



**Regina  
Humane  
Society**

## **Community-Based Solutions to Managing Companion Animal Populations**



**MORE** than a Shelter

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## Introduction

The Regina Humane Society (RHS) is a private, non-profit organization which has been providing animal welfare services to Regina and area since 1964. There is a misconception that all “humane societies” or “SPCA’s” operate under the umbrella of a provincial and/or national organization and receive funding from them. This is not true. Because there are so many humane organizations with similar names, it is not uncommon for supporters of one humane society or SPCA to confuse it with other humane societies and SPCAs. The RHS is dependent solely on financial support from its community and donors. Although the RHS (and other humane societies) partner with other local or national organizations on special projects or legislative issues from time-to-time, the majority are independent organizations.

The Regina Humane Society receives no on-going sources of funding from the provincial or federal governments and relies on donations, grants, and the support of the community to continue its work. The Society currently receives a fee for service from the City of Regina for Municipal Animal Control and Impoundment Services. The cost of operating the Regina Humane Society is over \$3.5 million annually.

Over the past few years, the RHS has experienced an enormous increase in rural and local intake which has put a significant strain on its infrastructure, financial, veterinary and human resource capacities that is unsustainable. Openly admitting animals from anywhere in the province and beyond affects the capacity to deliver the sheltering services the RHS is obligated to provide to the Regina community. To ensure the best outcomes for the animals in RHS care, the RHS must control how and when animals are admitted based on its capacity to provide care.

As an animal welfare organization, the RHS believes that when population management is deemed necessary, it is essential that it is achieved in a humane manner and ultimately leads to an improvement in the welfare of the companion animal population as a whole. We also believe it is important that population management is achieved as effectively as possible due to limitations on resources and also due to our responsibility to our donors.

This toolkit is intended for use by any individual or organization which is currently involved with, or interested in companion animal population management.

The responsibility for companion animal population management should rest within the applicable municipal government. Animal welfare organizations are not required to take on the overall responsibility for population management other than through a contractual agreement, with appropriate funding and resources. However, these organizations understand the importance of animal control and animal population management, and can play an important role in guiding and supporting government strategy, so it is important for them to have an understanding of all the components in a comprehensive strategy. This will enable them to target their support where it can be most effective and to make the best use of limited resources.

## Purpose

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on how to assess companion animal population management needs and how to decide upon the most effective and efficient approach to managing the population in a humane manner.

The status, composition and size of companion animal populations can vary significantly between areas so there is no single intervention that will work for all situations. Therefore, the need for initial assessment and consideration of all potential relevant factors before deciding on a program design is strongly encouraged. The only concept considered universal is the need for a comprehensive program that is focused on causes and not solely on treating the symptom, namely the roaming companion animal population. This toolkit is meant to provide information to areas without current animal management programs to assist in their development within their jurisdiction.

The RHS seeks to improve animal welfare and is dedicated to improving the well-being of animals in our community. Companion animal population management is an area of concern for everyone due to the welfare issues involved.

Roaming companion animals may encounter a range of welfare problems, including malnutrition, disease, injury and abuse. Uncontrolled or uneducated attempts to control the population may also present significant welfare problems, including inhumane or cruel methods of killing or restraint, and poorly equipped and managed holding facilities.

Within any population of animals there will be different categories of ownership. These are:

- 1) owned with restricted movements
- 2) owned and allowed to roam
- 3) unowned

There will be welfare issues relating to all categories of ownership. However, for the purposes of this document, the aim of companion animal population management is to manage roaming populations and the risks these may present. Whether reducing the size of a roaming population is considered necessary will, to some extent, be subjective depending on the group or agency involved. For example, a government agency responsible for public health and safety may be concerned specifically with roaming populations, including:

- transmission of disease to humans (zoonoses) and other animals
- injury and fear caused by aggressive behaviour
- nuisance behaviours
- livestock/wildlife predation
- causing of traffic accidents

On the other hand, in some areas, roaming animals may be valued, owned animals that are allowed to roam unrestricted by the local community. A reduction in their numbers may be neither necessary nor wanted, but improving the welfare and health of the population and reducing zoonotic risks may still be recognized as beneficial and desirable.

This document considers management options that address both categories (owned and unowned) of companion animals. There are five integral steps of a comprehensive population management program.

- 1) Initial data collection and assessment
- 2) Analyzing and interpreting assessment data with consideration of the influential factors in population management
- 3) The components of a comprehensive population program based upon specific circumstances
- 4) Designing the intervention
- 5) Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

This document uses and expands upon recognized strategies implemented by the International Companion Animal Management Coalition (cited below). Throughout this document, additional resources will be referenced that may assist with the development of an effective population management program.

<http://www.icam-coalition.org>. (2009) ICAM Humane Dog Population Management Guidance. Retrieved from [http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Humane\\_Dog\\_Population\\_Management\\_Guidance\\_English.pdf](http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Humane_Dog_Population_Management_Guidance_English.pdf)

<http://www.icam-coalition.org>. (2011) ICAM Humane Cat Population Management Guidance. Retrieved from <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/ICAM-Humane%20cat%20population.PDF>

*The information contained and/or referenced within this document is for general guidance only. The Regina Humane Society has made every attempt to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided. The Regina Humane Society does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, content, completeness or reliability of the information contained.*

# Definitions

## A. Types of Companion Animals

There are primarily three types of companion animals. They include owned, homeless and feral. These categories can be fluid as animals move from category to category. Within this population, it is most practical to think of roaming animals as belonging to one of three main groups: owned, semi-owned and un-owned.

- 1) *Owned* - those for whom an owner can be identified. Owned animals are likely to be owned by an individual, a household, or even a business. Owned animals can be confined or roaming.
  - a. Confined - Owned animals confined to a property (indoor or fenced) are very likely to be socialised to humans, and are most likely to have their reproduction controlled by humans.
  - b. Roaming - One that is not currently under direct control or is not currently restricted by a physical barrier. For the purposes of population management, it is generally the roaming animals that are the focus.
- 2) *Semi-owned or community animals* - the combined group of homeless and feral animals that are the result of failed human contact. These animals originated in the community and become the responsibility of the community in one way or another. Some can be considered “semi” owned, meaning that concerned residents feed them or provide some sort of shelter but do not identify them as their owned pets.
- 3) *Un-owned animals* – defined as homeless or feral animals and are those for whom an owner or caregiver cannot be identified.
  - a. Homeless – one time pets that are now lost or abandoned. They are typically accustomed to human contact and still depend on humans for food and shelter.
  - b. Feral – animals who are the offspring of feral or homeless animals

## B. Colony

A colony is defined as a group of three or more sexually mature (aged five to six months or more) animals living and feeding in close proximity. The term is commonly used to describe a group of un-owned or semi-owned cats.

