

# 2011 BCOA READY BORZOI DISASTER PREPAREDNESS REPORT

Veni Harlan & Robin Casey

## An Exhausting Year for Disasters

There were a record 99 major disaster declarations, 29 emergency declarations, and 114 fire management assistance declarations in the U.S. alone.

2011 was an extraordinary year for major earthquakes. In the seven weeks between 1 January and 21 February, Argentina, Chile, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Tonga, Burma, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Sulawesi, Fiji and New Zealand were all hit.

But by far the most damaging quake was the one that led to Japan's deadly tsunami on 11 March. This killed 15,500 people, caused the meltdowns of three nuclear reactors, and led to 160,000 people fleeing the area or being moved away. Tens of thousands of residents were ordered to abandon their homes with little warning. Residents had to leave their pets behind, believing they would be able to go home in a few days. Of course this didn't happen and many animals perished. Isabella Aoki Galleon, an organizer for Japan Earthquake Animal Rescue and Support comments "The psychological damage is huge on top of everything else they had to suffer."

Many commentators described 2011 as the "year of the tornado." Between January and June, 43 major thunderstorms released nearly 1,600 tornadoes in the central, southern and eastern U.S. Over 900 pets were left homeless after the Missouri tornado. They were aided in part by a dedicated core of rescuers.

Hurricane Irene slashed multiple states on the east coast causing Robin Casey to evacuate her Borzoi. "We stayed to protect our home and deal with the aftermath but it was important to me to have the dogs out of harm's way. Roy Silguero was kind enough to offer us board."

Oppressive and unrelenting heat broke tens of thousands of daily weather records such as...

Oklahoma—hottest month ever in any state with July.

Washington D.C.—all-time heat records with 106 degrees.

Houston—record string of 24 days in August over 100 degrees.

Newark, N.J.—record 108 degrees, topping the old mark by 3 degrees.



*"In many ways, 2011 rewrote the record books. From crippling snowstorms to the second deadliest tornado year on record, to epic floods, drought and heat, and the third busiest hurricane season on record. We've witnessed the extreme of nearly every weather category."*

—Christopher Vaccaro,  
NOAA spokesman

Texas was badly hit by heat waves and drought. The city of Austin had 27 consecutive days where the temperature was over 100F and 90 days in total when it reached that level. The Texas Forest Service said the continuing drought had killed 100-500 million trees, a figure that did not include the ones killed in wildfires that scorched around 4 million acres of the state. Wildfires destroyed the home of Billie Thibeaux. She was able to get her Borzoi and a few minimum items but the results were nothing short of devastating.



E. coli outbreak sickened hundreds and the AVMA reported a plethora of pet food recalls due to salmonella, aflatoxin, and melamine.



2011 was also the year of too much or too little water. It began with devastating floods in Australia which covered an area the size of France and Germany combined, and ended with tropical storm Washi killing nearly 1,000 people and making 300,000 homeless in the Philippines. Flooding took property and lives in multiple US states.



In the U.S. alone, 98 events (storms, flooding, fires and earthquakes) left \$27 billion in economic losses, more than double the 10-year average. The vast majority of damage was from twisters and other severe storms. Twisters also claimed nearly 600 lives in 2011.



Bob Hartwig, head of the Insurance Information Institute, states that 2011 was the costliest year for natural disasters worldwide. "It was one for the record book. We are rewriting the financial and economic history of disasters on a global scale." The problem was so big that insurers, emergency managers, public officials and academics from around the world gathered in Washington for a special three-day National Academy of Sciences summit to figure out how to better understand and manage extreme events.

And there are man-made disasters as well. The Army Corps of Engineers, desperate to save Baton Rouge and New Orleans from flooding, intentionally flooded parts of south Louisiana. The corps also blew up a Missouri levee to save the town of Cairo, Illinois, sending water into 130,000 acres of farmland.



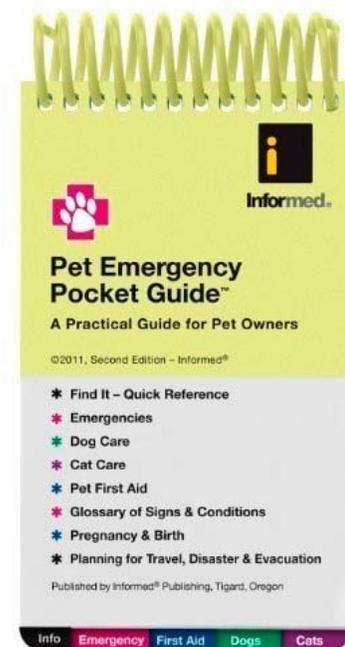
What does this all mean? Higher insurance rates for certain.

Everyone wonders, is there a "safe" place to live? Depends on what you want to be safe from. USGS spokesman Mark Newell says "Unless you're in a fallout shelter in the middle of some weird desolate place, I'm not sure you can use a data set to say this is where you should live. Every place has its own inherent risks."

## So what can you do to protect yourself, your family, and especially your Borzoi?

Disasters can make you feel helpless but the reality is, there are MANY things Borzoi owners can do to prepare, respond, and survive. Here 8 easy tasks you can do right now...

