***Summary Statistical Report:***
***April 2007****

***Animal Services Department, Orange County,***
***North Carolina***

*Introduction*

This is the Animal Services Department's monthly statistical report for the month of April 2007. Each month a standard set of summary statistics are generated regarding our core or essential services and activities. These are essential for purposes of effective management and administration in different program areas, in both our Animal Control and Animal Sheltering Divisions. At the same time, these statistics are an invaluable tool in communicating to various stakeholders, the general public and our elected officials and County management the scope and extent of animal services.

*Standard Statistics*

Each of our monthly reports contains various statistics that summarize the various activities of the County's Animal Services Department. These are standard statistics insofar as for a given month, such as April, they report on the same core or essential services. They are all presented at the end of the narrative portion of this report.

Some statistics capture the overall effort of all staff as they work together to provide integrated and coordinated animal services to the citizens of Orange County. These include:

1. *A.1. Monthly Demographics* (which shows from where and how animals arrived at Orange County's Animal Shelter).
2. *A.2. Monthly Shelter Activity* (which shows total animal intakes and dispositions).

Other statistics are more specific in summarizing services and activities, respectively of our department's Animal Sheltering and Animal Control Divisions. These include:

**Animal Sheltering**

1. *B.1. Monthly Dispositions* (which reports the dispositions of all animals sheltered in a given month)
2. *B.2. Live Release for Placeable and Recovered Animals* (discussed in detail in the following sections).
3. *B.3. Reasons for Euthanasia* (which reports the specific reasons for which animals were euthanized in a given month)

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4. *B.4. Volunteer Hours* (reports volunteer hours and how they compare to previous months and years)

**Animal Control**

1. *C.1. Rabies Exposures Investigated and Positive Cases* (which reports positive rabies tests and related investigations conducted by Animal Control Officers).
2. *C.2. Rabies Vaccinations* (which reports the number of vaccinations given by area veterinarians, at low-cost vaccination clinics organized by our department, and at Orange County's Animal Shelter).

Together, these monthly statistics provide a convenient summary of our critical services and activities. In a very transparent manner, they describe the efforts of our staff in delivering field services, sheltering animals whose dispositions they must ultimately decide, and programs such as our volunteer program that, among other things, is responsible for public outreach activities and dog walking.

*Statistical Development*

The summary statistics provided in our monthly reports are not static. They must be subject to change as our services are redefined, our practices evolve, and our administrative practices produce the most useful statistical information.

A good example of change is table *B.3. Reasons for Euthanasia*. Staff captured and encouraged the reporting of this information to make adoption figures, as well as the reasons for euthanasia, more meaningful and transparent. It does matter greatly whether a behaviorally sound and healthy animal is euthanized as a result of space limitations or an animal is euthanized because it is aggressive or infirm.

For example, in the month of April, the most common cat euthanasia reason was feral, with 13 feral cats euthanized. For dogs, the two primary reasons for euthanasia for the month were medical (19) and behavioral (18). No animals were euthanized for reasons of space for the month of April.

Also, we anticipate further development of the euthanasia categories that are used to report such information. Of special note is the generation of more specific information concerning the medical and behavioral reasons for euthanasia—not only because this clarifies the difficult decisions that staff must make on daily basis but because such information enables us to discuss whether there are specific programs that may be offered to reduce the rate of euthanasia of certain animals.

Finally, our intention is to link specific monthly reports such as this one to date about trends in our services and activities. What we foresee is a related set of graphs showing monthly data over time that enable us to identify and evaluate trends in key services and activities in relation to policies, practices and our own mission. As allowed by time in

the coming year, these graphs will be prepared and are expected to be presented along with reports of standard statistics for a given month.

*Adoptions and "Lives Releases"*

The placement of healthy and behaviorally sound animal companions is one of the foremost objectives of Orange County's Animal Services Department. The direct placement or "re-homing" of small animals, cats and dogs occurs through our own adoption program. In addition, many companion animals are transferred to "placement partners"—that is, non-breed as well as breed specific rescue organizations for cats and dogs (as well as other animals)—for their final placement on the basis of additional effort and evaluation by these various animal organizations.