## C. Managed Colony

A managed colony is a group of roaming animals (commonly cats) that is controlled by a TNR program or similar approach.

#### **D. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)**

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a program through which feral cats are humanely trapped, sterilized, vaccinated, medically treated and returned to the outdoor locations where they were found. To stop a colonies' numbers from increasing, 70% of the members must be altered. Ideal TNR for reduction and elimination of the cat colony requires a 100% sterilization rate.

#### **E. Stray**

Stray is used to describe previously owned animals that have become separated from their owners and are therefore lost, or gone 'astray'. In this case, stray implies that the animals are socialised to humans. Sometimes, however, stray is used to describe all roaming animals, whether socialised or not socialised to humans, and regardless of the animal's sources of food or shelter or ownership status.

#### **F. Responsible Ownership**

Responsible ownership is a principle of animal welfare that owners have a duty to provide sufficient and appropriate care for all their animals and their offspring. This 'duty of care' requires owners to provide the resources (e.g. food, water, health care and social interaction) necessary for an individual animal to maintain an acceptable level of health and well-being in its environment. Owners also have a duty (sometimes a legal duty) to minimize the potential risk their animal may pose to the public or other animals.

#### **G. Five Freedoms**

The Five Freedoms are a core concept in animal welfare that originated in a UK government report in 1965 and was then refined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council. The Five Freedoms is frequently referenced by animal welfare professionals around the world. It states that an animal's primary welfare needs can be met by safeguarding the following five freedoms:

- 1) Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- 2) Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3) Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- 4) Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- 5) Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

## Community Assessment and Strategy

Before establishing a population management program it is crucial that the particulars of the population in question are understood and measured accurately. This approach ensures the program will be customized to the specific characteristics of the local population, rather than using a single intervention for all animals or all situations.

### Population Assessment

The questions that should be explored throughout the assessment are:

- 1) What is the present size of the population in question and the animal types within it?
  - Where are the roaming animals coming from? What are the sources of these animals and why do they exist?
  - How is the roaming population changing over time and how is it maintained?
  - Is the unowned population itself capable of successful reproduction?
  - Can unowned animals raise offspring to adulthood?
  - Are unwanted owned animals abandoned and allowed to become part of the roaming population?
  - Are owned animals allowed to roam freely?
  - If abandonment or roaming is an issue, why does it occur? What are the beliefs, attitudes or environmental factors that cause these behaviours?
- 2) What are the key welfare issues faced by these animals? Measuring welfare can be approached either through direct observation of the animals or by measuring their access to resources important for their welfare, or a combination of both.
  - What is the welfare status of the roaming population and how widespread are welfare problems?
  - What is the welfare status of owned animals and how widespread are welfare problems? Do owners provide their pets with good welfare?
  - How is the welfare status of the animals affected by the current control measures?
  - What are the survival rates of different types or age groups of the animals in question? Shorter than average survival rates could suggest poor welfare.
- 3) What is currently being done for population control and why? Understanding what is already being done can allow current resources and control measures to be improved and built upon. This helps to ensure that any new interventions will not conflict with current ones.
- 4) Whose responsibility is it to control the roaming population? This usually falls under the purview of local government.

- 5) What relevant legislation exists? Any measures taken must fit within the legal framework of the area.

The information above is not a complete list, but an attempt to highlight key areas of importance. It is essential that all relevant stakeholders are consulted during this process and representation should be sought from everyone who is affected by the population issue(s). Wherever possible, an equitable approach should also be used; not only should people be consulted, but their views taken into consideration and their input used to design and drive the future intervention. This will encourage 'buy-in' from the stakeholders and will inevitably improve the success of the program. It is necessary to listen to the concerns and opinions of the local community and local authority because addressing these will help ensure the sustainability of the project.

### **Data Collection**

Data can be collected in a variety of different ways, depending on the information you want to acquire. Some useful methods include:

- Household surveys, either door to door or by telephone can be used to gather data on all aspects of pet ownership
- Focus groups and informal interviews can be used to explore the subject area from a range of different perspectives, so it is important to ensure that a good representation of the public is included.
- Indicator counts are simply a count that will indicate whether the number of animals in an area increases or decreases over a period of time.
- Mark-resight methods is where animals can be marked (or otherwise identified) and detected later by sighting in order to estimate population size and survival rates.

### **Committee Formation**

Ideally, it will be the duty of the local government authority to bring together stakeholders for consultation. However, if they are unwilling or unable to do this, anyone can create a working group themselves and relay the findings to the relevant authorities. The following is a list of possible stakeholders to be consulted:

- Government - usually local, but provincial and/or federal governments may also be applicable for policy and legislation.
- Veterinary community – national governing body, veterinary professional association, private practitioners, students.
- Animal welfare community – local, national and international organizations working in animal welfare and human health. Includes animal sheltering facilities or foster-based organizations.
- Academic communities – can provide experience in animal behaviour, veterinary science, sociology, ecology and epidemiology.
- Educators – can develop and provide curriculum on key issues.
- Local media – can provide an outlet for education, publicity and local support.

- Local community leaders/representatives and residents– both pet owners and non-owners.

The following is an outline that can be used to achieve stakeholder involvement. The process can be adapted to the size of the initiative.

- 1) Create a working group of people with an interest in and responsibility for local population management. This group would be tasked with designing and carrying out the initial data collection and assessment of the local population(s) in question.
- 2) Following an initial assessment, this working group can be developed into a formal committee with representation from each relevant stakeholder. The committee should have terms of reference, a list of membership and a role for members, a commitment to regular meetings, updates of an action plan and a clear aim.
- 3) Each member of the committee is responsible for representing the needs of their stakeholders with regards to population management. For example, the local public health authority might require control of zoonotic disease; the local animal shelter might require an improvement in welfare, and the municipal government might require an increase in pet licensing. A set of objectives can be drafted based on the data produced by the initial assessment and the needs of each stakeholder. The plan can form with clear understanding of the aims and what will be seen as success or failure by each stakeholder.
- 4) The financial commitment required to make the program successful, both in the short and long term, should be discussed and agreed by the committee.
- 5) The responsibility of each committee member needs to be made clear. Once the program is launched, regular meetings will be required to update on progress and discuss the results of monitoring and evaluation and discuss any changes needed.

