



Paw Prints

Issue 13

The Delaware Office of Animal Welfare Newsletter

Winter 2019

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QUOTE OF NOTE

"In my opinion, bridging the gap between animals and humans is part of gaining a greater understanding of life." - Kate Banaszak, Miss Delaware 2009

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The Office of Animal Welfare marks five years of helping animals and people

November marked five years that the Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) has protected the health, safety, and welfare of companion animals, and promoted the human-animal bond in Delaware.

The Delaware General Assembly established the OAW Taskforce recommended its creation to coordinate and manage programs, provide oversight, and address emerging issues with regard to companion animals. Today, the public has one centralized office for programs and services, which greatly reduces the confusion for residents and fragmentation of services that existed previously.

We operate with the following values:

- Animals should be protected from abuse and neglect. The public should be protected from dangerous animals.
- Homeless animals should receive safe shelter, care, and a chance for adoption.
- Programs that reduce pet homelessness and cruelty are important investments.

"In the five years since being established, OAW has seen tremendous change and growth," said Executive Director Christina Motoyoshi. "From setting up an entire statewide law enforcement program to redesigning the Animal Welfare License plate, there is much to celebrate."

Since November 2013, OAW has:

- Consolidated State companion animal programs for improved efficiency and performance
- Delivered comprehensive

recommendations for improving animal control and cruelty enforcement functions in the state

- Established Delaware Animal Services, the OAW's animal control and cruelty law enforcement unit
- Launched a statewide Lost & Found Pet Registry to reunite lost pets with their owners
- Drafted training and certification requirements for animal control officers and cruelty investigators
- Established enforcement provisions for the Shelter Standards law
- Launched a comprehensive shelter oversight program
- Overhauled dog licensing to increase accessibility and compliance
- Revitalized Delaware Animal Response (DAR) to assist animals in disasters
- Revamped the State Spay & Neuter Program with an online application, marketing campaign, and upgraded database to increase the utilization of low-cost spay/neuter surgeries
- Planned and hosted the first Delaware Animal Rescue Summit
- Hosted Delaware Spay Days to provide free surgeries to individuals with low incomes
- Launched a redesigned Animal Welfare License plate to increase spay/neuter sterilizations

"We've made great strides in our mission to help animals and people, and look forward to the next five years of promoting animal welfare in Delaware," Motoyoshi said.



Delaware Animal Services marks three years of animal control, cruelty law enforcement

Since taking on statewide animal control and cruelty law enforcement in 2016, the Office of Animal Welfare Delaware Animal Services (DAS) unit has answered the call for nearly 49,000 complaints. DAS dispatchers handle calls for dog control, animal cruelty prevention and enforcement, dangerous dog management and rabies control.

Officers are trained to scan stray dogs for microchips and/or search for owners when possible. All strays picked up by DAS are posted to the OAW's Lost & Found Pet Registry.

When an owner cannot be found, dogs are taken to Brandywine Valley SPCA shelters and placed on a stray hold,

which allows owners to retrieve their animals before they are put up for adoption. Approximately 50 percent of all dogs that were picked up by officers were reunited with their owners. In 2018 alone, 1,664 were reunited.

In addition to responding to calls for as-

sistance, DAS officers regularly deliver supplies and attend education events to provide resources and information to communities. The OAW has helped hundreds of residents and DAS officers have attended more than 200 education events since 2016.

TOTAL COMPLAINTS 2016 to 2018		
Dog Control	48,857	Animal Cruelty
23,603		3,361
Rabies Control		Police/Agency assists
6,472	Teleservice	1,501
	13,920	

*Case type is classified by dispatchers and may change upon officer response

DAS officer adopts dog from case

Delaware Animal Services Officer Andrew Shockley brought a rescued dog into his home after he responded to a call to check on the welfare of multiple animals in Sussex County. The case led to the voluntary surrender of 18 German Shorthaired Pointers and an English Setter due to unsanitary conditions at the property. Eight of the Pointers were puppies that were approximately 3 to 4 months old.

The dogs were taken to Brandywine Valley SPCA's Georgetown shelter to be placed for adoption. While dropping them off, one of the male puppies stood out to Shockley.

"He was the only one who came up and played with me," Shockley said. "He started licking me, and that was it."

