



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Jessica Burns
Community Relations Coordinator, 352-797-3660

Re: UPDATE #1 Weeki Wachee man arrested for Aggravated Animal Cruelty after
30 Dogs Removed from Property– 2025- 00150011, 2025-00137474

Date: April 09, 2025

UPDATE #1

After a thorough investigation, Hernando County Sheriff's Office detectives provided the State Attorney's Office with their findings. A warrant was issued for the arrest of **Jose Gonzalez-Cruz DOB/09-06-1975** for **Felony Aggravated Animal Cruelty** and **Animal Cruelty**. On 04-04-2025 Gonzalez-Cruz arrived for his civil court appearance and was ultimately placed under arrest.

Jose Gonzalez-Cruz, DOB/08-15-1979 was arrested and charged as follows:

- **Felony Aggravated Animal Cruelty**
- **Animal Cruelty**
- \$3,500 BOND

Gonzalez-Cruz relinquished custody of twenty five of the dogs. The other 5 dogs will remain impounded at the shelter as well, until the judge determines if they should be returned to Gonzalez or become property of Animal Services.

This is an ongoing investigation.



Jose Gonzalez-Cruz

ORIGINAL INFORMATION

On 03-07-2025, a Hernando County Sheriff's Office Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) along with patrol deputies, and forensics specialists responded to a residence on Margot Road in northwest Hernando County to execute an inspection warrant on the property, due to suspected animal neglect.

Upon inspection, it was discovered that all 30 dogs on the property owned by Jose Gonzalez-Cruz did not have proper shelter and 22 dogs either had no water, no access to water, or access to non-potable water (some water buckets had mold and dead lizards in them).

Nine dogs were categorized as skinny, as the ribs and/or hip bones could be seen clearly. Six of the dogs had noticeable sores with open bleeding wounds.

Several of the dogs were in crates that were too small. None of the crates had proper flooring, just open wires touching the ground.

Four dogs were located on the front porch and another four dogs were found on the back porch. Both porches were rotting with holes in the wood. Several dogs were observed to have no access to dry ground and the bottom of the kennels were muddy with a combination of feces and urine. The AEO noted the smell coming from the area where the dogs were housed was overpowering.

The AEO noted all the dogs appeared friendly toward people. Due to the conditions observed, Gonzalez-Cruz was issued a citation for Animal Mistreatment. All of the dogs, bulldog mixes, were impounded and transported to Animal Services.

Gonzalez-Cruz's next court date is Wednesday, May 7. The dogs will remain impounded at the shelter until the judge determines if they should be returned to Gonzalez's or become property of Animal Services.

Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!

Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or **TIPS from a cell phone.

You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .

You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!