Adoptions and transfer are two of the three elements of what may be referred to as "live releases." Animal companions recovered by their owners or a custodian—usually if not always "stray" animals brought to Orange County's Animal Shelter either by one of our Animal Control Officers or a member of the public—form the third element of animals that are released alive.

Using this basic formula, it is easy to calculate the total (or absolute) number of animals that are released alive from Orange County's Shelter.[1] The figures needed to make this calculation are provided by table *B.1.Monthly Dispositions: April, 2007*. For the month, there was a total of 168 "live releases," consisting of 82 adoptions, 49 transfers and 37 returns to owners or custodians.

Moreover, it is possible to determine the rate of live release for placeable animals and animals that have been recovered for a given month. As shown by table *B.2. Live Release for Placeable and Recovered Animals,* for the month of April this "rate" is 73 percent. It is calculated by dividing the number of animals that were released alive by the total number of potentially placaeble animals whose disposition was decided in the month.[2] As previously indicated, placeable animals do not include animals surrendered by their owner for euthanasia, feral cats, or animals that died before arriving at or while at our Animal Shelter.

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[1] It should be said that we are using "live release" rather than "placement" for two very specific reasons as well as because it has become a standard in the field of animal welfare since the appearance of the Asilomar Accords (http://www.asilomaraccords.org/). One reason is that it includes all animals that are not euthanized, i.e., transfers to placement partners and returns to owners and custodians as well as direct adoptions. The other reason is that it does not presume that an animal transferred to placement partners is, in fact, "rehomed." In the absence of feedback data from these organizations, which is desirable and an objective toward which we are working, there is no way to know what decision they have ultimately made about the disposition of a particular animal.

[2] Note that that the total number of placeable animals does not include (1) feral cats (as these are typically not placed); (2) animals surrendered for euthanasia by an owner (usually due to illness, infirmity or a behavior problem); and (3) animals that died in our custody as a result of untreatable injury or illness. In our previous monthly reports, this was referred to as the "adoptable placement rate" versus the "gross placement rate," insofar as the latter was determined on the basis of all animals dispositioned in a given month.

For April, there is an increase in the number of total adoptions for the month by comparison with the same month of the previous year. The adoption number for the month also compares favorably to recent months. "Live releases" are also quite a bit higher for the month when compared to the year before. Once again, this number compares well with the previous four months. Initiatives have been taken to ensure that we can and do continue to place as many healthy and behaviorally sound animals as possible given our core responsibilities, available resources and the dynamics of pet overpopulation.

*Pet Demographics and Overpopulation*

It is often said that pet problems are people problems, and that pet overpopulation is a community problem. These insights very much apply to our own circumstances and they help create a broader perspective in which to understand our own sheltering statistics.

More specifically, the number of animals that are sheltered in a given period of time is itself not caused by or a direct function of our sheltering operations and practices. The number of unwanted animals in our communities- animals sometimes referred to as "surplus" pets; the extent to which cats, rabbits and dogs alike are spayed or neutered rather than allowed to remain intact with the likelihood of eventual reproduction; the strength of norms and customs of responsible pet ownership; the scope and strength of animal regulations and their effective enforcement; and other such "variables" are what affect the number of animals that are sheltered in our own and other communities.

Month by month there are significant changes in the numbers of cats, dogs and other animals that are sheltered at Orange County's Animal Shelter. This month 460 animals were sheltered. By comparison, in August of last year 751 animals were sheltered and December of last year, 512 animals were sheltered. In very general terms, this "spread" in the number of animals sheltered reflects the seasonal nature of sheltering.

Moreover, it should be underscored that the "live release rate" for a given time period is determined by the number of animals that are sheltered as well as the absolute or total number of animals that are adopted, transferred, or recovered by their owner. It may well be that there is a high percentage number of animals that are released alive in a given month but that the absolute number is lower than in other months because of the number of animals that come to the shelter.

