



SHELTER  
ANIMALS  
COUNT

THE NATIONAL DATABASE

# 2024

## ANNUAL ANALYSIS

Comparing 2024 to 2023 and 2019



Dear Animal Welfare Community,

Since 2012, Shelter Animals Count (SAC) has embarked on a collaborative journey of data collection and sharing. Through it all, our work has been driven by the belief that understanding the number of animals entering and leaving shelters is essential to identifying real solutions to the challenges faced by animal welfare organizations today. This commitment to data as a unifying force is the cornerstone of our 2024 report, which reflects on a year of significant insights and challenges in animal welfare.

**This year, 13,527 organizations are included in the 2024 analysis by Shelter Animals Count.** We saw slight decreases in community intakes, while live outcomes within communities remained the same as 2023. Length of stay for dogs of all sizes increased in 2024, adding strain to an already overburdened shelter system. This extended stay contributes to the ongoing capacity crisis that has persisted since the pandemic, limiting space for incoming animals. While live outcomes have stabilized, animals entering shelters are still more likely to be adopted now than before the pandemic. However, with transfers and return-to-home rates declining, dogs are at greater risk of euthanasia when space and resources become limited, further challenging shelter operations.

Understanding historical trends in animal counts is essential for contextualizing the industry's progress. This report includes comparisons to 2019 to highlight how the field has evolved toward this “new normal.” Entering our fifth year of the ongoing capacity crisis, we face the cumulative impact of animals awaiting outcomes, compounded by increased lengths of stay for dogs. The figures presented in this report are more than just numbers; they represent lives, underscoring the importance of our collective efforts.

In 2024, we are proud to introduce a new machine-learning estimation model that translates percentages into estimated animal counts. This advancement marks a significant step forward in data accessibility, enabling advocates and organizations to harness insights more effectively. While the data reveals areas of concern, they also illustrate the incredible work being done to save lives and create positive change.

The challenges of the past year were met with resilience, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to collaboration. As we embark on this new year, Shelter Animals Count remains dedicated to transparency, cooperation, and neutrality. Together, we are shaping a better future for animals across the country—one informed by data and powered by passion.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to animal welfare. As we move forward into 2025, we look forward to celebrating your successes and sharing data-driven insights to support you in addressing challenges within your communities.

With gratitude,



**Stephanie Filer** | Executive Director - Shelter Animals Count



# HIGHLIGHTS

## 1% Fewer Community Intakes

Community intakes dropped by 1.4% (83,000 fewer dogs and cats) compared to 2023, with dogs contributing more significantly to the decrease. **(p. 6)**

## Mixed Adoption Trends

Adoptions rose slightly by 17,000 (<0.5%) in 2024, with dog adoptions down 1% and cat adoptions up nearly 2%. Adoption rates for both dogs (57%) and cats (64%) increased. **(p. 16)**

## Stable Live Outcomes

Live outcomes for cats and dogs remained steady at 5.2 million, a slight dip of <0.5% (20,000) from 2023, revealing subtle shifts between species. **(p. 12)**

## Fewer Non-Live Outcomes

In 2024, 748,000 dogs and cats experienced non-live outcomes, down 1.6% from 2023 and 20% from 2019. Cats drove much of this progress, with 3% fewer non-live outcomes than 2023 and 37% fewer than 2019, as euthanasia rates dropped from 13% in 2019 to 8% in 2024.

Dogs, however, saw euthanasia rates rise slightly from 7% in 2019 to 9% in 2024, now accounting for 50% of non-live outcomes compared to 36% in 2019. These trends show progress for cats but highlight challenges in improving outcomes for dogs. **(p. 17)**

## Longer Stays for Dogs

Dogs are staying in care longer in 2024 for all sizes of dogs – though large dogs are staying in shelters the longest. This is a trend warranting further examination of shelter resources and placement strategies. **(p. 16)**

## Organization Type Comparisons

In 2024, shelters and rescues played distinct yet complementary roles. Shelters handled 85% of intakes and 73% of adoptions, while rescues managed 27% of adoptions and 15% of intakes, focusing on specialized populations. Rescues also facilitated 52% of transfers, though overall transfers declined.

