

HUMANE CANINE SURVEY FOR LARGE URBAN SPACES

PREPARED BY
WORLD ANIMAL AWARENESS SOCIETY



- CITY SELECTION CRITERIA
- INITIAL ASSESSMENT
- VOLUNTEER CANINE SURVEY
- MONITORING & EVALUATION
- EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS
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The **World Animal Awareness Society** believes that responsibility for dog population management resides with local and/or federal government. Animal welfare NGOs should not be encouraged, nor seek, to take on the authority's overall responsibility for dog population management other than through a contractual agreement, and with appropriate funding and resources. However, animal welfare NGOs play an important role in guiding and supporting government strategy, so it is important for such organizations to have an understanding of all the components of a comprehensive strategy. This will enable each local authority to target their support where it can be most effective and to make the best use of limited resources.

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 dog population as a whole. As NGOs 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.

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

We are aware that the status, composition and size of dog populations can vary significantly between cities and there is no single intervention that will work for all situations. Therefore, we strongly advocate the need for initial assessment and consideration of all potential relevant factors before deciding on a program design. The only concept we consider universal is the need for a comprehensive program that is focused on causes and not solely on treating the symptom, namely the roaming dog population.

- CITY SELECTION CRITERIA

THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE CONSIDERED WHEN A CITY IS CHOSEN TO BE SURVEYED:

- Large Urban/City Space
- High Instance of Dog Bites
- Roaming or Loose Dogs
- Known Dog Fighting
- Low Spay & Neuter #
- Backyard Dog Breeding
- Multiple Authorized Agents
- Frequent Abuse Reports
- Frequent Neglect Reports
- General Media Awareness
- Social Media Scrutiny
- Increase in Animal NGO's
- High Surrender to Shelter #

Extensive portions of this document have been excerpted from HUMANE DOG POPULATION MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE published by the ICAM Coalition, 2007 cover & background image: Deanna Vollano, c. 2013 World Animal Awareness Society

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Initial data collection and assessment: Understanding the problem you are facing!

Before embarking on a dog population management program it is essential that the dynamics of the dog population are understood and measured objectively. This approach ensures the final management program will be tailored to the characteristics of the local dog population, rather than using a single blanket intervention for all dogs or all situations.

In assessing the local dog population the main questions to be explored through the assessment are as follows:

1. What is the current size of the dog population and the categories within it? This includes both owned and unowned, confined and roaming dogs, and where these overlap.
2. Where are the roaming dogs coming from? What are the sources of these dogs and why do these sources exist? Management strategies should aim to reduce the future unwanted roaming population by targeting the primary sources.
3. What are the main welfare issues faced by these dogs?
4. What is currently being done, both informally and officially, to control the dog population and why?
 - a. Understanding what is already being done can allow current resources and control measures to be improved and built upon. This also helps ensure that any new interventions will not conflict with current measures but rather replace or complement them.
 - b. Whose responsibility is it to control the roaming dog population? This usually falls within the realm of the agriculture (or sometimes health) department, with municipalities often responsible for carrying out activities locally. NGOs can provide effective elements of population management, but in order to do this they should be supported in partnership with, or led by, the responsible authority. It is also essential that any measures taken, fit within the legal framework of the space in which they are operating.
 - c. Pressure from the public can be very powerful and this is usually the 'why' behind control attempts. It is necessary to listen to the concerns and opinions of the local community and local authority; addressing these will help ensure the sustainability of the project. The justification for wanting dog populations to be controlled will depend on opinions as to whether roaming dogs are unwanted, but be aware that these will be determined by both the person you are asking and the individual dogs concerned. Within each of these main questions are sub-questions and tools that can be used to address them.

An initial assessment is required to determine each facet that will be needed to accurately measure the canine population in a city, including overall program scope and cost. The initial assessment is a rapid turn-around process that can usually be accomplished in a matter of days on site with just a few weeks prep.

A SERIES OF SUB-QUESTIONS:

How many dogs are currently in the categories of 'roaming' and 'confined'? Note that dogs that are roaming will be both unowned and owned roaming dogs.

- INITIAL ASSESSMENT

How is the roaming dog population changing over time and how is it maintained? Is the unowned dog population itself capable of successful reproduction? Can unowned dogs raise puppies to adulthood?

Are unwanted owned dogs abandoned in the street to become part of the roaming population? Are owned dogs allowed to roam freely?

If abandonment or roaming is an issue, why does it occur? What are the beliefs, attitudes or environmental factors that underlie these behaviors?

Measuring animal welfare can be approached either through animal-based assessment (direct observation of the animals) or resource-based assessment (measuring the access animals have to resources important to their welfare) or a combination of both which is optimum.

Measuring welfare in dog populations, especially those populations that include a proportion of roaming animals, is a relatively understudied area. However, it is important to us that we attempt to address this in some of the important sub-questions that arise during initial assessment.

Typical cost for an initial assessment of a large city is between \$10,000 and \$20,000



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The American Strays Canine Survey is a volunteer staffed, locally driven initiative supported with tools and guidance developed for national implementation by the World Animal Awareness Society.