With respect to the month of April, for instance, a lower number of animals were released alive than in March—168 versus 170; however, the percentage of live releases is higher in April than in March—73 percent versus 70 percent. Quite simply, the reason for this is that the number of animal sheltered was somewhat higher this month than last month.

To work toward the desideratum of ending euthanasia as a means of population control, it is thus essential to positively impact the number of animals that come into Orange

County's Animal Shelter in the course of the year. Essential to this is a community spay/neuter program for animal companions such as dogs and cats that promotes responsible pet ownership and enables all community members to spay and neuter their own pets. Developing such a program through the County's Animal Services Department, in coordination with the Animal Services Advisory Board, remains a fundamental and realizable objective for the foreseeable future.

No less essential is progressive legislation that is enforced in an effective, fair and reasonable manner. A starting point is what is sometimes referred to as "differential licensing"—that is, licensing or registration fees that are much lower for spayed and neutered animals than for intact animals. Other legislative options include an extra redemption fee for intact animals recovered from the Animal Shelter, which may be refunded if they are sterilized within a given time period, and permit systems that require a permit for dogs and cats that are going to be bred.

Moreover, there is an overwhelming need to address the deep-seated problem of feral cats in Orange County. Month after month feral cats (as defined by their community history and/or observed behaviors in the context of the shelter) are the largest single group of animals that are euthanized. In April, 13 feral cats were euthanized, and they comprised 54 percent of all cats euthanized during the month (and 18 percent of all animals euthanized).

The euthanasia of feral cats is not in fact a "shelter problem," but rather a community problem that needs to be addressed as such. There is a great need for initiatives in the area of public education to raise awareness insofar as euthanasia is the end result for many of these creatures, and their presence must be considered in relation to the risk of rabies, given the ongoing and endemic nature of so-called "raccoon rabies" in our County and region. Thus addressing the problem of feral cats must become part of a strategic plan for the County's Animal Services Department, again working in coordination with our concerned citizenry through the Animal Services Advisory Board.

These are illustrations of the kinds of the positive and proactive approaches that are needed to address the problem of pet overpopulation as a community problem. In working to reduce the number of unwanted animals that must be sheltered in our own communities, we would also expect improvements in some of the outcomes of our sheltering practices. We should all look forward to the day when there are very good numbers of adoptions and "live releases" but no less notable ongoing decreases in the number of animals that come to our shelter.

### *Rabies Cycle, Rabies Prevention and Rabies Control*

With respect to rabies control—historically a core function of animal control—we have continued to see positive rabies tests based upon public reporting and our surveillance of possible exposures of people and/or their pets. Table *C.1. Rabies Exposures and Investigated and Positive Cases* shows that this month there were three (3) positive rabies

tests- two for skunks and one for a bat. These tests brought the total number of positive tests to ten (10) for 2007. In 2006 there were twenty-seven positive cases—eighteen (18) raccoons, four (4) bats, four (4) skunks, and one (1) fox.

Our own public education activities stress that pet owners not only need to be sure that their pets are vaccinated and licensed but that a dog or cat with a current rabies vaccination must receive a booster shot within seventy-two (72) hours of any exposure to rabies. Unless an exposed pet with a current vaccination receives a booster shot within that time frame, the requirements of North Carolina law is the same as for an unvaccinated animal—namely, euthanasia or a six (6) month quarantine. In this regard, staff stresses the immediate reporting of any possible contact to animal control and/or public health authorities to ensure the health of all members of a household—human and pet alike.

As can also be seen from the table on rabies exposures, three (3) positive tests in the month resulted from our Animal Control Officers investigation of twelve (12) cases in which there were possible rabies exposures. Usually, these are cases involving known or suspected contact between a domestic small animal such as a dog or a cat and a wild animal such as a raccoon, as well as whether there is an indirect contact between a human and pet member of a household in these situations. But our Animal Control Officers are also responsible for bite reports involving dogs and cats (as well as other animals) and a human victim. In these cases, it is a legal requirement and public health precaution that a dog or cat biting a human being be contained and observed for a period of ten (10) days—thereby ensuring that the bite victim was not exposed to the rabies virus.

