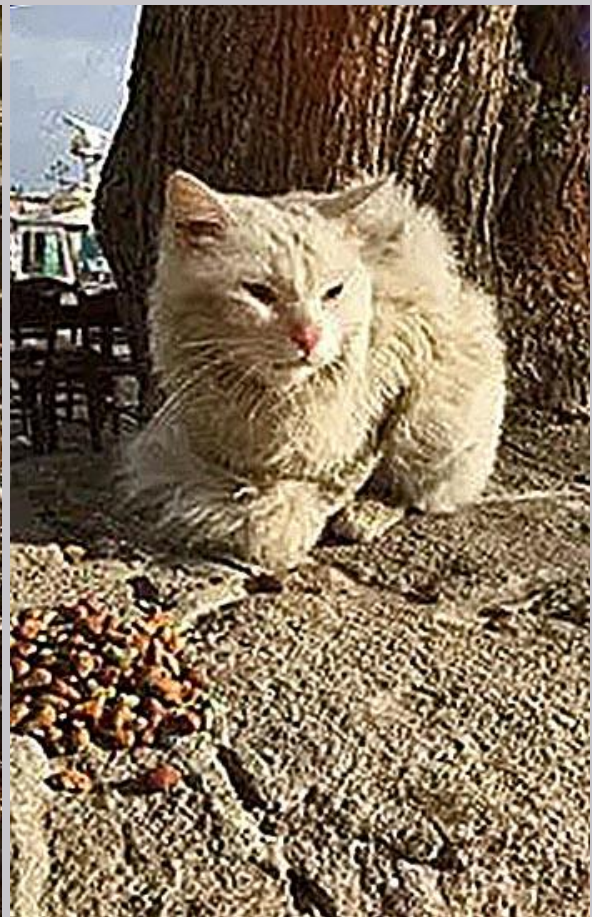
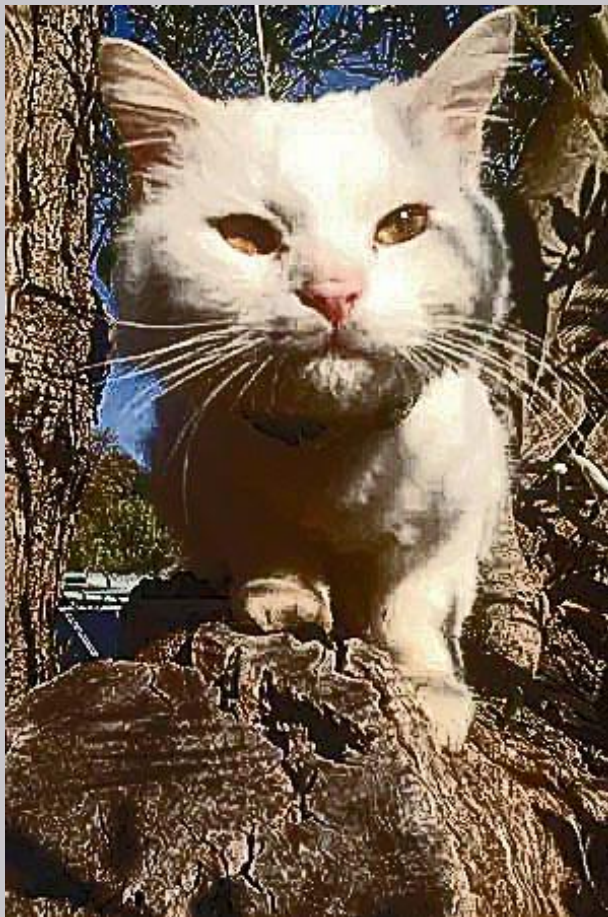


## Featured Felines: Escapes & Rescues 8 (2023)

*(page checked June 2026)*

### Kunkush, feline refugee from Iraq

In November 2015 a mother and her five children fled violence in Mosul, Iraq, making a risky journey in a rubber boat to the Greek island of Lesbos, where they arrived safely. Accompanying them in his basket was their Turkish Van cat, **Kunkush** – the only one of seven they'd been able to take with them. Unfortunately the cat became separated from his family when, probably frightened by all the noise and people, he managed to escape from his basket. Despite a search lasting several hours, he couldn't be found before the family had to move on to a refugee camp.