- 1 Adapt and mitigate. Understand the environment that you're in, adapt, and PLAN. There are many tools and links to help Borzoi owners with environmental and man made disasters. Please visit [www.borzoiclubofamerica.org/readyborzoi](http://www.borzoiclubofamerica.org/readyborzoi) to make your prepare for potential disaster in your area.
- 2 Find the resources to help you become prepared. There are some nice tools like the *Pet Emergency Pocket Guide* (<http://store.informedguides.com>)
- 3 Get Tech Ready! The American Red Cross, FEMA, and Google have joined forces to teach people how to use technology and social media to prepare for emergencies. Social media and technology are excellent resources to seek help in emergencies and share information. In fact, a recent Red Cross survey shows that the internet is the third most popular way for Americans to gather emergency information. Text and data services in particular tend to be more resilient than phones during emergencies. There are a plethora of apps for Android and iPhone!
- 4 Know which hotels and motels along your evacuation route will accept you and your pets in an emergency. Ask if no-pet policies could be waived in an emergency. ([www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com))
- 5 Create an "Emergency Information Document" using the Ready.gov Family Emergency Plan template. ([www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan](http://www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan)).
- 6 Visit, bookmark, and implement a plan from the Ready Borzoi website. ([www.borzoiclubofamerica.org](http://www.borzoiclubofamerica.org))
- 7 Promote disaster preparedness in your local clubs by sharing resources, information, and a buddy system.
- 8 Take action today!!! visit <http://goo.gl/9MkF6> and make a plan.



## What has our committee done in 2011?

We applied for and received a prestigious AKC Community Achievement Award for the disaster preparedness website Ready Borzoi. The award came with a certificate and a monetary award of \$1,000. We were delighted with requests from several national breed clubs to utilize information from the Ready Borzoi site for their own purposes.

We made a request to the board that funds from the AKC Community Achievement Award be used to educate members on disaster readiness. One of our ideas was to create key tags with the Ready Borzoi url that could be included in national packets and specialties to drive owners to the Ready Borzoi site and keep preparedness top of mind. Another idea was to create window clings that alert emergency personnel to pets inside the home/kennel. (Firefighters will *not* seek to rescue pets unless they know any exist.) This request was denied by the board.

As we worked to build awareness and name recognition, we made a request to the board that the vague committee name “Disaster Plans” be changed to “Ready Borzoi Disaster Preparedness.” This request was denied by the board.

Veni was asked by the board to create a brochure to be handed out at the Eukanuba “Meet the Breeds” booth. A tri-fold brochure was designed and files sent to a copy center in Virginia for Jane Schrieber. 200 copies were printed at a cost of about \$35. This document has been added to the Ready Borzoi site as a download for anyone wishing to print and distribute.

In general, paper hand-outs are not a particularly effective means to reach an audience on so dense a topic as disaster preparedness. Not to mention that paper items are largely discarded. We recommend producing practical items like key tags, magnets, or nylon leashes with Ready Borzoi and the url or QR code. These items are inexpensive and would provide a service to the fancy. Ultimately, the goal is to create name recognition, increase visibility, and drive traffic to the website—a one-stop disaster preparedness resource. We hope that the board will reconsider more creative and modern means to serve the fancy.

There have been discussions regarding the creation of a Ready Borzoi Facebook page, a disaster exercise at the National, a disaster preparedness raffle basket, and fund raising to create the items described above. Veni is also updating the website.



*A QR code (quick response code) was created for Ready Borzoi. Those with smart phones can scan and connect to the Ready Borzoi website.*



*Download the pdf version at Ready Borzoi.*

## Can animals warn us about coming natural disasters?

Some claim that it's a sort of ESP or mysterious "sixth sense"; others chalk it up to simple biology. Animals that detect impending earthquakes and tsunamis don't necessarily have more senses than humans; they just have much higher sensitivity. The fact that animals have keener senses than humans is well-documented. Dogs have a remarkable sense of smell, birds can migrate using celestial cues, and bats can locate food with echoes. The mistake is in confusing that higher sensitivity with some unknown, perhaps paranormal, power.

Animals may sense unusual vibrations or changes in air pressure coming from one direction that suggest they should move in the opposite direction. If a herd of animals are seen fleeing before an earthquake, all that is needed is for one or two of them to skittishly sense danger. The rest will follow, not necessarily due to some supernatural earthquake-detecting sense, but simple herd instinct.

Fortunately, with modern technology, tsunami warnings can be issued within seconds of an earthquake, in some cases providing hours of forewarning. The fact is, accessing the Internet, a smart phone, or radio is much more reliable than waiting for signs of impending danger in your dog's behavior.

—Benjamin Radford



*“With the comprehensive tools they have provided, the Borzoi Club of America has prepared Borzoi owners for any potential disaster and ensured that their members stand a better chance of protecting their pets, family and property in the event a disaster occurs. We encourage other clubs to take a look at the Ready Borzoi website and use it as an example when creating their own disaster plans.”*

—Sheila Goffe, AKC Director of Government Relations