Non-live outcomes showed mixed trends. Dog non-live outcomes rose 0.5%, driven by a 1.5% increase in government shelters, now 17.5% higher than in 2019, with a 15% non-live outcome rate. In contrast, cat non-live outcomes dropped 15% across all shelter types. Rescues saw decreases of 15% for dogs and 4.6% for cats for non-live outcomes.

Adoptions also varied. Shelter adoptions rose 0.4% for dogs and 2% for cats, with increases in government shelters offsetting declines in private shelters. Rescues saw a 4.2% drop in dog adoptions but a 1.4% rise for cats.

### Report Reading Tip

To improve readability, many figures in this report are rounded to the nearest 1,000. On the Stats at a Glance pages, numbers are rounded to the nearest decimal point. Some totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

# Shelter Animals Count's Enhanced Scientific Model

Shelter Animals Count (SAC) has introduced an advanced scientific model that elevates our ability to analyze and interpret data from animal shelters across the country. Leveraging cutting-edge machine learning technology, this new model enhances our commitment to providing meaningful insights and fostering data-driven decision-making in animal welfare.

## Why We Updated Our Model

In 2024, SAC released national estimates based on organization and species-level medians. While these estimates were thoroughly validated and instrumental in identifying high-level trends, we recognized an opportunity to deepen our analysis. The updated model enables a more nuanced understanding of the data, helping us uncover patterns and insights that can drive significant improvements in animal welfare outcomes.

## How it Works

Our enhanced model uses machine learning—a technology that teaches computers to identify patterns and make estimations based on large volumes of data. This approach allows us to analyze shelter data with unprecedented precision, delivering:



### Deeper Insights:

Granular analysis of species-specific trends, regional differences, and organization-level impacts.



### Improved Accuracy:

More reliable estimations, even for underrepresented data sets.



### Actionable Information:

Insights tailored to the needs of shelters, rescues, and other animal welfare organizations.

## Transition to New Model for 2024 Report

The transition to our new model may result in slight differences in previously reported numbers, but the overall trends remain consistent. This updated approach also provides increased accuracy in our estimations, offering organizations a more precise understanding of key metrics.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the New Model:

### What kind of data does the model use?

The model analyzes anonymized data from shelters and rescues across the country. This includes organization-level data (e.g., intake and outcomes) and species-specific information. Monthly data for intakes and outcomes from more than 6k organizations for the years of 2016-2024 is included in the model to determine intake and outcome totals for all organizations across the country.

Demographic data that was identified to be associated with intakes and outcomes are therefore included to more accurately predict intakes and outcomes.

### How does machine learning improve the model?

In 2024, SAC released national estimates based on organization and species level medians. These estimates, while thoroughly validated, were limited to high-level trends. To dive deeper in the data, SAC used machine learning to enhance the model.

Machine learning is more powerful because it can a) process and learn from multiple pieces of data, b) find hidden patterns, and c) make predictions that are more accurate for specific situations or groups rather than providing a one-size-fits-all number like the median does.

To learn more about the estimation model, visit our website at [shelteranimalscount.org/estimation-model](https://shelteranimalscount.org/estimation-model)



# INTAKES

SHELTER ANIMALS COUNT 2024 FULL YEAR REPORT

In 2024

# 5,766,000

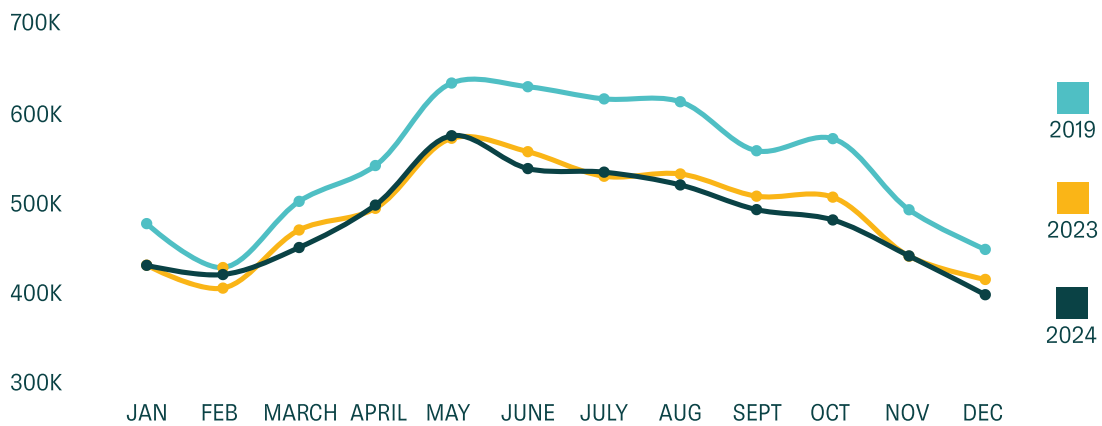
dogs and cats entered shelters and rescues nationwide.

