

## Stone County alleged animal hoarder pleads not guilty

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Shirley Gai has been charged with 117 counts of animal neglect by Stone County Sheriff's Department on March 21, 2013.

STONE COUNTY -- Accused animal hoarder Shirley Gai, 51, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to one charge of simple animal cruelty and 116 charges of animal neglect for failure to provide rabies shots to the mixed-breed dogs left without food or water at an unoccupied home she owns on Terry Cuevas Road, Stone County Chief Deputy Phyllis Olds said. No trial date has been set.

Gai was arrested in March after authorities and volunteers seized the dogs. They also found several dead dogs inside and outside the home, some stuffed in garbage bags or old dog food bags. Olds said the home's floors were caked in feces and urine.

None of the dogs had all of their hair and most suffered from contagious forms of mange and had numerous sores. Authorities said all had ear, eye and respiratory infections.

Neighbors said Gai showed up at the home to either drop off more dogs or dump a 50-pound bag of dog food over the fence. Olds said Gai picked up stray dogs or went to animal shelters to adopt them, thinking she was saving the dogs. Some of the dogs ate other dogs to survive, Olds said, adding officials found dogs who were lactating, but there were no puppies on the property.

The rescued dogs were taken to the Stone County animal shelter and Southern Pines Animal Shelter in Hattiesburg.

Some have since been taken to a Florida shelter, while others remain housed at area shelters, at a veterinarian's office or in foster homes while they recover and get used to being around people again.

Others have had to be euthanized because of severe aggressive behavior, Olds said.

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com/2013/04/24/4618464/alleged-animal-hoarder-pleads.html#storylink=cpy>