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SPCA concerned over increase of pit bulls on Cape Flats

The Cape of Good Hope (CoGH) SPCA has raised concerns around the proliferation of pit bulls on the Cape Flats following the death of an 18-year-old Retreat man, who was killed by the family pit bull.

The CoGH SPCA was called out to the man's home yesterday (Sunday, 25 July) by the SA Police and then asked by the deceased family to remove the dog along with two other pit bulls and put them all to sleep.

Whilst the CoGH SPCA does not know how the pit bulls had been trained or socialised, its CEO Allan Perrins has warned that in general pit bulls present a serious bite risk if they are conditioned or allowed to attack or fight.

“Just about every second person coming to the SPCA animal hospital has a pit bull. Most of them are unsterilised and the owners take pride in taunting them and encouraging them to be aggressive. They may be tough, rugged animals that can survive in deprived conditions, however they are also very often intolerant of other people and animals and this is what makes them potentially so dangerous”, said Perrins.

“The pit bull can be a wonderful pet, but owners of this breed must be aware that most strive to dominate and at the first sign of weakness they may react”, he said. “In this case it would seem that the deceased was going to take the dogs out for a walk, as the leashes were lying close to the body. We can only surmise that perhaps as the man bent down to put the lead on, that the dog saw this as a sign of submission and attacked to show his dominance over the owner and the other two dogs”.

Whilst the SPCA does not suspect that the dogs were used for illegal dog fighting, a family member indicated to the SPCA Inspector that when the pit bull met other dogs “he never lost a fight”. Perrins warned that if the pit bull had indeed tasted blood that this may have made him more dangerous.

The SPCA says it is against victimising the dog or breed when an attack happens because very often the dog has been conditioned to be aggressive. However it says it is important to know both the genetics and environment the pitbull, boerbul or rottweiler comes from to ensure that it has a predictable and pleasant nature.

Ends

Issued by the Cape of Good Hope SPCA. For further information contact Sarah Scarth or Lamees Martin on 021 700 4141 or email comms@spca-ct.co.za

Note to the editor

For further information on issue visit <http://www.spca-ct.co.za/SumArticle.asp> to read the article “Bad dog or bad owner” by Ryan Bubar