BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

6th International Conference on Humane Dog and Cat Population Management

16-20 June 2025 | Online

Conference Agenda

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Day 1
Government Leadership and Urban Development
16 June, 11:00–13:00 UTC

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1.2 Positive Cities

Patrick Gerard, Director of Advocacy (ICAM)

1.3 Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-Manage (TNRM) of Free-Roaming Dogs: Success Factors for Singapore

Dr Anhui Lin (National Parks Board, Singapore)

1.4 One Goal – Different Approaches: Tailoring the DPM to Given Circumstances, Examples From Bosnia

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1.5 Animal Protection and Intersectorality: Building Care Networks Through Health Education

Samilla Santos and Dr Danielle Ferreira de Magalhães Soares (Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil)

1.6 From Hate to Love, Led by Dogs: The Linda Pata Rat Programme

Anca Georgescu (TAC.social, Romania)

1.7 The Political Impact of Large-Scale Neutering Programmes in Malaysia

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2.4 Evaluating the Impact of the Trap-Neuter-Return Programme on Lisbon's Cat Colonies

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2.5 Preparing for Impact: Strategic Population Management Tools for Community Cat Programmes

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Cam Williams (Dogs Trust UK)

3.4 Is sustainability within our reach or are we further from our goals than we think? Dog population dynamics in Constanta Romania

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3.5 Advanced Dog Capture Tools and Technologies: A Case Study From Vieques, Puerto Rico

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3.6 From Data to Action: Country-Specific Strategies for Stray Animal Population Management Strategies in Southeast Asia

Chonnikarn (Pom) Phochanakij and Hanh Nguyen Minh (Four Paws International)

3.7 Demographics of Free-Roaming Dogs in Guwahati, India: Assessing Population Characteristics, Comparing Estimation Methods, and Validating Superduplicates as a Cost-Effective Tool

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Day 4: Program Dewata: Bridging Animal Welfare and Public Health Through a One Health Approach to Humane Rabies Control in Bali

Presenting author: Marissa E Arief

The presentation highlights the successful collaboration between FOUR PAWS and the Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA) through Program Dewata, a One Health initiative that integrates animal, human, and environmental health to achieve sustainable rabies control and humane population management in Bali.

The program's community-based approach has significantly reduced bite cases by combining mass vaccination and sterilization efforts, responsible pet ownership education, and outreach programs that support both owned and community dogs. Working closely with local governments and health centers, the partnership has strengthened capacity through stakeholder training, school-based education programs reaching nearly 10,000 students, and extensive community engagement.

By sharing best One Health practices and fostering local ownership of rabies prevention strategies, Program Dewata offers a replicable model for sustainable animal welfare and public health improvements.

Day 1: One Goal – Different Approaches: Tailoring the DPM to Given Circumstances, Examples From Bosnia.

Presenting authors: Alida Brkan[1] and Anida Dinarević[2]
1 alida.brkan@dogstrust.ba; - Dogs Trust Bosnia
2 anida.dinarevic@dogstrust.ba ;- Dogs Trust Bosnia

Since 2012, Dogs Trust Bosnia (DTB) has been dedicated to improving dog welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishing a sustainable dog management system through various initiatives with local communities. Our approach includes the CNVR program, Veterinary Training Programme, Fostering programme, Dog school, Education in schools and public awareness

campaigns on responsible pet ownership. We also collaborate with UNDP through the Community Empowerment Program, where all stakeholders work together to create action plans and address challenges in their city or municipality. Local government plays a key role in sustaining our efforts, engaging communities, NGOs, and the veterinary sector to work together toward long-term change. In this presentation, we will showcase two different-sized communities, both successful in creating DPM strategies within their capabilities.

Vareš is a small municipality with just around 10,000 residents but still it faces challenges in establishing a sustainable dog management system. In the late 2021, the municipality applied for an open call to collaborate, but did not meet the criteria to enter the DTB neutering program. Realizing that they were losing significant funds on lawsuits from citizens for dog bites, they initiated several changes and contacted us again seeking advisory support. Through minimal support from DT, they were able to overcome the major obstacles and quickly improved shelter management, formed local NGO with whom they are now developing the fostering system.

Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina's second-largest city, faced significant challenges with its stray dog population. Since 2018, DTB led a neutering campaign for stray and owner dogs covering over 23,000 dogs. In 2021, Banja Luka signed a memorandum of cooperation with DTB, demonstrating a commitment on sustainable and humane DPM. While DTB supported with mentioned programmes, the city had enough space and funds to establish the Dog Communal Police Department, strengthen cooperation with local NGOs, and improve shelter conditions. These efforts have set a positive example for humane, sustainable dog management also for other municipalities to follow.

Although somewhere it's needed to fully support communities to establish the backbone for DPM, sometimes advisory support or tailoring the project to specific community needs is enough to achieve change. It's essential to recognize and study carefully each community's obstacles, bring all stakeholders together, and create a customized plan based on the circumstances. Active discussions with local authorities are crucial, and we encourage local governments to commit to long-term, sustainable solutions for lasting impact. "

Day 4 New Developments Within the Communities Against Rabies (CAR) Initiative.

Further information to follow.

Day 5 “Animal-Friendly Communities” – A Community-Driven Approach to Harmonize Companion Animals, Wildlife and People in Tortuguero: A Case Study

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Presenting Authors: Grettel Delgadillo and Sofía Herra

Day 1 One goal- different approaches. Tailoring the DPM to given circumstances: Examples from Bosnia

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Presenting Author: Dr Anaida Dinarević and Dr Alida Brkan
alida.brkan@dogstrust.ba ; Dogs Trust Bosnia
anida.dinarevic@dogstrust.ba ; Dogs Trust Bosnia

Since 2012, Dogs Trust Bosnia (DTB) has been dedicated to improving dog welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishing a sustainable dog management system through various initiatives with local communities. Our approach includes the CNVR program, Veterinary Training Programme, Fostering programme, Dog school, Education in schools and public awareness campaigns on responsible pet ownership. We also collaborate with UNDP through the Community Empowerment Program, where all stakeholders work together to create action plans and address challenges in their city or municipality. Local government plays a key role in sustaining our efforts, engaging communities, NGOs, and the veterinary sector to work together toward long-term change. In this presentation, we will showcase two different-sized communities, both successful in creating DPM strategies within their capabilities.