### **Program Implementation**

Program implementation should be fairly straightforward if priorities and goals have been chosen sensibly and the design stage is carried out in detail. This stage may require phases, using smaller pilot areas, which are monitored carefully to ensure any problems are dealt with prior to a complete launch. The initial stages should not be rushed into as they provide a good opportunity to observe closely and improve progress in the early phases.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Once underway, it will be necessary to monitor the project's progress and evaluate its effectiveness. This is necessary to improve performance by highlighting problems and successes of interventions for accountability as well as to demonstrate that the program is achieving its aims.

Monitoring is a continuous process to verify the project is going to plan and allows for regular adjustments. Evaluation is a periodic review, carried out at specific targets to confirm the program is having the desired impact effect. Evaluation should also be used as the basis for decisions regarding future investment and continuation of the project. Both monitoring and evaluation involve the measurement of indicators selected at the design stage because they reflect important elements of the program at different stages.

Choosing appropriate indicators, with regard to their ability to reflect the changes that need to be measured is vital to the success of this stage. In order to choose these indicators it is essential to have a clear plan of what the program is setting out to achieve and why; and how the intervention will accomplish this.

Ideally monitoring and evaluation will be approached in a manner where all relevant stakeholders are consulted and involved in making recommendations. It is also important to remain open-minded as things may change contrary to expectations. The exposure of problems or failures should be seen as opportunities for improvement, rather than mistakes requiring justification. The concept of monitoring and evaluation is not complex, but there are many decisions to be made regarding what to measure, how this is to be done and how the results should be analysed and used.

## **Resources**

Resources Compendium: A Municipal Approach to Community Cats. A Guide from the Sustainable Jersey Animals in the Community Task Force  
<https://www.cditraining.org/Links/C.%20Resource%20Compendium.pdf> from [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com). (2014).

Cats in Canada 2017: A Five-Year Review of Cat Overpopulation.  
[https://www.humanecanada.ca/cats\\_in\\_canada\\_2017](https://www.humanecanada.ca/cats_in_canada_2017) from [www.humanecanada.ca](http://www.humanecanada.ca). (2018).

Managing Community Cats; A Guide for Municipal Leaders  
[https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/content/ca\\_community\\_cat\\_guide\\_updates\\_6\\_15\\_lowres\\_final.pdf](https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/content/ca_community_cat_guide_updates_6_15_lowres_final.pdf) from [www.animalsheltering.org](http://www.animalsheltering.org). (2014).

Humane Dog Management  
[https://www.worldanimalprotection.org/sites/default/files/int\\_files/humane-dog-management.pdf](https://www.worldanimalprotection.org/sites/default/files/int_files/humane-dog-management.pdf) from [www.worldanimalprotection.org](http://www.worldanimalprotection.org). (2015).

New Zealand National Cat Management Strategy Discussion Paper  
<http://www.nzcac.org.nz/images/downloads/nz-national-cat-management-strategy-discussion-paper.pdf> from [www.nzcac.org.nz](http://www.nzcac.org.nz). (2017).

ISFM Guidelines on Population Management and Welfare of Unowned Domestic Cats (*Felis catus*). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098612X13500431> from Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, 15(9), 811–817. Sparkes, A. H., Bessant, C., Cope, K., H Ellis, S. L., Finka, L., Halls, V., ... Yeates, J. (2013).

A Municipal Approach to a Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate & Manage Program

[http://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Grants\\_and\\_Resources/Past\\_Webinars\\_\\_T\\_rainings/2014/Animals\\_in\\_the\\_Community\\_and\\_Public\\_Health\\_\\_A\\_Municipal\\_Approach/AIC\\_Muni\\_Appr\\_to\\_TNVM.pdf](http://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Grants_and_Resources/Past_Webinars__T_rainings/2014/Animals_in_the_Community_and_Public_Health__A_Municipal_Approach/AIC_Muni_Appr_to_TNVM.pdf) from [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com). (2014).

S/N Program Community Assessment

[https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/asna\\_community\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/asna_community_assessment.pdf) from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org). (2018).

Community TNR Tactics and Tools

<https://www.petsmartcharities.org/pro/community-tnr-tactics-and-tools> from [www.petsmartcharities.org](http://www.petsmartcharities.org). (2014).

TNR and Targeting

[http://support.petsmartcharities.org/site/DocServer/Targeted\\_TNR\\_RW\\_Summit\\_v3.pdf?docID=1402](http://support.petsmartcharities.org/site/DocServer/Targeted_TNR_RW_Summit_v3.pdf?docID=1402) from [www.petsmartcharities.org](http://www.petsmartcharities.org). (2015).

Grassroots Mobilization

[https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/Implementing%20a%20Community%20TNR%20Program\\_Kortis\\_Bryan\\_4.pdf](https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/Implementing%20a%20Community%20TNR%20Program_Kortis_Bryan_4.pdf) from [www.animalsheltering.org](http://www.animalsheltering.org). (2015).

Companion Animal Management Plan

<https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/resource-centre/companion-animal-management-plan> from [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com). (2014).

Surveying Roaming Dog Populations: Guidelines on Methodology

<http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Surveying%20roaming%20dog%20populations%20-%20guidelines%20on%20methodology.pdf> from <http://www.icam-coalition.org>. (2008).

Persuading Municipal Officials to go with TNR

[https://www.maddiesfund.org/assets/documents/Institute/Persuading%20Municipal%20Officials\\_Rethinking%20the%20Cat\\_06-15.pdf](https://www.maddiesfund.org/assets/documents/Institute/Persuading%20Municipal%20Officials_Rethinking%20the%20Cat_06-15.pdf) from [www.maddiesfund.org](http://www.maddiesfund.org). (2015).

Stakeholder Engagement: Why is it important for Humane and Sustainable Dog and Cat Management?

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/ifaw-pantheon/sites/default/files/legacy/Stakeholder%20engagement.pdf> from [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org). (2013).

## Legislation

Public health and safety are fundamental concerns for every municipality. Incidents involving companion animal overpopulation or dangerous companion animals are becoming commonplace and are creating expectations for local governments to address these issues. Animal welfare agencies such as rescues and shelters are being overwhelmed by the demands being put on them by municipalities that have not taken responsibility for the animals within their jurisdiction. Municipalities have a responsibility to address the root causes of animal-related issues in their communities. Some pet owners are unaware or neglectful of their responsibilities to their pets or allow their pets to annoy their neighbours or harass wild animals that share the environment. This can result in dog bites, threats to people or animals, damage or contamination of property, pet overpopulation, abuse or neglect of animals and other consequences. The solution involves effective legislation and education that encourages responsible pet ownership.

