

## **SPCA Monterey County Cat & Dog Sheltering Statistics**

### **January 1 – December 31, 2023**

With an emphasis on compassion and supporting the human-animal bond, we maintained our focus on helping people keep their beloved pets. We offer numerous low- and no-cost programs and services along with our free Pet Food Bank, which gave out over 100,000 pounds of free pet food. We never closed our doors to any animal that needed us and we were open every single day of the year to help pets in need.

We continue to see a higher percentage of animals arrive in need of major medical or behavioral rehabilitation and we provided significant veterinary and behavioral care to surrendered and stray pets. We rescue pets from serious neglect situations, who also need weeks or months of care before they are healthy enough for new homes.

Limited admission shelters continue to impact us, as 5% of our incoming animals came when pet owners from outside our county, some as far away as southern California and the inland valleys, contacted us saying that no shelter or rescue group in their area would take their pets, many who needed medical and behavioral intervention.

We continued to focus on low-cost spay and neuter services, including mobile clinics, celebrating the most successful year in our history. We provided free feral cat spay/neuter surgeries, altering 1,454 feral cats at no cost to their caretakers. We provided grants to five local rescues and spay/neuter providers to prevent pet overpopulation and we took in numerous pets from other shelters to help them.

We never make decisions based on impacting a single statistic and this year was no different. We thank you for your support as we help pets in need in our community.

Please note, these statistics are only for cats, dogs, kittens, and puppies entering our shelter. We care for many other animals, including horses, rabbits, barn pets, guinea pigs, and exotic pets, and we provide many vital services at low or no cost to our community. Everything we do is only made possible by you.