Day 2 Building Evidence-Based Strategies for Unowned Cat Welfare and Population Management: Lessons From a Five-Country Pilot

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Presenting Author: Harry Eckman - Global advisor Cat Population Management International Cat Care

Email: ?; International Cat Care

International Cat Care has embarked on a pioneering initiative to develop national strategies for the management and welfare of unowned cats in five pilot countries: the UK, Australia, Portugal, Greece, and Cyprus.

Recognising the scale of the issue, and the complexity of developing long-term strategies for change tailored to each country's specific context and challenges, iCatCare invested the first year of the project into undertaking extensive research and insight-gathering for each country. The research process was designed to ensure any strategies are grounded in real-world evidence and accommodated varying, and often disparate needs and viewpoints.

The process combined desk-based research - examining national statistics, legislation, and existing literature; stakeholder interviews - involving in-depth conversations with veterinarians, animal welfare organisations, policymakers, local authorities, conservationists, and other key groups to capture diverse perspectives on cat populations and their management; and national public opinion surveys – to better understand attitudes and behaviours of the wider public as it relates to unowned cats.

By mapping the existing systems and identifying key barriers and leverage points, iCatCare will be able to develop country-specific strategies that will guide us towards sustainable, practical solutions for cat welfare.

In this presentation, we will look at how this process was developed, undertaken and what the initial learnings and insights have provided.

Day 1 From Hate to Love, Led by Dogs: The Linda Pata Rat Programme

Presenting Author: Anca Georgescu
ageorgescu@tac.social ; TAC.social

The Linda Pata Rat Program, initiated in 2019 by TAC.social, is a veterinary care initiative to improve the welfare of dogs in Pata Rât, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, also known as Europe's largest waste-related ghetto. Pata Rat is notably recognized for its landfill, which serves as both a county dumping ground and a residence for approximately 3000 people, illustrating severe segregation and socio-economic challenges. However, the plight of the approximately 900 dogs in this community had received no attention until 2019.

The program was named in memory of Linda, the first dog taken by TAC.social from Pata Rat, a dog whose story embodied the harsh realities faced by animals in Pata Rât.

We ended 2024 with 707 dogs and cats neutered, vaccinated against rabies and registered. This effort mobilized over 120 volunteers who collaborated closely with the local community, including children, to provide comprehensive veterinary services. Between 2019 and 2024, the team comprised veterinary doctors and volunteers from Romania, UK, USA, Switzerland, Italy, France.

The program's expenses were covered by international grants, individual donations, small local sponsorships and in-kind partner contributions. Despite these efforts, requests for assistance

from local authorities, including the Cluj-Napoca City Hall and Local Council, were declined. The most ironic lack of municipality support: the municipality couldn't help with the waste removal services, after the 5 campaigns on location, included in the program.

The success of the Linda Pata Rât Program is largely attributed to the dedication of its volunteers. Since 2019, over 120 individuals, both from medical and non-medical backgrounds, have contributed their time and skills. Their collective efforts have fostered authentic solidarity, hard work, kindness, and resilience within the community.

Beyond immediate medical interventions, the program emphasizes education and community engagement. Volunteers work alongside local residents, including children, to promote responsible pet ownership and improve the overall quality of life for both animals and humans in Pata Rat. This holistic approach aims to create sustainable change and uplift the community as a whole.

The Linda Pata Rât Program exemplifies a compassionate and comprehensive approach to veterinary care in underserved communities. Through medical treatment, education, and community involvement, TAC.social continues to make a profound impact on the lives of dogs and residents in Pata Rât, fostering a model of care and solidarity that can inspire similar initiatives globally.

Day 2: Counting Cats to Track Population Impact

Presenting Author: Dr Elly Hiby - Director, ICAM
Email: ellyhiby@icam-coalition.org

Effective management of cat populations is critical to achieving positive outcomes for both cat welfare and human communities. Common goals include reducing the number of free-roaming cats and improving the welfare of those that remain. While obtaining accurate population estimates can be resource-intensive and require specialised expertise, tracking indicators of cat density over time offers a practical and efficient alternative.

Transect counts provide a swift and effective method for monitoring changes in cat density. When survey protocols are applied consistently across repeated monitoring sessions, the resulting data can reflect broader population trends, serving as a sensitive indicator of the effectiveness of management interventions.

This presentation outlines the methodologies involved in conducting transect counts, including optimal practices for where, when, and how to conduct surveys. It also introduces the Talea app: a user-friendly digital tool that streamlines data collection and ensures secure data storage. Resources for further learning and guidance on cat counting techniques and population estimation methodologies will be shared.

Day 4 Project Hayat: Project of Life for the Love of Life

Please contact Salima Kadaoui at www.sftmorocco.org/

Day 5: Keeping Cats Safe at Home: A Holistic Approach to Domestic Cat Management in NSW

Presenting authors:
Dr. Brooke Kennedy1 and Dr. Gemma Ma2
bkenne27@une.edu.au ; University of New England -
gemma.ma@sydney.edu.au ; The University of Sydney School of Veterinary Science and RSPCA NSW

Free-roaming domestic cats are a significant threat to native Australian wildlife, contributing to the death of millions of native animals annually through instinctive predation. Keeping Cats Safe at Home (KCSAH) was a four-year, human behaviour change initiative led by RSPCA NSW and supported by the NSW Government's Environmental Trust, aiming to mitigate this impact by encouraging responsible pet cat guardianship. Between 2021-2024 the project partnered with 11 local councils to implement a human behaviour change approach to increase cat desexing, identification and containment. A social marketing campaign, informed by social science research and community consultation, was delivered through multiple channels, including social media, broadcast television, and local veterinary practices. Place-based targeted cat desexing programs were also implemented in council areas with populations of unowned cats or limited access to veterinary services. Key achievements included:

- Over 87,000 visits to the project website and 4,000+ email newsletter subscribers.
- Desexing and microchipping of over 2,700 cats, supported by 26 veterinary partners.
- Paid and organic social marketing reaching millions, including the successful "Not All Cat Videos Are Funny" campaign.
- Face-to-face engagement of cat caregivers at 30+ community events.
- Participation of 1,400+ students via curriculum-aligned school education resources and incursions.