In addition to the benefits of public safety and satisfaction, practical and progressive animal control bylaws should be cost effective for the municipality. Irresponsible pet owners cost taxpayer's money, and these costs can be offset by licensing fees, fines for bylaw offenders and other regulations that encourage responsible pet ownership.

Animal control should be a municipal responsibility and be governed by municipal bylaw. Municipalities may enact bylaws respecting wild and domestic animals and activities in relation to them. This provides those municipalities with the ability to regulate or prohibit a class or classes of animals within the municipality. There are provisions respecting dangerous animals in *The Municipalities Act*, which applies to municipalities other than cities and northern municipalities.

Municipalities may implement effective bylaws regulating companion animals in their jurisdictions. These bylaws can include:

- Animal control, including language to address dangerous dogs, exotic animals, animal licensing and identification, urban livestock, livestock protection, hoarding, community cat colonies and basic standards of animal care.
- Waste and attractant management, to address unintentional feeding of wildlife or companion animals.
- Business licensing, including licensing standards for animal breeders, boarders, service providers and pet stores.

## Resources

The Animal Protection Act 2018

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/english/Chapters/2018/A21-2.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (2018).

The Municipalities Act

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/M36-1.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (2018).

The Municipalities Regulations

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/M36-1.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (2018).

The Cities Act

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/english/Statutes/Statutes/c11-1.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (2018).

The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/N5-2.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (2018).

The Dangerous Dogs Control (Northern Saskatchewan) Regulations

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/English/Regulations/Repealed/N5-1R9.pdf> from [www.publications.gov.sk.ca](http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca). (1996).

City of Regina Bylaw No. 2009-44 <http://open.regina.ca/dataset/9ad4024f-9baf-4878-acf1-03eeb732aefd/resource/456d2b6e-6442-4229-b225-595398856270/download/2009-44c16.pdf> from [www.regina.ca](http://www.regina.ca). (2016).

*This information is not a substitute for legislation dealing with animal control. It is advisable to consult a solicitor on more complex situations. Please ensure the legislation you are referring to is the most up to date version.*

An Enlightened Approach to Companion Animal Control for Canadian Municipalities.

<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/an-enlightened-approach-to-companion-animal-control-for-canadian-municipalities>

New Model Animal Responsibility Bylaws

<https://spca.bc.ca/programs-services/working-for-better-laws/model-municipal-bylaws/>.

Available on request from [www.sPCA.bc.ca](http://www.sPCA.bc.ca). (2017).

Sample Municipal Bylaw Regulating the Keeping and Controlling of Companion Animals

<http://www.ncac-cnac.ca/policies%20and%20positions%20-%20ncac%20sample%20bylaw%20eng.june%202007.pdf> from [www.ncac-cnac.ca](http://www.ncac-cnac.ca). (2007).

Reducing the Impact of Cats on Birds and Wildlife. Retrieved from

[https://www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca/PDF\\_docs/CatsBirds/SPGuide\\_ReducingImpactCatsBirdsWildlife2016.pdf](https://www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca/PDF_docs/CatsBirds/SPGuide_ReducingImpactCatsBirdsWildlife2016.pdf) from [www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca](http://www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca). (2010).

For more information on responsible pet ownership practices and legislation regarding control of dangerous animals and your municipality's animal control bylaws please contact your municipal office.

## Education

Education is the most important component of a comprehensive approach to management, as human behaviour is a tremendously influential factor in companion animal issues. Encouraging responsible and rewarding human-animal relationships will lead to an improvement in animal welfare as well as a reduction in many of the sources of roaming animals. The owned animal population may be found to be a significant source of roaming animals and may suffer from many preventable welfare problems, and human behaviour towards these animals will be the driving force behind these problems. Public education to increase awareness of companion animal issues and an impact on animal welfare will be necessary for engaging community involvement. However, there may be key specific education messages that are important to highlight at different stages of a particular program. For example, in a cat population program, you may focus on the realistic expectations of cat ownership, while explaining the implications of feeding free roaming cats without assuming ownership for them.

Strategies should focus on supporting responsible pet ownership and on reducing the roaming population, with the aim of decreasing the incidence of these animals transitioning from owned to semi owned or unowned and maximizing the transition of these animals into owned pets.

Several issues need to be considered when using this component:

- Education initiatives should be developed in coordination with the local education authorities and carried out by trained professionals. Development of key messages is an important first step and may be best achieved through multi-stakeholder consultations. Curriculum development can be based upon these key messages. These messages should be tested for their effectiveness and reviewed on a regular basis. All stakeholders can advise on content but delivery should be carried out with skilled support.
- It is important to engage all potential sources of education to ensure that messages are kept consistent.
  - Ideally this should include animal welfare groups, the veterinary profession, schools, enforcement bodies, local government and the media (including animal-focused media groups).
- Education should be tailored carefully to your target audience as different methods will be required for different ages and cultures. It is important to understand the most effective ways of communicating to each target audience. Educational messages can be communicated in many ways, including:
  - formal seminars and lessons in schools
  - leaflets and brochures provided to targeted audiences
  - awareness in the general public through the press, billboards, radio and TV
  - directly engaging people in discussions as part of community-based programming

- Keep educational messaging consistent. The interventions should encourage responsible and rewarding human-animal interactions. For example, demonstrating respectful and careful handling of animals will help to encourage empathetic and respectful attitudes in the local population.
- It can take time for the impact of education on population management to become evident, so methods of monitoring and evaluating its impact need to incorporate both short-term and long-term indicators. The impact can be considered on three levels: the acquisition of knowledge and skills; changes in attitudes; and resultant behaviour change.

Attitudes towards companion animals also need to be explored within communities before the educational aspects on population control can be devised. If negative attitudes towards specific animals exist, they will reduce the likelihood of education programs, and subsequent management programs succeeding, especially if population stability as opposed to reduction is the intention. It is a good idea to engage religious representatives and community leaders early in the process, to explore how religious or cultural understanding could hinder or support potential educational efforts.

Religion and culture play an important role in people's attitudes and beliefs. There may be a belief that sterilization will cause undesirable behavioural changes, that sterilization is a form of mutilation or that to deprive an animal of the ability to reproduce is an unacceptable infringement of its rights. Religious and cultural attitudes must be explored and addressed with sensitivity and understanding if they need to be challenged for the benefit of animal welfare.

It may be possible to address these beliefs with education to change behavioural outcomes. For example, a belief that sterilization will cause negative behavioural changes in an animal can be addressed through education and examples of sterilized animals in the community, so encouraging owners to seek sterilization for their pets.