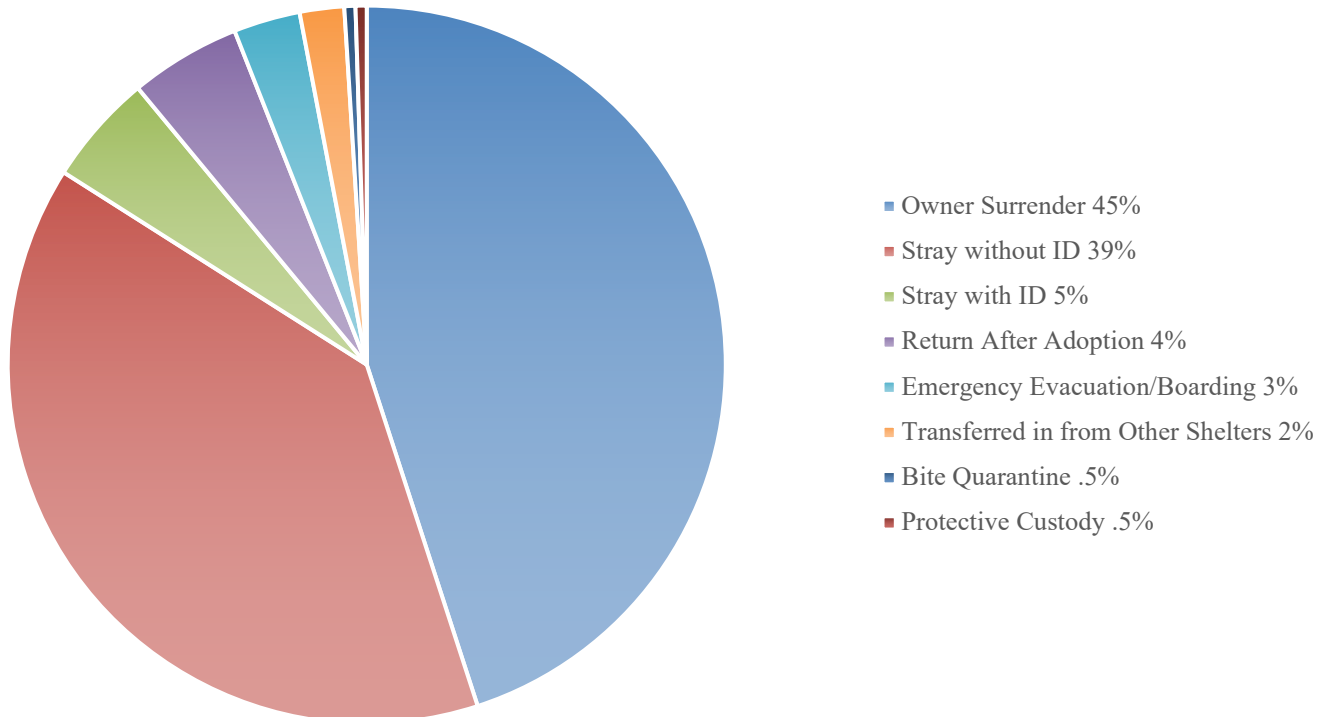
## INTAKE

	Dog & Puppy	Cat & Kitten	Total
All	1969	2347	4316

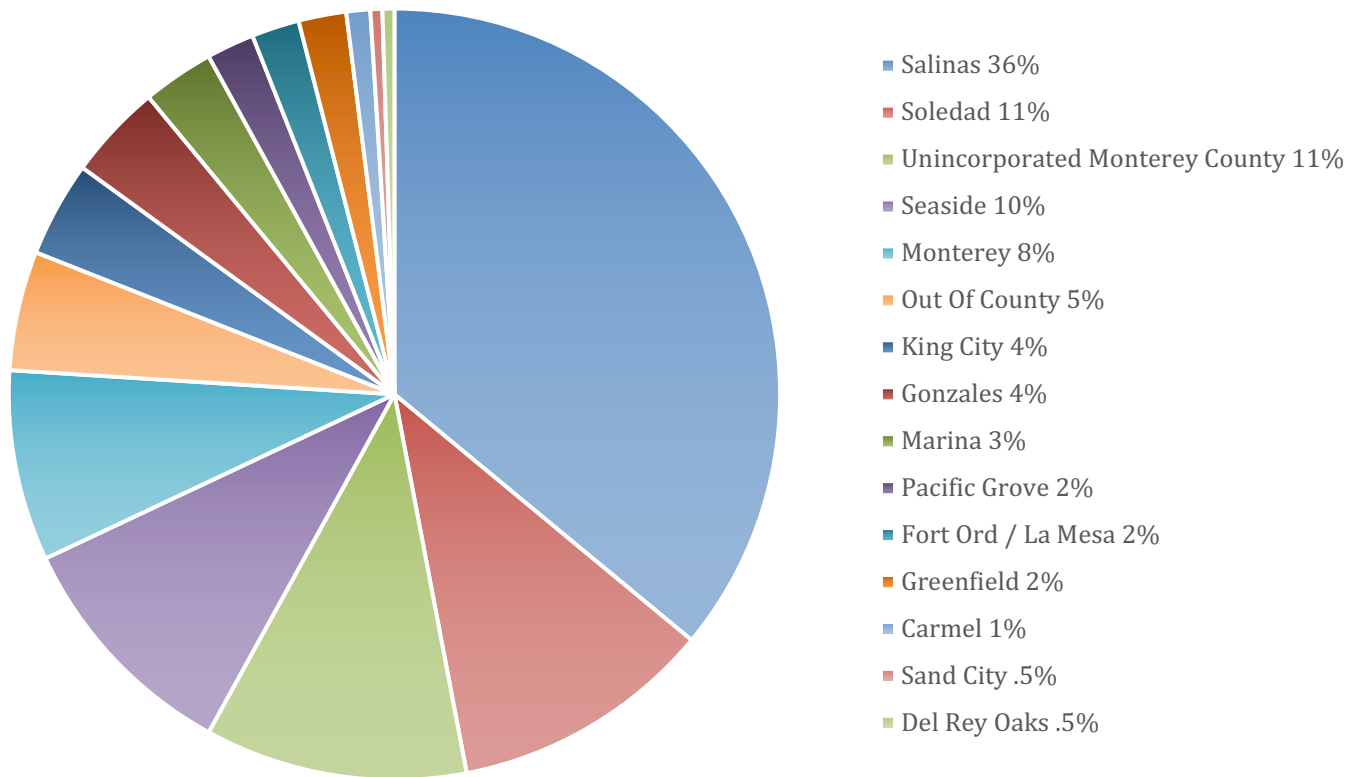
Your SPCA is the only open-admission shelter in Monterey County. We do not turn away pets that owners can no longer care for regardless of breed, age, physical health, or temperament. We also accept all strays from [jurisdictions in our county that contract with us for state-mandated animal sheltering services](#).

