

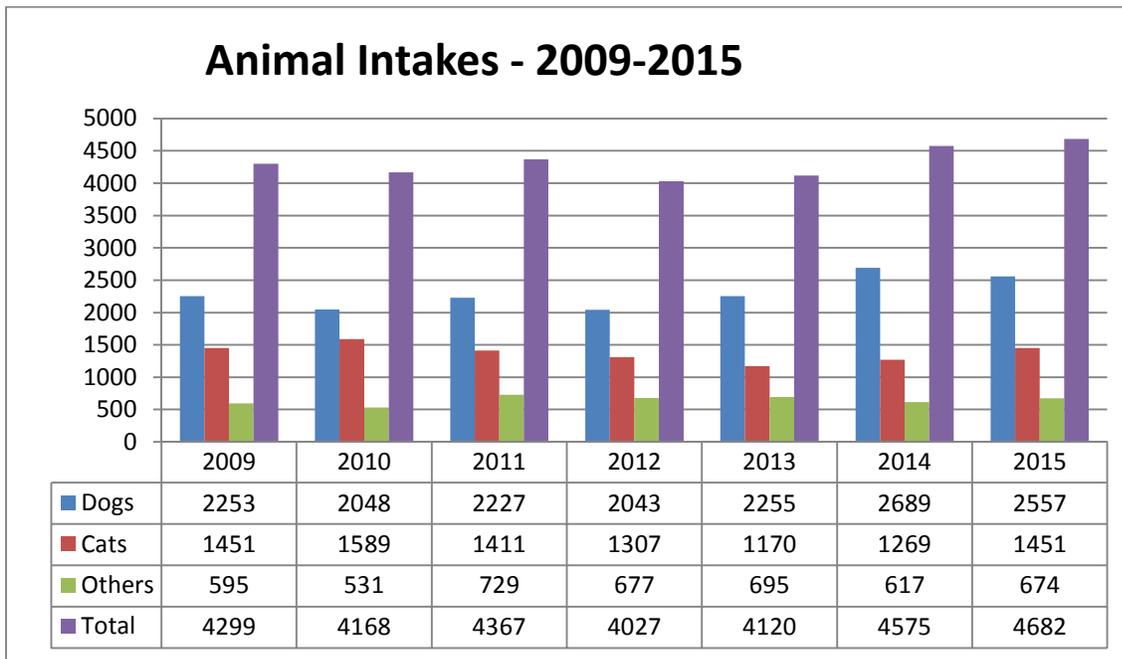


## **2015 Annual Report**

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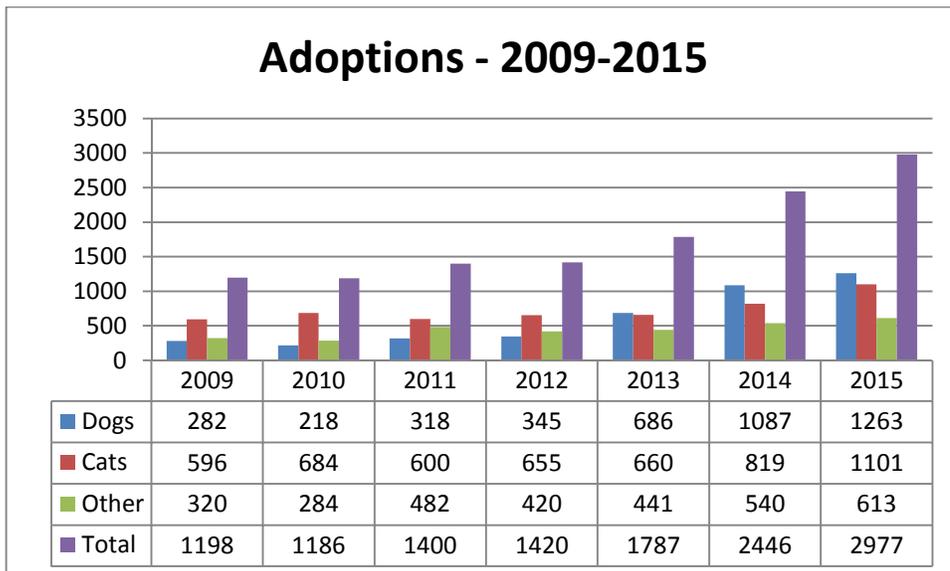
## Intake

The number of animals brought to the shelter declined from 2011 through 2013 but increased in 2014 and again in 2015, due to the strategic transfer in of animals from rescue and shelter partners in the region.