**1%**  
compared  
to 2023

**11%**  
compared  
to 2019

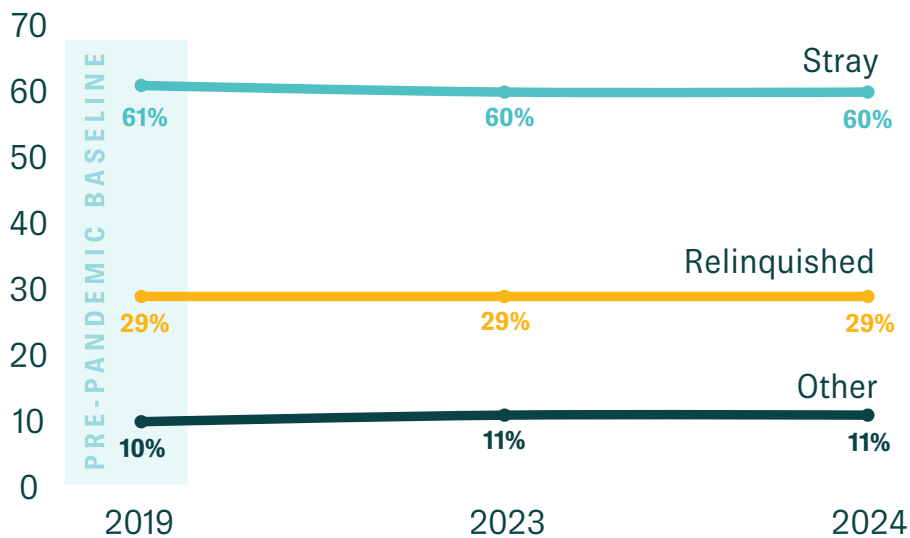
In 2024, community intakes for dogs and cats totaled 1.4% fewer than in 2023, representing 83,000 fewer animals. Intakes are evenly split between dogs and cats, with both contributing to the overall decline.

Intakes have declined by 11.3% (735,000 animals) since 2019.



*\*Community intakes tally all intakes except transfers to ensure a clear count of animals received directly from the community, avoiding double counting during total intake calculations.*

