

Animal Sweep Nets Arrests Around Santee Alley

By [ED FUENTES](#)

Published: Monday, September 21, 2009, at 08:43AM



Ed Fuentes [[Flickr](#)]

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES — A Saturday raid that took place around Santee Alley led to a series of arrests and confiscations, but showed just how difficult a task the city's Animal Sales Task Force has in putting a stop to illegal sales.

The animal trade thrives on sidewalks around the Fashion District's Santee Alley. Vendors avoid serious charges by using children to make their sales, and scarce resources have often made it difficult to get a prosecution.

Saturday's task force was led by LAPD, who was joined by Animal Services, the City Attorney's office, and the Fashion District BID.

Seven un-weaned puppies, four parakeets, four baby iguanas, 96 water turtles and 16 baby rabbits were taken in after the mid-day sweep. LAPD made ten felony arrests, six with charges of animal neglect, as well as one charge of felony battery and one charge of contributing to the delinquency to a minor.

Many of the vendors were no strangers to the current laws, having been cited before. "At best, it's a small step to curb sales like these," says an undercover volunteer. "Not only do the animals die young, they die as pets to kids... sometimes the pet is replaced by parents coming back to buy a new one. It's an endless cycle."