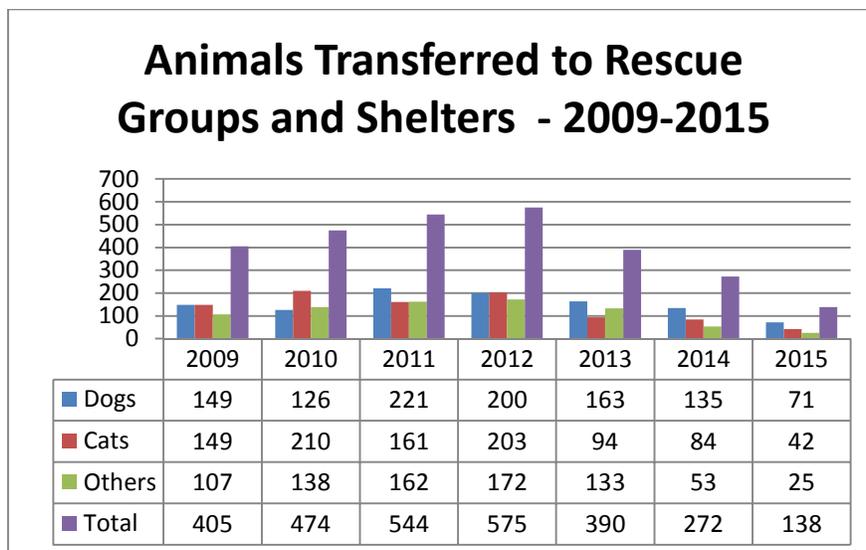
## Adoptions

2015 was another record adoption year. In 2015, more than 1,200 dogs were adopted and overall adoptions reached nearly 3,000. There was a 22% increase in total adoptions from the previous record year of 2014 and a 16% increase in dog adoptions. Since 2009, there has been a 148% increase in overall adoptions and a 348% increase in dog adoptions.



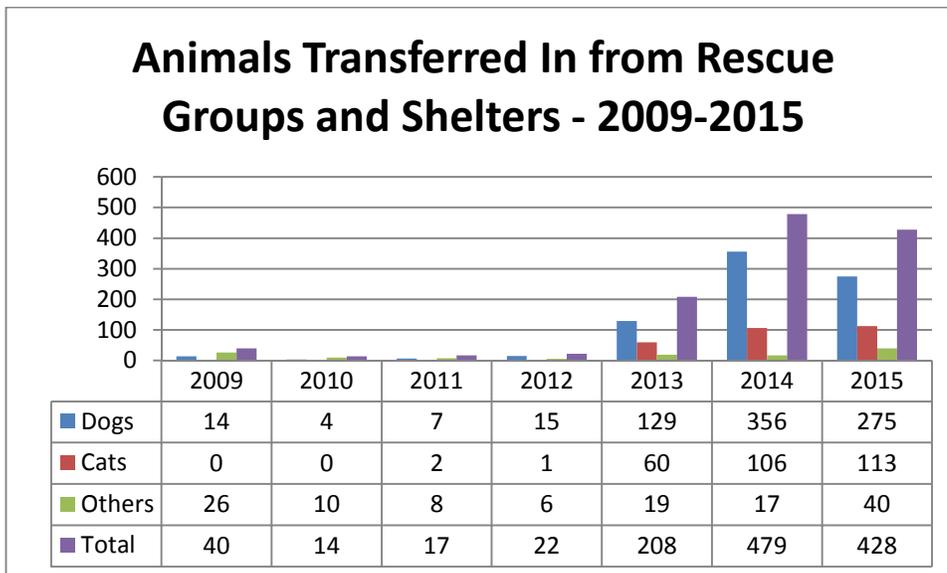
## Animals transferred to rescue groups and shelters

The number of animals transferred to rescue groups and other shelters has been in decline since 2012. This can be attributed partly to the shelter’s successful presence on social media platforms bringing more potential adopters into the building. Additionally, the shelter’s vibrant and expanding foster program allows animals who aren’t doing well in the shelter environment to go to foster homes, and many are adopted straight from foster. When animals are transferred out, it is often because that animal’s individual needs may be better met by a rescue group with a different environment, a primarily foster-based rescue, or a breed- or exotic-specific rescue. We also often return animals to their original rescue, if a surrendered animal came from a rescue previously. This year, we transferred out 150 animals. (71 dogs, 42 cats, 25 other)



## Animals transferred in from rescue groups and shelters

We have continued on our mission to expand the regional shelter partnerships developed over the past few years, and continue to transfer in animals from under-resourced rural rescue partners and neighboring shelters. This year, we transferred in a total of 428 animals. (113 cats, 275 dogs, 40 others). These strategic transfers bring more traffic into the shelter and resulting in more adoptions overall.