There are several options to quantify the number of loose dogs in a large city, ideally all of the following methods would be employed annually:

1. A volunteer staffed, scientific based, survey of the loose dogs on the street at any time utilizing inexpensive digital capture tools and an open Google Earth forum. A 2 day visual blitz of the city
2. Direct observation of dogs in shelters, using the same criteria used for other categories of dogs to allow for comparison including interviewing shelter authorities on the resources provided.
3. Selective community door to door polling and secondary NGO profiling to assist all stakeholders.

Quantify the REAL ISSUES with REAL DATA!

Implementation

This should be straightforward if priorities have been chosen sensibly and the design stage carried out in detail. This stage may require a phased approach, using pilot areas which are monitored carefully to ensure any problems are tackled before the full program is launched. The initial stages should not be rushed into. There will be early implementation problems, and frequent updates will be required between key stakeholders to monitor closely and improve progress in the early phases of the survey.

Planning for sustainability

Dog population management programs often require high levels of resources over a long period of time. These include human resources, infrastructure and finances. It is important to consider these factors.

Aims, objectives and activities

The program plan should include clear and agreed aims and objectives. It is also important at this stage to describe indicators that could be used to assess progress at each stage of the program.

- VOLUNTEER CANINE SURVEY

1. A survey of the roaming dog population utilizing industry accepted humane observation protocol developed in part with ICAM-Co tools and Google Earth and conducted over a few days by local volunteers with the support of area stakeholders under guidance of WA2S.
2. Periodic audits of all the local facilities that shelter canines.
3. Additionally, a questionnaire for owners asking whether their dogs are confined to private property or whether they (or somebody else they know, if admitting this behavior themselves is likely to be a problem) have ever abandoned a dog.

example:

American Strays Canine Survey - Detroit
<http://www.WA2S.org/american-strays>



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Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the program is underway it will be necessary to regularly monitor progress and evaluate effectiveness. This step is necessary:

- a. to help improve performance, by highlighting both problems and successful elements of interventions
- b. for accountability, to demonstrate to donors, supporters and people at the receiving end of the intervention that the program is achieving its aims.

Monitoring is a continuous process that aims to ensure the program is going to plan and allows for regular adjustments. Evaluation is a periodic assessment, usually carried out at particular milestones to verify the program is having the desired and stated impact. Evaluation should also be used as the basis for decisions regarding future investment and program continuation. Both procedures involve the measurement of indicators selected at the design stage because they reflect important components of the program at different stages.

Monitoring and evaluation should be an important part of a program but not overly time consuming or expensive. Choosing the right list of indicators, with regard to their ability to reflect the changes that need to be measured and can be measured with a degree of accuracy, will be key 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 participatory manner where all relevant stakeholders are consulted and involved in making recommendations. It is also important to remain open minded and positive during this process, as things may change contrary to expectations. The exposure of problems or failures should be seen as opportunities to improve the program, 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 analyzed and used. These issues and others can be discussed in much more detail following the Initial Assessment.

The following are suggestions for improving the functioning of the committee: Create seminars or workshops to inspire and develop the program, clarify all roles in detail, be transparent, and allow differences of opinion in a comfortable atmosphere.

Creating a multi-stakeholder committee

1. Create a working group of people with an interest in and responsibility for dog population management.
2. Following an initial assessment, this working group can be evolved to a formal committee with representation from each relevant stakeholder.
3. Each member of the committee is responsible for representing the needs of their stakeholders with regards to dog population management, for example public health organizations would require control of zoonotic disease, NGOs would require an improvement in welfare, the municipal council may require a reduction in nuisance reports, etc.

- MONITORING & EVALUATION

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. This should include the expected investment by each stakeholder.
5. The responsibility of each committee member in carrying out, monitoring and evaluating the program 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 hence any changes needed to the program.
6. The committee will essentially be permanent as dog population management is a permanent challenge, although the membership will inevitably change and evolve.



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An effective dog population management program needs a comprehensive approach. Ideally, the overall program should be coordinated by the local authority responsible for dog population management. NGOs should work with the authority to identify the areas in which they can support the program and make the most difference. All activities should be selected based on the priorities identified in the initial needs assessment. This section outlines a range of components that might form part of a comprehensive dog population education program.

Education

In the long term, education is one of the most important elements of a comprehensive approach to management, as human behavior is an extremely influential factor in dog population dynamics. In general, education needs to encourage a greater responsibility among dog owners for good population management and the care and welfare of individual animals. However, there may be key specific education messages that are important to highlight at different stages of the program, for example: bite prevention, selection and care of dogs, realistic expectations of dog ownership, advertising the importance of and access to, preventative treatments, as well as knowledge of normal and abnormal canine behavior.

Several issues need to be considered when using this component.

- A. Education initiatives should be developed in coordination with the local education authorities and carried out by trained professionals. All stakeholders can advise on content and provide impetus for programs but delivery should be carried out with expert support.
- B. It is important to engage all potential sources of education on dogs to ensure that messages are kept consistent. Ideally this should include animal welfare groups, the veterinary profession, schools, enforcement bodies and the media (including animal-focused media groups). It may be necessary for one particular body to take on a coordinating role.
- C. Veterinarians and veterinary students may also require focused educational efforts in the area of population management,
- D. Educational messages can be communicated in many ways, including: formal seminars and structured lessons in schools, leaflets and brochures provided to targeted audiences, awareness raising in the general public through the press, billboards, radio and TV, and directly engaging people in discussions as part of community-based programs.

