

Man found guilty of animal cruelty, months after 53 animals seized

Dogs, puppies, cat found living in filthy conditions, officials say



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MARLBOROUGH, N.H. —

A Marlborough man was found guilty Friday of animal cruelty, nearly eight months after more than 50 animals were taken from him.

John Riggieri, 58, was charged after he was evicted in July. Officials said they found feces, urine, dirt and pet hair throughout his home, where he was keeping 53 animals.

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"It was basically all over the floors," said Caleb Dobson of the Cheshire County Sheriff's Office. "You could tell that he had used squeegees to push it around, which laid up against the walls."

Officers worked with the Monadnock Humane Society to remove 33 adult dogs, 19 puppies and one cat.

During testimony Friday, officials said one litter of puppies was found in a built-in cabinet with no evidence of food or water. Another litter was found in the bathroom.

"There was a bug zapper to help control the flies," said Emily Kerylow of the Monadnock Humane society. "There was a fan going in there, fairly dark. The puppies were all in the bathtub, and the mom was lying on the floor next to them."

The animals were evaluated by a veterinarian, and the puppies' paws were an area of concern.

"Several lesions were on their paws," veterinarian Jennifer York said. "Their paws were stained yellow, and there were areas where the skin was opened and a blister had formed."

Over the past eight months, the Humane Society has invested \$240,000 to care for them, officials said. All the animals are living with foster families.

"The animals are still state evidence until all of this is settled," said Kathy Collinsworth of the Monadnock Humane Society. "These are foster homes that certainly hope to adopt when we win."

Riggieri is scheduled to be sentenced in April. His defense attorney said he plans to appeal.