

Washington County Animal Rescue Information

*Where the animals come from and the laws regarding their stay: (Figures are for 2008.)

- Strays – 5 full days without a collar, 10 full days with a collar
 - (780 dogs, 36 cats)
- Owner relinquished – No hold period by law. (751 dogs, 868 cats)
- Seizures/court cases – Court decides when to release – (75 dogs)
- Bite cases – 10 days of observation – (17 dogs, 3 cats)
- Total: 2604

*How the animals get out: (Figures are for 2008)

- Return to owner – 228 dogs (14%) and 15 cats (2%)
- Adoption – 245 dogs (15%) and 35 cats (4%)
- Euthanasia – Daily for cats, weekly for dogs on Thursdays;
 - 256 dogs (21%) and 495 cats (57%)
- Rescue – Weekly on Thursdays - 920 dogs (55%) and 375 cats (41%)

*Rescue is the process of taking animals from the shelter that have become available, that have not been adopted and will be put down, and moving them into foster settings with non-profit, validated, no-kill rescue groups that will find them homes.

*Walter and Kay Stewart of Damascus run a rescue program that saves the lives of many county animals both from the shelter and direct from the community by getting the animals to rescue groups that will find them new homes. These groups have thorough adoption processes that include an application, interviews, vet reference check and a home visit.

The rescue process goes on daily and involves visiting the shelter to get to know the animals, taking pictures and sending them along with descriptions of the animals to the rescue groups, talking with the rescue intake coordinators about their choices of animals, maintaining the transport van and equipment, planning the transport route and drivers, and driving the van weekly to a number of receiving rescues and connecting transporters. Every Thursday morning prior to euthanasia the transport van arrives at the shelter to pick up the animals that are being pulled to the safety of rescue groups.

The rescue program works solely through volunteers and donations. Anyone interested in offering time, goods and donations to the rescue program can reach the Stewarts at 276-475-5859. Anyone needing assistance in placing their animal into rescue can call the same number.

* Mandatory spay/neuter for adopted animals, spay/neuter in general is an answer to the euthanasia of animals, along with responsible pet ownership, and giving great thought to adopting beforehand so it will be a lifetime commitment.

* Myths that people have:

- All animals are kept at the shelter till adopted (Truth: Euthanasia – Daily for cats, weekly for dogs on Thursdays)
- The animals get medical care at the shelter
- Rescue gets the best animals before the public has a chance
- Owner relinquished dogs and cats are kept for a specified period of time/till adopted. (Truth: Euthanasia – Daily for cats, weekly for dogs on Thursdays)

ANIMAL DEFENSE LEAGUE PROGRAMS

*Spay/neuter: Financial assistance for the spay/neuter of county animals for owners needing assistance. Money for this program is obtained from grants, donations, United Way and the town of Abingdon. Call 877-301-2290 for information about what assistance your animal can receive.

*Trap, spay/neuter, release – County-wide program to help control and decrease the number of homeless cats in the county and offer them a better quality of life. Grant money and donations from private individuals and the town of Abingdon are used to support this program. For information and help with homeless cat colonies or to volunteer your services, call Sigrid Phillips at 276-608-4502

*PetSmart Adoption Center – The ADL members maintain the cats/kittens at the Adoption Center daily and open the Center to the public on the weekends and select other days of the year. If you would like to join this volunteer team, call Linda Fritsch at 276-245-6020.

*Food for the Animals – The Animal Defense League contributes dog/cat food and cat litter to the Food Pantry each month. If you need food for your animals go to the Food Pantry. If you would like to donate pet food, please take it directly to the Food Pantry.

*Education – Education of the public in the schools, libraries and the community is essential to the welfare of the animals of the county. If interested in becoming an educator please call 1-877-301-2290

*Animal Rescue Program – The year-round rescue of animals from the shelter and the community. The dogs and cats are fostered locally or taken immediately to rescue groups elsewhere that will foster them and find them good homes. This program includes hands-on cares, phone work, computer work, photography, time at the shelter, cleaning, driving and a real love of animals. This program is run solely with volunteers and donations. If interested in helping with rescue or if your animal needs rescue, call Kay Stewart at 276-475-5859.

*Transport – Volunteers are frequently needed for the transport of animals as they journey from shelter to rescue or rescue to new owner. If you have the time and enjoy driving and would like to volunteer, call Kay Stewart at 276-475-5859.