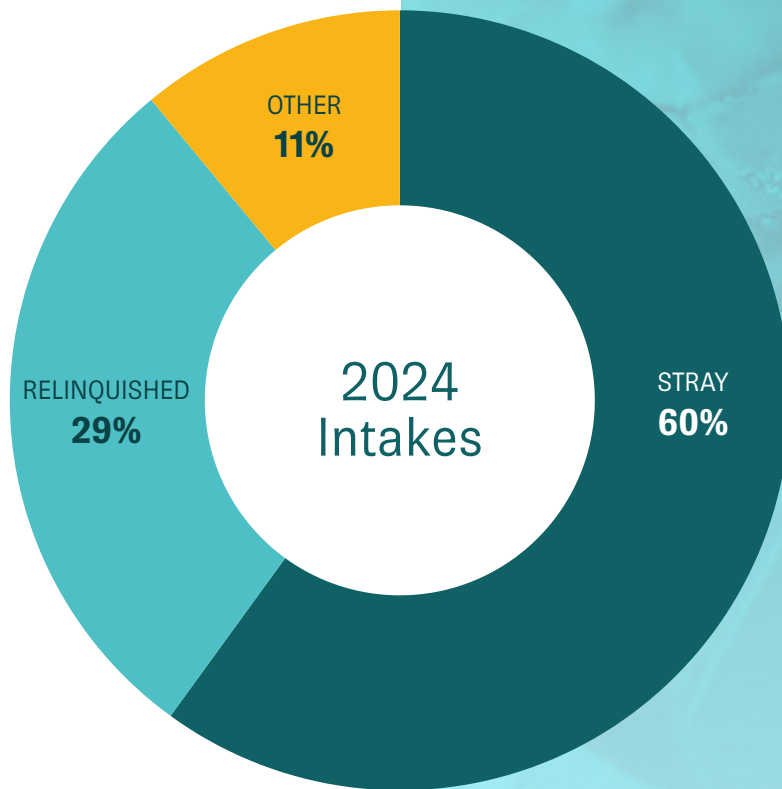
# Combined Species Intake Rates



The number of stray dog and cat intakes decreased slightly by 1.4% (50,000 fewer) compared to 2023 and still make up the majority of community intakes at 60%. Owner surrender/relinquishment continued to see a decrease in 2024 of 3.1% (52,000 pets) compared to 2023.



**Tip:** Throughout this report, we include both the change in the number of animals and what percentage increase/decrease that represents. We also include rates and rate changes, which allows us to see the change in occurrence, independent of the actual numbers. (For example: there has been a 1% decrease of community intakes, which equates to 83,000 fewer cats/dogs, while the intake rates on this page show the proportion of intake reasons, regardless of fluctuations in total intakes).