These statistics include all cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens entering our shelter. While our doors are open to all animals who need us, [we also offer numerous programs](#) to keep pets in their homes with their families or to prevent them from ever becoming homeless.

### How Pets Arrived at the SPCA



## Where Pets Arrived From



Salinas is still the city we receive by far the largest number of pets from, despite the city operating their own shelter. Most of the pets coming to us from Salinas arrive as owner surrenders, which Hitchcock Road Animal Services does not accept. Because of this, your SPCA began a focused, extremely low-cost Spay and Neuter program targeting pets owned by residents of Salinas and Seaside in 2018, later expanding to South County cities. In 2023, we spayed and neutered 7,482 pets at our clinic and by providing grants to multiple local rescue groups and spay/neuter providers to reduce pet overpopulation.

Five percent of the pets who need us come from owners outside Monterey County. Owners tell us that their local shelters will not accept their pets due to limited or managed intake and they have nowhere else to turn.

## **ADOPTIONS**

	<b>Dog &amp; Puppy</b>	<b>Cat &amp; Kitten</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Healthy</b>	699	1277	1976
<b>Rehabilitatable</b>	268	270	538
<b>Chronic Conditions</b>	90	80	170
<b>Unhealthy/Untreatable</b>	4	24	28
<b>Total</b>	1061	1651	2712

Your SPCA makes every attempt to find loving homes for the pets in our care. We do not place time limits on animals and will often keep pets for weeks or months until we find their new, forever homes. Thanks to the compassionate support of our donors, 767 pets - including dogs, cats, horses, exotic pets, and more - suffering from health or behavior issues received rehabilitation, major surgery, or other lifesaving care in order to become adoptable. The unhealthy pets in this section were adopted by volunteers who understood the pets' serious health or behavior issues, or were feral/unsocialized cats adopted into to barn homes. Please see the end of this document for the category definitions. We invite you to visit our Adoption Center or sign up for our Pet Alert Program (sign up at [SPCAmc.org/pet-alert-program](http://SPCAmc.org/pet-alert-program)) to meet your new pet.

## **TRANSFERED TO OTHER AGENCIES**

<b>Dog &amp; Puppy</b>	<b>Cat &amp; Kitten</b>	<b>Total</b>
138	226	364

This includes pets who were transferred to other shelters or rescue groups. The SPCA works with rescue groups to help find homes for pets who are not thriving in a shelter environment.

## RETURNED TO OWNER

<b>Dog &amp; Puppy</b>	<b>Cat &amp; Kitten</b>	<b>Total</b>
318	188	506

It is a thrilling day when lost pets are reunited with their owners! Every pet that enters our shelter is scanned for a microchip and their information is posted on our website to assist owners looking for their lost pet. As you can see from the chart above, 89% of the strays who come to us arrive with no microchip, collar, or tag. Despite this challenge, we reunited 7% more pets with their owners this year than the previous year.

## EUTHANIZED

	<b>Dog &amp; Puppy</b>	<b>Cat &amp; Kitten</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Healthy</b>	0	0	0
<b>Rehabilitatable</b>	0	18	18
<b>Chronic Conditions</b>	34	38	72
<b>Unhealthy/Untreatable</b>	345	266	611

The SPCA does not euthanize based on how long an animal has been in our care and once pets are made available for adoption they can stay with us as long as it takes (weeks, months, or even years) to find them new, loving homes. But sometimes, the most humane service we can provide is a painless ending. We will euthanize an animal that is suffering from an injury or illness that cannot be treated to assure the animal's long-term health and comfort. We may also choose humane euthanasia when an animal exhibits serious aggression towards other animals or towards people. While it is our mission to find loving homes for animals in need, it is also our responsibility not to adopt animals that pose a danger to other pets or people. These numbers do not include owners who bring their pets to us for compassionate end-of-life humane euthanasia services.

