

Suspected Fighting Dogs Seized in Ariz.

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Sheriff's deputies arrested a half-dozen people and seized about 150 dogs Tuesday in capping a yearlong investigation into a major breeding operation for dog fighting.

Nearly all the animals seized were pit bulls, an official with the Humane Society of Southern Arizona said.

Among those arrested was Mahlon Patrick, 63, whom investigators identified as one of the top dog fighting breeders in the country.

"We have dismantled a group of people at the upper echelon of dog fighting. This man has been involved for decades," said John Goodwin, a national Humane Society official, at a news conference.

It was not known whether Patrick had retained an attorney.

Most of the dogs were seized from a home in rural northwest Tucson, authorities said. About two dozen were removed from a mobile home property west of the Tucson Mountains.

Leads in the case were developed after Chicago police stopped a vehicle with several fighting dogs last March, and information eventually led to Tucson. Humane Society officials also provided information concerning the possibility of a dog fighting ring near Tucson.

About 10 of the dogs required medical attention. Authorities seized more than 50 weapons and training materials, as well as a device used to hold female dogs in place for breeding.

Six suspects in dog-fighting case released from jail without bond

By Kim Smith

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson, Arizona

Six people suspected of supplying dogs to organized dog fighting rings across the country were released from the Pima County jail without bond.

The Pima County Attorney's Office requested bail of \$500,000 for each of the six people arrested in a county-wide raid Tuesday. But City Magistrate Michael Lex declined to set any bail at all, said Sheriff's Department Sgt. Terry Parish.

According to authorities, deputies began investigating the ring last March after they received tips from Chicago police and the Humane Society of the United States.

Officers in March had stopped a van carrying several fighting dogs and they developed information that led them to Tucson. One of the six arrested, Mahlon T. Patrick, 63, is believed to be among the top three breeders of fighting dogs in the country, investigators said.

During the raid, investigators seized approximately 150 dogs, \$10,000 in cash and more than 60 weapons ranging from revolvers up to assault-type weapons, Parish said.

Much of the cash was found attached to the underside of a drawer at one suspect's house and authorities believe the weapons were used in trade, he said.

Eleven of the dogs seized from Patrick's property required immediate medical attention because of their poor living conditions.

Deputies are still gathering evidence today at a site near West Orange Grove and North Sandario roads, in the Picture Rocks area, just one-half mile from a Sheriff's Department substation, said Parish.

Investigators have found three dead dogs on the property along with the skeletal remains of an unknown number of other dogs, he said.

Since Tuesday's raids, the FBI, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have offered their assistance in the investigation.

Investigators are pouring over journals, logs, receipts and computers in the hopes of compiling more evidence against the defendants, Parish said.

Additional charges and additional arrests are likely, Parish said.

"We don't want to miss anything," he said. "We're not interested in putting a dent in this crime ring. We want to destroy it and make sure they are incapable of re-starting it."