Between 2021 and 2024, substantial reductions were seen in the cat management burden on partner councils through reduced pound cat intake (Blue Mountains -54%, Campbelltown -59%, Parramatta -73%, Kyogle, and Walgett -100%) and cat-related nuisance complaints (-40%+ in seven project council areas, and -60%+ in four project council areas). Cat population and behavioural ecology research was conducted using transect drives and remote sensing camera traps. Local council staff and citizen science volunteers were trained in conducting transects, then participated in data collection. A 25–50% reduction in free-roaming cat population density was found; 25% in the Blue Mountains, 35% in Campbelltown and 50% in the Tweed Shire. This project demonstrates the power of community-based, cross-sector collaboration to more effectively manage domestic cats.

Day 2 Cat Population Crisis in Mumbai, India: The Need for Data-Driven TNR, Its Challenges and Outcomes.

Presenting authors:
Pallavi Kamath[1] and Charu Khosla[2]
[1]pallavi@thefelinefoundation.com
[2]charu@thefelinefoundation.com

The Feline Foundation is an animal welfare organisation based in Mumbai, India. We focus on population control and medical rehabilitation for community cats in the city. We are currently implementing a data-driven TNR program in a suburb called Andheri West which we hope to complete by 2028. We have recently achieved an 81% sterilisation rate in a subsection of Andheri through collaborative efforts with local cat feeders, volunteers, and community members.

Background: Mumbai has a big stray cat population. Though there is no official census, the population appears to have grown in the last decade due to rapid urbanisation. The welfare of the cats is poor and the issue necessitates city-wide TNR programs. However even with the municipal government providing support, funding for animal welfare programs is inadequate and local non-profits run sterilisation programs only in their limited capacity, mostly on an individual appointment basis rather than mass TNR. Most nonprofits prioritise dog population control due to rabies risk and few conduct large-scale cat TNR.

Our Versova TNR Project: We recently conducted a cat TNR project and population study in a neighbourhood of Andheri called Versova, approximately 3 sq km in size, over the course of 18 months. We did baseline and end-term surveys of the region using the indicator count method, tracking population data and welfare status. We digitally mapped the area and divided it into subzones for easier counting and monitoring. Our baseline survey of the 20 subzones was conducted from November 2023 to September 2024 (as per our project funding and schedule). The total cats counted in the baseline were 2085 of which 37.75% were sterilised. We then conducted high-volume TNR activities in the region from March 2024 to March 2025, after which we conducted our end-term survey. As per the end-term results, 81.26% of the neighbourhood's 1761 community cats are now sterilised. The population also saw a reduction in the percentage of cats we labelled as 'vulnerable' in the following categories: 1) sick, 2) injured, 3) kitten, 4) pregnant/lactating. However the latter results are not statistically significant, which could indicate the necessity for more intensive TNR efforts or concurrent healthcare initiatives.

We hope to present our TNR implementation model, our challenges, and our learnings from sterilising thousands of cats in a city with rapidly increasing urban development, diverse cultural backgrounds/attitudes, and multiple stakeholders with varying involvement in our community animal welfare.

Day 3 Is sustainability within our reach or are we further from our goals than we think? Dog population dynamics in Constanta Romania.

Further information to follow.

Day 2 Preparing for Impact: Strategic Population Management Tools for Community Cat Programmes.

Presenting author::
Stacy LeBaron
stacy@communitycatspodcast.com - Community Cats Podcast

Community cat overpopulation is not an unsolvable problem—it's a misunderstood one. For too long, well-meaning efforts have focused on adoptions and shelter placement as the primary path forward. While valuable, these efforts alone can't resolve the scale of the issue. This session challenges outdated mindsets and introduces a data-driven approach to cat population management that prioritizes efficiency, scalability, and measurable impact.

In the first half of this presentation, we'll explore the Community Cat Pyramid, a visual framework that helps both new and seasoned advocates understand the true scope of overpopulation—and why adoption alone is not a sustainable solution. By illustrating the layers of care and need, the pyramid helps implementers, funders, and policymakers better understand where to focus resources for long-term success. We'll examine how this model can guide public messaging, support organizational planning, and foster shared understanding across diverse groups of stakeholders.

Next, we'll introduce the Community Cat Calculator, a free online tool designed to help programs estimate the number of cats in their community and determine the scale of sterilization needed to make a measurable impact. By aligning goals with human population data, the calculator allows communities to right-size their efforts, build realistic budgets, and track progress over time. This segment will walk through how to use the calculator in real-world planning scenarios, from grant proposals to municipal presentations.

Attendees will leave this session with:

A deeper understanding of the structural barriers to reducing community cat populations
Tools to educate stakeholders and reframe conversations around resource allocation
The ability to set strategic, scalable goals grounded in data and local context
Whether you're launching a new program, advocating for policy change, or trying to expand an

existing initiative, these tools offer a path forward that turns passion into action with strategic planning and measurable outcomes.

Day 1 The Political Impact of Large-Scale Neutering Programmes in Malaysia.

Further information to follow.

Day 1 Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-Manage (TNRM) of Free-Roaming Dogs: Success Factors for Singapore.

Presenting author: Anhui Lin
lin_anhui@nparks.gov.sg ; - National Parks Board

Singapore has been rabies-free since 1953. However, rabies is endemic in South-east Asia and Singapore maintains strict import control, biosecurity and quarantine, vaccination and biosurveillance measures to mitigate the risk of disease incursion.

Launched in 2018, the Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-Manage (TNRM) has been effective in the humane management of FRDs in Singapore. Over 4,300 FRDs have been trapped, with an estimated 80% of the FRD population sterilised. About 65% of trapped dogs have been rehomed, sheltered, or fostered, and the remaining released to live out their lives naturally. TNRM efforts have brought sustainable reduction of the FRD population to about 2,200 FRDs. Public feedback on FRDs has decreased by over 70% since the start of the programme.

Several key factors contribute to the success of the TNRM programme in Singapore. First, strong political support and government leadership, including funding for the trapping, sterilisation, microchipping. In 2022, the government-run Centre for Animal Rehabilitation was opened to support behavioural rehabilitation of FRDs and enhance rehoming opportunities.

