

ICAM Humane Dog & Cat Population Management 5th International Conference - Virtual 2024 - Day 4: Rehoming and Cats June 20th 2024

Question	Answer	Answerer Name	
Tamara Kartal, Chonnikarn Phochanakij & Ivet Balchiklieva, FOUR PAWS: Building strategic free-roaming cat management programmes— Examples from Sofia, Bulgaria and Bangkok, Thailand			
1	What do you mean by transects?	Those are unbiased routes (on streets) in a neighbourhood, along which surveys were conducted.	Tamara Kartal
2	would you agree that a tnvr approach is better when dealing with cats?	It can be a very helpful tool for sure. I think it would be good to know more about the situation you are working with to know what role TNVR can play in your project.	Tamara Kartal
3	Ivet, have you or Four Paws used the resources provided by Feline Fix by Five from the U.S. ? https://www.unitedspayalliance.org/feline-fix-by-five/	Hi, yes we are and they have been quite helpful along with the scientific research that is available on the topic :)	Ivet Balchiklieva
4	Hi. For the FourPaws team re your survey of vets. Would be great to learn more about how you shared the survey with vets, the response rate and the overall sample size. Also to see the survey instrument. We'd love to do something similar but don't have the expertise re survey design.	live answered	Ivet Balchiklieva
5	For all three FOUR PAWS speakers, curious, do your vets use the ventreal or flank OVH technique? for both dogs and cats	We are using both ventral and flank technique depending on the individual patient and the local situation.	Manuela Rowlings
	Thanks Manuela, just to confirm... for BOTH dogs and cats? I know some vets don't like to flank-spay dogs, only cats. Flank OVH is the most common technique used for HQHVSN in Colombia.	According to our quality standards both methods are acceptable for both species. We generally do more flank spays in our projects in Southeast Asia compared to Europe and I would say that this has more to do with veterinary attitudes, but we believe that it is important to know both options and to make the best choice for each individual animal.	Manuela Rowlings
6	Hi Ivet ... I am from Bulgaria - Varna. Can I have a email or a contact with you if appropriate to discuse diferent metars as counting dogs and cats in towns and others. Thank you	Hi lovely to meet you, please send us an email ivet.balchiklieva@four-paws.org and tamara.kartal@four-paws.org .	Tamara Kartal
7	How do you make visable that a cat has been sterilized	we introduced ear marking and tattoo on their ears to ensure that they won't be recaptured again.	Chonnikarn Phochanakij
8	The fact that monks are very cooperative with the sterilization project is surprising! Is there any difficulty for getting their cooperation in the cultural context or are they very cooperative from the strart of the plan?	not really difficult, they are very cooperative because they also look after these cats, but its hard to specify the location for mobile clinics because they got some funerals and events going on.	Chonnikarn Phochanakij
9	Asking the presenters who reported on veterinarians opposed to early cat spay neuter: If concern is welfare of cats, ethically how do they rationalize the fact that when cats are not sterilized early more cats are born to suffer and die unnecessarily? Is it because unowned cats are considered disposable?	[From Ivet] That is a very interesting question. The vets we asked actually did not find the status (owned/stray) of the cat or its sex to matter too much when it came to neutering age. Their recommendation was 7-11 month neutering age as the best case for all cats. In terms of the ethical concerns they expressed, it came across that they thought they would do more harm to the cat by neutering it early than if they waited due to the belief that the cat is not physically developed yet.	Roxanne Nazir

