

Friends of GAWT News Update

April 2010



Anti-Rabies Camps breaking records



**SINCE 2003 WE HAVE VACCINATED
25,000 DOGS & CATS**

Each year, several of the **Friends of GAWT** are in Goa at the same time, and we all volunteer for the Sunday morning anti-rabies camp, which runs weekly from October until May. They are completely organised and run by our uber-volunteers, who live in Goa, including 11-year-old Ruby, whose empathy with the dogs and cats is a joy to watch. Occasionally we have visitors come with us and when we went to Curtorim in January Tony and Leila Böhmer came along.

We started off quietly but were soon swamped with owners wanting us to vaccinate their dogs, treat their coats, worm them and give advice on feeding. Before very long both Tony and Leila were in the thick of things, filling in forms, loading syringe's, comforting bewildered pups, talking to people who wanted to adopt either a puppy or kitten. That day we vaccinated 200 dogs and puppies, a record for us. Later Tony and Leila gave us a wonderfully generous donation, for which we thank them.

Last Sunday we had another such day at Betalbatim, when just under another 200 dogs were treated. At the camps owners also have the opportunity to make an appointment to have their dogs, neutered and to get advice on tonics and vaccination schedules. There is a good video on the website www.gawt.org which catches the atmosphere of a camp perfectly.

Consider This

Each female dog, if left un-neutered, will have up to eight pups twice a year for possibly 7-10 years. The pups will start having their own litters within 7 months. And their pups. . . well, you get the picture. Then there are the un-neutered male dogs.... **Between 2003 and 2009 we carried out just under 10,000 sterilizations.** Do the maths and you quickly realise just how important our programs are in helping to keep the key problems of rabies and stray dogs contained. **We need your support to help us continue and expand this work.** www.gawt.org/donate

News from the Shelters

The website (www.gawt.org) has been updated to include our new branch at Canacona. Recently a couple of visitors who had heard about our work there came along to meet everyone. Shortly after they produced a short video, which beautifully captures what we are about. If you go to our 'Home' page on the website, www.gawt.org you can click on it. Or you can find it on YouTube, where it is being watched by a wide audience, and has provoked much interest in our work.

Just before Christmas, Canacona was hit by distemper - a common problem with all Shelters. We removed all the healthy dogs to the Curchorem site so that a deep clean could be carried out. We reopened a couple of weeks ago, and it's been hectic once again. The mobile clinic made its first visit since the closure last week and neutered 20 dogs and cats.

Janie O'Connor who manages the site, together with Radhika and other volunteers, copes with the daily dramas.



Trippy, looking happy and healthy

Quite often something more than TLC is needed, and when a very badly injured dog who had been run over by a vehicle was found lying by the roadside in Chawdi, he was immediately taken across to Curchorem to be assessed by Dr Jayram, our vet. Unfortunately the dog had to have a full amputation, but he is now well and happy and has returned to Canacona, where he was immediately named Tripod then Trippy for short! It can be difficult but a sense of humour is a must when you are doing this work. Many thanks to our supporter and volunteer Anna for sponsoring Trippy's treatment. .

A group of us, all Friends of GAWT, also went over to Curchorem to see how everyone was. It was just busy busy busy, with a whole family, including granny, looking for a puppy to adopt, (eventually they chose a pup *and* a kitten), and lots of animals in for A&E services, to be seen by Dr Jayram or Dr Natasha. People were buying from our shop and asking for advice. It was great to see how the local community was using the Shelter.

News from the Shelters cont'd

Gracie, Shelter Administrator, who has been with us for many years, handles all the calls for help coming in from villages and tourists on the beaches, and stays in close contact with our pick-up vans out on the road. She has raised assessing priorities and rapid reaction to a fine art here, and it was very impressive watching it all roll out. Complete unflappability and a sense of humour is Gracie's modus operandi.

The older 'home' dogs (meaning those who arrive in crisis and just won't leave us) now have their own play area, and when I went in to play with them I was comprehensively mugged, as we played ball, having my hairband snatched and shredded as I bent down to pick up the ball. They now also have a large paddling pool which they love to jump into and out of during their many tag games.

Elsewhere, dogs are being groomed, scratched, washed, comforted, talked to, and fed by their favourite person, our cook Suji (who is married to Sitaram). It's a non-stop day for everyone.



Prakash grooms guest Zoe

It was lovely to see the older dogs comforting the very young, newly arrived puppies.

Of course there are also all the paying 'guests' staying, and somehow they are usually calm and peaceful. They too get daily grooming, walking and playtime.