Second, a science-based, data-driven approach encompassing population estimates and demographic surveys, with regular monitoring of the FRD population. The original target to sterilise 70% of the FRD population within 5 years was based on scientific literature and population modelling. TNRM and feedback data are mapped in dashboards, guiding targeted TNRM efforts at breeding hotspots.

Third, strong collaboration between government agencies and stakeholders such as

veterinarians, NGOs, and community caregivers. Under Project ADORE (Adoption and Rehoming of Dogs), government agencies work with NGOs to facilitate the rehoming of local mixed breed dogs to public housing, which typically does not allow large dog breeds.

Fourth, proactive public education and outreach efforts under the “Manage” component of TNRM, on responsible pet ownership and community animal caregiving, as well as managing potential human-animal interactions in our City in Nature.

Finally, continued capability and capacity building, through local sharing and workshops, study visits on best practices, as well as training by international experts in animal welfare and behaviour, population management and control.

Singapore continues to refine her TNRM programme to enhance its effectiveness.

Day 2 Cat Management in the Urban City-State of Singapore.

Presenting author::
Anhui Lin
lin_anhui@nparks.gov.sg ; - National Parks Board

In September 2024, Singapore launched a comprehensive Cat Management Framework (CMF) to enhance the health and welfare of pet and community cats and safeguard public health, responding to the growing cat population which increased from 82,000 in 2018 to 94,000 in 2024.

The CMF was developed following extensive public consultation with multiple stakeholders, involving:

- A large-scale public survey (30,000+ responses)
- Focus group discussions with over 100 stakeholders (cat owners, fosterers, community cat caregivers, veterinarians, NGOs, and government agencies)
- Follow-up public consultation on specific policy details

The CMF comprises:

(a) Mandatory microchipping and licensing of pet cats - to enhance traceability in the event of a disease outbreak, help reunite owners with their lost pets and hold owners to greater accountability for the health and welfare of their pets. A two-year transition period with free licensing allows pet owners time to adjust to licensing requirements. Over 24,000 cats have been licensed to date. Sterilisation is incentivised through lifetime licenses for sterilised cats. Free microchipping drives increase access and a government-funded Pet Cat Sterilisation Support (PCSS) programme helps lower-income households.

(b) A Trap-Neuter-Rehome/Release-Manage (TNRM) programme for community cats – building on the Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme which started in 2011, under which an average of 4,000 free-roaming cats (FRCs) are sterilised and microchipped annually. Still, an estimated 13,000 FRCs remain island wide. The government-funded TNRM programme adopts a humane, science-based approach to FRC management, leveraging strong collaboration between the government, veterinarians, NGOs and the community.

(c) Enhanced education and outreach on responsible pet cat ownership and community cat caregiving – through a variety of communication channels, engagement platforms and influencers. A mandatory free online pet ownership course was introduced for licence applicants to raise the standard of basic pet care. Community cat caregiving guidelines were co-created with stakeholders to advocate best practices for responsible feeding and care of FRCs. Continued outreach through Pets' Day Out events, community roadshows, school talks, traditional and social media channels help bring key messages to the public.

Challenges remain, including disamenities from irresponsible pet ownership and caregiving, pet cat hoarding, home breeding and abandonment and limited shelter capacities. Future plans include

- in-depth analysis of pet cat licensing data
- human behaviour change research studies to formulate strategies to increase pet cat sterilisation and licensing rates
- mapping of free-roaming cat population to identify hotspots and drive TNRM efforts.

Day 5 Shifting the Norm: Promoting Early Sterilization to Influence Human Behavior and Feline Population Dynamics in the United States

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Presenting author:
Brianna Lovell Myers
brianna@unitedspayalliance.org ; United Spay Alliance

Human decision-making is central to the success of any animal population management strategy. While spay/neuter initiatives have made progress in increasing access, fewer have focused on when sterilization occurs. In the United States, veterinarians often graduate without a clear understanding of the optimal age for sterilization. Despite growing scientific evidence supporting earlier procedures, outdated guidelines recommending spay/neuter at six months or older continue to persist—despite the fact that cats can become pregnant as early as four months of age. This delay contributes significantly to unintended litters and feline homelessness.

Feline Fix by Five is a national U.S. awareness campaign designed to shift both owner behavior and veterinary norms by promoting sterilization before five months of age. While the "two months, two pounds" guideline is widely accepted in shelter and rescue settings, Feline Fix by Five targets a different gap: veterinarians in private practice and cat guardians who continue to view six months (or later) as the norm. The campaign frames early sterilization as both a

responsible pet care practice and a tool for preventing unwanted litters – and reducing the cycle of cat homelessness – before it begins.

Launched in 2016, the campaign has evolved in response to changing communication trends and community needs. A centerpiece of our strategy is a dedicated awareness month each February, when we activate veterinary clinics, shelters, rescues, and advocates across the country. We equip them with customizable media kits containing outreach materials, graphics, talking points, and sample messaging to help normalize early-age sterilization in their communities. The campaign's public-facing educational materials are grounded in veterinary science and behavior change principles, aiming to influence decision-making at the household and clinic level.

This presentation will explore:

*Behavior change challenges in encouraging early-age sterilization among U.S. cat guardians and veterinary professionals

*Messaging strategies that promote earlier spay/neuter as a responsible, preventive practice

*Key lessons from nearly a decade of evolving outreach and engagement efforts

*The impact of targeted awareness campaigns on feline population dynamics

By addressing the social and cultural drivers behind delayed sterilization, Feline Fix by Five demonstrates how communications and education can complement direct services in reducing overpopulation—offering a model for shifting public norms and improving outcomes for cats.

Day 2 Evaluating the Impact of the Trap-Neuter-Return Programme on Lisbon's Cat Colonies.

Presenting author:
Madalena Neves
madalenaneves@fmv.ulisboa.pt ; - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Lisbon
Co-authors:
Telmo Nunes - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Lisbon
Marta Videira - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Lisbon; Casa dos Animais de Lisboa
Virgílio Almeida - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Lisbon

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The stray cat number's rise is a growing problem, not only in Portugal, but also in many different countries. Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) is the most effective method to control stray animal populations. It consists of capturing stray cats, transporting them to a facility where they are sterilized and releasing them to where they were initially caught.
This study evaluates TNR's impact, implemented by Lisbon's shelter (CAL), in this city's stray cat colonies through the years. It also predicts this program and this population's future, considering different factors such as immigration, abandonment, adoption, sterilization rate and the

interaction with the population of owned cats.
To achieve these goals, two different studies were performed. First, surveys were sent to Lisbon's cat colonies caretakers. Data were collected regarding colonies' information and caretakers' characteristics.