Efforts to ensure current vaccination, for the welfare of pets and the people with whom they come into contact, are ongoing and activities in this area are captured by vaccination statistics compiled by our Animal Control Division. As is ordinarily the case, the majority of these vaccinations – 982 out of a total of 1,214 vaccinations – continue to be performed at veterinary establishments but another seventy-two (72) animals were vaccinated at our Animal Shelter prior to their adoption or recovery.

In addition, in the month of April the Animal Services Department organized two low-cost rabies vaccination clinics in Orange County. A total of one hundred and sixty (160) cats and dogs were vaccinated at these clinics.

All of these activities—public education and outreach, investigations and enforcement, and providing low-cost vaccination clinics—are critical given that Orange County continues to be affected by the epidemic of "eastern raccoon rabies" that began in the latter half of the 1990s. Their essential nature is further underscored by the current view that we are on the upside of a raccoon rabies cycle that may bring even higher numbers of confirmed rabies cases than we have seen in recent years. North Carolina public health veterinarians have articulated this view because of their awareness that last year 520 animals were confirmed rabid by North Carolina's rabies laboratory, an increase of 62 cases from the year before.

*Special Monthly Notes*

There have been several challenges and changes that have affected animal disposition numbers this month. One of the most notable has been the use of kennel space for an ongoing investigation. Since early January, kennel space has been needed to house nearly twenty dogs seized as a result of an animal cruelty investigation, resulting in much less space for adoptable animals.

Also notable are improvements in the areas of adoption counseling and behavioral evaluations. The change in adoption counseling has promoted more informed and responsible decision making, but may mean some potential adopters choose not to adopt at this time. Similarly, improved behavioral evaluations for incoming animals have allowed for early identification of animals that may not be suitable for adoption, but also impact the number of animals available for adoption in a given month.

It should also be noted that staff members have strived to promote adoptable animals to not only the public, but a number of rescue organizations as well. Staff has created new partnerships and built upon existing ones to ensure a successful working relationship between Animal Services and these organizations. This has created an increase in the total number of animals transferred to such organizations. They have also initiated new marketing activities including community posters and targeted ads that are intended to supplement ongoing outreach activities in raising the public profile of Orange County's Animal Shelter.

*Conclusion*

As a very young department that came into existence in 2005, Animal Services continues to develop new ways in which to better serve the animals and citizens of the county. As suggested in our discussion of pet overpopulation, there are a number of initiatives that must be taken to effectively address the underlying problem of pet overpopulation. These include the creation of a spay/neuter fund and an effective program to address feral cats, among others, and steps are being taken toward those goals by the department in coordination with the Animal Services Advisory Board.

Also, on behalf of its citizens the County has committed itself to building a new animal services facility. With the opening of this facility at the end of 2008, for the first time Animal Control, the Animal Shelter, and Administrative staff will be housed under the same roof. In addition to providing some true economies of scale, and better allowing the coordination of animal services, it is expected that this facility will help to overcome one of the major inhibitions to our placement efforts—namely, the fear and inhibition that members of the public have toward earlier generations of shelters which are often perceived as dreadful places.

As it is being designed as a resource center that is an attractive public destination, the new facility is expected to have a very positive affect on the number of adoptions,

transfers, community outreach programs, public visitors, and much more. With its innovative and modern design, this new facility will become a community asset and help to further staff efforts to deliver integrated and coordinated animal services to the citizens of Orange County. As well, it is intended and expected to enhance our adoption activities and increase our average rate of "live releases" at the same time as it enabled our staff to work with community stakeholders to more effective address and ultimately resolve the pressing problem of pet overpopulation.