### **Resources**

Pets for Life Community Outreach Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.animalsheltering.org/sites/default/files/content/PetsForLifeCommunityOutreachToolkit.pdf> from [www.animalsheltering.org](http://www.animalsheltering.org). (2014).

## Controlling Access to Resources

One of the most noteworthy and controllable aspects affecting companion animal population size is their access to resources. Roaming cats and/or dogs rely on food and shelter provided intentionally or unintentionally by people. Food sources include garbage dumps, household garbage, and public garbage bins. Well-meaning households and individuals deliberately feeding animals that they view as stray or being in need, also affect population sizes. The extent to which an animal relies on the resources available on public property for survival will depend on the level of care provided by its owner.

Shelters include structures such as barns, sheds, garages, alleyways, vacant lots, abandoned buildings, warehouses, parks and backyards. Properties with junk and debris lying about provide multiple areas in which to hide. An animal's survival and reproductive success, which includes survival of offspring, frequently depends on access to these human provided sources of food and shelter. A well fed stray animal is healthy enough to reproduce and potentially have healthy offspring.

The intervention of reducing access to resources should not be used alone. For those animals identified as being dependent on public property resources for survival, changes to the access to these resources should be done in step with reducing the population or by making alternative provisions for those animals.

In some situations, the main food source will be food provided directly by humans through deliberate feeding. The motivation for feeding will vary between geographical areas and between individuals and this must be understood and taken into consideration if attempting to influence human feeding behaviour. Education will play an important role in influencing this behaviour. Some municipalities have taken steps to institute feeding bans, or to legislate ownership of these "stray" animals.

The key message and associated education should emphasize the importance of sterilizing animals. To feed other owned, semi-owned, homeless or feral animals which are not sterilized directly contributes to the overpopulation issue and in turn, causes the suffering and death of animals. The aim is to empower people feeding other animals to take the next steps in providing care, which includes checking the animal for a tattoo/microchip, spaying/neutering and rehoming, practicing TNR or surrendering to a local organization.

## Identification and Registration

Companion animals should have at least one form of permanent identification. Ideally, all cats and dogs would have a microchip which is registered in a database. Additionally, non-permanent forms of ID such as pet ID tags on collars are encouraged. Companion animals with ID are much more easily returned to their owners and multiple forms of ID increase the chance of a successful return of the animal. There are a variety of types of identification including permanent and non-permanent methods.

### Permanent Identification

Permanent types of identification commonly available to pet owners are microchips or tattoos. While these can be used to locate the owner of a lost pet, they require the use of a database and third party to retrieve the owner's information. Their primary function is to serve as permanent identification and concrete proof of ownership. These are helpful as a backup method to identify an animal in case they have lost their collar or tag.

#### 1) Microchips

Microchips are a small implant, about the size of a grain of rice, embedded under the skin of an animal using a large needle. The procedure is minimally painful and can be performed during a routine vet visit. The chip contains a unique series of numbers that act as a serial number specific to that animal. A scanner is required to display the unique identifying code which can be traced back to the owner with the use of a database provided by the chip company. Most vet clinics and animal shelters have scanners and can scan found animals to assist with owner identification.

When an animal is scanned at a vet office or animal shelter, the owner information can be verified. Thereby, a finder can ensure they are returning the animal to the rightful owner. Microchips provide irrefutable proof of ownership and cannot be removed.

Microchip Pros:

- Long lasting, permanent ID
- Can be inserted without sedation
- Usually comes with a tag indicating the animal is microchipped (Microchips can migrate from their injection site. A microchip tag gives the message that it is there and may have migrated).

Microchip Cons:

- Require a chip scanner and database to contact owner

#### 2) Tattoos

In the past, tattoos were commonly used by vet offices, animal shelters, rescue groups, and breeders to track and identify animals. Tattoo popularity has declined as more

people choose to use microchips instead. They do still serve the purpose of permanent identification. If an animal with a tattoo is found, the tattoo can be traced to the vet clinic that created it, who in turn can contact the owner of the animal.

Tattoo Pros:

- One time application/permanent ID
- Readable by anyone (without the use of technology) if animal is not fractious or aggressive

Tattoo Cons:

- Hidden by hair or fade over time making them difficult to read
- Requires the animal to be sedated to tattoo
- Unreadable if animal is fractious or aggressive
- Need use of database to track to the owner

### **Non-Permanent Identification**

Microchips and tattoos are an excellent form of permanent ID, should an animal become lost without a collar or tags on. However, ID tags provide instant access to an owner's contact information. They do not require any third-party database for contact, so it is often the quickest and most effective method in reuniting pets with owners.

#### 1) Collar & ID Tag

A standard collar represents a worldwide, recognized symbol for an "owned" animal. Coupled with the owner's information attached with a tag it is a powerful reunion tool for lost pets and their owners.

ID Tags Pros:

- Provides instant identification of a pet
- ID tags are easily readable by anyone without the use of technology
- They are readily available, inexpensive, and fully customizable

ID Tags Cons:

- Potential safety risk as they can become hooked or caught
- Can become detached and lost
- Several tags together can become bulky and can be noisy from the jingle of metal on metal

Ideally, a pet should wear a collar with ID all the time. ID tags have a limited amount of space available to include important information. At a minimum, the tag should include:

- Pet's name
- One or two (current) phone numbers

- A personal message like “I am microchipped” or “Call my mom” or “I’m friendly”
- Special needs (Medical condition or treatments)

One single method of identification, whether it be a tag, customized collar, tattoo, or microchip is good, but a combination of two or more is better. Each has their unique benefits, but their drawbacks are relatively minor compared to not having a pet returned due to lack of identification. Identification is only as good as the information provided and should always be up to date.

## 2) Registration

Typically, pet registration requirements are dictated by the municipality, in conjunction with any associated pet bylaws. A licencing program is commonly used for the registration of a pet owner. Usually a licence identifying number is issued to the owner, along with a tag bearing the identifier and a contact number for the registering organization. If a stray pet is found with the tag, a person can call the registering organization to get current contact information for the animal’s owner.

Licensing may be used when certain criteria have to be fulfilled prior to pet ownership and might require additional actions on the owner's part, such as ensuring that the animal is microchipped, has a current rabies vaccination and/or is spayed/neutered.

In many jurisdictions a fee must be paid. Registration or licensing fees can be charged (a one-time fee or payment each year) in order to provide funds for other areas of the management program. Although care needs to be taken to balance potential income against enforcement, if fees are too high owners may try to avoid registration. Differential fee scales can be used as an incentive for sterilization, encouraging owners to keep only a small number of animals and discouraging breeding or hoarding. Licences typically must be renewed annually.