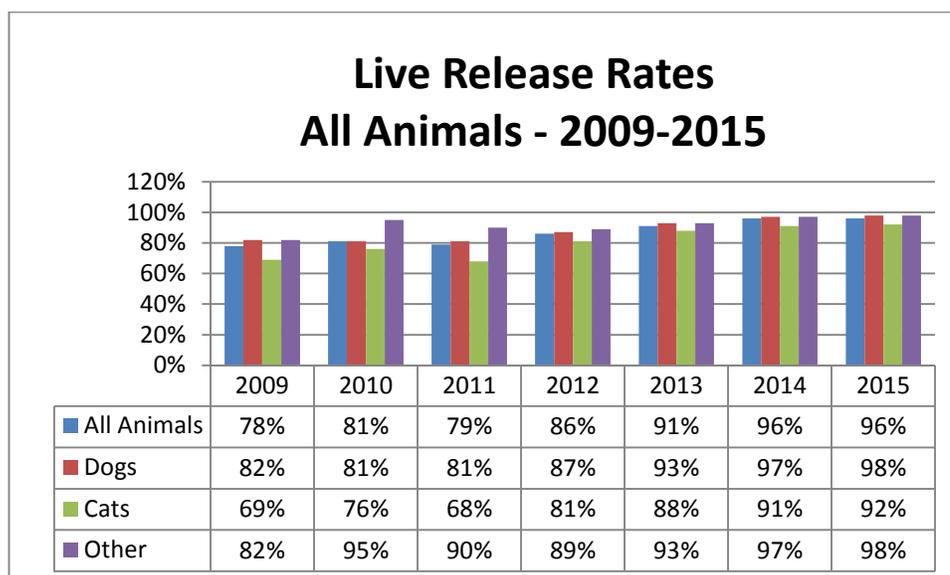
## Asilomar Accord live release rates

The Asilomar live release rate calculates the number of live outcomes of animals in the shelter, taking out the animals signed over as requests for euthanasia. The chart below reflects the 'live release' rate as calculated using the Asilomar method.

Visit [here](http://www.asilomaraccords.org/) to read more about the Asilomar Accords.

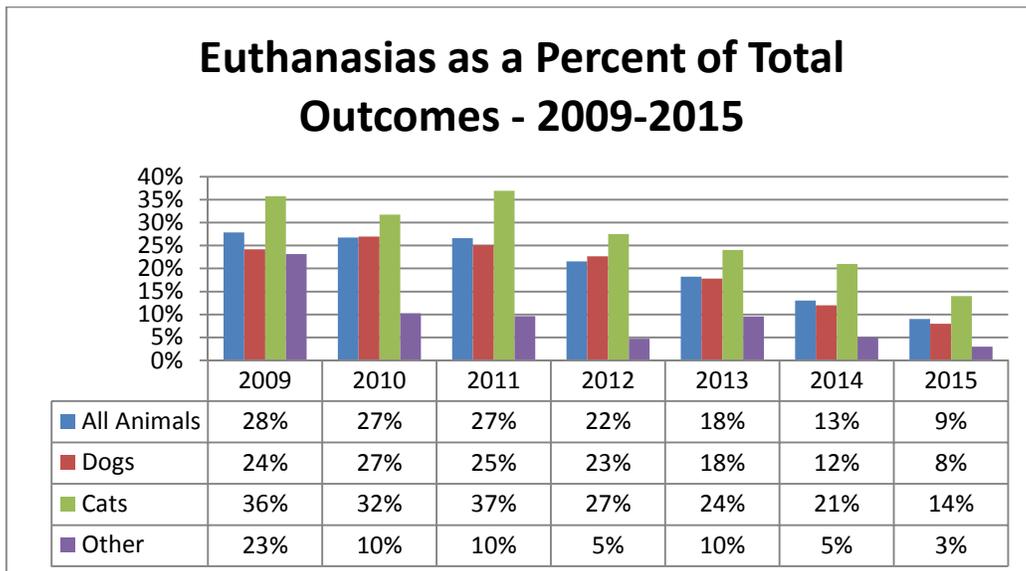
<http://www.asilomaraccords.org/>

This chart does not include euthanasia performed as a request from the owner. The data including Euthanasia requests is reported to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and reflected on the next page.