## *STANDARD MONTHLY STATISTICS: APRIL 2007*

## A. Overview Statistics

### *A.1. Demographics: April 2007*

| | Animal Control | | From Public | | Total Incoming | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strays (1) | Surrender | Strays | Surrender | | |
| Carrboro | 10 | 2 | 6 | 2 | **20** | **6.9%** |
| Chapel Hill | 8 | 1 | 32 | 42 | **83** | **28.7%** |
| Hillsborough | 7 | 3 | 4 | 16 | **30** | **10.4%** |
| Orange County | 67 | 27 | 30 | 7 | **131** | **45.3%** |
| Other County | 1 | 0 | 13 | 9 | **23** | **8.0%** |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | **2** | **0.7%** |
| **Total** | **93** | **33** | **87** | **76** | **289** | **100.0%** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strays | **180** | **62.3%** | Animal Control | **126** | **43.6%** |
| Surrenders | **109** | **37.7%** | Public | **163** | **56.4%** |

(1) "Strays" under Animal Control Demographics also includes quarantined animals that have not been surrendered.

### *A.2 Shelter Activity: April, 2007*

| | Dogs | Cats | Others | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In Shelter Custody as of April 1, 2007 | 95 | 71 | 5 | **171** |
| | | | | + |
| Total Admitted April 2007 | 139 | 124 | 1227 | **449** |
| Sheltered in April 2007 | 234 | 194 | 32 | **460** |
| | | | | - |
| Dispositions for April 2007 (1) | 139 | 102 | 6 | **247** |
| Remaining in Shelter Custody on May 1, 2007 (2) | **95** | **92** | **26** | **213** |

(1) Includes corrections to previous month

(2) Within Shelter: 84 dogs, 50 cats, 0 other
In foster Homes/ Pet Stores: 2 dogs, 10 cats, 0 other

## B. Animal Sheltering Statistics

### *B.1.Total Disposition: April, 2007*

| | Dogs | Cats | Others | Total | % of Total Dispositions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reclaimed | 31 | 6 | 0 | 37 | **14.80%** |
| Adopted | 52 | 26 | 4 | 82 | **32.80%** |
| Transferred (1) | 11 | 38 | 0 | 49 | **19.60%** |
| Euthanized | 46 | 24 | 1 | 71 | **28.40%** |
| Died | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | **4.00%** |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | **0.40%** |
| **Totals** | **140** | **104** | **6** | **250** | **100.00%** |

(1) Transferred to Rescue Service

### *B.2 Live Releases for Placeable and Recovered Animals: April, 2007(1)*

| | Dogs | Cats | Others | Total | % of Total Dispositions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reclaimed | 31 | 6 | 0 | 37 | **16.02%** |
| Adopted | 52 | 26 | 4 | 82 | **35.50%** |
| Transferred (2) | 11 | 38 | 0 | 49 | **21.21%** |
| **Totals** | **63** | **64** | **4** | **168** | **72.73%** |