Mandatory registration and identification can help the practical problems faced by impound facilities and shelters. When a stray animal is quickly identified, it can be returned to its owner without delay. If not identified, it is by definition ‘un-owned’ and the facility can implement its policies without the delay of waiting for an owner to come forward.

The most effective way of clearly connecting an owner with his or her animal is to use registration and identification together. This should encourage a sense of responsibility in the owner as the animal becomes identifiable as his/her own.

Registration/identification is an important tool for reuniting lost animals with owners and can be a strong foundation for enforcement of legislation (including abandonment legislation and mandatory regular rabies vaccinations).

Furthermore, developing communication, education and advocacy messaging that urges guardians to have their animals properly identified is encouraged. It is also encouraged

for municipalities to enact bylaws that make companion animal identification mandatory and to hold low-cost microchip clinics to make ID accessible to all.

## **References**

A Municipal Approach to a Self-Sustaining Community Animal Welfare & Enhanced License Compliance Program

<http://www.njlbha.org/Links/A.%20%20Enhanced%20License%20Compliance.pdf> from [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com). (2014).

Webinar: How are lost pets found?

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20130905/how-are-lost-pets-found> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org).

## Sterilization and Contraception

The control of reproduction is fundamental to any population management plan. Sterilization reduces or eliminates nuisance behaviours (roaming, aggression, fighting, “packing up” in dogs or urine spraying in cats) associated with reproduction and also promotes better welfare of the animal. Most importantly, sterilization eliminates unwanted litters.

The control of reproduction through permanent sterilization or temporary contraception can be achieved through three main methods.

- 1) **Surgical (Spay/Neuter):** The removal of reproductive organs under general anesthetic ensures permanent sterilization and can significantly reduce sexual behaviour (especially if performed early in an animal’s development). Surgery may be costly initially but is a permanent solution and more cost efficient over time. It requires trained veterinarians, an infrastructure and equipment. Spay/Neuter is commonly practiced after six months of age. However, the practice of pediatric spays and neuters is becoming more commonplace, specifically by animal sheltering organizations. Pediatric spay and neuter will prevent the accidental litters born at the onset of puberty. In addition, it allows animal sheltering organizations to complete the procedure prior to adoption and ensure 100% compliance rates.
- 2) **Chemical sterilization and contraception:** Currently, no methods of chemical sterilization or contraception are guaranteed to be effective or without risk when used on roaming unmonitored dogs or cats. However, this is an active area of research and effective and suitable chemical sterilants for mass reproductive control are expected in the future. These methods are still quite limited by the cost, the fact that they may need to be repeated and by the welfare problems associated with certain chemicals.
- 3) **Physical contraception through the isolation of females in estrus (heat) from males:** Owners can be educated to recognize the signs of a female dog coming into estrus and can plan to ensure the female is isolated from males during this period. Attention must be paid to the welfare of both the female and males when planning how to isolate the female. Sexual behaviour can become challenging as males will try to gain access to females, however, isolation requires minimal cost to achieve and does not require surgical intervention.

When using tools for sterilization and contraception it is important to consider their sustainability – population management is a permanent challenge so it is vital that sustainability is considered throughout the design of the intervention. For example, providing free or low-cost services with no explanation of the full costs may give pet owners an unrealistic expectation of the true cost of veterinary care.

It is also important within a comprehensive management program to address all the issues identified as impacting on a specific population. For example, if the owned cat population is identified as a significant source of unwanted kittens, a TNR intervention alone will not efficiently

impact the actual source, and a sterilization intervention focused on owned cats, preferably including financial contributions from the owners themselves, should be included. Voluntary, incentive-based measures may encourage owners to have their animals sterilized and identified (e.g. reducing the cost of sterilization if the animal is microchipped at same time).

A local veterinary infrastructure is a requirement for the general health and welfare of owned animals, so if local, private veterinarians could provide sterilization services it is advisable to work to build up and incorporate this capacity rather than to exclude and alienate it. This may require the support of a growing 'market' for companion animal sterilization services in the local community by advocating the benefits of sterilization and helping to support part of the costs, as well as supporting the development of the service itself through training.

There can be a variety of barriers to spay/neuter services; a financial barrier is the most obvious, but location of the services and transportation can also be a barrier.

Options to address financial barriers:

1) *Direct Provision of Services*

Offer low or no-cost spay/neuter services directly to the public. This is a good option if funding is available. Human resources are usually the most expensive item in the operating budget of a spay/neuter clinic. Capital funding required to build or purchase a clinic can also be high, but there are alternatives. Rental space can be a good option because the location can be chosen based on accessibility to the target public demographic. There is a strong rationale to put a focus on spay/neuter with a goal of reducing operating expenses in the future by reducing animal intake.

2) *Spay/Neuter Program Partnership with Local Veterinarians*

It may not be possible to offer services directly through an animal welfare agency. It may not even make sense, especially in a smaller or rural community. Offering low or no cost services through partnerships is another program model. This kind of a program can be started by contacting local veterinary clinics and encouraging them to meet to discuss strategies. Strategies could include one or a combination of the following:

- a. Veterinarians agree to donate a certain number of surgeries per year to give back to their community.
- b. Agencies involved supplement the cost of the surgeries by supplying the veterinarians with funds
- c. Agencies involved offer marketing opportunities to the veterinarians in exchange for services.
- d. Veterinarians can seek mentorship from organizations that are currently using high volume techniques.

### 3) *Funding Models*

A combination of several funding models can be considered:

- Grant Application: Granting bodies can be approached regarding the attainment of grant funding opportunities.
- Corporate Sponsorships: Corporations will pay sponsorship fees in exchange for marketing opportunities.
- Donations: A spay/neuter fund can be set up to assist with the capital expense and yearly operations budget. Collection of donations to support services is the typical funding model for animal welfare organizations.
- Fees for Service: Many pet owners in the targeted demographic may not be able to pay any fee to have their pet spayed/neutered. However, a “pay what you can” program can help to offset some costs or a very low fee can be implemented with encouragement to pay more if possible.
- High Volume Spay/Neuter Techniques: Although this is not a funding model, using high-volume techniques greatly increases the number of surgeries that can be performed for almost the same amount in expenses.

#### Overcoming Transportation Barriers

- 1) Agencies can fund the transportation of pets to a stationary spay/neuter clinic.
- 2) Agencies can enlist help from volunteers to transport pets to a stationary spay/neuter clinic
- 3) Use of a mobile or mash-style spay/neuter clinic. Mobile or mash-style clinics are ideal as they allow agencies to go to the community to provide service and transportation of the pet to a spay/neuter clinic becomes unnecessary.