Shockley began the formal process to adopt the puppy, now named Duke. Duke is very mellow, loves to play with his squeaky duck toy, always wants attention, and is enjoying his new life with his new family.



Delaware Animal Services Officer Andrew Shockley and his dog, Duke.

Shauna McVey photo

OAW, HSUS host expert-led training for law enforcement

The Office of Animal Welfare partnered with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to provide a free, one-day animal cruelty training specifically for law enforcement. The training, which took place in Middletown this January, instructed animal welfare officers on investigating animal abuse, neglect, dogfighting, cockfighting, and sexual exploitation of animals. The class was attended by 24 officers from three different agencies.

HSUS instructor Lt. Michael Gabrielson, a veteran police officer and court-recognized expert in dog fighting, provided information on investigating complex animal cruelty crimes, from first response to filing charges, including key evidence, warrants, statements, and the link between animal cruelty and other violent crimes.

Pet safety risks to consider during the cold months

By Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus
Chief Veterinary Advisor



Dr. Kathryn Stoltzfus

During the winter, there are several things to consider for the safety of your pets.

If it is too cold for you, then it is too cold for your pets; they can suffer from hypothermia and frostbite. Some pets that have increased cold tolerance and can spend longer time outside, but no pet can safely be outside for long periods in freezing weather. Know your pet's limits and consider a sweater or coat if needed.

Walks will probably have to be shorter during cold weather. If you see your pet slow down, stop moving,

start whining, seem anxious or start burrowing to get warm, this indicates hypothermia and they should be taken indoors immediately. If your pet comes inside and cannot stop shivering or is very lethargic, this could indicate serious problems and they should see their veterinarian immediately.

Watch the weight

You may notice that your pet will eat more when it is cold. While it is okay for them to have a little more food, do not let them gain too much weight. In the long run, this weight gain will cause more medical issues and extra pounds that do not really keep them warm.

Watch the ice

If it is cold enough to form ice on ponds and streams, exercise caution. Dogs might run out on ice that gives way and you will naturally want to save them, which will put

you and your pet at risk.

Elderly pets

Remember that medical conditions such as arthritis may worsen during cold weather, so check with your veterinarian to make sure you keep your pet as healthy as possible. Elderly pets do not tolerate the cold and icy/snowy conditions as well as younger pets. Watch them closely for any signs of hypothermia and monitor for slips and falls on the ice and snow.

Snow covers scents

A well-fitting collar with up-to-date identification and a microchip are important. During the winter, the snow and ice can hide recognizable scents that allow the pets to make their way home if they get lost.

Winter chemical risks

Watch out for salt, de-icers and other chemicals that

can cause irritation to your pet's feet, legs, and belly while out walking. When back indoors, wipe off a pet's coat and pay attention to the belly, legs, and feet. Wipe between the toes to remove chemicals and ice. Ice balls can form and cause injury to the skin on the feet. Consider using pet-safe de-icing products around the home, and make sure that all de-icers that melt snow have used all their thermal energy before your pets walk on them, as they can cause burns.

Check your vehicle

Before starting your vehicle, bang on the hood or honk the horn to encourage any animals that have found some warmth there to leave. If you are going out, remember a cold car is just as dangerous as a hot car for pets. Leave them home.

Spay & Neuter Program nears 30,000 surgeries, gets upgrades

The State of Delaware Spay & Neuter Program surpassed 28,000 surgeries in 2018, its 12th year of providing low-cost spay/neuter surgeries for animals owned or cared for by residents, and animal rescuers and shelters.

The program was established to help individuals who have low incomes and receive qualifying types of public assistance have their pets spayed/neutered at a reduced rate. Nearly 40 veterinary providers participate. A small portion of the fund also supports local animal shelters and rescues through grants for the purpose of sterilizing homeless pets. Since its inception in 2007, the program has provided spay/neuter and rabies vaccination services to 13,000 residents, 44 animal rescues, and all six Delaware animal shelters.

Since assuming administration for the program in 2014, the OAW has worked to raise awareness and make it more accessible to the public. Interest in the program doubled when the OAW launched an online application and its "Fixed & Fab"

marketing campaign. Additional veterinary providers were recruited to offer more surgery locations.