## Euthanasia rate

Because of an overall increase in adoptions, the euthanasia rate of animals in the shelter has decreased from 28% in 2009 to 9% in 2015. The shelter does continue to provide free end-of-life euthanasia for pets belonging residents of Fairfax County, so this includes animals surrendered for the purpose of euthanasia.



## **Foster Program**

The shelter currently has 326 foster families, up from just over 150 at this same time last year. Animals are sent to foster homes when they are too young to be in the shelter, including pregnant or nursing mother animals of all species; when they are sick, injured, or are recovering from surgery; or when they need a break from the shelter.

In 2015, a total of 880 unique animals were sent to foster a total of 1469 times. The higher number accounts for animals sent to foster multiple times, such as for Power Hours, weekend foster, or animals who move between foster homes. This includes 512 dogs and puppies sent to foster a total of 990 times, 319 cats and kittens sent to foster a total of 429 times, 22 guinea pigs sent to foster a total of 23 times, 20 rabbits, two hamsters, two turtles, one parakeet, one snake, and one chicken.

Of all of the unique animals sent to foster, there were 271 who were too young for the adoption floor, 190 dogs who went on Power Hours, 188 animals who were pregnant or nursing/unweaned, 131 who went for weekend foster, 121 animals who just needed a break, 104 who went to medical foster, 47 for offsite events, 45 for behavioral reasons, 18 for additional

socialization, 17 because they had special needs, and four because they were of advanced age.

Many existing foster programs were continued and expanded in 2015, largely due to the increase in the number of foster families and the addition of volunteer foster program assistants.

- 1. Weekend Dog Fostering:** We continued our very successful and popular Weekend Dog Foster program, where dogs go to foster families' homes from Saturday evening to Tuesday morning, so they can be in a home environment during the two days the shelter is closed. Read about this program in the Huffington Post: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/weekend-fostering\\_us\\_5682c6f6e4b06fa688813bf8](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/weekend-fostering_us_5682c6f6e4b06fa688813bf8)
- 2. Power Hour:** The Power Hour program continues to be the most common reason people decide to come on board as a foster. Shelter dogs are taken out for field trips to stretch their legs, go on walks/hikes, enjoy a special treat, and have a fun, positive experience with a foster.
- 3. Short-Term Cat Foster Program:** Our short-term cat foster program allows cats who have become stressed in the

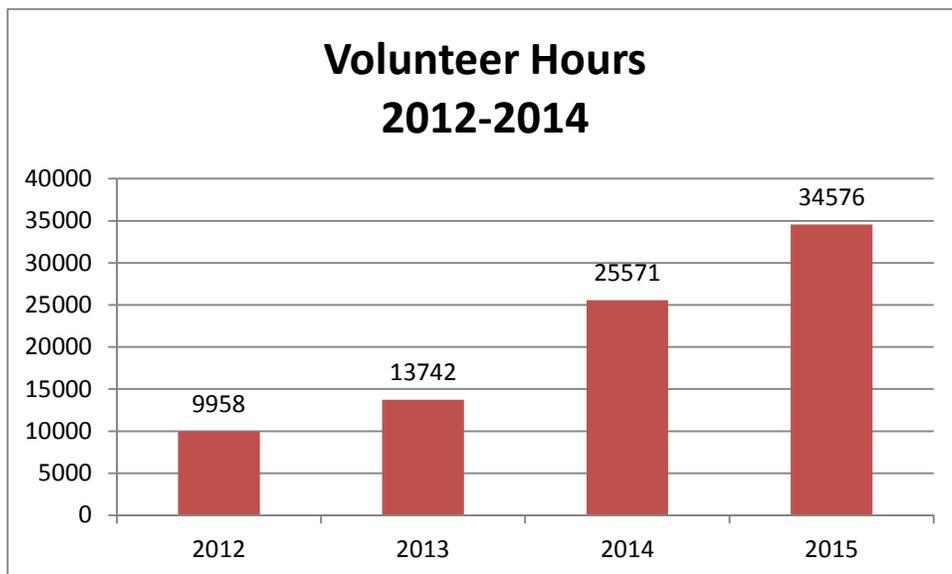
shelter environment to decompress in a home environment for varying amounts of time dependent on each individual cat's needs and provides valuable information about how the cat might behave in a home.