#### Resources

Humane Canada Accessible Spay and Neuter Tool-Kit  
[https://www.humanecanada.ca/spay\\_and\\_neuter\\_tool\\_kit](https://www.humanecanada.ca/spay_and_neuter_tool_kit)

Outdoor Cats in our Community. Communities Promoting Animal Welfare NJ  
[www.cpawnj.org](http://www.cpawnj.org).

Save Lives with Feral Freedom  
<http://815678169699-bfas-files.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Feral-Freedom-Guide.pdf> from [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org). (2014).

Implementing a Community Trap Neuter Release Program  
<https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/implementing-trap-neuter-return-program.pdf> from [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org). (2010).

Neighborhood Cats TNR Handbook

<https://www.neighborhoodcats.org/resources/books-videos-more> from [www.neighborhoodcats.org](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org). (2016).

Webinar: Spay/Neuter: What You Need to Succeed

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20130716/spayneuter> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org). (2013).

## Vaccination, Zoonoses and Public Health

Dog or cat populations that are allowed to roam and reproduce freely have a significant human health component. Zoonoses are diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans, such as Rabies. Roaming, unvaccinated animals are at the highest risk of infection.

It is necessary to reduce the risk a particular animal population presents to human health and to the health of other animals. Zoonotic diseases are often the primary cause for concern with regard to roaming animal populations, particularly with local governments who have a responsibility for public health. Because rabies is a fatal disease, with dogs being the most common vector for transmission to humans, rabies control is often a major motive for dog population management.

Several issues need to be considered when exploring these factors. The importance of zoonotic control should not be played down to relevant stakeholders, such as public health officials. It is important to explore ways that effective zoonotic control can be achieved while remaining neutral, or even positive, towards animal welfare. Zoonoses are a concern for the general public. Controlling zoonoses and providing tangible evidence of this control to the public may help to increase confidence in a management plan. In some situations it may be advisable to introduce improved zoonotic control to restore public confidence first and then follow with other elements of companion animal population management, such as sterilization or improved health care. However, a comprehensive program of population management including simultaneous zoonotic control is the ideal option.

Preventative veterinary treatments should be provided to protect the health and welfare of companion animals and to reduce the incidence of zoonotic diseases. These treatments should be offered in conjunction with education about the other aspects of responsible ownership. Local veterinary communities should be consulted regarding the prevalence and distribution of infectious diseases and parasite infestations, so that a preventative treatment protocol can be tailored to a particular area, local circumstance and level of need.

Regular vaccination and parasite control is likely to improve the health of animals, and can lead to increased reproductive success. Therefore, a sterilization intervention must be offered in conjunction with any preventative treatment provision. As with sterilization, preventative treatments can be used to encourage owners to accept the value of general veterinary treatment and population management tools. Wherever possible, the local veterinary infrastructure should be involved in providing preventative treatments, to ensure ease of access and continuity of treatment in the long term.

In any location where expert opinion advises rabies control is necessary or desirable, healthy animals should be vaccinated at least once. A booster at one year followed by boosters every one to three years or as required by local ordinance and the vaccine manufacturer, is indicated.

Healthy cats are commonly vaccinated against five commonly encountered diseases:

- 1) Feline Herpes Virus (Rhinotracheitis)
- 2) Feline Calicivirus
- 3) Feline Parvoviral Enteritis (Feline Panleukopenia or feline distemper)
- 4) Feline Leukemia
- 5) Rabies

Healthy dogs are commonly vaccinated against six commonly encountered diseases:

- 1) Canine Distemper
- 2) Canine Parvovirus
- 3) Canine Adenovirus Type 2
- 4) Canine Parainfluenza Virus
- 5) Bordetella Bronchiseptica
- 6) Rabies

Animals managed by TNR or similar interventions may not receive more than one vaccination, due to the logistical problems of retrapping at a later date, but this may be sufficient to provide immunity for their lifespan, assuming a shorter lifespan and if a vaccine providing several years of immunity is available and used.

It is important to remember that vaccination results in a herd immunity effect, which is the point at which the proportion of immune individuals in the group is so high that the disease cannot spread through the population.

### Parasite control

Parasitism is the most common transmissible problem of companion animals. Common parasites include fleas, ear mites, ticks, intestinal ascarids (roundworm such as *Toxocara cati*), cestodes (tapeworms such as *Dipylidium caninum* and *Taenia taeniaeformis*) and hookworms (*Ancylostoma* and *Uncinaria* spp).

The choice of anti-parasitic product will depend on the parasites to be treated, the route of administration that is possible, the availability and cost of the product and the characteristics of the local population.

### Public Health and “One Health”

One Health is the integrative effort of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, animals, and the environment. Together, the three make up the One Health triad, and the health of each is inextricably connected to the others in the triad. Understanding and addressing the health issues created at this intersection is the foundation for the concept of One Health. Veterinary medicine, public health and local government all play a critical role in the health of animals, humans, and the environment.

As the human population continues to increase and expand across our world, the interconnection of people, animals, and our environment becomes more significant and impactful. The importance of One Health is highlighted by many factors in our world today:

- The world's total population exceeded 7.7 billion people in 2019, and it continues to climb.
- As our population expands geographically, the contact between human and animal habitats increases, introducing the risk of exposure to new viruses, bacteria and other disease-causing pathogens.
- Advancing technologies and science-based evidence is increasing the awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the interdependency of the health of humans, animals, and the environment.
- The human-animal bond continues to grow throughout societies.
- It is estimated that at least 75% of emerging and re-emerging diseases are either zoonotic (spread between humans and animals) or vector-borne (carried from infected animals to others through insects).
- Vigilant protection of our water sources, food and feed supplies from food-borne diseases and contamination is critical for human and animal health.

## **Resources**

Rabies

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/diseases-and-conditions/rabies#how-rabies-is-spread> from [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca). (2018).

Community Cats and Public Health

<https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/community-cats-public-health.pdf> from [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org). (2017).

Webinar: Shelter Vaccination Protocols

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20141111/shelter-vaccination-protocols> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org). (2014).

Zoonoses-Shared Disease Agents of People and Pets

<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/zoonoses-shared-disease-agents-of-people-and-pets-animal-owners> from [www.canadianveterinarians.net](http://www.canadianveterinarians.net). (2016).