"We simplified the application process and removed barriers for applicants," said Program Coordinator Shauna McVey. "Our goal is to maximize use of the fund and sterilize as many pets as possible to prevent unwanted litters."

To further protect the public, rabies vaccinations are also administered to any unvaccinated pets that are spayed or neutered through the program.

The program now benefits from quicker processing times thanks to a new database that further streamlines application approvals. The database is a web-based system that automatically integrates applications from FixedandFab.com, and allows for better tracking and report generation. These data functions were previously performed manually.

To find out more about the Spay & Neuter Program, go to www.fixedandfab.com.

DAR volunteers rally for animals from hurricane zones

The Office of Animal Welfare Delaware Animal Response unit had its biggest call to action when they spent several weeks in September and October assisting Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA). They cared for cats and dogs brought to Delaware from North Carolina and Florida shelters that were impacted by Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

As the East Coast braced for Hurricane Florence's impact, BVSPCA opened the doors to its newly acquired Georgetown Animal Rescue Center (ARC) and turned it into a Hurricane Hub. DAR Coordinator Karen Clark said the hub served as a centralized location for shelters from Virginia to New England to pull evacuated animals and bring those animals to their own facilities for adoption. The shelter animals brought to Delaware were removed from shelters in the south to open space for animals that were displaced by the hurricanes.

Clark said 17 DAR volunteers gave 158 hours to care for animals at the hub for Hurricane Michael, and 43 volunteers gave 528 hours for Hurricane Florence. DAR has a total of 141 credentialed volunteers.



BVSPCA's Delaware Shelter Manager David Owens greets a dog led by DAR Volunteer Ellen Roe into the the BVSPCA's Animal Rescue Center turned temporary "Hurricane Hub," which operated in September and October to assist animals from shelters affected by Hurricanes Florence and Michael.



Office of Animal Welfare Delaware Animal Response Coordinator Karen Clark waits while a dog who was evacuated from North Carolina takes a much-needed rest stop upon arrival at Brandywine Valley SPCA's Animal Rescue Center in Georgetown. Shauna McVey photos

"The hub gave our volunteers with a great opportunity to provide hurricane assistance for animals, without having to deploy out of state," Clark said. "This provided volunteers with valuable hands-on experience in providing care for a large number of animals in a mass-care setting."

Helping hands in an empty space

The ARC was nearing completion, and had plenty of empty kennels and cat rooms available to help during the disaster. Linda Torelli, BVSPCA director of marketing and programs, said volunteers were needed to care for the animals over a two-month period because the building was not yet staffed. DAR volunteers provided crucial help by walking dogs, bathing animals, cleaning kennels, and providing general animal care over several weeks.

"We were all working hand-in-hand on tasks big and small to prepare for, care for, and place these animals," Torelli said. "By opening the center early, we took on the work of operating a fourth shelter with the staff from our three other shelters, so the time and love contributed by these volunteers was absolutely essential to the mission."

Torelli said 339 animals passed through the Hurricane Hub from Cumberland County, Pitt County, and Guilford County animal shelters, and Jacksonville Humane Society. Once in the shelter, the cats and dogs received veterinary care, food, and housing before they were put up for adoption. Delaware SPCA, Faithful Friends Animal Society, and Grass Roots Rescue, along with nearly a dozen other rescues and shelters, took animals from the Hurricane Hub into their care to assist with caretaking and adoption.

About the ARC

BVSPCA purchased the building in June and has been working to re-open its doors as the Animal Rescue Center that will provide specialized care for shelter animals who need it most. Because it was vacant as Hurricanes Florence and Michael hit, it provided a convenient and central location for the intake of dogs and cats transported from the south, and to prepare them for transfer for other rescues and shelters. The building formerly operated as Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary until 2013.

Torelli said while most of BVSPCA's resources go to help animals from the local community, it's important to stretch a little farther in times of crisis. Countless animal welfare employees and volunteers around the United States pitch in to offer assistance when animals are impacted by devastating events like hurricanes.

To volunteer with DAR

DAR volunteers provide crucial support to pet owners who must stay at a shelter during a disaster situation.

The DAR program establishes co-located pet shelters with veterinary support so companion animals can be safe and close to their owners.

For more information or to sign up as a volunteer, contact DAR Coordinator Karen Clark at 302-242-3594 or karen.clark@delaware.gov.