In the second study, data were collected from the 2021 census, CAL's colonies' location, SIAC (Sistema de Informação de Animais de Companhia) and Veterinary teaching hospital, FMV - Lisbon. This information was analyzed in R and QGis where a negative binomial regression model was created, which provided results later used in a population model (capm 0.8.0.).

The results from the first study show a significant decrease in mean colony size, going from 14.7 (SD 14.7) to 8.3 (SD 6.8) cats since the beginning of the implementation of the TNR program, a decrease of, in average, 20.8% (SD 53.4), with a duration of a mean of 7 (SD 4.9) years, and an average spay rate per colony of 89% (SD 21.3). A brief characterization of the caretakers showed that 57% were above 50 years old and 80% were women.

In order to predict the future of this population, the negative binomial model predicted a total of 46219 stray cats in Lisbon. This value was later used in a population model which anticipated a decrease to 67.4% of the population in 5 years. It also determined that the factors that most influence the evolution of stray cats' number are the environment's carrying capacity and the number of births in this population.

This work highlights the positive effects of the TNR program on these colonies and emphasizes the importance of the implementation of a transversal strategy, operating on sterilization, population education and environment control. This enables the accomplishment of an effective population control method that results in a healthy and stable stray cats' population.

Day 3 More Than Spay and Neuter: A 10-Year Evolution of Dog Management and Improving Companion Animal Welfare in India.

Dr. Piyush Patel, Director, Street Dog Program (India) - Humane World for Animals, India

India is home to an estimated 70 million street dogs, whose close interactions with humans pose significant public health and animal welfare challenges. Since 2013, HSI has been working to humanely manage street dog populations, transforming its approach over the past decade from a narrow focus on spay/neuter to a holistic model that enhances companion animal welfare.

This presentation will explore the evolution of HSI's dog management strategies, highlighting key learnings, opportunities, and the role of data in informing programmatic activities. Central to this transformation has been an emphasis on community-driven efforts, including education

programs and the development of robust volunteer networks. These initiatives have played a critical role in managing street dog populations, reducing human-dog conflicts, and improving the quality of life for both animals and communities.

Collaboration has also been pivotal. Partnerships with governmental agencies, local animal welfare organizations, and communities have enabled the development of a more sustainable and ethical approach to street dog management. The workshop will provide a detailed analysis of successful strategies implemented across more than 15 locations in India, as well as honest reflections on the challenges and lessons from initiatives that fell short.

Over the past decade, HSI has facilitated over 200,000 spay/neuter surgeries and 250,000 rabies vaccinations, contributing to significant progress in humane dog population management. One key case study to be discussed is Uttarakhand, where HSI has operated a statewide program since 2016.

Through field stories, data-driven insights, and reflections from the past ten years, this workshop will outline what HSI now considers a “good” model for street dog management and how it can be replicated for lasting impact.

Day 3 Advanced Dog Capture Tools and Technologies: A Case Study From Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Presenting author:
John Peaveler - Humane Innovations, LLC
john@humaneinnovations.com
Co-authors:
Dave Pauli - Humane World for Animals
Jennifer Toussaint - Animal Welfare League of Arlington

Catching high percentages of dogs in a sizable population is not easy. A variety of circumstances can influence exactly how difficult any individual dog will be to capture. In most environments, capture programs can begin to struggle when a portion of the population learns to avoid both equipment and dog catchers. Ideally, programs will begin with the broadest possible number of capture options available to teams and will continue to grow and evolve to integrate new tools and techniques. However, many programs will eventually be left with a population of largely difficult to capture dogs, and these animals will require advanced tools and techniques.

Since 2015, the non-profit Our Big Fat Caribbean Rescue has been working to reduce population size and improve animal health through trap-neuter-return efforts in Vieques, Puerto Rico. Efforts there have had positive, significant impacts in both regards. However, a small number of dogs have proven to be extremely capture resistant. In October of 2024, a small team of experts were brought to the island in order to capture at least some of the most difficult dogs. During the ten-day mission, a range of advanced capture tools and technologies were utilized to capture a majority of the known and even a segment of previously unknown dogs. Additionally, specialized and custom capture tools were imported to Vieques and local stakeholders were

taught how to utilize them in order to continue successful advanced capture operations after the team had left.

This session will introduce advanced capture tools including custom electronic traps, collarums, cellular cameras, mapping tools, and offer some tips on advanced humane live trap use. Every dog can be caught, and serious programs have to be adaptable and willing to put in the effort that advanced capture requires.

Day 3 From Data to Action: Country-Specific Strategies for Stray Animal Population Management Strategies in Southeast Asia

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Chonnikarn (Pom) Phochanakij and Hanh Nguyen Minh

Effective stray animal population management requires strategies tailored to local challenges while integrating public health and animal welfare priorities. In Southeast Asia, we use data-driven approaches to address country-specific issues. This presentation compares population management strategies in Vietnam and Thailand, highlighting key differences and shared priorities.

Vietnam faces challenges from dog meat trade and theft, contributing to rabies spread. Advocacy for a dog meat ban is crucial alongside vaccination and education. Government and local partners play a key role in policy advocacy and enforcement.

Thailand's challenge lies in identifying high-density stray populations and implementing control measures. While strategies vary between urban and rural areas, the goal is nationwide adoption of CNVR through government capacity building. Evidence-based planning informs urban interventions such as free mobile clinics, while collaboration with local partners ensures standardized CNVR application.

Both countries integrate rabies prevention into their programs—Vietnam focuses on vaccination and sterilization, while Thailand balances both. Evidence-based planning supports urban interventions, local government collaboration strengthens CNVR, shelter support, and adoption programs. Strengthening partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, and local communities is essential for sustainability.

Long-term success requires ongoing monitoring to assess the impact of capacity building and regulatory advocacy. Sustainable implementation depends on local agencies leading efforts to align strategies with community needs.

