



LARIMERHUMANESOCIETY
SPRING 2023

A PUBLICATION OF LARIMER HUMANE SOCIETY
To further the compassionate, safe, and responsible
relationship between animals and people.

PETSPECTIVE

ADDRESSING THE DILEMMA OF OVERCROWDED SHELTERS

We've all seen the headlines -

"Front Range animal shelters are filling up" - CPR

"Pet shelters in Colorado are overcrowded again" - Rocky Mountain PBS

"Animal shelters seeing adoption shortages in Northern Colorado" - KDVR

The storylines were clear: shelters are full, animals aren't being adopted, and staff and veterinarians are stretched thin. Throughout 2022, this was the narrative coming out of shelters — not just in Colorado — but across the nation.

Meanwhile, the country was experiencing a long-awaited decline in the threat of COVID-19, and the direct impact of the pandemic was beginning to wane. However, the indirect and long-lasting effects were beginning to emerge — one of them being a devastating impact on our nation's network of animal shelters. Headlines were published on a weekly basis reporting the dilemma of overcrowding and the struggle to find a balance between the number of animals entering shelters and the number of animals being adopted. Those news stories bore out in the most recent data released by Shelter Animals Count, a national database that tracks animal shelter statistics and outcomes.

Compared to 2021, the number of animals entering shelters increased by 4% through the 3rd quarter of 2022, while the total number of animals leaving shelters decreased, ultimately creating a population imbalance. Simply put, animals were entering and staying in shelters at a much higher rate.

Due to capacity restraints, many shelters had to make the difficult decision to limit the number of animals they would accept. In more dire situations, shelters had to refuse the intake of new animals altogether.

As an open admission shelter, Larimer Humane Society is committed to ensuring every unwanted or homeless pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care. As a result of this commitment, our rate of animal intake skyrocketed.



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As shelters across the country reported similar outcomes, there was one overwhelming theory as to why, though the evidence is not yet concrete. For months, news outlets suggested that households that welcomed a pet into their home during the pandemic quarantine were no longer able to care for their pet — the result of shifting work schedules and lifestyle changes. Were this the case, the high volume of animals that were adopted in 2020 were now returning to their respective shelters (or

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elsewhere), causing a sharp and unexpected increase of animals within a short period of time. At Larimer Humane Society, however, the self-reported impetus for pet surrender continued to reflect one growing community issue: housing.

Needless to say, Larimer Humane Society had a busy summer, and as Shelter Supervisor Lee Jones put it, “our busy season never ended.” However, despite seeing an increase of animals on a daily basis, our employees and volunteers rose to the challenge and implemented strategies to help counter the threat of overcrowding.

Managing a shelter population requires a balance between the number of animals coming in and the number of animals leaving. Because all animals are welcomed through Larimer Humane Society’s doors, our efforts are generally focused on the latter — making sure that animals are being adopted or reunited with their family.

To boost adoption rates in 2022, we offered dozens of promotions to ensure that fees weren’t a barrier to the adoption of a new companion. Staff also made it a point to give our shelter animals more opportunities to meet prospective owners by participating in a variety of local adoption events. In the world of marketing and outreach, more is more, and by expanding adoptions to more venues, we were able to help our shelter animals get adopted more quickly. These efforts resulted in a 29% increase in adoptions, helping counterbalance the climbing number of animals in our care.

While these challenges made for a tumultuous year for animal sheltering, the data presented by Shelter Animal Count suggests that, as long as shelters continue to focus on increasing outcomes for all animals, we will start to see shelter populations return to manageable levels. At Larimer Humane Society, we are confident in our ability to do this thanks to a strong infrastructure of in-house services and resources, as well as a corps of dedicated staff and volunteers.

Another invaluable part of our infrastructure is you, our community of supporters. We enter each day knowing that we are not alone in our work to make a positive impact on the well-being of animals in northern Colorado.

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2023 CELEBRATION OF SECOND CHANCES CALENDAR

Last call for the 2023 *Celebration of Second Chances Calendar*! Are you still in need of a calendar for the New Year? Scan the QR code below! We have a limited supply and are offering a \$10 discount for every calendar purchased - while supplies last! Scan the QR code below and get yours today. Proceeds from each purchase directly benefit the animals in need who come through our shelter — stay organized and support a great cause at the same time!

Each month features a brewery in northern Colorado, as well as an animal who recently received their second chance at a loving family. Each calendar comes equipped with Buy One Get One free coupons for each brewery, as well as great discounts at your local Poudre Pet & Feed Supply. Support local, support animals in need, and support your schedule with the brand new 2023 *Celebration of Second Chances Calendar*!



ASK THE EXPERTS

Dear Larimer Humane Society,

I'm looking for some tips on how to manage my dog's weight as it seems like he can put on the pounds so easily, but has a hard time shedding them. We exercise often and he eats the same amount of food every day, yet he's looking more plump and I'm not sure what to do. Any thoughts on how to help manage his weight?