## Holding Facilities and Rehoming

For previously owned stray and abandoned animals, placing them into a new home with a new owner (rehoming or adoption) is an ideal welfare solution. However for many animals, including most feral and many street and community pets, confinement in a home or in a shelter facility is likely to cause unacceptable stress, and may pose potential health risks to humans through human-directed aggression. In such cases, alternatives such as TNR should be sought. Euthanasia may have to be considered to avoid long-term confinement if there are no available suitable options.

Where rehoming of animals is being undertaken, an organized approach is essential. This may include using a network of interim foster homes with well-trained caregivers, and/or a sheltering facility, and/or leaving the animal in place (with support) until an appropriate placement can be found.

The success of a rehoming/adoption intervention depends on the availability of holding facilities such as shelters or foster homes, and on the community's attitude towards adopting pets; if there is no past precedence of owners obtaining pets via adoption, the number of animals held will likely increase, leading to overcrowding and poor welfare. If negative ideas exist towards adoption, an educational intervention on the advantages of adopting should be in place before starting any population management program.

In many shelter situations, the potential number of animals entering greatly outweighs resources, space and the availability of new homes. Therefore, organizations should target resources appropriately to home as many suitable animals as possible with a minimum length of stay and adequate quality of life.

Organizations must understand the limits of their resources, and the capacity of any facility should not be exceeded in a manner that is detrimental to the quality of care provided and/or increases risks of disease and stress to animals already in the facility.

Where placement of an animal (regardless of its source) with an owner in a home is being considered, a safety assessment is critical. The welfare of the individual animal, the sustainability of the rehoming program, and human health and safety are compromised if an animal is placed in an inappropriate home. Alternatively, placing an inappropriate animal into a particular homing situation may also yield the same results.

When animals are rehomed, organizations have a responsibility to appropriately match the animal's temperament, behaviour, health and required lifestyle to the anticipated new environment and resources within it, so that welfare needs are met and the new owner is able to care for it.

Sheltering organizations should provide facilities that minimise stress and maximise biosecurity. Measures should be in place to ensure that animals remain healthy (physically and psychologically). This can be achieved through reduced length of stays, careful design of the facilities, adequate resources and careful management of the animals.

Sheltering organizations also have a responsibility to ensure that all animals are spayed or neutered before they are rehomed. To rehome animals without a guarantee that they will not breed is irresponsible and directly contributes to the overpopulation issue. These organizations also have a responsibility to provide animals in their care with appropriate preventive care (which may include vaccinations, parasite control and tattoo/microchipping) before they are rehomed.

Under any circumstance, long-term caging is not acceptable. Residence in a shelter facility should be for the shortest possible time, allowing for adequate assessment, treatment, etc. Long-term caging of animals or permanent confinement in a shelter facility is not acceptable.

Holding facilities should be managed to a high animal welfare standard, and be designed to meet the animals' needs while minimizing the risks of disease. Such facilities can be very expensive and time-consuming to manage, so adequate funds and personnel must be available to ensure their success. Awareness of the full costs required for appropriate facilities is extremely important. Facilities should also play an education role on responsible pet ownership within a community, in order to counteract any possible encouragement of abandonment they may represent. Owners of unwanted or problematic pets should be encouraged to consult professionals for advice and help, and to rehome their animals rather than abandoning them outdoors.

Policies should be written to cover important topics such as sterilization, rehoming, capacity and criteria for euthanasia. These should take into account the welfare of individual animals, the cost implications, the aims and objectives of the facility and the impact of the facility on the long-term management of the population. Protocols should be designed for each stage of shelter activities, from quarantine on arrival, to daily routines such as cleaning, feeding and exercise, to record keeping and rehoming practices.

The design of the centre should take into account the welfare needs of the animals and also consider public access, physical characteristics, services (such as drainage and water sources), potential noise disturbance, planning permission and potential for future expansion.

A network of foster homes may be an alternative to shelters, especially for very young or very old animals, those recovering from illness or injury, or those requiring behavioural rehabilitation.

## **Resources**

Guidelines for the design and management of animal shelters

<http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Shelter%20guidelines.pdf> from [www.icam-coalition.org](http://www.icam-coalition.org). (2008).

Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters

<https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf> from [www.sheltervet.org](http://www.sheltervet.org). (2010).

Webinar Series: ASV Shelter Guidelines

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar-series-asv-shelter-guidelines> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org).

Webinar: Shelter Intake Parts 1 and 2

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20170808/shelter-intake-1> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org) (2017).

Webinar: Shelter Sanitation Parts 1 and 2.

<https://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/20170711/shelter-sanitation-1> from [www.aspcapro.org](http://www.aspcapro.org).  
(2017).

## Euthanasia

Humane euthanasia is an appropriate welfare option for companion animals where significant and/or sustained physical or psychological suffering exists or is anticipated or when public health and/or safety are at risk. In a number of circumstances, humane euthanasia may be the most appropriate option for an individual animal, although that decision should never be taken lightly and alternative options for healthy and behaviourally sound animals should always be considered. Failure to administer euthanasia to an animal in distress is not humane, and may be subject to prosecution contingent upon existing animal welfare legislation.

The practice of euthanizing a large number of animals to prevent population growth (culling) is ineffective under most circumstances. In most situations where culls are used as a primary management tool, the absence of the existing animals simply attracts more animals, which move in and use the available resources. This is commonly referred to as the vacuum effect.

As part of all interventions, including TNR and sheltering facilities, euthanasia will always be required for animals that are suffering from an incurable illness, injury or behavioural problem that prevents them being rehomed safely, or for animals that are not coping with their environment and are suffering poor welfare as a result. In preparation for responding to these situations, every management plan should have an agreed upon and written euthanasia policy. Ultimately, a successful population management program should create a situation where these are the only occasions when euthanasia is required and all healthy animals can be found a good home or environment to live.

Only humane methods of euthanasia should be used and only skilled and knowledgeable people should perform euthanasia.

### **Resources**

AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf> from [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org). (2013).

The welfare basis for euthanasia of dogs and cats and policy development. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ifaw-pantheon/sites/default/files/legacy/ICAM%20Euthanasia%20Protocol.pdf> from [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org). (2011).

Euthanasia of Shelter Companion Animals. Retrieved from

[https://www.humanecanada.ca/euthanasia\\_of\\_shelter\\_companion\\_animals](https://www.humanecanada.ca/euthanasia_of_shelter_companion_animals) from [www.humanecanada.ca](http://www.humanecanada.ca). (2018).

## Conclusion

An animal's strongest advocate is you, and the people in its community. That's because you, as a citizen, have the power to influence your community and your legislators—especially on a local level. You do not need any prior animal or political experience to improve animal welfare in your community; all you need is determination and the willingness to use your voice to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.



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