

While both methodologies aim to quantify free-roaming dog populations, their technical executions diverge because they are engineered to solve fundamentally different problems.

ICAM protocols are primarily built for **epidemiological triage and veterinary intervention**—specifically, figuring out how many vaccines or sterilization surgeries are required to manage a population in developing nations.

The American Strays methodology is built for **municipal transparency and civic accountability**, specifically within the U.S. infrastructure.

Here is how the technical mechanics break down on the ground:

Feature	ICAM Standard Protocols	American Strays Methodology
<b>Primary Objective</b>	Veterinary intervention and disease control	Policy change, transparency, and storytelling
<b>Field Personnel</b>	Trained NGO staff and health workers	Volunteer citizen scientists and NGO team
<b>Routing Strategy</b>	Randomized transects or block sampling	Saturation coverage of targeted high-risk zones
<b>Data Capture</b>	Proprietary DPM apps (Talea, WVS App)	Open-source GIS (OSMTracker) and visual media
<b>Core Output</b>	Statistical population estimates	Spatial story maps, statistical population estimates and documentary evidence

## Key Technical Divergences

### 1. The Tech Stack and Data Granularity

ICAM heavily promotes mobile applications that force surveyors to log specific veterinary metrics for every dog spotted—Body Condition Score (BCS), sex, visible pregnancy, or lactation status. This requires the surveyor to pause, observe, and input data, which slows down the route.

The American Strays approach prioritizes speed and verifiable location data. By utilizing tools like OSMTracker, field teams can drop rapid GPS waypoints without breaking momentum. The deeper data isn't captured via a form, but through the accompanying high-resolution video and photographic evidence. This creates a dual-layer dataset: a strict geographical breadcrumb trail mapped directly onto municipal infrastructure, backed by irrefutable visual proof.

## **2. Routing vs. Extrapolation**

To save time and money, ICAM protocols rely heavily on statistical extrapolation (like Distance Sampling). Surveyors might map only 10% of a city using strict, randomized transects, and then academics run those numbers through a formula to estimate the total population of the other 90%.

American Strays execution is often much more targeted and intensive. Rather than randomizing, it frequently uses existing municipal data (like 311 call clusters or bite reports) to identify specific crisis zones. The methodology then attempts comprehensive, street-by-street saturation of those targeted zip codes. The goal isn't just an estimated number; it's a complete spatial map proving the reality of those specific streets to local lawmakers.

## **3. Personnel and Community Engagement**

An ICAM survey is generally a quiet, clinical operation performed by a small team of trained professionals. The goal is to observe without influencing the environment.

American Strays operationalizes community involvement. Deploying volunteer citizen scientists changes the technical requirements of the survey—training must focus heavily on safety, basic app mechanics, and visual capture rather than complex veterinary assessments. Furthermore, the survey itself becomes a highly visible civic event. The presence of the surveyors and cameras acts as an intervention in its own right, forcing the community and local government to acknowledge the data collection in real-time.

## **4. The Final Deliverable**

When an ICAM survey concludes, the end product is typically a white paper or a spreadsheet detailing density metrics and target intervention thresholds.

When an American Strays survey concludes, the raw GPS data and visual captures are synthesized into spatial "story maps." The data is presented not just as statistics, but as a cinematic narrative. This translates the raw street counts into a format that cuts through bureaucratic denial and directly engages both policymakers and the public. The data is available to be used for immediate community wide mitigation.