

Dog Overpopulation – Not! Really!
The Myth of Dog Overpopulation
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There is NO dog overpopulation in the United States. Really. None. There is in actuality a serious dog ‘distribution’ problem. That fact is conveniently overlooked by those who want to have more legislation to ban pet sales in pet stores, restrict breeders from breeding dogs and selling pups, have dog limits in cities and counties and demand unbearable fees for the ‘privilege’ of whelping a litter and so much more.

The myth of dog over population is out there and needs to be explored. Dog overpopulation is the thread that runs through all of the animal rights propaganda, press releases and pleas to legislators. It is the undercurrent of those who loudly complain that breeding must be stopped; that breeders are contributing to the ‘dog over population.’ In California alone from 1972 to 2004, impounds were reduced from about 800,000 to about 350,000 <[NOTE 1](#)> and that reduction was mirrored in other states... unfortunately not all of the states, wherein there remains a problem. Another source portrays a rapid increase in owned dogs, but an inverse decrease in shelter killings <[NOTE 2](#)>:

| Year | Total owned dogs and cats | Euthanized | Approximate % of owned animals euthanized |
|------|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| 1973 | 65 million | 13.5 million | 21.0 |
| 1982 | 92 million | 8–10 million | 10.0 |
| 1992 | 110 million | 5–6 million | 5.5 |
| 2000 | 120 million | 4–6 million | 4.5 |

Over the next few months, I will submit articles on the problems of preventable shelter retentions, breed re-homing organizations, the Rescue “Business,” no kill campaigns, “humane relocation,” and other aspects of the dog distribution problems that impinge on legislation and therefore affects your dog ownership.

Legislation restricting breeding and dog ownership is being influenced by a public relations campaign that feeds upon misinformation and fictional statistics. That campaign comes from various fronts, but the most forceful and ambitious comes from the very organization that illustrates the statistics that dog population in shelters and the killing of dogs in shelters is declining.

This month, let us just see how statistics can be used to confuse, perplex, confound and bamboozle the uninformed public about the dog population in U.S. animal shelters.

On the Humane Society’s webpage they attempt to demonstrate the horrid problem of overpopulation and that we kill too many dogs in shelters (that is sadly true.)

Watch closely here, watch the math...

HSUS Pet Overpopulation Estimates, (2009) <[NOTE 3](#)>

**“Estimated number of cats and dogs entering shelters each year:
6-8 million (HSUS estimate)”**

**“Estimated number of cats and dogs reclaimed by owners from shelters each year:
30 percent of dogs and 2-5 percent of cats entering shelters (HSUS estimate)”**

So less than 5 Million dogs and cats remain in shelters after owners reclaim them.

Then:

**“Estimated number of cats and dogs adopted from shelters each year:
3-4 million (HSUS estimate)”**

O.K., so:

We are at now at about 1.5 million dogs that remain in shelters after being released to re-homing organizations and sold to the public.

Wait a minute! We haven't added those euthanized yet.

Let's go back to HSUS statistics... and in the interest of fairness, let us use their high estimates. 8 million enter shelters, 30% (+5% of cats, since cats are the major portion of the shelter populations, we'll add them to the 30%... 35%) are reclaimed -2, 800,000. Now from the 5,200,000 not claimed, 4,000 are sold (adopted) = 1,200,000 remain in the shelters with no breakdown to owner turn-ins, too ill or aggressive to sell.

And yet, HSUS states that:

**“Estimated number of cats and dogs euthanized by shelters each year:
3-4 million (HSUS estimate)”**

HUH? From where did those remaining 2,800,000 come?

The real facts are that there are NO solid facts yet, but there is hope that statistics can be discovered. The National Animal Interest Alliance has a Shelter Project that has been compiling statistics for several years and has gathered a great deal of factual, proven statistics. <[NOTE 4](#)> When complete, this project (not to be confused with the HSUS Shelter project that usurped the name), will give an accurate and complete analysis of the nations shelter populations.

None of us can look around and not be aware of the thousands of dogs that are homeless and are waiting in re-homing kennels or pounds for an owner and a home. For the millions of dogs that are removed from public animal shelters, many, perhaps most, are claimed by those wonderful volunteer organizations that attempt to find permanent placements for them.

We'll advance to the disconnect that arises between those who maintain that there is an overpopulation problem and the need for dog owners who will be looking for a new pup or dog to replace their deceased one in a later issue. For now, keep aware that there are 78,000,000 owned dogs in the U.S. by the Animal Pet Product Association's 2011-2012 survey <[NOTE 5](#)> That is 78 million owned dogs in homes at this time.

Next Month:

Re-Homing Facilities, and the Rescue Business, the Differences