

Buncombe County Ordinance – No Success

It is hypothesized that forced sterilization of the local animal population reduces shelter intake and subsequently the euthanasia rate of unwanted pets. While at times numbers to support this theory seem to be pulled from thin air, shelter numbers are reported annually to the State hopefully with some semblance of accuracy. Using this data refutes animal rightist claims that the Buncombe County mandatory spay neuter ordinance has resulted in 60% to 70% reduction in euthanasia rates.

Despite the fact that Mandatory Spay Neuter (MSN) is a failed concept, advocates in numerous states and occasionally in North Carolina continue to stir public opinion, lobbying for ordinance changes, and offering Buncombe County's success as a model.

Shelly Moore (director of the Asheville Humane Society) was quoted in one article stating that shelter intake dropped by 1300 in the first year after passage of the ordinance. ⁽¹⁾ During a 2008 meeting of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, the mandatory spay neuter ordinance was praised for being responsible for reducing shelter numbers by 2000 a year. ⁽²⁾

Certainly if the cited figures are accurate, Buncombe County would be proud to report the decrease in shelter intake and euthanasia correctly to the State Veterinarian as part of collecting statistics for the spay/neuter program. However, a review of reported statistics from 2001 thru 2008 does not support Buncombe County's claim of success.

Reported intake in 2001 was 9235 and reported intake in 2008 was 7312 – a reduction of 1923 or 21% in a seven year period. Euthanasia total in 2001 was 6230 and reported total in 2008 was 4437 – a reduction of 1793 or 29% during this same seven year period. From the first full year of enforcement, intake dropped from 7981 in 2005 to 7312 in 2008 – a decrease of only 669 animals in three years.

Reviewing available statistics from other counties shows that a few counties were able to achieve close to Buncombe's percentage of decrease in shelter intake and some counties exceeded that percentage although actual numbers were smaller. None of these counties utilized a mandatory spay neuter ordinance.

(1) State's spay/neuter program tapped out. Mountain Times 5/4/2005

<http://www.mountainx.com/news/2005/0504spayneuter.php>

(2) Minutes of Buncombe County Board of Commissioners' Continued Meeting of September 2, 2008 http://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/commissioners/web_PDF/september22008.pdf

COMPARISON OF SHELTER STATS AS REPORTED TO STATE

BUNCOMBE	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 229,027 in 2008; 11% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	4155	660	74	3193	77%	
Dogs	5080	1259	615	3037	60%	
total	9235	1919	689	6230	67%	
% of Intake		21%	7%			
2002						
Cats	4156	555	55	3318	80%	\$699,395.06
Dogs	5079	1189	601	3072	60%	
total	9235	1744	656	6390	69%	
% of Intake		19%	7%			
2003	Year prior to passage of ordinance					
Cats	4318	572	60	3566	83%	\$665,092.00
Dogs	5089	1136	672	3117	61%	
total	9407	1708	732	6683	71%	
% of Intake		18%	8%			
2004	Year during which ordinance was passed, enforced for 3 months					
Cats	3988	493	48	3337	84%	\$665,092.00
Dogs	4284	1037	582	2530	59%	
total	8272	1530	630	5867	71%	
% of Intake		18%	8%			
2005	1st full year of enforcement					
Cats	3897	563	68	3181	82%	\$696,319.00
Dogs	4084	1146	593	2253	55%	
total	7981	1709	661	5434	68%	
% of Intake		21%	8%			
2006						
Cats	3716	557	157	2549	69%	\$ 829,688.61
Dogs	3809	1051	873	1901	50%	
total	7525	1608	1030	4450	59%	
% of Intake		21%	14%			
2007						
Cats	3638	561	127	2816	77%	
Dogs	4169	1185	841	1960	47%	
total	7807	1746	968	4776	61%	
% of Intake		22%	12%			
2008						
Cats	3454	579	89	2651	77%	\$ 1,125,250.00
Dogs	3858	1103	687	1786	46%	
total	7312	1682	776	4437	61%	
% of Intake		23%	11%			

net decrease

1923

21%

CLEVELAND	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 99,015 in 2008; 3% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	3552	13	25	2634	74%	\$ 310,815.00
Dogs	3990	32	326	3448	86%	
total	7542	45	351	6082	81%	
% of Intake		1%	5%			
2002						
Cats	3227	3	34	3042	94%	\$ 310,815.00
Dogs	4040	17	383	3611	89%	
total	7267	20	417	6653	92%	
% of Intake		0%	6%			
2003						
Cats	3918	6	49	3798	97%	\$ 342,125.00
Dogs	3875	35	353	3491	90%	
total	7793	41	402	7289	94%	
% of Intake		1%	5%			
2004						
Cats	3459	4	34	3380	98%	\$ 354,648.00
Dogs	3913	16	396	3506	90%	
total	7372	20	430	6886	93%	
% of Intake		0%	6%			
2005						
Cats	3215	7	26	3153	98%	\$ 377,583.00
Dogs	3875	20	382	3441	89%	
total	7090	27	408	6594	93%	
% of Intake		0%	6%			
2006						
Cats	2933	4	60	2821	96%	\$ 409,424.00
Dogs	3742	15	399	3288	88%	
total	6675	19	459	6109	92%	
% of Intake		0%	7%			
2007						
Cats	2678	2	28	2663	99%	\$ 438,379.00
Dogs	3680	19	356	3277	89%	
total	6358	21	384	5940	93%	
% of Intake		0%	6%			
2008						
Cats	3013	0	27	2965	98%	\$ 516,646.00
Dogs	3496	10	315	3139	90%	
total	6509	10	342	6104	94%	
% of Intake		0%	5%			

