

PRIORITIES 2035

ROLDA, United for Vulnerable Animals Worldwide

2026: ROLDA's First 20 Years

More than 100,000 animals helped, and counting

ROLDA branches registered in 8 countries

Rebranding: United for Vulnerable Animals Worldwide



A word from Dana, Founder of ROLDA

To Our Supporters and Partners Around the World,

As we launch ROLDA's 2035 strategic plan, I would like to pause and reflect on the journey we have shared and on the road that lies ahead.

In 2026 we marked two milestones: our first 20 years, and 100,000 animals helped. We chose to mark them with two important actions. We changed our name to reflect the work we actually do today, and we began converting our shelter into the first ***cage-free facility*** for rescued dogs in Romania.

The past few years have been hard on our supporters, and they have been hard on us. We have faced them together: the COVID crisis, the economic strain of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, rising electricity and fuel costs, and lost jobs.

Our focus remains anchored in our two principal pillars:

1. Abused, neglected, and homeless animals
2. Pets belonging to vulnerable or financially distressed people

Looking back, I am both humbled by and proud of how a small team has transformed into something more like a family. The **#ROLDAfamily**
The years ahead will take us in a new direction: A new way to rescue.

Rescue will always remain at the center of what we do, but we have learned that the deeper work happens with communities, so that fewer animals reach the point of needing rescue at all. Expanding our support to families under financial strain, senior pet owners in particular, is one of the surest ways to keep an animal in the home it already has.

Vulnerable people with pets have become a central focus for ROLDA. That can include survivors of domestic violence who will not leave without their animals, as well as rural communities where our social programs and educational work change the daily lives of the animals living there.

The further ROLDA's mission travels, the more people it reaches, and the more we can accomplish together.

With determination, respectful collaboration, and your continued support, we will extend ROLDA's reach and impact, and help build a safer, more hopeful future for animals and for the communities alongside them. What sustains this work is ordinary human compassion that lives within each of us. It is not a weakness. It is the spark that, when nurtured, makes ROLDA's achievements possible.

This will be a transformational decade for animals, and you can be part of it.



With respect and hope,

Dana Costin
Founder & CEO ROLDA

OUR STORY

ROLDA is an internationally supported charity founded to address ***Romania***'s homeless animal population, once estimated in the millions. Today that figure is thought to stand at approximately 600,000 stray dogs, alongside a growing number of homeless and feral cats. We approach the problem humanely, efficiently, and responsibly. Our six principal areas of focus are rescue, rehabilitation, sheltering, sterilization, social programs, and education, and we hold to a strict no-kill policy. Our international branches support ***ROLDA Romania*** by raising donations and finding homes for the dogs we rescue.

The dogs in our care are taken in from the streets, surrendered by community members who can no longer keep them, or rescued from puppy mills across Europe. Alongside rescue and sheltering, we help people in financial hardship, seniors in particular, so that they can keep caring for the pets they already have.

In 2022, within days of the outbreak of war in ***Ukraine***, ROLDA was among the first organizations to respond. We assisted refugees at the borders, took Ukrainian dogs into our shelters, and moved funds and essential supplies to local rescuers. That work continues today. We fund medical care and food, repair shelters damaged by bombing, and join evacuation missions in dangerous areas of ***Donbas*** to bring animals out of harm's way.

After 2025 we extended our support beyond Romania and Ukraine to animals affected by natural and human-made ***disasters*** anywhere. The ROLDA Emergency Relief Program gives priority to disadvantaged communities, where large stray populations and economic hardship compound one another.

HOW ROLDA STARTED?

In 1999, a group of animal lovers formed ROLDA in response to the rising stray dog population in Galati, Romania. As the Soviet Union withdrew, homeless dogs gathered in the vast, abandoned industrial complexes, where they found shelter and bred unchecked. Within a few years the stray population had climbed into the millions.

Dana Costin, ROLDA's founder, still leads the organization. Her commitment to vulnerable dogs began with Printz, a badly injured German Shepherd mix she took out of an illegal dogfight. What started with the two of them in a small apartment is now an international organization, registered across Europe and the ***United Kingdom*** and as far afield as the United States and ***Australia*** . To date we have helped more than 100,000 animals, each with a story of its own.

