

ANIMAL BALANCE

2006 Report

Project Goals: To first sterilize the cat and dog populations of the Galapagos Islands to stop population growth. Second, to train the local authorities to manage and control the populations humanely. Third, to replicate this sustainable model worldwide.

February 2006 – Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela Islands.

SUMMARY

Over the course of 9 days, the CIMEI and AB held simultaneous clinics on Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela Islands. Having shattered the records from all our previous campaigns, this proved to be the most successful of all our clinics. Prior to our arrival, the CIMEI took over the management of the project on a local level. They conducted a door to door census, outreach campaign (including TV and radio spots) and had appealed to other organizations such as the Police, SIGGAL (the quarantine agency) and the Park Service to assist with the campaign. With the increased local support and awareness, the project was able to reach further into the community. The result of this joint effort lead to 544 animals sterilized, averaging just over 60 animals a day.

HIGHLIGHTS - FROM EACH ISLAND

Isabela Island

In recognition of its important work, the CIMEI on Isabela was recently awarded additional space for a larger clinic. This central location allowed us to sterilize 34 animals in 3 days, allowing extra time to visit the highlands in search of animals. What we found was that we had sterilized most of them in previous campaigns. Nonetheless, these visits were just as important as the people brought their dogs and cats to show how well they were doing and how much they were loved. The CIMEI and AB have formed strong relationships in the community so continued communication and presence is important.

Returning to Isabela was vital to our work as it was the first island we worked on and could highlight our successes as well as foreshadow problems that we may face on the other two islands. First, it was evident that the level of care that the people were providing their animals had improved because they finally have the services they need. Second, the local people told us that the cats and dogs are calmer, that the dogs are not destroying the trash each night, and the majority of people are using the leashes and collars to help control the dogs. We are confident that the population growth has stopped on this island and the numbers are now decreasing.

On the other hand, we are faced with a new challenge regarding the introduction of purebred dogs to the islands. These dogs are being smuggled in on the military planes, taken to the farms for breeding, and then sold in the village. Recently, we saw Alaskan Huskies, Cocker Spaniels and Labradors around town. AB is currently working with the quarantine agency, SIGGAL, to address this problem.



San Cristobal Island

A team of 5 volunteers traveled to San Cristobal Island to sterilize the remaining animals on that island. Dr. Diego Barrera, the resident Ecuadorian volunteer veterinarian, worked alongside this team (2 veterinarians, 1 vet technician and 2 helpers) to sterilize 148 animals in the 9 days of operation.

The community showed tremendous support by offering whatever they could do to help. The Police Department and SIGGAL both offered dedicated vehicles and 2 officers each to help throughout the campaign. The elementary schools provided classroom space as surgical rooms in the remote locations in the highlands. The media supported the program by publicizing the animals up for adoption. Towards the end of the campaign, we could clearly see that there were very few animals left to sterilize.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence to our campaigns' success was the community's recent call for puppies. Many people in the town were first resistant to sterilizing their animals because they wanted puppies as pets. On the same accord, some people in the highlands absolutely refused to sterilize all their dogs because they wanted to breed them as hunter dogs. Unfortunately, the people in the highlands also killed their "excess" puppies when they did not need additional hunter dogs. As a solution, we offered to save these puppies by adopting them out to the people in the town. This compromise satisfied the people in the highlands and also convinced the people in the town that there would still be puppies in the future, even if they sterilized their dogs.

Finally, AB confronted with the proximity issue of dogs and sea lions. San Cristobal has an incredibly accessible sea lion population. About 200 haul out on the beach each night, just 10 feet from the main road and it is quite a noisy scene as they push each other around for the best sleeping position. However, the dogs also share the same space, so this deeply concerned the Park Service. Having seen similar problems on Isabela, AB offered dog training so that people learn how to use their free collars and leashes and take responsibility for their dogs.



Santa Cruz Island

Santa Cruz Island is the most challenging island to work on. All the non-profit organizations, including the GNPS and the Charles Darwin Research Station (The Station) hold offices here and there are more political layers to address. Santa Cruz also has the largest number of human inhabitants and the town is inundated with tourists, shops and restaurants. All this human activity resulted in an explosion of the cat and dog population over the years. Three years ago there were packs of dogs roaming the streets and animals were being killed everyday by cars or poison. Since then, AB and CIMEI has held 3 campaigns and we are now seeing some improvements; people are using the dog leashes and are keeping their animals in the home.

