crimes against New York's animal population.
- The HLE department has the ability to respond to cruelty complaints within New York State. However, their efforts are primarily focused on the five boroughs of New York City.
- In 2006, HLE investigated 4,191 cases of suspected animal cruelty that resulted in 103 arrests and 295 seized animals.
- ASPCA HLE agents and investigators rescued more than 200 animals after the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.
- It is estimated that there are up to five million owned and stray animals living in New York City. There are more than eight million people living in New York City.
- The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has approximately 41,000 officers to protect and serve the human population; the ASPCA's HLE department has 18 uniformed and plainclothes officers for the entire animal population of New York City.

- In 1867, the ASPCA operated the first ambulance anywhere for injured horses—two years before New York’s Bellevue Hospital put into service the first ambulance for humans.
- In 1894, the ASPCA assumed the job of caring for New York City’s stray and unwanted animals, a function previously performed by New York City government. After 100 years, the ASPCA declined the option to renew the contract in order to focus on national education, information and advocacy.
- In 2006, the ASPCA’s Pet Adoption Center found homes for 2,253 dogs and cats.
- In 2006, the ASPCA’s Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital treated 24,120 animals.
- The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is the only facility of its kind staffed by five veterinary assistants, 10 certified veterinary technicians, nine board-certified toxicologists/veterinary toxicologists and 16 veterinarians. The center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The ASPCA Animal Behavior Center offers assistance to people whose pets have specific behavioral problems.
- The ASPCA Counseling Services department offers bereavement counseling to people whose pets have died.
- ASPCA attorneys and staff work with legislators to sponsor and support animal welfare legislation and initiatives that provide greater protection for animals under the law.
- In 2006, National Outreach provided on-site visits and expertise to shelters in 29 states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Turkey; presented 337 training seminars and workshops to shelter professionals across the U.S.; and provided \$6,735,993 in grants to 200 animal protection organizations in 43 states, plus Puerto Rico and Jamaica.
- Today, more than one million supporters throughout North America help the ASPCA carry out its life-saving mission.

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) was the first humane organization established in the Americas, and today has more than one million supporters throughout North America. A 501 [c] [3] not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA’s mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. The ASPCA provides local and national leadership in animal-assisted therapy, animal behavior, animal poison control, anti-cruelty, humane education, legislative services, and shelter outreach. The New York City headquarters houses a full-service, accredited animal hospital, adoption center, and mobile clinic outreach program. The Humane Law Enforcement department enforces New York’s animal cruelty laws and is featured on the reality television series “Animal Precinct” on Animal Planet. For more information, please visit www.aspc.org.

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