(1) Adoptable does not include Surrender for Euthanasia or feral cats

(2) Transferred to Rescue Service

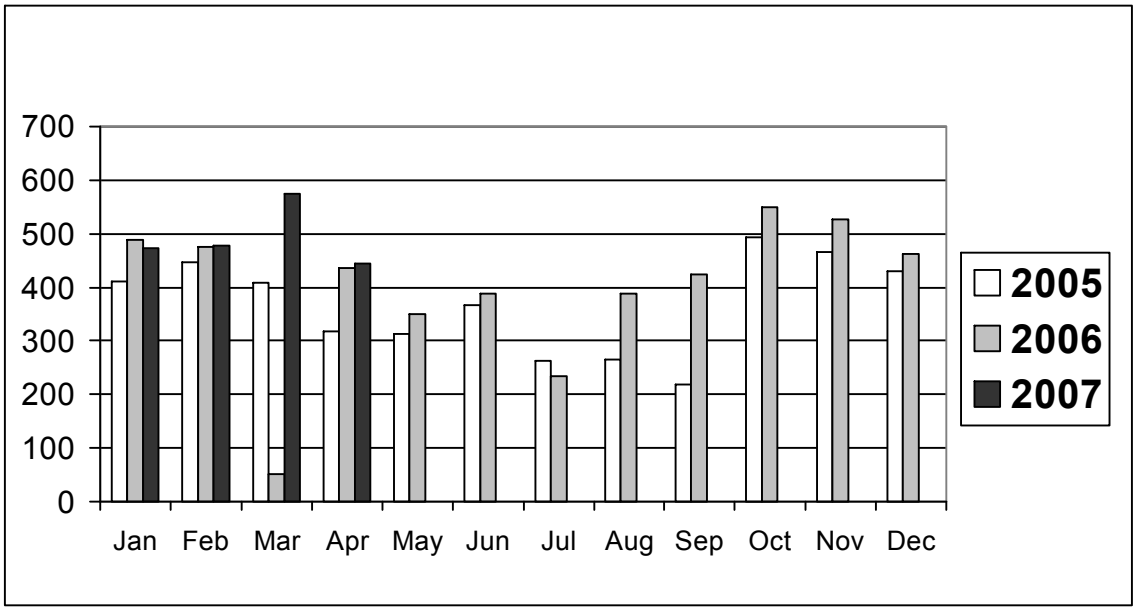
## *B.3. Reasons for Euthanasia: April, 2007*

| | Dogs | % of Total Euthanized By Reason | | Cats | % of Total Euthanized By Reason | | Others | % of Total Euthanized By Reason |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 4 | **8.70%** | Age | 0 | **0.00%** | Age | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Behavioral (1) | 18 | **39.13%** | Behavioral (1) | 2 | **8.33%** | Behavioral (1) | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Feline Leukemia | 0 | **0.00%** | Feline Leukemia | 0 | **0.00%** | Feline Leukemia | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Feral | 0 | **0.00%** | Feral | 13 | **54.17%** | Feral | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Heartworm | 4 | **8.7%** | Heartworm | 0 | **0.00%** | Heartworm | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Medical (2) | 19 | **41.30%** | Medical (2) | 7 | **29.17%** | Medical (2) | 1 | **100.00%** |
| Pregnant | 0 | **0.00%** | Pregnant | 0 | **0.00%** | Pregnant | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Owner Request | 1 | **2.17%** | Owner Request | 2 | **8.33%** | Owner Request | 0 | **0.00%** |
| Space | 0 | **0.00%** | Space | 0 | **0.00%** | Space | 0 | **0.00%** |
| **Totals** | **46** | **100.00%** | | **24** | **100.00%** | | **1** | **100.00%** |

(1) "Behavioral" includes a wide range of behavioral issues that may prevent an animal from being available for adoption to the public. These issues vary widely between cats, dogs and other animals, and can include aggression, lack of socialization, severe kennel stress or other factors that make the animal a risk if placed back into the community.

(2) "Medical" includes a wide range of conditions and diseases that may prevent an animal from being available for adoption to the public due to unsound health. These conditions range in severity and differ greatly between cats, dog and other animals. Additionally, because we test animals for certain diseases as a standard protocol, these are often more easily identifiable and thus can be separated as a specific condition statistic. For example, the "Feline Leukemia" category above is listed separately, though it is a medical condition.

## *D. Volunteer Hours: April, 2007*



## C. Animal Control Statistics

### *C.1. Rabies Exposures Investigated and Positive Cases: April, 2007*

| | Dogs | Cats | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Exposures Investigated** | 0 | 2 | 10 | **12** |
| **Tested Positive** | 0 | 0 | 3 | **3** |

### *C.2. Rabies Vaccinations*

| | Dogs | Cats | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vaccinated at Shelter | 46 | 26 | 0 | **72** |
| Vaccinated at Vet Clinics | 584 | 398 | 0 | **982** |
| Vaccinated at Rabies Clinics | 112 | 48 | 0 | **160** |
| **Total Vaccinations** | **742** | **472** | **0** | **1214** |