4. **Neonatal Kitten Fostering:** We have continued to expand our neonatal kitten foster base by offering in-depth trainings to foster parents willing to open their homes to these most delicate foster animals. Neonatal kitten fosters must bottle feed their kittens every two to six hours, depending on the age of the kittens, and fostering neonatal kittens requires a lot of time and patience.

## Volunteer Program

The shelter currently has more than 300 active volunteers who contributed more than 34,500 hours to the shelter. In addition to caring for the animals, cleaning and administrative work, the volunteers participated in several new initiatives in 2015, including children's birthday parties at the shelter and hosting reading to the animals for groups. Programs aimed at bringing children and families into the shelter have been very popular.

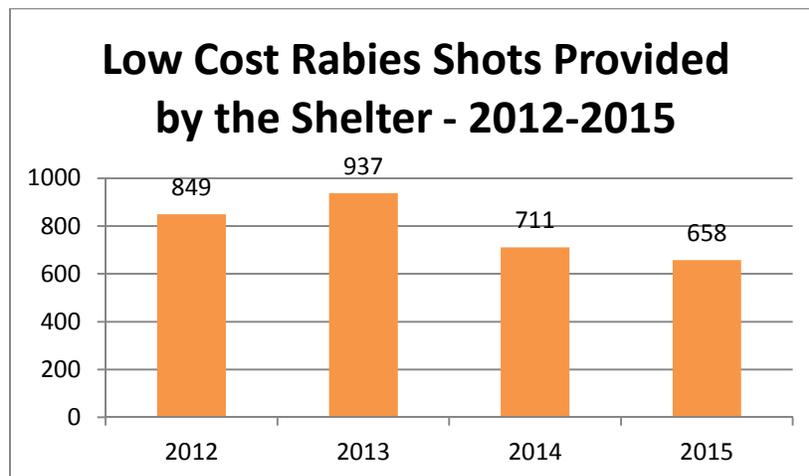
Since 2012, there has been an increase of over 300% in volunteer hours and volunteer hours increased by 40% in 2014.



## Community Programs

**Community-based spay and neuter:** Since 2008, the shelter has sterilized and vaccinated about 6,000 free-roaming cats. In 2015, nearly 800 cats were spayed or neutered from mid-February through December (the program was suspended from January 1 through mid-February during the transition to a new contract veterinarian for the shelter). This pro-active, community-based program contributes to the annual intake remaining steady despite a growing population of cats and people in Fairfax County.

**Low-cost rabies clinics:** We held eight rabies vaccine clinics at various sites in Fairfax County in 2015, providing affordable vaccines to the public. A total of 658 shots were given in 2015 (487 to dogs and 171 to cats). Eight clinics are also scheduled for 2016.



## **Conference Presentations**

Shelter Placement Coordinator Amanda Novotny presented at the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies Conference on advanced techniques and topics related to Trap, Neuter, Return.

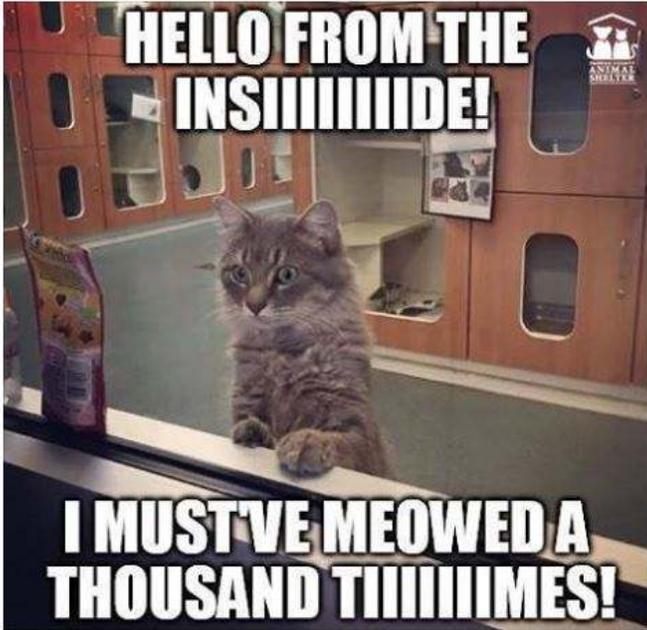
Former Outreach and Communications Director Kristen Auerbach presented at the Virginia Federation for Humane Societies on the Fairfax County Animal Shelter's successful social media and also on issues related to breed labeling dogs in shelters.