Day 5 Cat Friendly Homing: Practical, Proven Strategies for Homing Unowned Cats.

Lindsey Quinlan and Dr Vanessa Whitfield

International Cat Care's Cat Friendly Homing programme is a proven approach to achieving better outcomes for unowned cats. Designed for flexibility, it can be successfully applied in shelters, homing centres, and foster networks worldwide.

This session will introduce the Cat Friendly Homing programme and demonstrate how its practical tools and real-world solutions—rooted in iCatCare's Cat Friendly Principles—help organisations work more effectively within their limited resources. Using data from a real-life case study in a UK homing organisation, we'll explore how these adaptable strategies lead to measurable improvements in both cat welfare and homing success.

Day 1 Animal Protection and Intersectorality: Building Care Networks Through Health Education.

Presenting authors:
Samilla Santos[1] and Dr. Danielle Ferreira de Magalhães Soares[2]
[1]samillavs@gmail.com; Federal University of Minas Gerais
[2]Federal University of Minas Gerais
Coauthors:
Maria Andreza Santos de Morae - Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais. Caroline Batista de Oliveira – UNA University Center.
Camila Stefanie Fonseca de Oliveira - Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Cross-sector collaboration is a practical and essential strategy for addressing complex social and environmental challenges. More than a theoretical framework, it represents a concrete social practice that unites different government and community sectors. Despite its importance, the implementation of inter-agency initiatives, particularly those involving animal protection services and zoonotic surveillance units, remains limited in many contexts. In Brazil, especially in urban settings, cooperation between animal protection, social assistance, health, and education services is vital to address issues such as animal abandonment, mistreatment, and overpopulation. This is particularly evident in cases of animal hoarding, a complex condition requiring integrated action to ensure both human and animal well-being.

Similarly, there is a growing need to support multispecies families—households where companion animals are considered integral members—living in extreme poverty, with limited access to food and basic care.

To respond to these challenges, a Health and Socio-environmental Education Sector was created between 2023 and 2024 within the local animal protection agency in Betim, Minas Gerais, Brazil. This sector developed intersectoral actions in partnership with social assistance centers (CRAS – Social Assistance Reference Centers), public health and education departments, civil defense (emergency management), and environmental authorities. Through active learning methodologies, the sector implemented initiatives to prevent disasters such as floods and landslides, interpersonal violence (in collaboration with CRAS), zoonotic disease transmission, and irresponsible pet guardianship.

Educational activities were conducted with children, families, educators, and municipal employees. More than 10,000 people were reached through these initiatives. Impact assessment revealed that 12% of those who accessed spay/neuter and veterinary consultations in early 2025 were referred by CRAS, with the Citrolândia region showing the highest concentration. Educational actions carried out in partnership with CRAS accounted for 60% of the initiatives between 2023 and 2024.This experience highlights that public animal welfare policies should not be limited to veterinary services. They must incorporate educational and preventive strategies that acknowledge the socioeconomic and cultural realities of multispecies families.

Only through this integrated approach—aligned with the One Health framework—can we promote holistic well-being, prevent abandonment and mistreatment, and strengthen community resilience.

Day 4 Let's Save the Strays International in Myanmar: Dog Population Management and Rabies Prevention and Control in a Conflict-Affected Country.

Presenting authors:
Dr. Amy A. Shroff1 and Dr. Joann Lindenmayer2 -
amy.shroffvmd@gmail.com ; LSTSI
joann.lindemayer@gmail.com ; LSTSI
Co-author:
Gary Evans - LSTSI

Myanmar, the site of the longest civil war in the world, confronts enormous free-roaming dog population and rabies challenges. An estimated 250,000 dogs live in Yangon alone, the largest city in Myanmar; of those, only an estimated 20% have been vaccinated even once against rabies. Past government efforts to carry out widespread culling have failed to mitigate these problems. There are currently no formal animal welfare organizations in Myanmar, and widespread poverty limits access to post-exposure rabies prophylaxis.

By request in 2018, Let's Save the Strays International (LSTSI) established a pilot Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) program in Mandalay. The program is distinguished by its Burmese-led, community-engaged approach to dog population management and rabies prevention. Working with the Myanmar Veterinary Association, the University of Veterinary

Science Yezin, local veterinarians, and residents who feed free-roaming dogs, LSTSI established two TNVR teams, each with four veterinarians, five trained volunteer veterinary technicians, and community volunteers; the latter assist with restraint and paperwork to register dogs for sterilization and vaccination. Teams receive additional training in best practices from international nonprofits Soi dog, World Veterinary Services (WVS), and the International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM). People who feed street dogs ("street feeders") self-identify to help locate intact dogs for surgery and monitor their health after surgery.

LSTSI expanded its efforts to Yangon, the largest city in Myanmar, in 2024. The nonprofit's strategy is to focus sterilization and vaccination efforts in focal areas, expanding to contiguous areas when 80% of the street dog population in a locality has been sterilized. Anecdotal information shared by TNVR team members and community residents indicates that where LSTSI has worked, the number of puppies and human-dog conflicts has been reduced, and dog health has improved. This year many will be trained in the use of a Mission rabies app that has been adapted and simplified to collect data on the presence and body condition of intact dogs, nursing females, and puppies.

Myanmar presents numerous challenges to TNVR efforts. This presentation will share lessons learned from engaging communities and conducting TNVR in a resource-constrained country embroiled in the longest civil war in the world and, as on March 28, 2025, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake.

Day 3 Demographics of Free-Roaming Dogs in Guwahati, India: Assessing Population Characteristics, Comparing Estimation Methods, and Validating Superduplicates as a Cost-Effective Tool.

Presenting authors
Laura Cunha Silva
laura.dasilva@unibe.ch ; Veterinary Public Health Institute
Co-authors:
Parimala Mohanty - Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Guwahati, India.
Reda Zahri - University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland.
Salome Dürr - Veterinary Public Health Institute, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland.
Harish Kumar Tiwari - Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Guwahati, India.; Sydney Medical School, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, NSW, Australia. ; DBT Wellcome Trust India Alliance Intermediate Fellow, Hyderabad, Telangana, India. , India.