He was found, luckily, three days later by fishermen, who named him 'Dias', Greek for Zeus. His fur was matted and full of sand, and he was being bullied by local cats. A local vet gave him a health check and vaccinations, but no one knew anything except that he'd come from Iraq; it wasn't known where his family had gone. An American volunteer helping refugees, Ashley Anderson, stepped in and, with the aid of friends Michelle and Amy, organised a poster campaign and online appeal to try to find information. Presumably in the meantime they also took care of Kunkush.



# CAT FOUND

Help! I lost my family on Lesbos Island in Greece, when they brought me on their rubber boat from Turkey in November. When we got to shore, I got scared and ran away but I really want to be with them again. Volunteers believe I came from Iraq. Can you help me look for my family? I am sure my family is in Europe and with your help I can be reunited with them again! My family sacrificed a lot for me to escape with them so I know they love me a lot! We need to stick together, we have been through enough and I really miss them.

کمک! من خانواده ام را در جزیره لیبسوس یونان هنگامیکه توسط یک قایق رابری من را آوردن گم کردم. رضاکاران معتقد هستند که من از عراق آورده شده ام. من مطمئن هستم که فامیلم در اروپا هستند و با کمک شما من میتوانم با فامیلم یکجا شوم.

المساعدة! فقدت عائلتي في جزيرة لیبسوس اليونان عندما تم نقلي على متن قاربهم المصطاف من تركيا في شهر نوفمبر. عند وصولنا الشاطئ خفت جثا وهربت ولاكن اريد الرجوع إلى أهلي مجدداً. المتطوعين يعتقدون أنني من العراق. هل بإمكانك مساعدتي في البحث عن عائلتي؟ انا متأكد ان عائلتي في أوروبا وبمساعدتك يمكن لي ان اجتمع معي عائلتي!

هاریکاری ..  
ل گزیرتا لیبسوس با یونانیستایی من خنزانان  
خود ز دست دا دما فمگوهلشتی ز  
ترکیا یو یونانیستایی ل معدا نوقمبری  
بری یا گمیهکا منات ..  
دما نهم گمستین بهشتی نهم گمک  
ترسیام و من پاز دالی نهم دقوازم  
جارمک دن فمگرم .. کمسن خودبهجس  
وسا هزر دکن ز ابراقی هاتمه گملو تو  
دکاری هاریکاریا من بکی ل گمیهکا  
خنزانان من؟ نهم بیلورم کو خنزانان من ل  
نموریا به و ب هاریکاریا ته دیه کو نهم  
جارمک دن خنزانان خودره بهگم



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Eventually a foster mother was found for him in Berlin, Germany, and she promised that if within a year his family hadn't been found, she'd adopt him. A GoFundMe page was set up to refund Michelle the €600 she paid for his ticket. Kunkush's journey was successful, and he settled into his new home, where he was said to relax, sleep a lot, and be quite talkative when he was awake!



But the search for his family didn't stop. It was the middle of February 2016 when someone from Norway got in touch, having seen the online appeals, and said he thought the family had moved in next door to him. They were contacted, and were able to send photos of Kunkush to the American volunteers. They in turn arranged a Skype reunion with Kunkush and his family. During the call, the cat was looking behind the computer, trying to find his humans!



Only a few days later he was on his way for the much shorter journey to Norway and a joyful reunion with his people, which was reported on Norwegian TV. It had taken four months and 4000 km, but Kunkush was finally home.



It would be lovely to report that Kunkush led a long and happy life back with his family, but it was not to be. Just a few short months later, in early June, he caught a type of coronavirus, FIP (feline infectious peritonitis), and died.

His family settled well in Norway and take an active part in the village community where they live. In 2017 they took in a new cat, a black-and-white kitten called **Bella**.