net decrease

1033

14%

DAVIDSON	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 158,166 in 2008; 7.4% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	4070	137	22	3911	96%	\$ 95,661.00
Dogs	4713	324	255	4134	88%	
total	8783	461	277	8045	92%	
% of Intake		5%	3%			
2002						
Cats	3304	135	12	3157	96%	\$ 296,962.00
Dogs	4275	304	295	3676	86%	
total	7579	439	307	6833	90%	
% of Intake		6%	4%			
2003						
Cats	3244	153	17	3074	95%	\$ 320,585.00
Dogs	3712	388	300	3024	81%	
total	6956	541	317	6098	88%	
% of Intake		8%	5%			
2004						
Cats	3243	164	19	3060	94%	\$ 320,585.00
Dogs	3884	441	292	3151	81%	
total	7127	605	311	6211	87%	
% of Intake		8%	4%			
2005						
Cats	3446	134	37	3275	95%	\$ 362,063.00
Dogs	3893	456	344	3093	79%	
total	7339	590	381	6368	87%	
% of Intake		8%	5%			
2006						
Cats	3505	134	12	3359	96%	\$ 381,965.00
Dogs	4017	369	321	3327	83%	
total	7522	503	333	6686	89%	
% of Intake		7%	4%			
2007						
Cats	3151	154	21	2976	94%	\$ 447,180.00
Dogs	3459	406	345	2708	78%	
total	6610	560	366	5684	86%	
% of Intake		8%	6%			
2008						
Cats	3706	140	26	3540	96%	
Dogs	3775	395	420	2960	78%	
total	7481	535	446	6500	87%	
% of Intake		7%	6%			

net decrease

1302

15%

GASTON	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 206,679 in 2008; 8.5% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	5056	21	83	4644	92%	\$ 821,116.00
Dogs	4930	127	502	4196	85%	
total	9986	148	585	8840	89%	
% of Intake		1%	6%			
2002						
Cats	4069	41	35	3888	96%	\$ 792,387.00
Dogs	4353	67	469	3703	85%	
total	8422	108	504	7591	90%	
% of Intake		1%	6%			
2003						
Cats	4661	36	45	4389	94%	\$ 858,489.00
Dogs	4503	107	514	3864	86%	
total	9164	143	559	8253	90%	
% of Intake		2%	6%			
2004						
Cats	4292	34	39	4034	94%	\$ 646,519.00
Dogs	4689	151	504	3913	83%	
total	8981	185	543	7947	88%	
% of Intake		2%	6%			
2005						
Cats	3924	37	72	3627	92%	\$ 1,012,125.00
Dogs	4519	115	522	3720	82%	
total	8443	152	594	7347	87%	
% of Intake		2%	7%			
2006						
Cats	4441	350	32	3928	88%	n/a
Dogs	4644	625	515	3344	72%	
total	9085	975	547	7272	80%	
% of Intake		11%	6%			
2007						
Cats	4362	597	37	3497	80%	\$ 1,053,566.00
Dogs	4588	926	400	3167	69%	
total	8950	1523	437	6664	74%	
% of Intake		17%	5%			
2008						
Cats	4151	716	29	3219	78%	
Dogs	4348	1505	430	2378	55%	
total	8499	2221	459	5597	66%	
% of Intake		26%	5%			

net decrease

1487

15%

STANLY	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 59,614 in 2008; 2.6% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	2189	16	21	1930	88%	\$ 161,863.00
Dogs	2465	122	189	1807	73%	
total	4654	138	210	3737	80%	
% of Intake		3%	5%			
2002						
Cats	2270	44	10	1912	84%	\$ 194,920.00
Dogs	2426	256	200	1579	65%	
total	4696	300	210	3491	74%	
% of Intake		6%	4%			
2003 not available						
Cats	0	0	0	0		\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0	0%	
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						
2004 not available						
Cats	0	0	0	0	0%	\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0	0%	
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						
2005						
Cats	2187	21	24	2142	98%	\$ 268,896.00
Dogs	1682	258	176	1248	74%	
total	3869	279	200	3390	88%	
% of Intake		7%	5%			
2006 not available						
Cats	0	0	0	0		\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0		
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						
2007 not available						
Cats	0	0	0	0		\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0		
total	0	0	0			
% of Intake						
2008						
Cats	1805	123	18	1664	92%	\$ 335,216.00
Dogs	1357	301	155	901	66%	
total	3162	424	173	2565	81%	
% of Intake		13%	5%			