The Park Service and Darwin Station are very positive about our work and can see that the community supports the project. To thank us and embrace us into their community, we were invited to participate in the Galapagos Anniversary Parade. The team wore Animal Balance caps and t-shirts and marched among the Park Service employees, waving at the crowds across the entire town. Everyone who had their animals sterilized sent up a big cheer when we passed.

June 2006 – Santa Cruz Island

SUMMARY

It had become time for Animal Balance to take more of a support role in the campaigns. In order for the project to be sustainable we are now moving into phase two of our goals: *to train the local authorities to manage the populations humanely.*

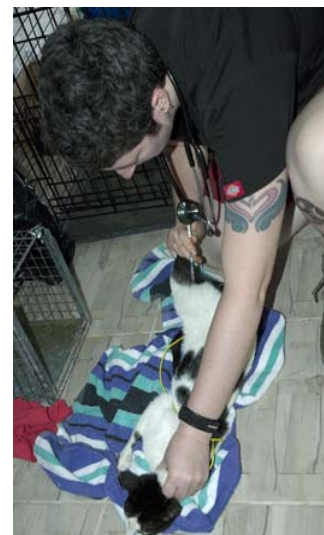
The CIMEI coordinated the next campaign in June of 2006. For the first time Animal Balance Directors did not travel to the islands to help coordinate the project on the ground. Animal Balance sent 6 volunteers (2 vets, 2 techs and 2 helpers) and all the supplies to assist the CIMEI. The CIMEI took the lead and together we sterilized 135 animals in one week.

The team found that there was a large need for them to reach out into the communities in the highlands so a small sub-team rented a truck and went from farm to farm sterilizing animals on the tailgate of the

truck or on the farmer's kitchen table. CIMEI Vet, Dr. Ruben Aleman, worked with Animal Balance RVT, Liz Peach, to achieve this task. Any animal that was underweight or compromised in any way was brought back to the CIMEI clinic for sterilization using gas anesthesia, otherwise all animals were sterilized using injectable anesthesia on site.

The CIMEI have kept the Access database updated and now have an accurate record of all animals registered. The CIMEI started the registering process and have issued each guardian with an identity card. They now have a record of the guardians information, fees paid, health status of the animal, photo of each dog, microchip number of each dog and can easily track the populations with their annual census data. The CIMEI now has a new office on the outskirts of Puerto Ayora with a far superior clinic and much improved communication system.

The team, led by CIMEI was very successful in one week. We are now confident that Animal Balance can hold a support role in the campaigns as CIMEI has the tools they need to be able to manage the projects on the ground in the long-term.



CONCLUSION

Since the first campaign in May 2004, Animal Balance and CIMEI have sterilized a total of 2,736 animals throughout the Galapagos Islands. Every day, that number grows as the local veterinarians continue this important work. Together, we have stopped population growth on both Isabela and San Cristobal Islands and sterilized 54% of Santa Cruz's cat and dog populations. Each island now has a fully equipped clinic with a fully trained Ecuadorian veterinarian who is trusted by the local people

(Isabela – *Dr. Byron Puga Torres*, San Cristobal – *Dr. Diego Barrera*, and Santa Cruz – *Dr. Ruben Aleman*). Animal Balance has also provided additional medical supplies on each island so that they can continue to treat animals in between campaigns.

Our strategy to create a sustainable model is coming to fruition. The CIMEI has taken the initiative to coordinate additional campaigns this year and AB is taking a more supportive role. Ecuadorians helping Ecuadorians is a far more effective and sustainable strategy. Moreover, the local vets have also been asked to visit the mainland of Ecuador and Chile to speak at conferences to explain how the AB model works. One of the Ecuadorian volunteer vets from an earlier campaign has approached the Mayor's office in Quito to duplicate such a program in the city. They are now all ambassadors for the project and advocates of humane animal management.

THE FUTURE

AB will assist with a 2-week November 2006 campaign, again focusing on the cats and dogs in Puerto Ayora and the surrounding highland areas. If possible we will also send a satellite team to San Cristobal as the CIMEI there has requested our assistance. Plus, they have a new Ecuadorian Vet that Dr. Diego Barrera has trained. He believes that the new vet will benefit greatly from participating in an AB campaign. It will be helpful if he knows that he has Animal Balance's backing and understands our philosophy. Quite often the CIMEI staff feel like they are on their own and do not have much support. When AB comes in to town we are able bring about a great sense of excitement and interest in all the issues associated with animal welfare and keep animal care and pet responsibility in the spotlight.