Human behavior is likely to be the most powerful force behind dog population dynamics.

The encouraging of responsible and rewarding human-animal interactions will lead to both an improvement in animal welfare and a reduction in many of the sources of roaming dogs. The owned dog population may be found to be a significant source of roaming dogs and may suffer from many preventable welfare problems, and human behavior towards dogs will be the driving force behind these problems.

- EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

It can take time for the impact of education on dog 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.
- Determinable changes in behavior.

Available WA2S Educational Components:

1. Lesson plans for K- 12 schools
2. Community based TV PSA's
3. Multi-lingual interactive media



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"The **American Strays Canine Survey** conducted by the World Animal Awareness Society - WA2S.Org has provided valuable and reality based information that will assist the Michigan Humane Society and other key stakeholders within the city of Detroit.

The challenges regarding homeless and stray animals within Detroit are significant and it is imperative that we collectively and efficiently maximize our finite resources to better the lives of animals within the City.

This project has been a key step forward in advancing our understanding relative to the scope and magnitude of the animal issues in Detroit and it will enable MHS to further improve our life-saving programs.

Tom McPhee is truly a talented filmmaker and visionary- using his talent and skill to make a better life for the animals in our communities."

David Williams
Interim President & CEO
Michigan Humane Society

There are a number of reasons to incorporate filmed services into a your canine survey, here is a few:

1. **American Strays Project** description - see example>
2. **Educational Tools** - see the example bottom right
3. **Community and Media Outreach** - In Detroit we created a series that included high-lighting many of the NGO's working to solve everyday problems. See one of the more than 20 episodes that were produced below.

American Strays - The Series



American Strays Project Detroit Overview Video



- FILMED COMPONENTS

Lesson Specific Educational Video Series for NGO's, the community, and schools



ALL FILMED COMPONENTS ARE ENTIRELY CUSTOM AND ARE PRESENTED IN THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT.

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PRESS

The American Strays Project in Detroit has fully engaged the media in support of the community. Here is a short list of the media attention "tens of thousands" of stray dogs will bring to a city.

PRE SURVEY:

1. <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/city-of-strays-detroits-epidemic-of-50-000-wild-dogs-20120320>
2. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-21/abandoned-dogs-roam-detroit-in-packs-as-humans-dwindle.html>
3. <http://money.cnn.com/video/news/2013/08/29/n-detroit-stray-dogs-economy-harlow.cnnmoney/index.html>
4. <http://www.insideedition.com/headlines/6893-abandoned-dogs-hit-epidemic-proportions-in-detroit>
5. Animal lovers set out to count Detroit's stray dogs <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013309210100>
6. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/09/23/225410632/detroit-has-many-strays-but-were-not-tripping-over-dogs>
7. <http://www.lifewithdogs.tv/2013/09/award-winning-director-tom-mcphoe-discusses-the-american-strays-project/>
8. <http://wdet.org/shows/craig-fahle-show/episode/finding-a-solution-to-stray-dogs-in-detroit/>

POST SURVEY:

1. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/23/detroit-abandoned-dogs_n_4639907.html
2. www.freep.com/article/20140124/COL43/301240027/detroit-stray-dogs-survey-not-50000-Nancy-Kaffer
3. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/01/20/detroit-stray-dogs-below-3000/4681091/>
4. <http://michiganradio.org/post/new-study-nowhere-close-50000-stray-dogs-detroit>
5. http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2014/01/less_than_3000_loose_dogs_coun.html
6. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/21/us/michigan-study-disputes-stray-dog-numbers.html>
7. <http://wdet.org/shows/craig-fahle-show/episode/detroit-stray-dogs-real-count/>
8. <http://detroit.jalopnik.com/new-data-suggests-less-than-3-000-stray-dogs-in-detroit-1505129208>
9. <http://blogs.metrotimes.com/news-blawg/detroit-really-50000-stray-dogs-likely-study-says/>

RESOURCE LINKS

- PRESS & RESOURCE LINKS

The World Animal Awareness Society and the entire American Strays Project team would like to acknowledge and thank the contributors to this program by sharing the following resource links:

1. <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Surveying%20roaming%20dog%20populations%20-%20guidelines%20on%20methodology.pdf>
2. http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Humane_Dog_Population_Management_Guidance_English.pdf
3. <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Non-surgical%20methods%20for%20controlling%20the%20reproduction%20of%20dogs%20and%20cats.pdf>
4. <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Identification%20methods%20for%20dogs%20and%20cats.pdf>
5. <http://www.wspa.org.uk/>
6. <http://www.conservationresearch.co.uk/>
7. <http://www.hsi.org/>
8. www.icam-coalition.org

This is not the entire list of resources used to create the American Strays Project, more information can be found here: <http://www.wa2s.org/american-strays>

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