net decrease

1492

32%

STOKES	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 46,171 in 2008; 3.3% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	1856	59	6	1791	96%	\$ 132,933.00
Dogs	1806	152	143	1511	84%	
total	3662	211	149	3302	90%	
% of Intake		6%	4%			
2002						
Cats	1740	40	11	1694	97%	\$ 130,093.00
Dogs	1911	148	119	1642	86%	
total	3651	188	130	3336	91%	
% of Intake		5%	4%			
2003						
Cats	2063	60	11	1990	96%	\$ 130,093.00
Dogs	1847	148	119	1582	86%	
total	3910	208	130	3572	91%	
% of Intake						
2004						
Cats	1530	48	13	1466	96%	\$ 154,868.00
Dogs	1749	160	130	1458	83%	
total	3279	208	143	2924	89%	
% of Intake						
2005						
Cats	1543	46	4	1500	97%	\$ 176,559.00
Dogs	1546	143	82	1310	85%	
total	3089	189	86	2810	91%	
% of Intake		6%	3%			
2006						
Cats	1697	65	3	1614	95%	\$ 161,783.00
Dogs	1773	208	166	1453	82%	
total	3470	273	169	3067	88%	
% of Intake						
2007						
Cats	1520	103	11	1411	93%	\$ 215,934.00
Dogs	1726	221	145	1362	79%	
total	3246	324	156	2773	85%	
% of Intake						
2008						
						\$ -
Cats	1284	112	19	963	75%	\$ 189,322.00
Dogs	1355	257	87	1126	83%	
total	2639	369	106	2089	79%	
% of Intake		14%	4%			

net decrease

1023

28%

WAKE	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 866,410 in 2008; 38% increase from 2000						
2001						
Cats	3249	589	52	2564	79%	\$ 1,493,706.00
Dogs	3854	1274	391	2118	55%	
total	7103	1863	443	4682	66%	
% of Intake		26%	6%			
2002						
Cats	4132	699	98	3112	75%	\$ 1,355,686.00
Dogs	4245	1498	365	2206	52%	
total	8377	2197	463	5318	63%	
% of Intake		26%	6%			
2003						
Cats	4389	834	66	3461	79%	\$ 987,272.00
Dogs	3935	1570	381	1970	50%	
total	8324	2404	447	5431	65%	
% of Intake						
2004						
Cats	5026	927	67	3475	69%	\$ 1,075,800.00
Dogs	4229	1744	351	1767	42%	
total	9255	2671	418	5242	57%	
% of Intake						
2005						
Cats	4398	675	76	3563	81%	\$ 501,325.00
Dogs	4248	1616	412	2097	49%	
total	8646	2291	488	5660	65%	
% of Intake		26%	6%			
2006						
Cats	5164	770	90	4258	82%	\$ 789,266.00
Dogs	4474	1484	418	2510	56%	
total	9638	2254	508	6768	70%	
% of Intake						
2007						
Cats	2659	649	139	1715	64%	\$ 1,708,082.00
Dogs	2806	1024	697	1006	36%	
total	5465	1673	836	2721	50%	
% of Intake						
2008						
	not available					
Cats	0	0	0	0	0%	\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0	0%	
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						

net decrease

1638

23%

DUPLIN	Intake	Adopted	Ret.	Euth.	% Euth	Budget
Population: 53,362 in 2008; 8.8% increase from 2000						
2001	not available					
Cats	0	0	0	0		\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0		
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						
2002						
Cats	1013	0	20	993	98%	\$ 81,000.00
Dogs	2223	91	47	2085	94%	
total	3236	91	67	3078	95%	
% of Intake		3%	2%			
2003						
Cats	1010	9	16	1045	103%	\$ 91,759.00
Dogs	1931	163	61	1707	88%	
total	2941	172	77	2752	94%	
% of Intake						
2004	not available					
Cats	0	0	0	0		\$ -
Dogs	0	0	0	0		
total	0	0	0	0		
% of Intake						
2005						
Cats	1179	220	14	946	80%	\$ 124,454.00
Dogs	2278	700	115	1442	63%	
total	3457	920	129	2388	69%	
% of Intake		27%	4%			
2006						
Cats	977	167	14	798	82%	\$ 139,322.00
Dogs	2241	850	149	1242	55%	
total	3218	1017	163	2040	63%	
% of Intake						
2007						
Cats	1043	67	10	966	93%	\$ 128,000.00
Dogs	2125	617	190	1318	62%	
total	3168	684	200	2284	72%	
% of Intake						
2008						
Cats	576	23	18	535	93%	\$ 146,052.00
Dogs	1765	314	146	1305	74%	
total	2341	337	164	1840	79%	
% of Intake						

net decrease

895

28%