FACTS ABOUT ANIMAL SHELTERING

How many animals enter animal shelters each year? And how many are euthanized?

The HSUS estimates that animal shelters care for 6-8 million dogs and cats every year in the United States, of whom approximately 3-4 million are euthanized. At this time, there is no central data reporting agency for animal shelters, so these numbers are estimates. In order to develop a more accurate picture of the problem, the Maui Humane Society has begun publishing its annual statistics, which are available on our website.

In the 1970s, American shelters euthanized 12-20 million dogs and cats, at a time when there were 67 million pets in homes. Today, shelters euthanize around 4 million animals, while there are more than 135 million dogs and cats in homes. This enormous decline in euthanasia numbers—from around 25 percent of American dogs and cats euthanized every year to about 3 percent—represents substantial progress. We will make still greater progress by working together to strike at the roots of animal overpopulation.

Why are there so many homeless animals on Maui?

Low adoption rates are one factor driving the high number of animals in shelters, but every year, millions of dogs and cats are relinquished by their owners—or rescued from the streets by field officers and private citizens—and brought to local shelters. These circumstances leave shelters and rescue groups with a large number of animals in need of homes.

To help reduce the number of homeless animals, The Maui Humane Society works to promote responsible pet ownership and to reduce pet overpopulation through public education, legislation, and SNARP, our spay/neuter assistance referral program.

How long are animals held at an animal shelter before being adopted or euthanized? What factors affect those decisions?

Maui Humane Society has no set time limit for holding an animal. Just as in the vast majority of shelters, decisions about adoption and euthanasia are based on factors that include the temperament and health of the animal, and the space and resources available to humanely house and properly care for the animal.

Some animal shelters take in strays, and many of those facilities have an established holding period for those animals to allow their owners a chance to find and claim them. This stray holding period is typically set by local or state law, so it will vary from one community to the next. Here on Maui, we have a five business day holding period for stray animals before they are put up for adoption.
Maui Humane Society strives to ensure that our animals remain healthy and are given every opportunity to find new homes. If an animal becomes sick, stressed, or exhibits challenging behavior, we take steps to treat these conditions when possible. We provide veterinary and behavioral assistance, and use responsible foster homes when available to get the animal into a less stressful environment.

However, if efforts to treat the illness or behavioral problem fail and the animal is not showing signs of recovery, some shelters may not have the resources to continue treatment and may not have access to a reputable rescue group or foster home. In some of these cases, euthanasia may be warranted.

**Why aren't all animal shelters no-kill shelters?**

Under Maui County contract, the Maui Humane Society is mandated to accept all animals brought to us. The HSUS believes there must be at least one animal shelter in every community that operates under this philosophy. Ending the euthanasia of homeless animals is a goal that all animal welfare organizations share.

But the reality is that shelters, with their limited space and finite resources, cannot achieve this goal without high levels of community support.

MHS focuses on the root of the homeless animal problem by educating pet owners, helping them deal with behavior problems and other issues so that they can keep their pets for life. We encourage spaying and neutering to reduce animal overpopulation, promote adoption from shelters and rescues, and seek to end the mass breeding of dogs in puppy mills and their sale in pet stores and on the Internet.

Good matchmaking and proactive adoption programs and help to reduce the euthanasia of homeless animals. We maintain the highest standards of animal care and all adopted animals are spayed and neutered.

You can make a difference! Support community-wide efforts to prevent overpopulation. Adopt your next companion animal from a shelter, have all your pets spayed or neutered, and be a responsible pet owner—protect your pets with current identification tags and don’t let them roam.

**How do I notify the correct authorities about animal abuse or neglect that I have witnessed?**

If you witness animal abuse or neglect, please contact the Maui Humane Society immediately by calling (808) 877-3680 ext. 29. Maui Humane Society field officers have the jurisdiction and capability to investigate and resolve these situations. They rely on concerned citizens to be their eyes and ears in the community and to report animal suffering. If you suspect dog-fighting, call Maui Police Department.
Facts about Animal Cruelty

What is animal cruelty?

Animal cruelty encompasses a range of behaviors harmful to animals, from neglect to malicious killing. Most cruelty investigated by MHS field officers is unintentional neglect that can be resolved through education.

Intentional cruelty can run the gamut from knowingly depriving an animal of food, water, shelter, socialization, or veterinary care to maliciously torturing, maiming, mutilating, or killing an animal.

Why is it a concern?