Former Shelter Director Tawny Hammond presented at the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies on challenges and successes in animal sheltering.

## Social Media

**Facebook:** The shelter started the year with about 16,000 Facebook followers and ended the year with more than 34,000. About half of the shelter’s adopters say they saw the shelter or a shelter pet on Facebook. Posts receive around 100,000 views per week, bringing lifesaving attention to animals in our care. Our most popular post, featuring a photo of a cat paired with Adele lyrics, went viral; it reached more than 9 million people and had over 65,000 shares.

Gerry just cannot get Adele's latest hit out of his head. He may have taken some creative liberties with the lyrics though...



8,811,030 people reached [Boost Post](#)

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Kirk Ellis, Dawn Nieters, Bethany Wild and 27,818 others like this. [Top Comments](#)

66,533 shares

**Instagram and Twitter:** The shelter maintained our presence on Twitter and Instagram platforms, which provide opportunities for additional engagement with people in our community and beyond. Our Instagram account has more than 5,000 followers, up from 1,000 last year. Our Twitter has 1,760 followers, up from 1,000 last year.

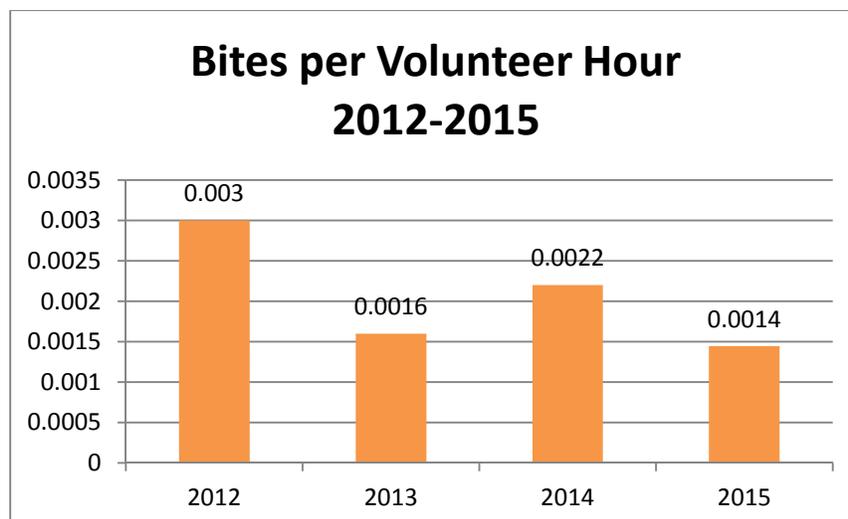
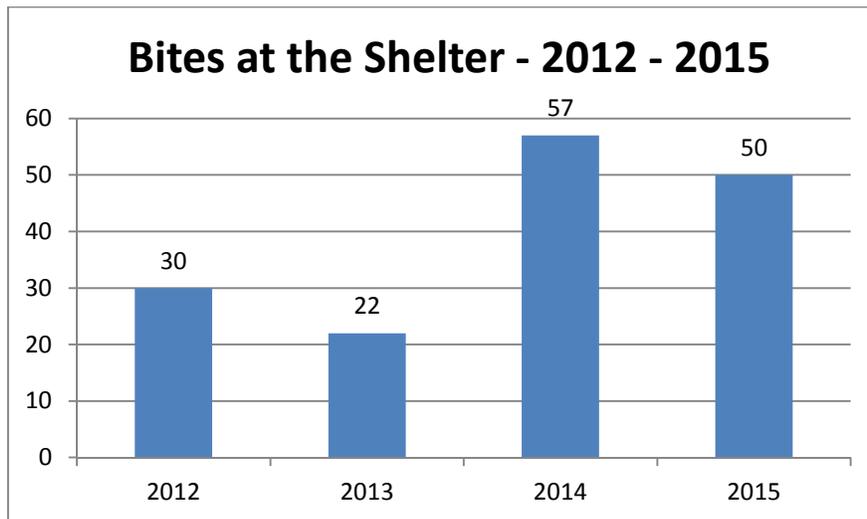
## 2015 Shelter News