India bears the highest global burden of rabies, accounting for approximately 35% of all human rabies deaths worldwide with free-roaming dogs (FRDs) playing a critical role in the spread of the disease. Accurate FRD population estimates are crucial for effective dog population management (DPM) and mass dog vaccination (MDV) strategies. While several studies have assessed FRD demographics in India, none have focused on Northeast India, particularly Assam. This study 1) characterizes FRD demographics in two urban settings in Guwahati, Assam, 2) estimates FRD populations using Program MARK and the SuperDuplicates (AS) application, and 3) evaluates AS

as a less resource-intensive alternative to MARK for population estimation.

Photographic capture-recapture surveys were conducted in two distinct locations in Guwahati: a market area without defined boundaries and a gated university campus. At least 141 unique FRD were sighted on campus and 183 in the market site. Significant statistical differences were found in regard to sex, age, size and sterilization status of FRD populations between sites.

Population estimates using Program MARK Huggin's heterogeneity models revealed market FRD population estimated at 252 individuals (Chao estimator), while campus estimates varied: 161 (morning transects) and 153 (evening transects) using the Jackknife estimator, with total estimates of 164 (Chao) and 169 (Jackknife). The AS estimated 246 FRD in the market and 178 on campus. All possible day combinations estimates were calculated via AS and over 70% congruence was observed between estimates from MARK and AS.

In the same city, different areas exhibit diverse population characteristics and varying population estimates. AS proved to be a reliable, efficient alternative to program MARK for estimating FRD populations, with compatibility above the 70% threshold. This study highlights the need for local contextualization in planning MDV and DPM campaigns, even within the same administrative units.

Day 4 Animal Population Management in the City of São Paulo.

Presenting authors:
Telma Rocha Tavares[1] and Analy Xavier[2] - -
[1]telmartavares@prefeitura.sp.gov.br ; Prefeitura de São Paulo
[2]analyxavier@prefeitura.sp.gov.br ; Prefeitura de São Paulo

Co-authors
Camila Diniz Fontanesi - Prefeitura de São Paulo

The city of São Paulo has extensive legislation concerning the management of stray dogs and cats, laws for the protection and welfare of domestic animals, as well as regulations on the sale and donation of dogs and cats, reproductive control, and more. São Paulo was a pioneer in offering free veterinary care for dogs and cats and currently operates four public veterinary hospitals. Additionally, the city has a robust Permanent Reproductive Control Program, which includes three modalities: contracted clinics, mobile spay-and-neuter units, and task forces at public facilities.

The removal of animals in São Paulo is carried out by the Zoonosis Surveillance Division of the Health Surveillance Coordination (DVZ/COVISA), selectively and in cases of proven aggression, invasion of public institutions or threat to public health. It also applies to animals in a state of suffering or with incurable diseases, in which cases the animal may be subjected to clinical euthanasia.

The Center for Zoonosis Control was established in 1973 with the primary goal of combating rabies and diseases transmitted by rats. To control rabies, one of the key strategies involved the

euthanasia of stray dogs and cats. This practice continued for 35 years until it was officially banned by law in the state of São Paulo in 2008.

In 2017, the city of São Paulo established the Domestic Animal Health and Protection Coordination (COSAP), within the Municipal Health Department, with the mission of developing and implementing consistent public policies for the health, welfare, and protection of domestic animals.

Among its main attributions are reproductive control, identification and registration of dogs and cats, adoption and promotion of the concept of responsible ownership throughout the municipality.

The reproductive control program operates on three fronts: veterinary clinics, neutering campaigns held in public spaces, and those conducted through mobile units. Animals neutered through the municipal program are also vaccinated, microchipped, and registered with the General Animal Registry (RGA).

COSAP receives animals collected by the DVZ after surveillance procedures and a quarantine period and is responsible for their care until they are rehomed through adoption.

Additionally, COSAP oversees reproductive control of dogs and cats in areas of health interest, including communities and homeless populations.

Activities include surveillance of capture neuter resident animals, annual census, reproductive control through TNR actions (Trap-neuter-release (TNR), identification by microchip, parasite control, sample collection for zoonosis surveillance and clinical treatment. Some of the animals treated are also made available for adoption.

Day 5 The Essential Role of Ukrainian Communities in Dog and Cat Population Management.

Presenting author:
Dr. Gregg Tully
gregg@greggtully.org ; Wildlife & Welfare

The crisis in Ukraine is a unique challenge for dog and cat population management. Before the Russian military invaded in 2022, there were few population management programs, pet owners and government officials generally did not appreciate the importance of sterilization, and of the small number of dog population surveys that had been conducted, many were done years ago or were not entirely reliable.

Due to the war, 14 million Ukrainian people fled their homes, many of them leaving countless family pets on the streets. As most of these animals were not sterilized, this has created potential for a population explosion on a scale that Ukraine has never seen.

From the perspective of disaster response, the war is unusual because many animal protection organizations that typically deploy teams of disaster specialists, animal handlers, veterinarians have not allowed their staff to go to Ukraine.

Wildlife & Welfare's first project in Ukraine was to distribute food to abandoned pets. We worked with Ukrainian partners to form a network of hundreds of community members who regularly feed thousands of roaming animals. We wanted to complement the short-term impact of food aid with more sustainable dog and cat population management, including targeted short-term projects in villages as well as ongoing collaborations with veterinary clinics in towns and cities. However, without trained animal handlers, suitable vehicles, animal handling equipment, or even any staff in the country to manage the project, it seemed impossible. Ukrainian community members made it a success.

We asked them for recommendations of veterinary clinics, traveled to Ukraine to assess these clinics, and partnered with several that have very high standards. We raised funds and engaged our network of animal feeders. Now, when they see unsterilized dogs and cats in the areas where they distribute food, they use food to gain trust of the animals, make appointments with our partner clinics, collect the animals, and bring them for sterilization. For animals that are difficult to catch, skilled animal handlers help for a small fee. After surgery, the community members take care of animals in their homes, return them to their neighborhoods, and monitor them for post-operative complications whenever they feed animals.
Without the dedication, compassion, and skills of these community members, all unpaid volunteers, the program would not be possible. Furthermore, they are contributing to a cultural shift in Ukraine toward sterilization becoming more accepted as a part of responsible pet ownership.