All animal cruelty is a concern because it is wrong to inflict suffering on any living creature. Intentional cruelty is a particular concern because it is a sign of psychological distress and often indicates that an individual either has already been a victim of violence or might be predisposed to committing acts of violence.

Why would anyone be cruel to animals?

There can be many reasons. Animal cruelty, like any other form of violence, is often committed by a person who feels powerless, unnoticed, or under the control of others. The motive may be to shock, threaten, intimidate, or offend others or to demonstrate rejection of society’s rules. Some who are cruel to animals copy acts they have seen or that have been done to them. Others see harming an animal as a safe way to get revenge against—or threaten—someone who cares about that animal.

Is there any evidence of a connection between animal cruelty and human violence?

Absolutely. Many studies in psychology, sociology, and criminology in the past 25 years have demonstrated that violent offenders frequently have childhood and adolescent histories of serious and repeated animal cruelty. The FBI has recognized the connection since the 1970s, when its analysis of the lives of serial killers suggested that most had killed or tortured animals as children.

Other research has shown consistent patterns of animal cruelty among perpetrators of other forms of violence, including child abuse, spousal abuse, and elder abuse. In fact, the American Psychiatric Association considers animal cruelty one of the diagnostic criteria of conduct disorder.

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**What happens when authorities prosecute an animal cruelty case?**

Depending on the severity of the case, those convicted of animal cruelty can be imprisoned. Appropriate sentencing can also include individual or family counseling, community service, placement in a diversion program, and a prohibition on owning or caring for animals.

It is rarely the goal of police to imprison a child for cruelty to animals. Law enforcement officers and judges recognize that cruelty to animals is one part of a complex problem. Sometimes, the official response to animal cruelty provides a family its first opportunity to get help.

**How many animals are victims of cruelty each year?**

Because there is no national reporting requirement for animal abuse, there is no way to track the number of animal cruelty cases that are filed or that make it to court each year. The idea of creating animal abuser registries, similar to sex abuser registries, has been advocated for a long time. The nation’s first such registry was established in Suffolk County, N.Y., in October 2010.

**What can I do to help fight animal cruelty?**

Be aware of the signs of animal cruelty and call Maui Humane Society at (808) 877-3680 ext. 29 to report animal cruelty. Provide us with as much detailed information as possible so that we can accurately assess the situation and better protect the animal from harm.
FACTS ABOUT FERAL CATS

What is the difference between a stray cat and a feral cat?

A stray cat is a pet cat who is lost or abandoned. Feral cats are the offspring of lost or abandoned pet cats or other feral cats who are not spayed or neutered. Stray cats are accustomed to contact with people and are tame, but feral cats are not accustomed to contact with people and are typically too fearful and wild to be handled. Whereas stray cats may be reunited with their families or adopted into new homes, feral cats do not easily adapt or may never adapt to living as pets in close contact with people. However, there are many things you can do to help improve the health and quality of life of feral cats.

Why are there feral cats? Where do they come from?

Feral cats are the offspring of lost or abandoned pet cats or other feral cats who are not spayed or neutered. Females can reproduce two to three times a year, and their kittens, if they survive, will become feral without early contact with people. Cats can become pregnant as early as 5 months of age, and the number of cats rapidly increases without intervention by caring people.

Where do feral cats live?

Feral cats typically live in a colony—a group of related cats. The colony occupies and defends a specific territory where food (a restaurant dumpster, a person who feeds them) and shelter (beneath a porch, in an abandoned building) are available. Since feral cats typically fear strangers, it is likely that people may not realize that feral cats are living nearby because the cats are rarely seen.

How do feral cats survive—find food, stay warm, etc.?

Many don't survive. If they do survive, their lives aren't easy without human caretakers. Females may become pregnant as young as 5 months of age and may have two to three litters a year. Being pregnant so young and so often, and having and nursing kittens, is even more stressful on female cats who are struggling to survive. More than half of the kittens are likely to die without human intervention. Males who roam and fight to find mates and defend their territories may be injured and transmit diseases to one another through bite wounds. Feral cats may find food in a restaurant dumpster or someone may feed them. They may find shelter from the elements beneath a porch or in an abandoned building. But often they are without a reliable source of food and adequate shelter.

Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage is a non-lethal strategy to reduce the number of feral cats and improve the quality of life for cats, birds, wildlife, and people.

What is Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM)?