There's a children's book detailing Kunkush's story: *Kunkush: The True Story of a Refugee Cat* by Marne Ventura, published by Raintree, ISBN 978-1-4747-6438-4.

[Buzzfeed](#) (Feb. 2016) | [Facebook](#) (last used 2019)

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## Featured Felines: Escapes & Rescues 9 (2020)

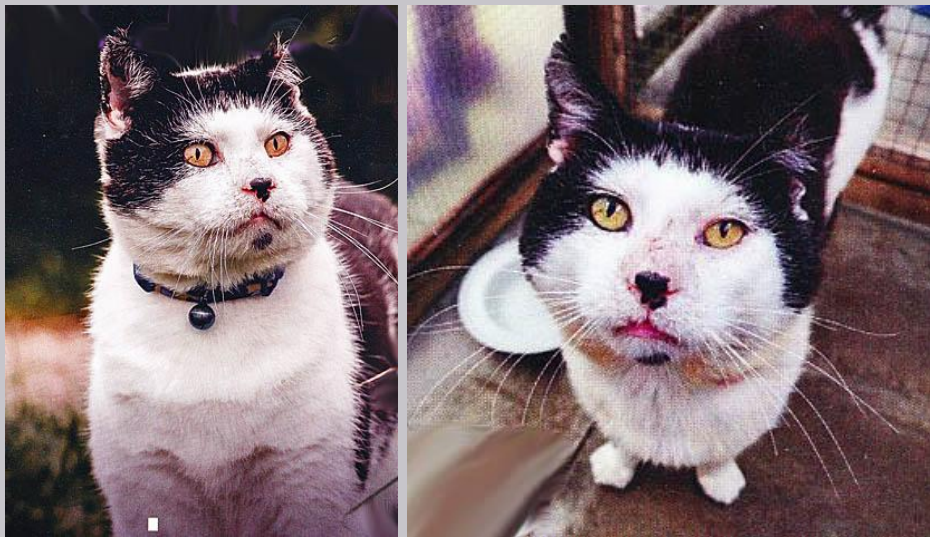
(page checked June 2926)

### Buzz, rescued from dog-baiting

#### Cornwall, England

Abbie Garland first encountered the cat she named **Buzz** at her parents' home on the Lizard Nature Reserve – the largest such reserve in south-west England – when he was hanging around, skinny and hungry, and came in for some food. He was scared and ran off when someone opened the door to where he was. She spent three hours outside trying to approach him, but he was still too frightened to move from where he'd taken refuge. Next day she acquired a trap and finally, four days later on the last day of June 2019, he was caught and Abbie took him in for the night. He purred and seemed happy to be with her.

Buzz was filthy, thin, had badly infected ears and was generally in a poor state. Next day he went off to the vet, who estimated that he was around six or seven years old, and thought it looked as though an ear had been bitten off by a dog. Buzz didn't want to leave Abbie and actually screamed when the vet took him in. He stayed there three weeks, and then went to the local Cats Protection branch to complete his recovery and to see whether an owner could be found.



No one came forward, but a lady said she'd lived next door to his original owner and confirmed that poor Buzz had been used for dog-baiting. He wasn't allowed in the house. The RSPCA had been called several times, but nothing seems to have resulted. When the owner found out that the lady was feeding Buzz, he was dumped.

Abbie already had two cats at home and a young Collie puppy, Loki, but decided she had to take in Buzz as well. When she formally adopted him in early August and took him home, he got on with the cats, but she had to keep him and the dog separate for some time, or Buzz would attack. Fortunately after a while he became used to Loki, and they ended up the best of friends, sleeping in the same bed, sharing biscuits and even going out for walks together. On those occasions Abbie has to pick Buzz up if she sees another dog approaching, as he's still likely to attack it! Otherwise he's a very affectionate cat, has become a real 'home boy' and, although frightened at first, he's become used to other people and will even let strangers stroke him. It's a real happy ending for the cat who had such a bad start in life.



Your Cat *(Jan. 2021 – archived copy: but no hyperlink!)*

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