In line with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Working with local communities and actively engaging in impoverished rural areas means that ROLDA's initiatives are in line with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The One Health concept recognizes that the health and well-being of humans, animals, and eco systems are all interconnected.

By protecting the health of animals, we are also safeguarding the health of the humans who live in contact with them and the surrounding environment.



We strive to improve the quality of life of vulnerable animals and people (the elderly, the disabled, children, prisoners) through projects that involve both, thereby adopting an inclusive approach.



We combat the issue of stray animals and canine and feline over population, which has a significant impact on wildlife as well as on the lives of communities.

OUR 2035 AMBITIONS, AN OVERVIEW

- Achieve a substantial and lasting reduction in the number of animals born unwanted and homeless;
- Address the root causes of pet abandonment;
- Educate communities about animal behavior, animal rights, and the place of animals in our lives;
- Support vulnerable pet owners;
- End animal cruelty in public shelters and in communities across Romania;
- Support other animal welfare initiatives;
- Encourage people to treat pets as members of the family;
- Continue to rehome responsibly;
- Modernize our facilities so that rescued dogs and cats are better housed;
- Create the first cage-free shelter for dogs in Romania
- Shorten the time a dog spends in a shelter before adoption;
- Prevent and control diseases carried by animals;
- Reduce food waste;
- Encourage activities that strengthen the bond between animals and people;
- Support animal therapy initiatives for vulnerable people
- Begin construction of the ***PawzUp center*** , where future generations of people and animals can spend time together, support one another, and enjoy each other's company

OUR MISSION

National component: to build humane and sustainable habitats for abused animals and to create safer, cleaner environments for the people of Romania.

Global initiative: to extend our support to vulnerable animals affected by natural and human-made disasters.

OUR VISION

To end animal suffering on the streets and in the wild, and to work toward a WORLD FREE of unwanted animals.

OUR GOAL

We are working toward a homeless animal population of zero, in which every pet is microchipped, entered in the national registry, and traceable to an owner who is accountable under the law. People and animals both gain from that relationship when it is a good one, and abuse, neglect, cruelty, and exploitation have no place in it.



The pillars on which ROLDA focuses its work in Romania have two components:

1. The animal-related component

- Rescue and assistance: reaching animals that have no one else
- Rehoming: matching each rescued dog with the right person
- Sterilization: reducing animal overpopulation humanely
- A no-kill shelter policy

2. The people-related component

- Social campaigns: providing immediate support and preventing abandonment in the most disadvantaged communities, seniors with pets among them
- Education and awareness: reaching the next generation, who hold the hope of a better future for these animals
- Collaboration with fellow rescuers who need our support and share our aims

Together, we will create a better World for animals and for the people who care about them.

TRUSTWORTHY AND TRANSPARENT

Platinum Transparency 2026

Candid.

ROLDA is recognized as a trustworthy and transparent leader in international animal rescue, and we hold Platinum level status on GuideStar/Candid.

That standing rests on evidence rather than assertion. We state plainly where donations go, report regularly on our rescue work, and publish photographs, video, testimonials from the people we help, and full financial reports. ROLDA's name inspires confidence, backed by open communication.

MISSION AND IMPACT-FOCUSED

ROLDA is committed to give hope to every animal, however difficult the case. Whether it is a street dog in Romania, an abandoned pet in Ukraine, or a senior animal needing specialized care, we do not turn away. That consistency is what turns individual rescues into lasting change.

COMPASSIONATE AND HUMAN-CENTERED

ROLDA's work is about far more than numbers or donations. It is compassion, put into practice. Our team works quietly and without fanfare, on the front lines, taking the hardest cases and creating real change for animals and for the people who care about them.

POSITIVE, HOPEFUL AND SOLUTION-ORIENTED

We do not hide the reality that animals face, but we keep our attention focused on what can be done about it. No situation is beyond the reach of people willing to show up. Through this work we offer hope to the animals we rescue and to the supporters who believe the world can be better than it is.