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Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM) is a strategy for improving the lives of feral cats and reducing their numbers. At a minimum, feral cats who are TNRMed are spayed or neutered so they can no longer reproduce, vaccinated against rabies, and surgically ear-tipped on one ear (ear-tipping is the universally-recognized sign of a cat who has been TNRMed). Dedicated caretakers feed and provide shelter for TNRMed cats, monitor the TNRMed cats for sickness and remove new cats for TNRM if feral or possible adoption if tame.

Do people take care of feral cats? What do they do?

Many people see a roaming cat and start feeding the cat even though many communities have feeding bans meant to discourage feeding. Ideally, the person quickly does more to help the cat:

- If the cat is tame, the person should take steps to find the cat's owner. If unsuccessful, the person should take steps to find a permanent home for the cat.
- If the cat is feral, unapproachable and wary after several days of feeding, the person should find out if there are any groups in their community that are currently doing TNRM and consult one of the many resources to learn about Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM).

Once a cat or colony of cats has been TNRMed, a dedicated caretaker provides food, water and shelter, monitors the cats for sickness and removes new feral cats for TNRM or new tame cats for possible adoption. TNRM is a strategy that many dedicated caretakers pay for out of their own pockets to help improve the lives of feral cats and reduce their numbers. Without TNRM and a dedicated caretaker, the population of the colony would continue to increase.

Why can't animal shelters rescue feral cats?

Animal shelters already care for and try to find homes for thousands of lost, injured, abandoned and relinquished pet cats. Whether the shelter is an independent non-profit organization or is an animal care and control agency funded by the municipality, many do not have the resources to do TNRM.

Animal shelters that receive complaint calls or calls of concern from the public may attempt to humanely trap and remove feral cats. Or, they may provide information and loan traps to citizens interested in humanely trapping feral cats. Maui Humane Society works in conjunction with the Feline Foundation of Maui's TNRM program. To support TNRM, contact the Feline Foundation of Maui at (808) 891-1181.

Feral cats brought to the shelter, especially those who cannot be identified as members of a known TNRMed colony, are likely to be put down right away or after a mandatory holding period. It is difficult to accurately identify a feral cat without a holding period, yet safely caring for a feral cat in a typical shelter cage, is very stressful for a feral cat. In addition, if space is limited at the shelter, feral cats may be put down to make space for adoptable cats.

Would it be better if feral cats were euthanized?

Some people feel sorry for feral cats because of their difficult and dangerous life. Others are annoyed by the cats' behaviors and want the cats removed. But many people don't feel that the cats should be euthanized. Even if there were enough people and money to remove and euthanize feral cats, other feral
cats would move into the vacant territory to take advantage of the food source and shelter now made available. It's an endless cycle.

The alternative is Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage. When feral cats are TNRMed, their health improves because they no longer have kittens and fight over mates, and nuisance behaviors are greatly reduced or eliminated. The colony's dedicated caretaker provides food, water and shelter, watches over the health of the cats and removes any newcomers for TNRM (if feral) or adoption (if tame).

TNRM improves the quality of life for existing colonies, prevents the birth of more cats, and reduces the number of cats over time. Additionally, many groups that provide resources for TNRM have calculated that the costs associated with TNRM are considerably less than those associated with removal, shelter care, and euthanasia of feral cats.

**What are problems associated with unneutered/unspayed feral cats?**

A colony of unneutered/unspayed feral cats can produce a number of problems, including:

- a growing population of cats
- frequent and loud noise from fighting and mating behavior
- strong foul odors from unneutered male cats spraying to mark their territory
- flea infestations
- visible suffering from dying kittens and injured adults.

In addition, the shelters in a community with a large, unneutered feral cat population may experience:

- higher intake rates of cats into shelters due to the rescue of feral kittens and the capture of feral adults
- higher euthanasia rates for all cats due to the unadoptability of feral adults and the necessity to euthanize adoptable animals due to limited cage space
- higher animal control costs due to trapping efforts and/or costs associated with caring for and euthanizing feral cats
- a constant rate of nuisance complaints about feral cats.

**Why doesn't simply removing feral cats from an area work to reduce their numbers and nuisance behavior?**

There are many reasons why feral cat problems are rarely solved by efforts to trap and remove them. Feral cats live at a certain location because it offers food and shelter. If a colony is removed, some feral cats from surrounding colonies may move in to take advantage of the newly available resources. The cycle of reproduction and nuisance behavior begins all over again.