We accept owner-surrendered animals. We focus on pets from Monterey County but are often approached by people from outside our county who say their local shelter was

limited admission or refused their pet, and they had nowhere else to turn. Many of these pets from out of our county are not safe adoption candidates due to a history of aggressive behavior. Still, their owners are grateful that we choose to accept their pets.

For decades, we have had a 100% success rate rehoming physically and behaviorally healthy, fully-weaned cats and dogs. While we sometimes need to euthanize pets with serious rehabilitatable or chronic conditions, every day your SPCA is mending broken bones, healing wounds, providing long-overdue veterinary care, or working to socialize anxious pets. Euthanasia decisions are never made lightly, and the treatable and chronic categories are the euthanasia areas we are working hard to reduce to zero. Please see the end of this document for the category definitions.

## **LIVE RELEASE RATE**

Below, you can see the SPCA's Live Release Rate for several years. Our Live Release Rate (also called a Save Rate) is calculated consistently with shelters and communities across the country. We take the percentage of animals for which we've created a positive outcome -- ones we've adopted, returned-to-owners or transferred -- from the total number of animals received. And, as is a standard practice, we don't include animals surrendered by their owners with a request for euthanasia in the calculation, if they are indeed unadoptable.

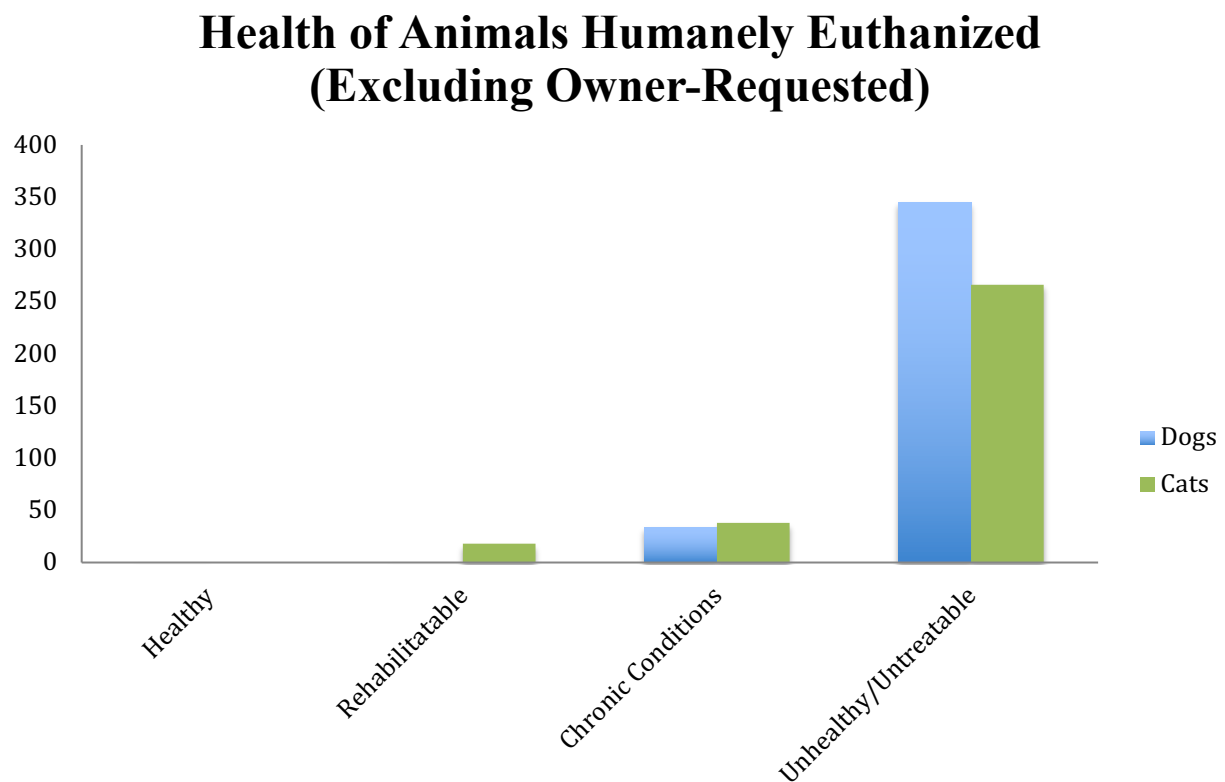
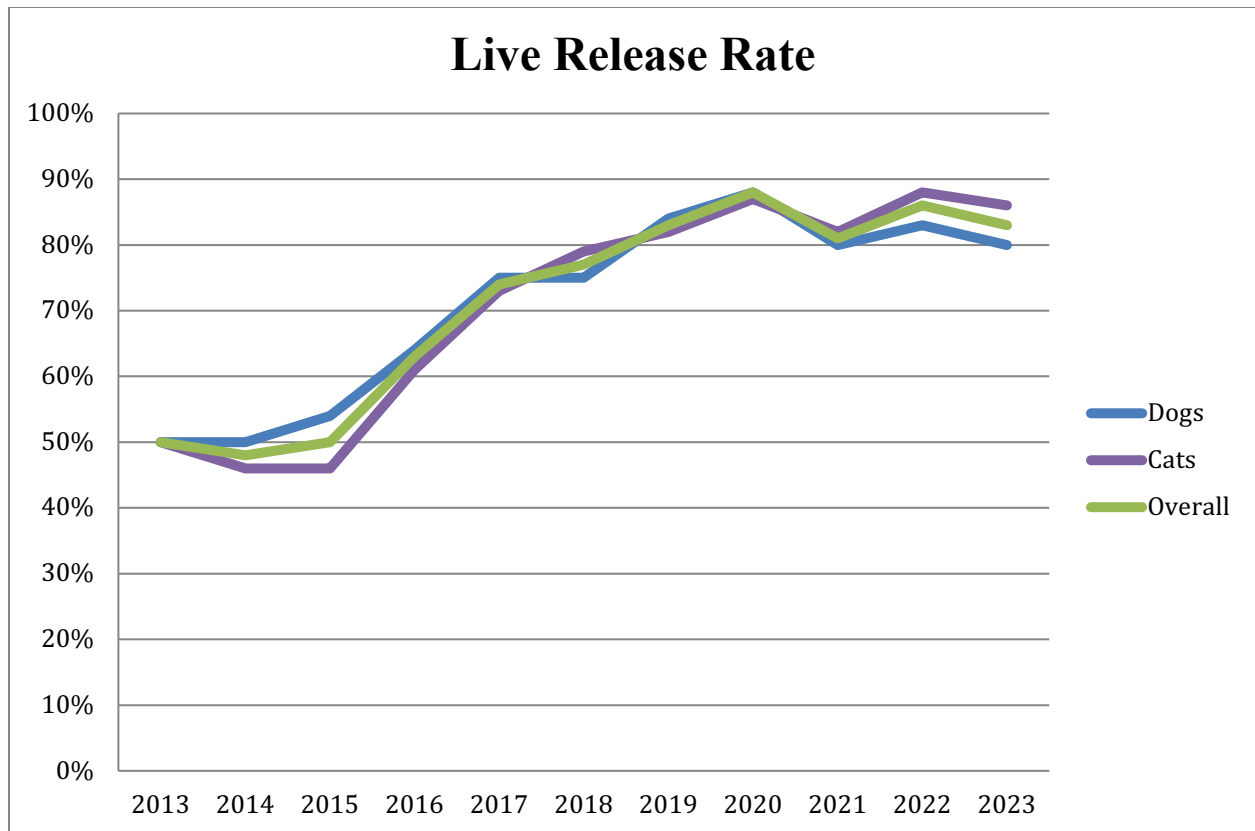
There are many factors that can impact a shelter's Live Release Rate: the number and health of incoming animals, customer relations, medical and behavioral resources for treatable animals, adoption requirements, transfer and foster programs, low-cost spay/neuter and education, and facility hours and design. The SPCA – and shelters nationwide – have experienced challenges this year due to 2020 and 2021, which saw more people acquire pets than any previous year.