# 2,877,000 DOGS

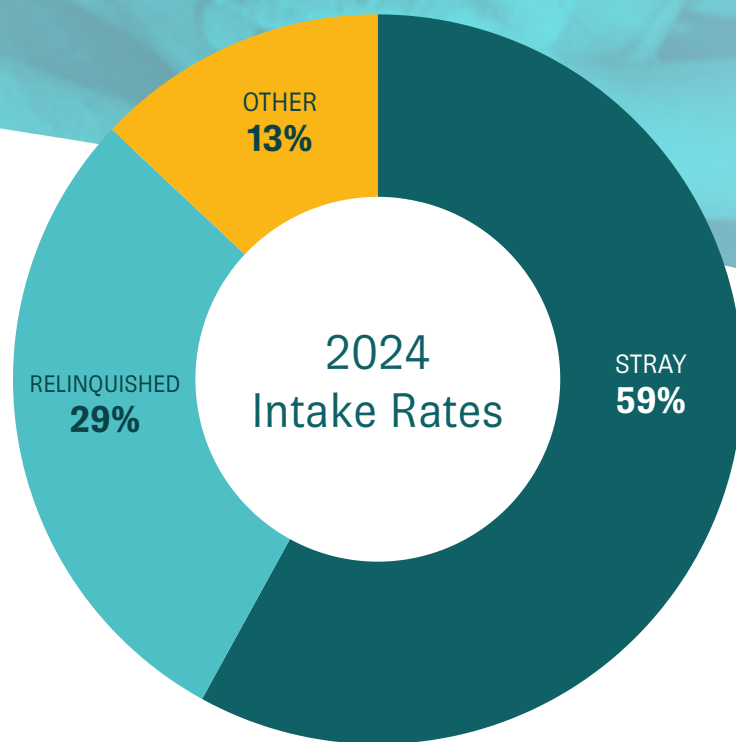
entered shelters and rescues in 2024

**2%**  
compared  
to 2023

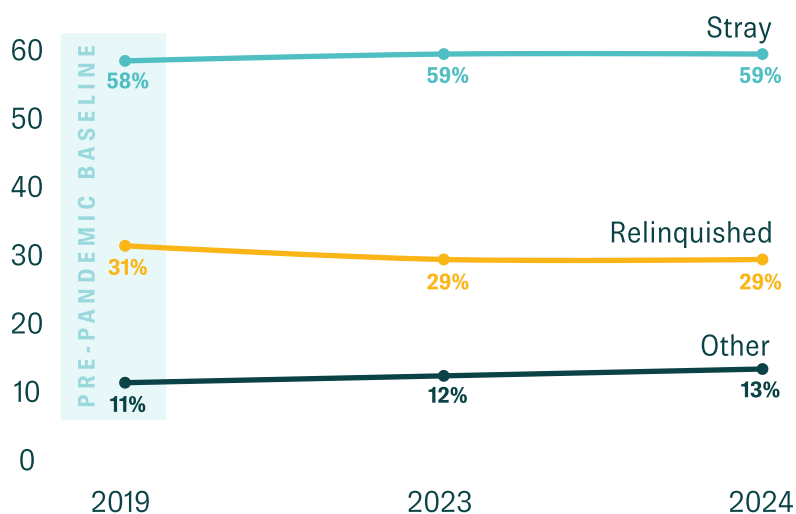
**14%**  
compared  
to 2019

In 2024, dog intakes from community sources continued their downward trend, decreasing by 2.2% (64,000 dogs) compared to 2023 and by 14.1% (472,000 dogs) from 2019 levels. Stray dog intakes saw a similar 2% decline (41,000 dogs) from the previous year, yet they remained the largest source of community dog intakes, comprising 59%—a consistent proportion year-over-year.

Owner surrenders also dropped, decreasing by 4.5% (39,000 dogs) but still accounting for 29% of all dog intakes, a figure that has held steady despite the overall decline. Meanwhile, other intake sources, such as animals seized or born in care, saw a notable 4.6% increase (16,000 dogs), providing a glimpse into shifts in the types of dogs entering shelters and organizations.