If all the cats in a colony are not trapped, then the ones left behind tend to have more kittens. In addition, more kittens will survive because there are fewer cats competing for the available food. The population will continue to increase until the level that can be supported by the available food and shelter is reached.

Other factors which usually make removing feral cats ineffective include:

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• the lack of cooperation of the cats' caretakers—the only people who really know the cats' numbers and patterns and who can control whether or not they're hungry enough to enter a baited trap
• the unwillingness of volunteers to trap cats who face an uncertain fate upon capture
• the lack of animal control resources available to accomplish this task
• the difficulty of catching all the cats in a colony
• the ongoing abandonment of unaltered pet cats who can also repopulate a vacated territory Trap and remove will only result in a temporary reduction in the numbers of feral cats in a given area.

Why don't feeding bans work to eliminate feral cats?

The logic behind bans against feeding feral cats is that if there is no food available, the cats will go away. This is not true. Feral cats are territorial animals who can survive for weeks without food and will not easily or quickly leave their territory to search for new food sources. Instead, they tend to move closer into human habitations as they grow hungrier and more desperate. Their malnourished condition will make them more susceptible to parasitic infestations, such as fleas, which they will spread into work places, garages, homes, etc., within their territory.

The cats will also continue to reproduce despite the effort to "starve them out," resulting in the visible deaths of many kittens. As a result, feeding bans, if enforced, tend to make the situation much worse instead of improving it. A second reason why feeding bans are rarely effective is that they are nearly impossible to enforce. Repeated experience has shown that people who care about the cats' welfare will go to great lengths, risking their homes, jobs and even their liberty, to feed starving animals. Someone determined to feed the cats will usually succeed without being detected, no matter the threatened penalties. In addition, there may be more than one feeder and other sources of food, including dumpsters, garbage cans, and other animals.

How does TNRM solve common complaints associated with feral cats?

• When feral cats are trapped, neutered and returned to their territory, they no longer reproduce
• The cessation of sexual activity eliminates the noise associated with mating behavior and dramatically reduces fighting and the noise it causes
• Neutered feral cats also roam much less and become less visible and less prone to injury from cars
• Foul odors are greatly reduced as well because neutered male cats no longer produce testosterone which, when they are unaltered, mixes with their urine and causes the strong, pungent smell of their spraying
• When the colony is then monitored by a caretaker who removes and/or TNRMs any newly arrived cats, the population stabilizes and gradually declines over time.

What can I do to help feral cats?

Helping feral cats can be very rewarding. There are many options for you to be involved; please contact the Feline Foundation of Maui for more information. If there one or more feral cats in your area that does not have a caretaker, you can become their caretaker. Feral cat caretakers practice Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage, feed, provide shelter, monitor the cats for any problems, trap new cats who arrive. If the new cats are feral, they are TNRMed; if they are kittens young enough to be socialized or tame lost or abandoned pet cats, they are evaluated for adoption.

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FACTS ABOUT CHAINS & TETHERS

What is meant by "chaining" or "tethering" dogs?

These terms refer to the practice of fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake, usually in the owner's backyard, as a means of keeping the animal under control. These terms do not refer to the periods when an animal is walked on a leash.

Is there a problem with continuous chaining or tethering?

Yes, the practice is both inhumane and a threat to the safety of the confined dog, other animals and humans.

Why is tethering dogs inhumane?

Dogs are naturally social beings who thrive on interaction with human beings and other animals. A dog kept chained in one spot for hours, days, months or even years suffers immense psychological damage. An otherwise friendly and docile dog, when kept continuously chained, becomes neurotic, unhappy, anxious and often aggressive.

In many cases, the necks of chained dogs become raw and covered with sores, the result of improperly fitted collars and the dogs' constant yanking and straining to escape confinement. Dogs have even been found with collars embedded in their necks, the result of years of neglect at the end of a chain.

Who says tethering dogs is inhumane?

In addition to The Humane Society of the United States and numerous animal experts, the U. S. Department of Agriculture issued a statement in the July 2, 1996, Federal Register against tethering:

"Our experience in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act has led us to conclude that continuous confinement of dogs by a tether is inhumane. A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury."

How does tethering or chaining dogs pose a danger to humans?

Dogs tethered for long periods can become highly aggressive. Dogs feel naturally protective of their territory; when confronted with a perceived threat, they respond according to their fight-or-flight instinct. A chained dog, unable to take flight, often feels forced to fight, attacking any unfamiliar animal or person who unwittingly wanders into his or her territory.