From here the mobile clinic travels twice a week to Canacona, checking on new arrivals there, and bringing back to Curchohem those who are in need of serious or long-term treatment.

The rains are coming soon, so water-proofing will begin in a few weeks. Meantime it just gets hotter and hotter. The tourists have gone home, and very hard times begin for the beach dogs as all the shacks, their main source of food and water, close. Meantime our work of picking up stray, injured and abandoned dogs and cats just goes on 24/7, while Charmian Byrne, Grace Kare and other senior volunteers work out new ways to raise the money to pay for it all.

We brought the Mobile Clinic to Loutolim

Volunteers Joan and Ray Fincham organised the Mobile Clinic to come to Loutolim, where they live. We offered people the opportunity to have their pets neutered on the site and to take them home afterwards. Posters were put up, and flyers delivered. Appointments were made and on the day, people started to arrive in a steady trickle. Dr Jayram and his assistants worked steadily throughout the day. Later we had a row of pets in the 'post-op' cages in the shade as their owners waited for them to recover. Everyone had time to chat and have cold drinks. This was a "test" day and everybody agreed that with a little bit of tweaking we could look at doing this more often.



Dr Jayram (R) and Sitaram (L) neuter a kitten at Loutolim

When Velly met Millie contd ..

We have had several enquiries about Velly and Millie (see the video on website). The good news is that they are thriving, and have grown into quite beautiful dogs. Just before Christmas volunteers and owners Jean and Pete brought home a kitten which was a few of days old and abandoned on the beach, "just for a couple of weeks until we get it adopted" they said, in what was definitely the triumph of good intentions over past experience (remember Milly was brought home 'just for six weeks', over a year ago!). So, three months later, the kitten, now known as Jazz, below, has become the third member of the pack! The normally very cool and reticent Velly fell in love with what was in effect a tiny scrap of hyperactive fur, and became her No.1 protector.



Cesar Millan has been and gone

If you don't already know, Cesar Millan has a good newsletter which you can get online at www.cesarmillanlive.co.uk. I missed all his gigs in the UK and to my despair also missed him in Dublin - he arrived there on St Patrick's Day and joined in the fun that evening by arriving on stage in full 'irish' dress, complete with pint of Guinness. You can see it on YouTube. I was in Dublin on 16th March but if I had realised he was coming I would have stayed on. Friends there tell me it was a riotous evening.

RSPCA helping out in Haiti

An RSPCA chief officer has been deployed to earthquake stricken Haiti to take over the day to day running of the Animal Relief Coalition for Haiti (ARCH), a group of 21 animal charities from around the world.

ARCH was formed specifically to deal with the Haiti crisis. It is led by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The Coalition is already on the ground in Haiti, working with local people to help injured animals as well as provide a massive vaccination programme for livestock, poultry and pets. Chief officer Kevin Degenhard has left to take over the role of coordinator from WSPA's Gerardo Huertas, who is the charities' disaster operations director for the Americas. Kevin said:

'Being asked to take on this role is both a massive honour and a great responsibility. I will spend two months in Haiti helping to co-ordinate the running of the mobile outreach clinics and other field operations, and working with the Haitian government to put the ARCH programme plan for animal welfare into action.' Extract courtesy RSPCA Easter Newsletter.

Everyone in GAWT wishes him well.

Bring & Buy Sales

Organised by our volunteers we have had a run of monthly 'bring and buy' sales at the Tate Bar and Restaurant, in Colva. Our enormous thanks to owners Tof and Emma who generously allowed us to use their premises (inside and out). These sales bring in a steady amount of money, and provokes the clearing out of a lot of unwanted stuff from everyone's house. I've come to the conclusion that there is always someone somewhere who wants that piece of equipment which you have forgotten you ever had and certainly can't remember what it was for originally.

HAPPY SPRING (when it finally arrives)

We laughed so much at this picture, sent by our volunteer Radhika, that I thought we should share it with all the Friends of GAWT.



We are on Facebook

I have to admit I find Facebook infuriating to work with, but we are there and if you google 'Goa Animal Welfare Trust facebook' you should find us there.

Feel free to leave us a note on our wall (?) and the younger members of GAWT (!) will probably see it before we do . . .

And finally ...

If there is anyone out there who is running a marathon or walking a 5K or leaping out of airplanes this summer, please remember us when you are thinking about your Good Cause. Get in touch with me at friendsofgawt@gawt.org or info@gawt.org or call me on 07904173729. All and any fundraising ideas welcomed.

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