And, there are simple ways of impacting Live Release Rates that we would argue don't reflect positive changes and artificially change the percentage. A shelter, can, for example, stop accepting owner-surrendered animals they feel they cannot easily adopt. Live Release Rates can be informative or meaningful, or they can be neither, yet are

often used as an end all tool or the only way to measure a shelter's work or compare one shelter to another. Looking at a chart of shelters or communities and their Live Release Rates, one could find a shelter with a 95% save rate and assume that shelter is doing far better work than one with a 70% save rate. But what's unknown is this: what kinds of animals do both shelters accept? How many do they turn away and never count in their statistics? Do they take on animals with challenging behaviors or medical conditions and make them well?

Statistics are important to the SPCA as a measure of how we are doing now compared to how we did last year or the last few years. We make them available to the public, but not without this critical context. The SPCA is an open-admission shelter, meaning we turn no owner-surrendered animals away and accept the task of caring for and making well animals that need medical care or behavioral attention (both, in some cases, and often a significant amount) before they can be rehomed. Our admissions also include hundreds of animals, each year, from residents living outside Monterey County who were turned away from their local shelter. Our live release rate for 2023 was 83%. We never turned any emergency away. We encouraged people to keep healthy pets as long as possible to reduce the number of animals in our shelter and therefore the number of people needed to care for them. And we continued to stay open for people needing to make compassionate end-of-life decisions for elderly and severely ill pets.

Our Live Release Rate was impacted by helping owners keep healthy pets while continuing to take in pets who were severely injured or aggressive. We saw a greater percentage of unadoptable (aggressive or severely ill) animals surrendered to us this past year as more people were able to keep their healthy pets.





## OTHER

The year began and ended with many animals in our loving care. Sadly, a small number of animals died of natural causes.

## DEFINITIONS

Each of these categories refers to both the medical and behavioral health of an animal. These are not our definitions; they are defined by the Asilomar Accords and used by shelters across the nation.

**Healthy:** all dogs and cats eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

**Rehabilitatable:** all dogs and cats who are not healthy, but who are likely to become healthy if given medical, foster, behavioral, or other care equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners. For example: a dog with a broken leg, a cat with an upper respiratory infection, or a puppy with minor resource guarding issues (these are often pets who can be rehabilitated and adopted).

**Chronic Conditions:** all dogs and cats who are not healthy and who are not likely to become healthy regardless of the care provided but who would likely maintain a satisfactory quality of life if given medical, foster, behavioral, or other care, including long-term care, equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners. This does not include any dog or cat who is determined to pose a significant risk to human health or safety or to the health or safety of other animals. For example: a senior pet with a heart murmur or a cat

with FIV. These are often pets who are adopted by a small number of caring people willing to provide a home for a pet with a long-term health condition. You can use our [Pet Alert Program](#) or [adoptions website](#) to search for a special needs pet.

**Unhealthy/Untreatable:** dogs and cats who, at or subsequent to the time they are taken into possession have a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that poses a health or safety risk or otherwise makes the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and are not likely to become healthy or treatable even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners. While it is our mission to find loving homes for animals in need, it is also our responsibility not to adopt animals that pose a danger to other pets or people. Also, pets who are suffering from a disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the animal's health or is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future, and are not likely to become healthy or treatable even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners. For example: a dog with serious aggression towards pets or people, a cat with malignant cancer, or a pet with a serious traumatic injury that has a poor prognosis for recovery.

**Barn Cat:** a barn cat is a feral or severely unsocial cat that cannot safely or humanely live as a house pet. We ask adopters to provide a safe barn, shed, or other structure where a cat can be safe and seek protection from the elements and provide food and veterinary care. This program is only for feral or severely unsocial cats - we will not adopt cats to barn homes when they are used to being house pets. While this program is successful, we almost always have more feral or severely unsocial cats than people able to adopt a barn cat. Learn more about our [barn cat program](#).