10	<p>For FourPaws. We don't get very 'good' numbers using a strict transect approach, with many fewer cats spotted than we understand live in the area. We've had better results counting cats at feeding points, obviously doing so on several occasions.</p> <p>Be good to have a conversation with colleagues doing cat PM about their different experiences of cat counting.</p>	<p>This would make a great ICAM Conversation! Plenty of experiences and knowledge to exchange here. I find transects are great for providing monitoring data - measuring changes in cat density over time - there are techniques for turning these into estimates, but these are more tricky and depend on how you have designed your transects too. Tamara has done a great job of this in Bulgaria :-). ACC&D also have a cat counting document that might be useful https://www.acc-d.org/resources/counting-cats</p>	Elly Hiby
	<p>For FourPaws. We don't get very 'good' numbers using a strict transect approach, with many fewer cats spotted than we understand live in the area. We've had better results counting cats at feeding points, obviously doing so on several occasions.</p> <p>Be good to have a conversation with colleagues doing cat PM about their different experiences of cat counting.</p>	<p>Yes, that is one of the problems. We work with detectabilities to account for the cats we do not observe, as we only see a subgroup of the actual cat population. We are therefore using (and testing at the moment) to see what is the best method to account for this while keeping capacity restraints in mind. Always, happy to exchange experiences!</p>	Tamara Kartal
11	<p>NGOs do not find it humane to ear tip and/or tattoo the ears of roaming cats from cat colonies when they are under anesthesia for TNR; do you have recommendations how to address this? As a vet from the government I fear some cats will be unnecessarily captured and if not microchipped also anesthetized again when doing TNR</p>	<p>We heard that people were not aware of this though, but if cat colonies are semi-owned or community cats then we might need to advocate to them why it's better to mark them to prevent them from being recaptured again. This would be more painful for them to go through this again so ear marking/tattoo is the way to protect them.</p>	Chonnikarn Phochanakij
Vicky Halls, ICatCare: Completing the jigsaw puzzle of sustainable and effective cat population management			
1	<p>Often decimation of wildlife (esp. birds) and reduction of biodiversity are arguments used to eliminate cats allowed or living outdoors. Prof. Dennis C. Turner published 2022 in <i>Frontiers in Veterinary Science</i> arguments against both assumptions stating 1) that (high) estimates of bird predation have never been juxtaposed to the size of the prey populations and 2) that the claims about reduction in biodiversity are only referring to alpha-biodiversity and not the more meaningful gamma-biodiversity. Are you aware of this critical but fair appraisal of the evidence and situation?</p> <p>doi: 10.3389/fvets.2022.1087907</p>	<p>Yes thank you, I am aware of this and good to hear from you, I hope you are well. This is one of the many challenges that we all face when engaging with stakeholders to get consensus and agreement to collaborate for effective and sustainable CPM. It has been great to have this paper to challenge many of the misconceptions about the true impact of cat predation in all situations. However we also feel that finding common ground between stakeholders, rather than just focusing on challenging their interpretation of the available science, proves beneficial. It continues to be a struggle in many countries, as I understand it, but there are also some success stories related to good collaboration between cat welfare organisations and conservationists. It feels sometimes like an uphill struggle but we continue to attempt to understand the motivations and beliefs of all stakeholders.</p>	Vicky Halls
2	<p>Where can I find information on safe injectable anesthesia in puppies and kittens between 2-4 months of age for instituting early pre puberty neutering? We do not have access to gas anesthesia</p>	<p>Hi Audrey, this is a great UK-based information centre for neutering kittens https://cat-kind.org.uk/</p>	Vicky Halls

	Listening to your presentation it feels like running a TNR programme is pointless, is that the case?	Hi! Running a TNR programme is definitely not pointless! As I mentioned in my presentation this is a skilled role and we need people to continue to undertake these programmes, in conjunction with other strategies and interventions, in order to achieve the overall goal of sustainable and effective CPM. The point I really wanted to make was that we have lots of information now, often from modelling but also from some successful long-term programmes, that shows us how to conduct TNR in the most impactful way. People who are currently conducting TNR should maybe take the opportunity to reach out to other individuals and organisations locally carrying out the same work to see if resources can be pooled to become even more impactful regarding the effect on the overall population. It isn't easy, and the planning and surveying before you even start trapping may seem overwhelming but... there is a lot of help out there from incredible providers of resources: ICAM, ACC&D, The DC Cat Count and, of course, iCatCare.	Vicky Halls
3	You mention you are working with 5 pilot countries, does International Cat Care support people working in other countries?	For the second part of your question: Yes, we are working specifically with UK, Portugal, Australia, Greece and Cyprus for our programme funded by a grant from Battersea, but this work will inform the way we provide tailored educational and training support for a diverse range of countries and cultures in the future. In the meantime iCatCare has a wealth of information available on our website, www.icatcare.org/unowned-cats , that we hope will be of assistance, no matter where you are in the world.	Vicky Halls
	We put cats in shelters for their own safety, what is the alternative?	The final part of your question about putting cats in shelters for their own safety, I accept that in many parts of the world there is an immediate need to remove cats from dangerous situations to a comparatively safer place. This makes sense in the short-term, but keeping cats in shelter cages longer-term, with little or no hope of being adopted or placed somewhere more suitable to meet their needs is not the answer. In an ideal world we would have a situation where the cat population was managed to such an extent that the number of cats requiring homing was much lower and any stay needed in a shelter environment would be a short one, as the perfect environment to meet their needs is found. This is a long-term goal that requires a great deal of collaboration from many stakeholders, as described in my presentation. If you would like some more comprehensive information about the alternative to shelters and Cat Friendly Homing, please visit our website, www.icatcare.org/unowned_cats	Vicky Halls
Jenni McDonald, Cats Protection: From Counting to Modelling: Bespoke methodology and insights into unowned cats in the UK			