- Pender Veterinary Center took over shelter veterinary services in January of 2015. Since that time, shelter pets have been spayed or neutered on-site in the veterinary suite. This saves a great deal of staff time transporting and is much easier on the animals.
- The shelter held its first ever “Pet Prep Camp” in conjunction with the Fairfax County Park Authority.
- The shelter also partnered with the Fairfax County Park Authority to offer on-site dog training and Scout programs for children.
- The shelter held a number of adoption promotions, including Extravacatza!, Back to School Day, Meowloween, Black Fur Day, Pajama Day, Star Wars Day, and the Ugly Sweater Party promotion. For the second year in a row shelter volunteers dressed as elves and delivered adopted pets to their families on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- The shelter was featured in a number of articles written by the Huffington Post, including:
  - Korean Meat Farm Dog story:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/08/dogs-rescued-from-dog-meat-farm\\_n\\_6438472.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/08/dogs-rescued-from-dog-meat-farm_n_6438472.html)

- Dog Play Group story:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/08/playing-for-life-pit-bulls\\_n\\_7226240.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/08/playing-for-life-pit-bulls_n_7226240.html)
- 'Back to School' Adoption Special feature:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/these-shelter-pets-are-going-back-to-school-with-worlds-cutest-adoption-pics\\_us\\_5601b34be4b00310edf8f02c](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/these-shelter-pets-are-going-back-to-school-with-worlds-cutest-adoption-pics_us_5601b34be4b00310edf8f02c)
- Weekend Foster Dog Program feature:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/weekend-fostering\\_us\\_5682c6f6e4b06fa688813bf8](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/weekend-fostering_us_5682c6f6e4b06fa688813bf8)
- Huffington Post Live interview with staff and fosters about our short-term foster programs:  
<http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/therapy-animals-llamas-alpacas-short-term-fostering-animal-sanctuary/5681cee199ec6debc30014a8>

## Shelter Safety

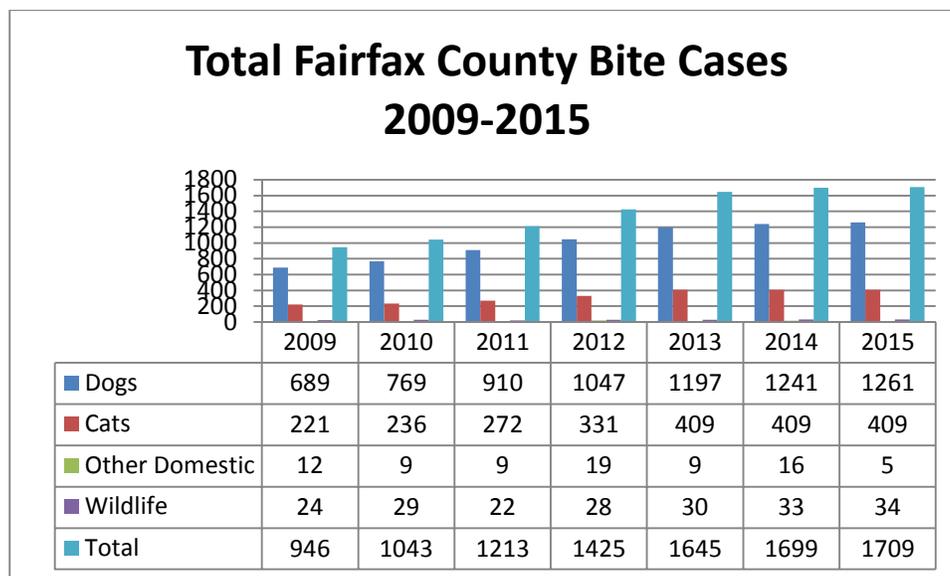
Shelter staff remains focused on safety and training and overall safety has been improving. Bites per volunteer hour have decreased by 50% since 2012. The vast majority of bites are minor puncture wounds not requiring urgent medical care. About half the bites in 2015 were by dogs, while the rest were by cats and other companion animals.



## Community Safety

**Adopted animals returned for biting:** Animal Control did not track animals returned to the shelter for biting for a complete year until 2013. Seven animals were returned for biting in 2013, seven again in 2014, and 19 in 2015. In 2015, this means that about three out of every 1,000 animals were returned for biting.