OUR CORE BELIEFS

We share this world with creatures capable of awakening deep affection and fascination in anyone willing to look. That is a remarkable inheritance, and it carries a responsibility: to act as guardians of the natural world and the animals in it.

Rescued in Romania, loved all over the world: adopt. Romanian dogs are like any other dog. Nothing they did brought them to where they are, and they want only to love and be loved.

They deserve the same claim to life, safety, and happiness as anyone.
Every animal's life has worth.

Both ROLDA and the RSPCA agree:

- Animals have emotions, feelings, memories, and rights.
- Animals enrich and improve our lives.
- Every animal has the right to live, and to live free from suffering.
- Every animal has the right to die humanely and with dignity.
- Every person should consider how their choices and behavior affect animals.
- Understanding an animal's behavior before handling it matters, because responses to human contact can be unpredictable.
- Every person can and should play a part in building a better world for people and animals alike.

It may take decades, and our determination will not falter. In the meantime we work with the resources at hand to improve the living conditions and welfare of the animals in our care, and of those living in the wild.

OUR MAJOR MILESTONES

1998

It began with a chance meeting in a park.
Dana rescued her first dog, Printz, from illegal dog fighting. A German Shepherd mix, he showed her the scale of the cruelty facing dogs in Romania. Nursing him back to health, she found the purpose of her life and allowed herself to imagine a country where animals were respected. The challenge was not a small one: several million unsterilized strays breeding freely, state-sanctioned pounds where dogs were killed for profit, and authorities who looked the other way.



1999

Dana sought out like-minded people.
Living near Galati, Romania's fifth largest city, Dana founded a group she named ROLDA, the Romanian League in Defense of Animals. Homeless dogs were the focus, because roughly 30,000 of them were trying to survive on wasteland and in the streets, where they were struck by traffic that rarely stopped. Dana taught herself English online so that she could build a network and learn how to establish and fund a charity-run shelter.

2003

The first shelter for dogs

After a sustained fundraising effort, ROLDA purchased land in the village of Smardan, near Galati, and built a small shelter there. It was designed as a sanctuary and as a genuine alternative to the state-sanctioned catch-and-kill camps known as public shelters. Our policy was the opposite of theirs: no dog with any hope of survival would be put down. The shelter welcomed 60 dogs in its first month.

2006

Becoming an accredited charity around the world.

We became an NGO by registering the ROLDA Foundation in Romania. On July 4 of the same year, ROLDA was incorporated as a charity in the United States under the name Romanian League in Defense of Animals, Inc. Also in 2006, we purchased additional land for a second, larger shelter.

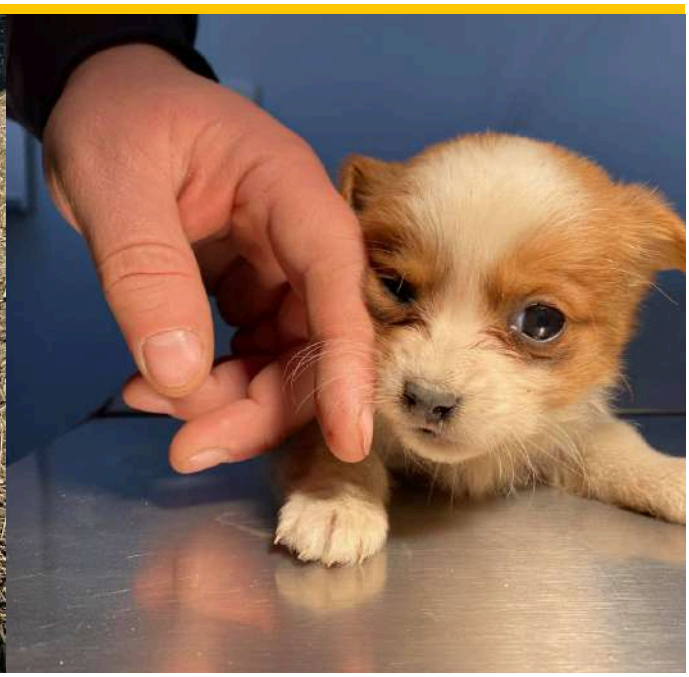
2007

ROLDA partnered with the local steel producer to address its stray dog population humanely, then estimated at 10,000 dogs.

