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## **Couple charged with animal cruelty**

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### **Franklin:**

Two city residents are facing seven charges each of animal cruelty after police and state social workers allegedly found seven dogs, a number of cats, a bird, a rabbit and a dead ferret in their Pine Street home.

Chief David Goldstein said John Harmon, 47, and Shannon Kelly-Harmon, 40, also have two children who are in temporary custody of the state Division of Children, Youths and Families.

Goldstein said his officers became aware of the number of animals when the Harmons reported one of their children as a runaway on June 24.

He said Officer Christopher Hart knew the child from his job as school resource officer and was able to locate her. During his interview with the child, Goldstein said, Hart learned of the living conditions in the home and contacted a DCYF worker for an evaluation. The worker went to the home and removed a second child.

He said the child told Hart she ran away because the last time she went home the smell in the house caused her to vomit and, when she went into her room, her pet ferret was dead.

Goldstein said the Harmons were told to take care of their animals and clean their home or the children would not be returned. He said John Harmon took the seven dogs to the Franklin Animal Shelter while police helped animal rescuers herd the nearly 20 feral cats living near and in the house.

The rabbit and the bird were given to a family in Washington (N.H.).

Goldstein said all of the dogs were in "very bad" shape, with matted feces in their coats, fleas, worms and a variety of open sores and infections. He said the dogs included a male poodle, a male Chihuahua, a male Chinook, two American Eskimo dogs, a spayed Pekinese, an 8-year-old shely and a 6-year-old black Labrador.

Laurence Boyett, a volunteer at the shelter, said all seven dogs remain with them but, because of this sudden influx, the shelter is now full. He said that, until the case is finished, the dogs will stay at the shelter waiting for the court to determine whether or not they can be adopted.

He said all seven have been treated by a veterinarian and cleaned by a groomer — at a cost of \$2,000.

Goldstein said that, when the veterinarian determined the condition of the dogs met the standard for cruelty, he issued arrest warrants for both Harmons.

"This was a very ugly situation," Goldstein said. "There's not enough adjectives to describe what we found in that house."

The Harmons are due to appear in Franklin District Court in August.

People wishing to help the Franklin Animal Shelter may call 934-4132 or go to the website, [www.franklinanimalshelter.com](http://www.franklinanimalshelter.com). He said the shelter is in need of cash to pay the veterinarian and grooming bills.