As an ever-increasing number of humans move to, visit and use her natural resources, the Galapagos Islands ecosystem bends and buckles under the strain. It is imperative that community orientated programs gather momentum and attack the real issues and work together for common goals. AB shows that this is possible. We have designed a very practical solution whose success emerged from the collaboration of all the local organizations. We firmly believe that together we can protect all of the animals of the Galapagos without harming any of them.

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S VOLUNTEERS

AB would like to extend a special "thank you" to the 127 international volunteers that have worked so hard on the campaigns. Each donated their time, energy and money to help the animals. Everyone worked extremely hard in very difficult conditions, without complaints. This project would not have been successful without their dedication, compassion and enthusiasm.

OUR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

And thank you to our partners, CIMEI, GNPS, SIGGAL, the Police, the Darwin Station and the amazingly hospitable and kind people of the islands. We have all been deeply touched by the people and their wonderful pets.

OUR MAJOR SPONSORS

The Galapagos Conservancy, Bosack and Kruger Foundation, The Edith Goode Trust, The ASPCA, PetCo, In Defense Of Animals, WildAid, Pfizer, and our very kind private donors.

Together we are protecting ALL the animals of the Galapagos Islands

Sterilization Statistics From 2004 – 2006

| Sterilized | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | Total Sterilized |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------------------|
| Isabela | | | | |
| cats and dogs | 486 | 37 | 35 | 558 |
| San Cristobal | | | | |
| cats and dogs | 134 | 622 | 177 | 933 |
| Floreana | | | | |
| cats and dogs | 6 | 31 | 0 | 37 |
| Santa Cruz | | | | |
| cats and dogs | 395 | 309 | 504 | 1073 |
| TOTAL | 1021 | 999 | 716 | 2736 |

| CENSUS | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|----------------------|------|------|----------------|
| Isabela | | | |
| cats and dogs | 470 | 408 | Available Oct. |
| San Cristobal | | | |
| cats and dogs | 772 | 803 | Available Oct. |
| Floreana | | | |
| cats and dogs | 69 | 75 | Available Oct. |
| Santa Cruz | | | |
| cats and dogs | 2000 | 1954 | Available Oct. |
| TOTAL | 3311 | 3240 | |

CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

2002. In 2002, Animal Balance (AB) became aware that the local authorities were utilizing lethal methods in a futile attempt to stop the growth of their escalating cat and dog populations. The Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS) was concerned that the cats and dogs were negatively impacting the local environment and the Municipality (CIMEI) was worried that the free-roaming dogs would discourage tourism. The community was also concerned about the perceived health risks associated with the animals but became outraged and upset with the frequent poisoning campaigns. Subsequently, communication between the authorities and the people deteriorated.
2003. In May 2003, AB conducted a feasibility assessment and set out to convince the GNPS and CIMEI that a comprehensive, community-based sterilization program would provide the solution. Since poisoning did not curb the populations, was expensive, and relations with the community had continued to worsen, they agreed. Following the visit, AB held a national donation drive, fundraised for the project, and partnered with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) who then carried the supplies and equipment to the islands.
2004. In May and December of 2004, AB held two sterilization campaigns. A volunteer team comprised of: 64 international veterinarians, technicians and helpers sterilized 486 animals on Isabela Island (6 weeks) and 194 on Santa Cruz Island (2 weeks). By the end of the year we were confident that we had stopped population growth on Isabela Island.
2005. In May 2005, AB held its first campaign on San Cristobal Island. With the help of 25 volunteers, the 4-week campaign resulted in 463 animals sterilized on San Cristobal and another 118 on Santa Cruz. In August, AB carried out another national search for supplies. The SSCS's ship, the Farley Mowat, once again delivered the critical supplies.
2006. In February 2006, 30 international AB volunteers worked alongside 20 local volunteers to sterilize 544 animals in just 9 days. Three simultaneous campaigns ran on Santa Cruz, San Cristobal and Isabela Island. The CIMEI began to take over the majority of the coordination on the ground. They coordinated a campaign in June and sterilized 135 animals in one week with assistance from Animal Balance volunteers. Together we will hold another campaign this year in November for 2 weeks, AB will again assist with vets, techs and supplies.
2007. AB and CIMEI aim to have stopped population growth on all 3 effected islands by the end of 2007. The CIMEI will then continue to humanely manage the population as Animal Balance slowly withdraws from the islands.