2008 - 2015

According to the steel plant's management, approximately 10,000 strays were captured, fed, housed, and rehabilitated where needed, and a significant proportion were adopted into permanent homes across Europe. Using humane methods alone, ROLDA brought the stray population at the plant down from 10,000 to 1,000.





2012

After Romania and the United States, we opened a branch in Norway under the name ROLDA, Gatehunder fra Romania.



2014

ROLDA opened branches in Switzerland (Association ROLDA Suisse), Sweden (Association ROLDA Sverige), and Australia (ROLDA Inc).





2015

ROLDA opened a branch in the United Kingdom (ROLDA UK).





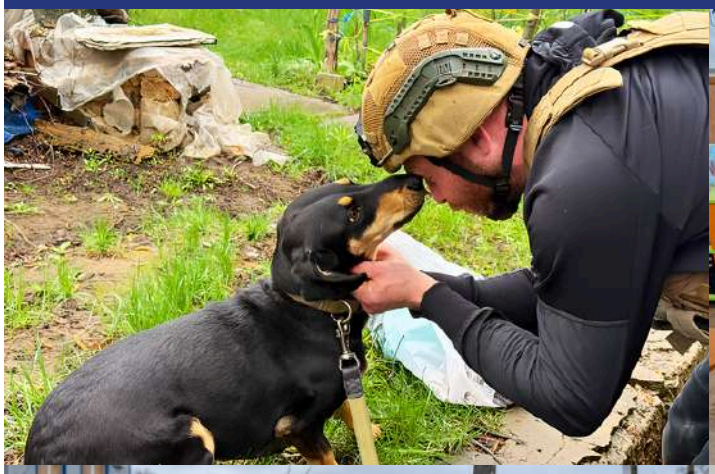
2021

Spreading the love, and the expertise.
Individuals and organizations helped us when we were starting out, and it was only right that we do the same for rescuers elsewhere in Romania. We began connecting rescuers in other cities, starting in Tulcea, where we supported a small cat rescue organization and ran sterilization campaigns.




2022

Emergency support for #UkraineAnimals caught in the war zone.
ROLDA coloring books were distributed in schools across Romania.






2023

A sanctuary for disabled and senior cats was completed and welcomed its first residents.
The #FriendsForever program launched, supporting seniors with pets in Romania.




2025

More than 100,000 animals helped since ROLDA was founded. We began rescuing dogs from puppy mills, and within 18 months more than 200 of them had been rehomed in Europe.




2026

ROLDA celebrates its 20th anniversary. Converting our first dog shelter into a cage-free facility is changing what sheltering can look like in Romania. Our new name, ROLDA, United for Vulnerable Animals Worldwide, reflects a mission that now covers animals affected by disaster anywhere as well as animals in Romania. We have purchased additional land to expand the cage-free shelter.




OUR CHALLENGES

Environmental

Milder winters raise the risk of bacteria and parasites in our facilities, which makes reliable heating and lighting a continuing necessity.

Societal

COVID restrictions have made adoption and volunteering harder, and people living alone have lost some of the companionship animals provide.

Technological and Economic

Rising fuel, electricity, and utility prices are straining household budgets, and more animals are given up for financial reasons as a result. Technology cuts both ways in this work, and we make deliberate use of the side that helps. One example is cryptoforanimals.org, which accepts cryptocurrency donations in support of animal welfare.

HOW ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

- Rescuing dogs from puppy mills, sheltering them, and finding the right home for each one
- Evacuating and assisting animals near the front line in Ukraine
- Sheltering dogs and cats
- Running sterilization programs in the poorest rural regions of Romania
- Rehoming, where the quality of the match matters more than the speed of it
- Supporting local people to help animals in ways that fit their culture and traditions, since they know best what will work where they live
- Providing humanitarian aid to local communities after a disaster
- Helping vulnerable people, including seniors with pets
- Encouraging local artisans to work creatively in support of the animal cause
- Education in schools, including a coloring book distributed in Romania and translated for other countries
- Supporting initiatives that help pets and owners live well together and inspire others to do the same e.g. **Chefs for Pets - The Kindred Kitchen**, a cooking challenge that invites supporters to make safe homemade pet meals and treats from leftovers and pantry staples. It reduces household food waste and turns an everyday routine into time spent with an animal. Selected recipes are published in a free ROLDA cookbook distributed worldwide, alongside clear guidance on which foods are dangerous to dogs.