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Numerous attacks on people by tethered dogs have been documented. Tragically, the victims of such attacks are often children who are unaware of the chained dog’s presence until it is too late. Furthermore, a tethered dog who finally does get loose from his chains may remain aggressive, and is likely to chase and attack unsuspecting passersby and pets.

**Why is tethering dangerous to dogs?**

In addition to the psychological damage wrought by continuous chaining, dogs forced to live on a chain make easy targets for other animals, humans, and biting insects. A chained animal may suffer harassment and teasing from insensitive humans, stinging bites from insects, and, in the worst cases, attacks by other animals. Chained dogs are also easy targets for thieves looking to steal animals for sale to research institutions or to be used as training fodder for organized animal fights. Finally, dogs’ tethers can become entangled with other objects, which can choke or strangle the dogs to death.

**Are these dogs dangerous to other animals?**

In some instances, yes. Any other animal that comes into their area of confinement is in jeopardy. Cats, rabbits, smaller dogs and others may enter the area when the tethered dog is asleep and then be fiercely attacked when the dog awakens.

**Are tethered dogs otherwise treated well?**

Rarely does a chained or tethered dog receive sufficient care. Tethered dogs suffer from sporadic feedings, overturned water bowls, inadequate veterinary care, and extreme temperatures. During snow storms, these dogs often have no access to shelter. During periods of extreme heat, they may not receive adequate water or protection from the sun. What's more, because their often neurotic behavior makes them difficult to approach, chained dogs are rarely given even minimal affection. Tethered dogs may become “part of the scenery” and can be easily ignored by their owners.

**Are the areas in which tethered dogs are confined usually comfortable?**

No, because the dogs have to eat, sleep, urinate and defecate in a single confined area. Owners who chains their dogs are also less likely to clean the area. Although there may have once been grass in an area of confinement, it is usually so beaten down by the dog's pacing that the ground consists of nothing but dirt or mud.

**How else can people confine dogs?**

The HSUS recommends that all dogs live indoors as a part of the family, are taken on regular walks, and otherwise provided with adequate attention, food, water and veterinary care. If an animal must be housed outside at certain times, he should be placed in a suitable pen with adequate square footage and shelter from the elements.

**Should chaining or tethering ever be allowed?**

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To become well-adjusted companion animals, dogs should interact regularly with people and other animals, and should receive regular exercise. It is an owner’s responsibility to properly restrain her dog, just as it is the owner’s responsibility to provide adequate attention and socialization. Placing an animal on a restraint to get fresh air can be acceptable if it is done for a short period or while supervised. However, keeping an animal tethered for long periods is never acceptable.

If a dog is chained or tethered for a period of time, can it be done humanely?

Animals who must be kept on a tether should be secured in such a way that the tether cannot become entangled with other objects. Collars used to attach an animal should be comfortable and properly fitted; choke chains should never be used. Restraints should allow the animal to move about and lie down comfortably. Animals should never be tethered during natural disasters such as floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, or blizzards.

What about attaching a dog's leash to a "pulley run"?

Attaching a dog's leash to a long line—such as a clothesline or a manufactured device known as a pulley run—and letting the animal have a larger area in which to explore is preferable to tethering the dog to a stationary object. However, many of the same problems associated with tethering still apply, including attacks on or by other animals, lack of socialization and safety.

What is being done to correct the problem of tethering dogs?

More than 100 communities in more than 30 states have passed laws that regulate the practice of tethering animals. Maumelle, Ark., and Tucson, Ariz., completely prohibit the unattended tethering of dogs. Many other communities only allow tethering for limited periods of time or during certain conditions. Orange County, Fla., for example, does not allow tethering between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. or during times of extreme weather.

Why should a community outlaw the continuous chaining or tethering of dogs?

Animal control and humane agencies receive countless calls every day from citizens concerned about animals in these cruel situations. Animal control officers, paid at taxpayer expense, spend many hours trying to educate pet owners about the dangers and cruelty involved in this practice.

A chained animal is caught in a vicious cycle; frustrated by long periods of boredom and social isolation, he becomes a neurotic shell of his former self—further deterring human interaction and kindness. In the end, the helpless dog can only suffer the frustration of watching the world go by in isolation—a cruel fate for what is by nature a highly social animal. Any city, county, or state that bans this practice is a safer, more humane community.