3	<p>The traditional threshold of 6 months for neutering appears to have been set many decades ago - how often is this wrong? How common are births earlier than 6 months? And if it's common, how did the vet community get this threshold so wrong?!</p>	<p>In the UK neutering at 4 months of age has been the recommendation since around 2006 and prior to that it was 6 months. In terms of how common pregnancies and births are in young cats, we suspect cats on average reach puberty around 6 months, hence the previous 6 months advice, but if 6 months is the average this means that we would expect half of all female cats to reach puberty before 6 months and indeed we see many unplanned litters in young cats and a substantial proportion of those cats are 6 months or younger.</p> <p>The historic 6 month recommendation would have been reflective of the knowledge, evidence and also the available surgical and anaesthetic protocols at the time.</p> <p>We now have a lot more evidence around the impact of neutering cats prepubertally so we can be much more confident in this recommendation and the long term implications on cat welfare and perhaps most importantly veterinary medicine has progressed like all fields of health care, with evidence-based protocols and procedures specifically for kittens.</p> <p>For a recent summary of evidence around neutering cats at 4 vs. 6 months see: https://cat-kind.org.uk/media/10659/neu_7999-cpcg-summary-of-evidence_a4_4pp_digital.pdf</p> <p>And for further information about the procedure and protocols visit: https://cat-kind.org.uk/</p>	Jenni McDonald
4	<p>Is the rather low neutering rate among owned cat explained by the price of neutering one's own cat, or by cultural reasons, or both, or something else?</p>	<p>Neutering rate varies across communities, in areas where cats are not neutered the main reasons from owners include their cat is indoor only, lack of funds, not got around to it and they want their cats to have litters. Age is also reported, when owners are unaware their cat can be neutered before 6 months. Unfortunately the cost issue does seem to be increasing in the UK. Cultural differences between views have also been identified at a local level, really emphasising the importance of a tailored approach within communities to listen to specific concerns.</p> <p>You may be interested in Cats Protection's Cats and their Stats report for more information on neutering rates in the UK: https://www.cats.org.uk/about-cp/cats-report</p>	Jenni McDonald
5	<p>Thank you, Jenni: would love to learn more about cats protection's community engagement programme and lessons learnt so far, please, if there is anywhere we could read about it.</p>	<p>Thanks for your interest :)</p> <p>We have a stakeholder report here on this project: https://www.cats.org.uk/media/4178/cp-cat-watch-report-2019.pdf</p> <p>And if you want more detailed information around the scientific approach, our open access publications are available here: https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/9/4/175</p> <p>https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2018.00258/full?fbclid=IwAR22ai6Az9vMsO80u0took-uPY94qp9uIHci4VdQOqO0nH1LTkaIT2qyK</p>	Jenni McDonald

1	when pets are dumped (they are caught on the shelter's camera), we are not likely to consider rehoming them; should we? I meant reuniting them with the people who dumped them	This presentation is geared toward programming for lost/stray pets :)	Jenifer Reed
2	I'm curious to know who is legally responsible if the stray animal is injured during their stay with the "finder"?	live answered	Jenifer Reed
3	Thanks Jennifer. How do you deal with safety issues? Do you assess whether an animal is suitable to stay with the finder? And who is responsible should something untoward happen? Many thanks	live answered	Jenifer Reed
4	Some concerns: It seems your program anticipates active oversight by shelters. What actually happens is an informal situation where local lost and found social media groups do this informally. This results in not ensuring proper ID of petson claiming. Dogs that are being bred returned to backyard breeders. Also neglected dogs. Frequently same dogs get loose- posed dangers to public safety to people and other animals and dig (for ex: hit by cars) How is this addressed?	Hi! This program aims to increase support for lost pet reunification that is often already occurring in the community and focuses on education around reunification strategies and data tracking that may support animals that have been lost more than once. We have also seen some shelters have an active presence on local social media groups. If you would like to talk about this further, we would be happy to connect via email at hass-project@americanpetsalive.org !	Heather Kalman
5	Is there a format in which the shelters piloting this type of program can come together to discuss their individual pros and cons and possibly learn from each other?	Hi! I'll be teaching a live course on this topic (through Maddie's University) in the fall. If you're interested in participating, please email us! hass-project@americanpetsalive.org	Jenifer Reed
Vinicius Soares Santos, Federal University of Parana: Population Management of dogs and cats and the Social Veterinary Medicine: Zero			
1	Is the provision of pet food to vulnerable families for a set period of time? if yes, has there been any challenges with coming to the end of this food	actually we offer for indetermined period of time... the project try to help with the nutrition but we are not able to offer ALL the food that every animal needs, unfortunately	Renan Oliveira
	Is the provision of pet food to vulnerable families for a set period of time? if yes, has there been any challenges with coming to the end of this food	we receive food every 2 months	Renan Oliveira
2	Are you able to quantify the effect on abandonment of the Zero Hunger programme?	live answered	Natasha Lee
Other/General questions			
1	What are the indicators of Rabies Control program/measures?	Hi, there was a presentation from Andre from GARC on Tuesday that you may find useful. You can see the presentation here - https://tinyurl.com/ICAMconf2024 . I also recommend looking at the United Against Rabies forum website for more information - they had a webinar on the subject of rabies programme measurement last year - you can watch again on their website under 'events' https://www.unitedagainstrabies.org/	Elly Hiby
3	To ICAM representatives - Talea app seems not to be available for iphones (can ´t find it on App Store) If this is right, is there a plan to introduce it to App Store?	There is a plan to do this - we would like it to be on iPhones too! But app design costs time and money - so we went for Android first as these phones are more widely used in low and middle income countries. Its coming! But we are working with minimal funding for this.	Elly Hiby