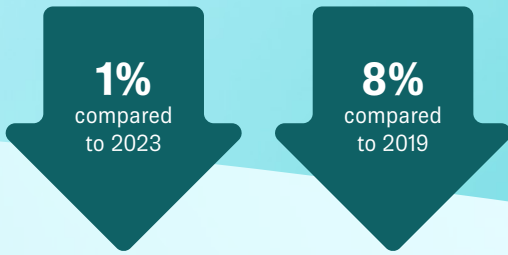
## Canine Intake Types Intake Rates





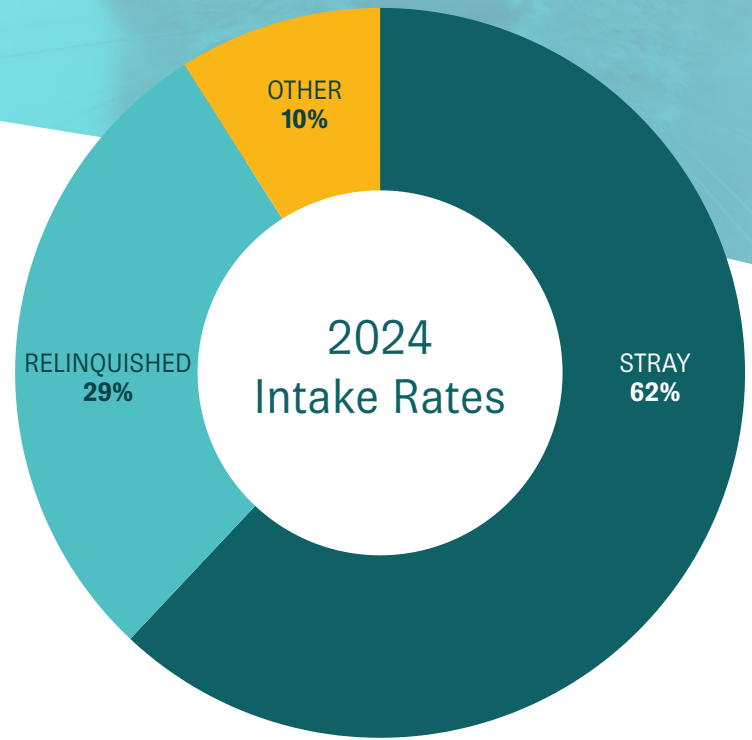
# 2,880,000 CATS

entered shelters and rescues in 2024

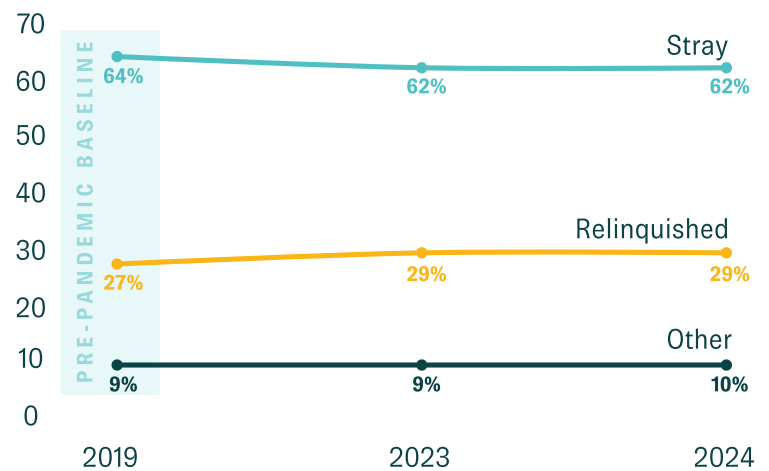


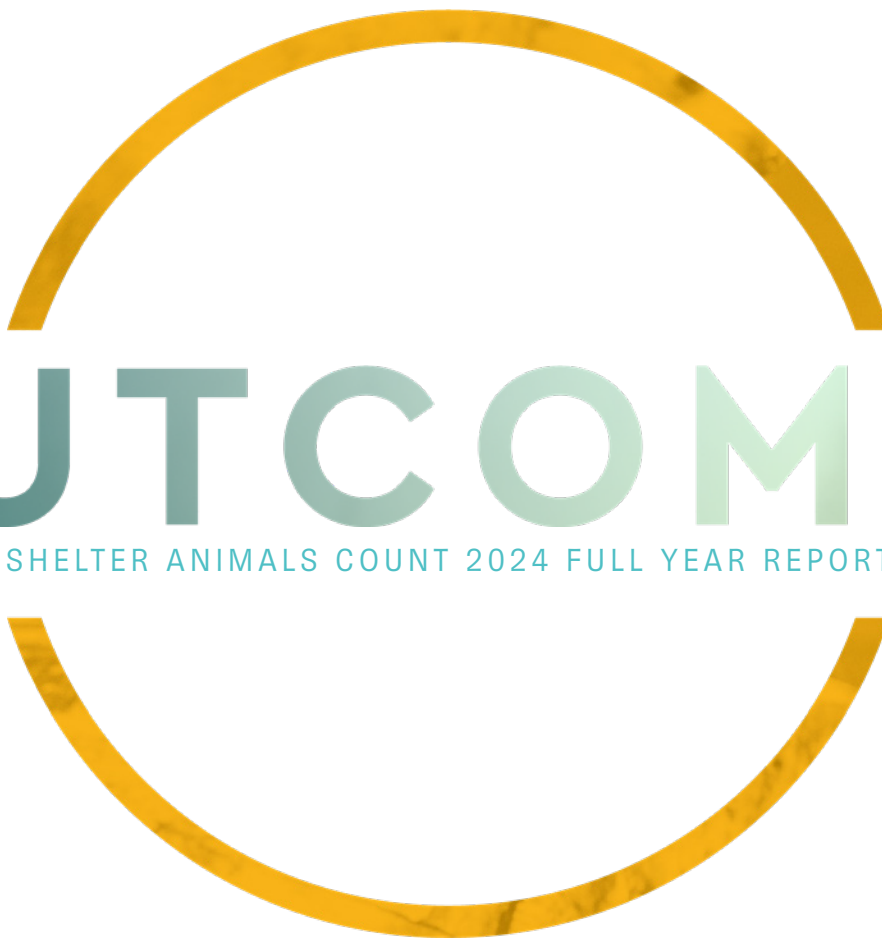
In 2024, cat intakes from community sources experienced a slight decline, falling by less than 1% (19,000 cats) compared to 2023 and by 8.4% (263,000 cats) compared to 2019. Stray cat intakes also saw a minor decrease of less than .5% (10,000 cats) from the previous year and now account for 62% of cat intakes, a drop from 64% in 2019.