**Animal bites in Fairfax County:** Reported bites increased by about 200 animals per year from 2010 until 2013, with a smaller increase after 2013. Several years ago, the health department began tracking hospital visits due to bites, which resulted in more accurate and higher numbers of bites being reported.





## **Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter (FFCAS)**

FFCAS is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2006 to support the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and provide financial resources amounting to \$104,500 in 2015 to facilitate adoptions for shelter pets.

### **In 2015, the FFCAS:**

- Provided funding for collars and personalized I.D. tags for over 2,400 adopted cats and dogs, helping to reunite lost pets with their people more quickly.
- Funded medical treatment for 38 shelter animals amounting to \$34,000, saving lives and increasing the animals' adoptability and quality of life.
- Funded spay and neuter surgeries for approximately 300 feral cats, helping to reduce the problem of pet overpopulation.
- Provided funding of microchips for all cats adopted from the shelter, increasing the chances they will be reunited with their owners if they become lost.

In addition, Friends facilitated adoptions for 332 of some of the Shelter's neediest dogs and cats through its recently created shelter pet sponsorship program funded separately by additional donations. Visit their website at [www.ffcas.org](http://www.ffcas.org) and find the Friends on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/ffcas!>

## **Wildlife**

**Deer Management Program:** Each year, deer management is conducted in Fairfax County parks to reduce the number of deer-related conflicts that can pose safety and health concerns for residents and minimize ecological damage resulting from overabundant deer. The program is mandated by the Board of Supervisors and is implemented by the Fairfax County Police Department, in partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

The program uses the safest, most effective and sustainable deer management methods currently permitted by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries including archery, managed shotgun hunts and police sharpshooting. The current harvest total for FY 2016 (through December) is 1,006 deer. All venison harvested during sharpshooting operations is donated to Hunters for the Hungry, a non-profit organization that provides food for the needy.

**Geese Management Program:** Fairfax County uses a combination of methods to address the growing number of resident Canada geese including repellency and humane exclusion, landscape modification and egg addling/oiling to limit flock growth. In 2015, county staff from the FCPD Animal Services Division, Fairfax County Park Authority and Stormwater

Management oiled eggs from 137 resident Canada goose nests through a federal registration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**4-Poster Deer Study:** The 4-Poster Deer Treatment Station pilot study was conducted to evaluate wildlife host-targeted tick control on white-tailed deer, which may serve as maintenance hosts for black-legged ticks that transmit Lyme disease and other pathogens. Field work for the study was completed in March 2015. The final summary report is in review for dissemination in early 2016.

**Community Outreach:** FCPD Animal Services staff held two public information meetings to discuss the FY 2016 Deer Management Program. Additionally, staff attended community meetings to discuss deer management and safety considerations for the Kings Park West Civic Association, Miller Heights Neighborhood Association, Overlook Foundation and Stone Haven Civic Association. Staff presented information on wildlife management to the Citizens Police Academy and Wildlife Rescue League and held an exhibit booth at the Lee District Resource Fair.

**Training:** Wildlife staff participated in several training events including the Department of Public Safety Communications call-taker training, the Northern Virginia Deer Summit and the 69th Annual Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Conference. FCPD Animal Services staff attended training workshops hosted by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, Beltway Chapter of the National Association for Interpretation, Humane Society of the United States, Loudoun County Animal Services Division, Save Lucy Campaign and the Wildlife Rescue League on topics including wildlife call-taker strategies, humane exclusion techniques, care for orphaned/abandoned wildlife, reuniting wildlife, bat identification and conservation, and game camera trapping.

**Media:** Wildlife management topics including the Deer Management Program, coexisting with wildlife, safety information for encounters with bears, foxes, raccoons and snakes, safe driving tips during deer season, orphaned/abandoned wildlife and feeding wildlife, were highlighted in a variety of media outlets including the FCPD Public Information Office (PIO), Ask Fairfax!, Wild Side of Fairfax County, Tips and Tails, and YouTube.

Information provided through FCPD PIO media releases, phone and on-air interviews related to deer management, urban wildlife, bear sightings including a possible injury to a dog and a bear-vehicle collision, and rabid wildlife attacks on people and domestic animals were covered by the Annandale Blog, CBS, Fairfax Times, FOX, InsideNOVA, NBC, Washington Post, WNEW, WTOP, and WUSA.