— *Dog Dad*

Hi there,

You are not alone! Managing your pet's weight is an important part of their health, but can be tricky, and also changes as they age. There are two areas of your pet's routine (dogs and cats) to pay attention to when monitoring their weight: food intake and exercise. To help us with this topic, we spoke with our Supervising Veterinarian Dr. Garcia. Here are the tips she shared to help your pets stay trim and healthy:

1 Food Intake

First and foremost, talk with your veterinarian about what kind of food to feed your pet and how much. It's important to rely on your veterinarian's advice as opposed to the recommendations on the back of the food packages, because those tend to suggest way more than your pet actually needs. Create a plan with your veterinarian and stick to it. Be sure to account for extra treats and people food, as this surplus of calories can get out of hand and contribute to pet obesity. Dogs and cats normally don't know how much you're giving them, only what you're giving them, so I recommend that you break treats up into smaller pieces. This will help reduce the amount of calories your pet consumes, and will also allow that bag of treats to last longer!

If your pet is on a "grazing" schedule — meaning, you leave food out and they eat as they please — be sure to give them a fixed amount per day, as opposed to filling the bowl every time it's empty. If you have multiple pets grazing the bowl, it's important to monitor this as sometimes one pet can dominate and eat more than their fair share.

As your puppy or kitten grows into adulthood (usually around one-year-old), be sure to transition their specialized "puppy/kitten" food to "adult" food. You may notice in the pet food aisle that some packages say "for puppies/kittens" and others say "for adults." Food that is intended for puppies and kittens is higher in protein and minerals, and is tailored to match the needs of the young animal in their growth patterns. Speak with your veterinarian to discuss when your pet should transition to adult food.



2 Exercise

The key thing with exercise is consistency. Provide your pet with daily activity, even if it's only 5-10 minutes per day. I know it's hard when schedules get tight and it feels like you just don't have time to walk your dog or play with your cat, but committing to at least five minutes on those busy days will help you maintain consistency. It's also exercise for us, too, which can help us feel better and improve our mental health.

For cats, try to actively play with them to encourage exercise. Kittens usually have no problem jumping around and climbing on everything, but as cats age, they tend to lose their drive to play and hunt as much, especially if they're indoor cats. Giving them tall structures or spaces to go "up" is also a great way to encourage them to climb and play, leading to natural exercise. For older cats, speak with your veterinarian about possibly cutting back on food consumption since they are not moving around as much. However, some cats naturally have high metabolism and are always skinny, so you wouldn't want to cut back on their food. Have an open and honest conversation with your veterinarian to ensure a sustainable plan for your cat.

On a similar note, dogs who do not move or exercise as much should have their food intake reassessed as well. It's common for pet owners to not walk or play outside as much during the winter months, and that's the time I usually give my dogs less food. Again, be sure to speak with your veterinarian as every dog is different, and they will help you determine the right balance between exercise and food intake for your pet.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

2022 vs 2021*

*JANUARY THROUGH NOVEMBER

6,566 vs 5,213

ANIMALS CARED FOR

3,533 vs 2,740

FAMILIES WERE CREATED

1,402 vs 1,146

FAMILIES WERE REUNITED

607 vs 456

ANIMALS WERE CARED FOR BY FOSTER FAMILIES

21% vs 20%

OF STRAY CATS WERE REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES

The national average is 5%

86% vs 88%

OF STRAY DOGS WERE REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES

The national average is 42%

596 vs 521

ANIMALS WERE TRANSFERRED FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES
FOR A CHANCE WITH A NEW FAMILY

419 vs 422

ANIMALS WERE ENROLLED IN OUR PETS NEEDING PATIENCE
PROGRAM TO HELP FIND THEM A PERFECT FAMILY

7,988 vs 6,385

VACCINATIONS WERE PROVIDED TO OUR ANIMALS

1,870 vs 1,693

SPAY/NEUTER, DENTAL AND OTHER SURGERIES
WERE PERFORMED BY OUR VETERINARY SERVICES
TEAM AND SUPERVISED CSU STUDENTS

12 vs 12

DAYS WAS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY



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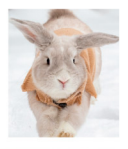
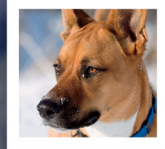
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larimerhumane.org

MISSION

To further the compassionate, safe, and responsible
relationship between animals and people.

VISION

Larimer Humane Society is a trusted, responsive community
leader, providing programs and services essential to the high
quality of life for animals and people in northern Colorado.

ABOUT LARIMER HUMANE SOCIETY

Larimer Humane Society is an independent nonprofit agency.
We are not a division of any county or city and are not funded
by any national animal-welfare organizations. We are a 501(c)(3)
corporation and we are governed by a volunteer board
of directors. We turn no animals away.