



Information Series

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Animal Services - Your Animal Shelter

Dogs, cats and other animals arrive at Animal Services for many different reasons. **Almost half of the pets** are brought in by their owners, usually because the pet has medical issues, behavior issues, or the owners are moving. Some are picked up and brought to us because they are wandering, chasing people or other animals, are injured, or unfortunately, dead from being hit by a car.

In 2014, our shelter handled 6,346 animals from the Thurston County area. Most of these animals were dogs and cats, but we also had almost 350 birds from a cock-fighting case, 120 animals in other court cases, and 375 raccoons, possums, crows, rabbits and other wildlife!

In an average week:

- 53 strays are brought in by the public or by animal control officers;
- 43 pets are brought to our shelter by their owners;
- 3 animals are picked up dead on the road by our officers;
- 40 pets are adopted back into the community; and
- 20 pets are returned to their owner.

With this many animals, several decisions have to be made about each animal:

- Is the pet's owner going to come and pick up his or her pet?
- Is the animal a good pet to adopt if the owner doesn't come get it?
- Is the animal healthy and friendly?

We find homes for most of the animals, but what do we do if the animal isn't a good candidate for adoption? Sometimes, we have to euthanize animals because they are too sick, too injured or too unfriendly to be adopted.

According to the ASPCA, in the United States, **7.6 million animals enter shelters every year**, and almost a third are euthanized. You might be asking yourself, "Why?"

Many people do not spay or neuter their pets. This is especially true for cats – so there are simply too many. Even one litter adds to this problem, as each kitten in a litter can grow up to have kittens of its own. Animal Services has programs to help pay for spaying and neutering cats and dogs!

The most common reason for dogs coming to our shelter is that they did not get enough time being trained or socialized. Dogs can become very lonely and bored if their family is too busy to spend time with them. Some will bark, chew up things they shouldn't and even run away to find something to do or someone to play with. We have lots of information on training and socializing dogs.

Be a friend to the animals – spay or neuter your pets, spend lots of fun time with them, and encourage others to do the same!