Owner surrenders for cats decreased by 1.6% (14,000 cats) from 2023. However, they represent a growing share of cat intakes, rising to 29% in 2024 from 27% in 2019, indicating a shift in the types of cats entering shelters and organizations.



## Feline Intake Types Intake Rates





# OUTCOMES

SHELTER ANIMALS COUNT 2024 FULL YEAR REPORT

In 2024

# 5,959,000

dogs and cats had a **community outcome** (excluding transfers)

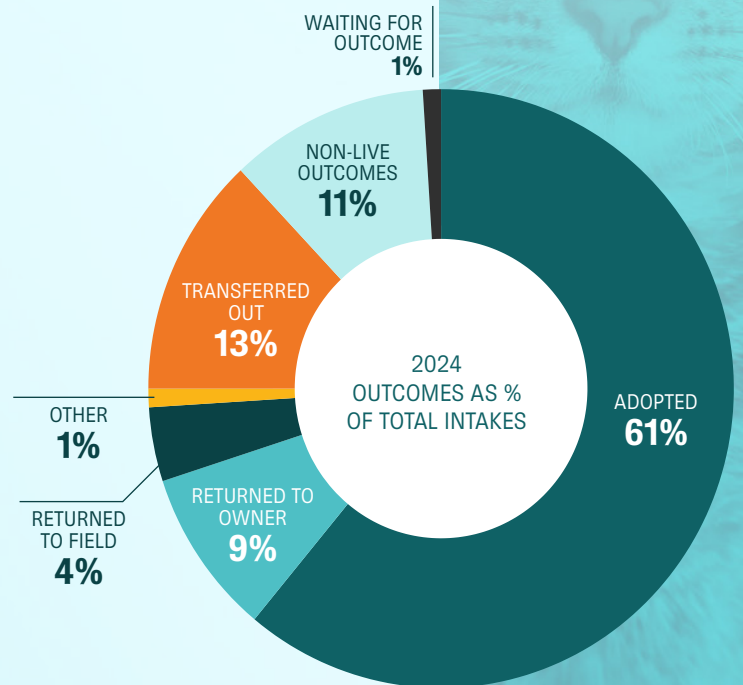
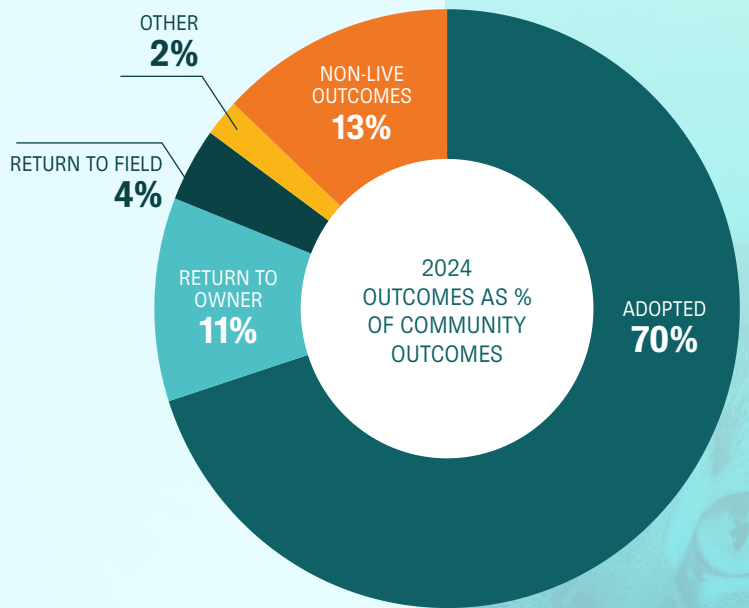
This is a decrease of 33,000 outcomes compared to 2023 (630,000 fewer than 2019) driven by the decrease in overall outcomes for dogs.