SHORT TERM PRIORITIES

The obstacles are real, and we intend to succeed regardless. For vulnerable animals in Romania, Ukraine, and beyond, ROLDA is often the only organization that comes.

In our first 20 years we helped more than 100,000 animals suffering from abuse, neglect, and disaster. Many more still need us: animals that are homeless or in distress, and pets belonging to families with very little. Our ambitions have grown to match these increasing needs. We intend to help a minimum of 50,000 animals every year, and to maintain that pace for the next three years.

50,000: the number of vulnerable animals we want to help over the next three years.

In Romania, that means more than 10,000 animals. Internationally, it means a minimum of 40,000 in Ukraine, rising as we extend support to other countries affected by disaster.

We want to see pets treated as members of the family, every rescued dog and cat placed in a safe permanent home, and for animal cruelty to become something that is left in the past. Our strategy for getting there has several layers, each carrying part of the weight.

You are part of that strategy. We know you love animals as much as we do. Join the ROLDA family, and together we can reach every animal waiting for our help.

OUR LONGTERM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Prevention: helping dogs and owners live better together

What we currently do:

- Cover sterilization costs, reducing the number of unwanted puppies and kittens
- Control disease through vaccination and parasite treatment
- Test dogs from our own shelters before adoption
- Provide expert support when owners are struggling

Our plan:

- Expand our digital services to give owners the guidance they need
- Develop partnerships, including with schools

Goal: to reduce animal overpopulation by sterilizing a minimum of 1,500 pets annually.

Sterilization is now the subject of national debate in Romania, and it is the only humane way to change the size of the stray dog population. Under public pressure to act, the Romanian government made the unfortunate decision in 2016 to outlaw the rescue, neutering, and return of stray animals. Before that, by neutering and vaccinating healthy dogs and releasing them back into their territory while sheltering and treating those who needed it, ROLDA had been reducing the stray population successfully.

Goal: test every new dog that enters our shelters.

Every new furry friend that arrives at a ROLDA shelter is treated for injuries and then held in quarantine before joining the general population. Each one is tested (snap test) to control mass spreading diseases. During the quarantine, we administer broad-spectrum vaccinations and screen for the conditions that move fastest through a shelter, heartworm and parasite infestation among them. This protects the animal that has just arrived and every animal already in our care. It is a good practice to separate a shelter from a place where disease simply circulates.

Goal: create workshops and educational materials to support pet owners.

Abandonment usually begins with a problem the owner cannot solve alone: a dog that barks without stopping, a behavior nobody has explained, a cost nobody saw coming. Our educational work exists to reach people at that moment. We distribute a free coloring book to schools and preschools, publish an ABC guide in Romanian for children and their parents, and run a national study, modeled on a British program, that helps owners trace a behavioral problem back to its cause instead of concluding that the animal cannot stay. Written material does a great deal, and it cannot answer a follow-up question. The next stage is to build this work into structured workshops, so that owners receive guidance in person from someone who can respond to the specific situation in front of them.

Romania: Rescue, Shelter, Rehabilitation & Rehome

What we currently do:

- Give senior and disabled cats a secure future in our shelter
- Invest in the first cage-free facility ever built in Romania for rescued dogs
- Maintain a sensory garden to support the rehabilitation of dogs
- Raise the standard of care across our facilities

Our plan:

- Support the rehabilitation of shy, frightened, and previously abused dogs that are not yet ready for adoption

Rehoming: helping dogs find their forever home

What we currently do:

- Train staff and community members in dog behavior, and provide expert support
- Expand the adoption program across the countries where ROLDA is registered
- Increase the number of foster placements

Our plan:

- Shorten the time a rescued dog spends in our shelter

International: creating a better world for all animals in need

Our plan:

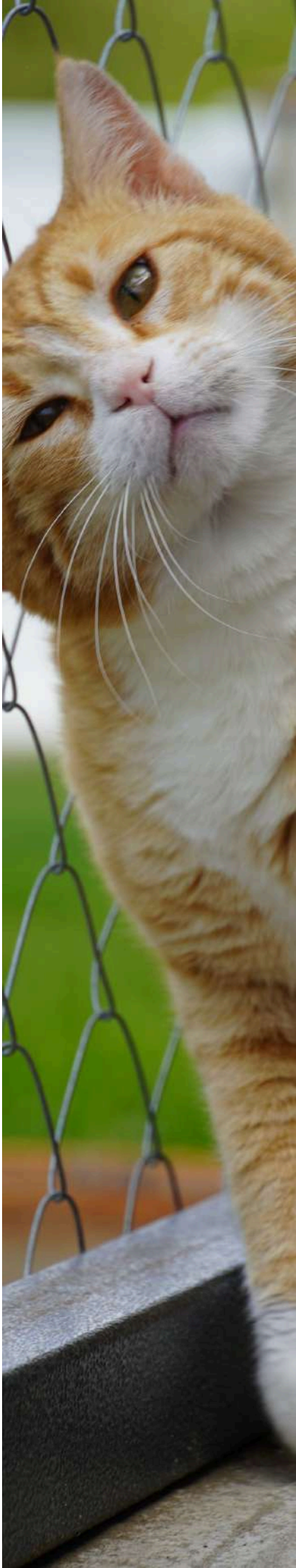
- Animal disaster support
- Raising ROLDA's international profile
- Developing partnerships

Brand Engagement: building a community of dog lovers

- Community education and engagement

Fundraising: raising money to help dogs when and where they need us most

- Build a robust fundraising mix
- Maximize the return on every dollar invested in fundraising



SHORT TERM PRIORITIES

#UnChainDogs

Romanian law makes it illegal to keep a dog permanently chained outside strict welfare conditions. In practice the rule is widely overlooked and rarely enforced. Join our community of supporters in raising awareness of what chaining does to a dog, and in pressing the Poliția Animalelor (Animal Police) to enforce the protection that already exists in law. Your support can help bring a long-standing practice to an end and give thousands of dogs their freedom back.

#CloseIllegalShelters

Romanian law requires public dog shelters to meet basic standards of hygiene and care, and conditions on the ground fall far short of that. Many are overcrowded and unsanitary, and the dogs held in them are neglected and mistreated. Urge the Director of ANSVSA, Romania's National Veterinary Sanitary and Food Safety Authority, to require public shelters to meet welfare regulations or close. Advocating for these dogs saves lives and pushes the whole system toward reform.

Free Captive Animals in Romania

Law 205/2008, as amended, prohibits the possession and sale of wild animals by unauthorized individuals and legal entities, with the exception of zoos. Even so, wolves, snakes, bears, monkeys, and lions are kept illegally in Romania by private individuals for pleasure and profit. These animals are smuggled into the country or trafficked onward abroad with no regard for their welfare.

Wildlife tourism is among the most misleading and profitable of these enterprises. It uses animals from birth until they are euthanized or abandoned once they are no longer considered valuable, and the years in between are spent in hardship and harsh training so that they will perform for tourists.

Sign our petition urging ANSVSA and the Garda de Mediu (National Environmental Guard) to shut down illegal animal tourism operations across Romania, relocate wild animals held illegally, and hold those responsible to account.

Help Break the Cruel Cycle of Puppy Mills

Puppy mills are large-scale breeding operations that put profit ahead of animal welfare, confining dogs in cramped, unsanitary conditions with little or no human contact or medical care. Puppies and their mothers suffer badly, physically and emotionally. Sustained awareness and public pressure can bring the practice to an end. Join us by signing our petition calling for an end to puppy mills across Romania, so that every dog caught in this cycle has a chance at a healthy life in a home that wants them.

YOUR DONATION WILL HELP VULNERABLE ANIMALS

- **Survive natural and human-made disasters**
- **Recover from the abuse suffered in puppy mills**
- **Build a new future in a safe, permanent home**