Day 5 Culturally Relevant Training to Promote Community Engagement, Responsible Pet Ownership, and Sustainable Animal Population Management in Remote Australian Indigenous Communities.

Presenting author
Jenny Turton -
jenny.turton@amrric.org ; Animal Management in Rural & Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC)
co-author - Lani Lawson - Animal Management in Rural & Remote Indigenous Communities

Managing animal populations in remote Australian Indigenous communities presents unique challenges. Limited access to animal health services, due to remoteness and broader social

determinants of health, contributes to overpopulation, animal welfare concerns, nuisance behaviors, and increased risks of zoonotic diseases and dog bites. Additional complexities arise from factors such as the absence of fencing, cultural perspectives on free-ranging pets, limited resources for animal management programs, a lack of companion animal legislation, and inadequate local by-law enforcement. Addressing these challenges requires culturally and contextually appropriate solutions. Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) is a national not-for-profit organisation that collaborates with remote Indigenous communities to improve companion animal health, thereby supporting broader community well-being through a multidisciplinary One Health approach.

Education and training are key to empowering individuals and strengthening local capacity for sustainable animal management. In response to the specific needs of remote Indigenous communities, where mainstream animal care and regulation courses are unsuitable, AMRRIC has developed two accredited skill sets designed to equip animal management staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement effective programs tailored to the realities of these communities. The two accredited skill sets include:

ACMSS00031 Promote Animal Health in Remote Communities Skill Set: Designed for frontline staff, such as Animal Management Workers, Environmental Health Workers, or Rangers employed by Local Government Authorities (LGAs) or Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (ACCOs).
ACMSS00034 Animal Management Coordination in Remote Communities Skill Set: Tailored for managers overseeing animal health programs within LGAs or ACCOs, many of whom lack formal training in animal-related fields.

Both skill sets emphasise community engagement, ensuring animal management initiatives are developed in collaboration with local communities for sustainable, long-term impact. Participants learn to effectively engage with community members, involve key stakeholders, and deliver school and community education programs on animal health and management. These efforts are essential in fostering human behavior change related to animal ownership, promoting responsible pet ownership, and encouraging participation in animal population management.

By building local capacity through culturally relevant education and training, AMRRIC is equipping remote Indigenous communities with the skills and knowledge needed for sustainable animal management. These initiatives not only improve animal health and welfare but also strengthen community well-being, fostering long-term, positive change for both people and their companion animals.

Day 3 Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks – The Use of Theory of Change for Animal Welfare.

Presenting author:
Cam Williams
cameron.williams@dogstrust.org.uk ; Dogs Trust
Co-author:
Dr Lauren Harris - Dogs Trust

Animal welfare organisations spend around $400 million annually, with approximately $50 million spent on dog projects. This figure excludes the billions of dollars spent annually by local and national governments. The sustained rise in resourcing for global dog projects points to an ongoing interest in finding lasting solutions. However, this continued growth has led to increasing requirements for evidence and justification to funders. The Theory of Change methodology is presented here as a tool for growing understanding and communication of animal welfare projects. A Theory of Change provides a key opportunity for stakeholder engagement and should interrogate project requirements, what success looks like and the knock-on implications of change, both the good and the bad.

In this presentation, we will describe how Dogs Trust, the UK's largest dog welfare charity, utilises the Theory of Change methodology to inform and evaluate both strategic and intervention-focused decision-making. Employing the Theory of Change method allows for the development of clear and structured project thinking whilst creating a space for diverse stakeholders to share their insights, assumptions and understanding of causal pathways and processes between the activities and actors required for the desired change to occur. It is also an important space to discuss the external factors, those out of the control of the intervention or stakeholders, that may accelerate or diminish the effectiveness or sustainability of the project.

The Theory of Change methodology will be demonstrated step-by-step using the presentation of existing models designed through Dogs Trust collaboration internally or with external partners and an example designed for the ICAM conference and discussing a United Kingdom project perspective on a microchipping intervention, featuring data from the Dogs Trust longitudinal Stray Dog Survey, collecting data since 1997. It is hoped that this presentation can contribute to the animal welfare evidence conversation and open the door to more organisations having further tools for a structured, transparent and accountable intervention design and review process going forward.

Day 4 A Barking Dog Never Bites, a Baited Dog Never Dies – of Rabies!

Presenting authors:

Dr. Gowri Yale[1] and Dr. Ad Vos[2]
[1] gowri.yale@ceva.com - Ceva Sante Animale
[2] ad.vos@ceva.com - - Ceva Sante Animale

Rabies remains one of the deadliest infectious diseases, with a 100% fatality rate. It continues to cause thousands of human deaths each year, most often in children and untold suffering and loss among dogs and other animals. Free-roaming dogs are the main reservoir and transmitter of the virus to people. Tragically, rabies not only threatens lives but also deepens fear and tension between communities and free-roaming dogs, making coexistence and population management more difficult.

The most effective and sustainable way to eliminate dog-mediated human rabies is by vaccinating dogs before they become infected, rather than treating humans after exposure. While mass dog vaccination campaigns have made great progress in many parts of the world, reaching free-roaming dogs remains a major challenge. These dogs, often inaccessible through conventional methods, are key to stopping the transmission cycle and must be included in vaccination efforts.

Historically, specialized tools such as nets, poles, and blowpipes have been used to catch and vaccinate these animals. While they make it possible to reach this critical dog population, they can cause stress, fear, and even injury. Over time, dogs learn to avoid vaccinators, making each campaign more difficult. These methods also carry risks of disease transmission (like canine distemper and parvoviral enteritis), public safety, as frightened dogs may flee into traffic or crowded areas.

Oral rabies vaccination (ORV) offers a breakthrough alternative: a safe, effective, and humane approach that allows dogs to be vaccinated simply by consuming a palatable vaccine bait. This method reduces stress for both the dog and the vaccinator, increases acceptance within communities, and helps protect animal welfare while advancing public health goals. ORV has already proven successful in eliminating rabies in wildlife reservoirs and is now showing great promise for free-roaming dogs.

By increasing coverage among hard-to-reach dogs in a quicker, gentler, and more compassionate manner, ORV not only makes rabies control more effective, it transforms it into a kinder and easier way of protecting both animals and humans.