### 2 Ways to Look at the Data:

The top graph shows the outcome type rates based on all of the community outcomes that occurred. These percentages can be used to calculate how many animals were represented in each piece of the pie, out of all of the community outcomes that occurred (5.9M). The bottom graph shows the status of all cat/dog intakes that occurred, the outcomes that have occurred, including transfers out, and also accounting for the percentage of animals that are still waiting for an outcome (this is the gap that is resulting in high shelter populations: 1% or 103k more animals have arrived than have left). These percentages can be used to calculate how many animals were represented in each piece of the pie, out of all of the total intakes that occurred (7M on pg 18).

For example: Of the 5.9M animals who have been outcomed, 70% were adopted (4.2M cats/dogs) and at the same time, of the 7M intakes (pg 18), 61% were adopted... and 1% is still waiting in the shelter.



In 2024

# 5,211,000

dogs and cats had a community LIVE outcome

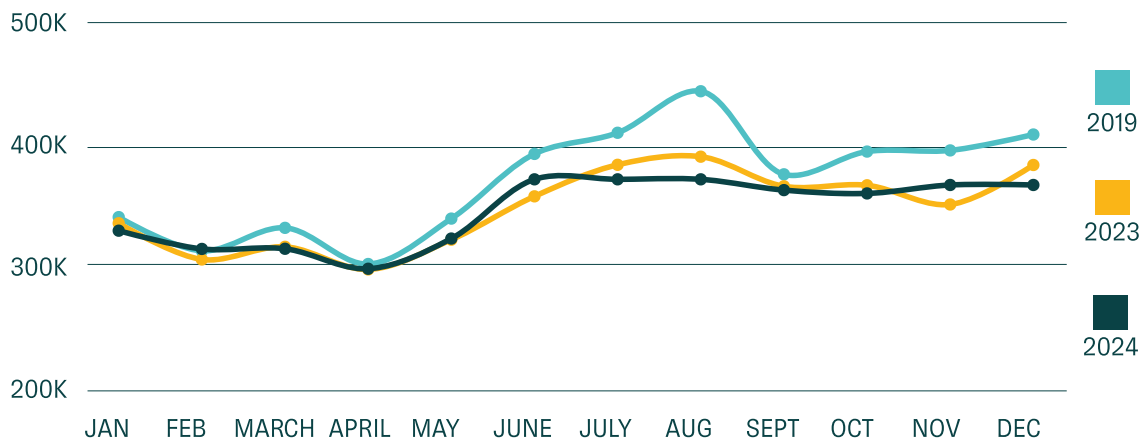
**< 1%**  
compared  
to 2023

**7%**  
compared  
to 2019

In 2024, approximately 5.2 million cats and dogs had a community live outcome, excluding transfers—a figure that represents a slight decline of 0.4% (20,000 animals) compared to 2023.

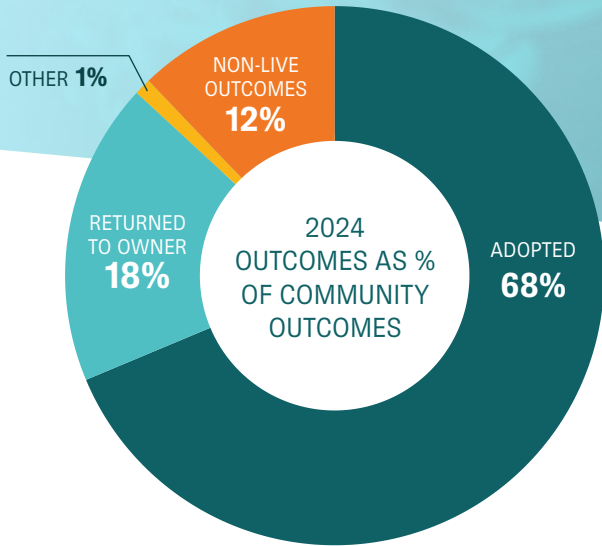
Dogs accounted for 2.6 million of these live outcomes, marking a decrease of nearly 2% (46,000) from 2023 and a more significant drop of 15.8% (490,000) compared to 2019. In 2019, dogs comprised 55% of all community live outcomes, but by 2024, their share has declined to 50%.

In contrast, cats also achieved 2.6 million live outcomes in 2024, an increase of 1% (26,000) from 2023 and 2% (51,000) from 2019, reflecting a steady upward trend in positive outcomes for cats in recent years.



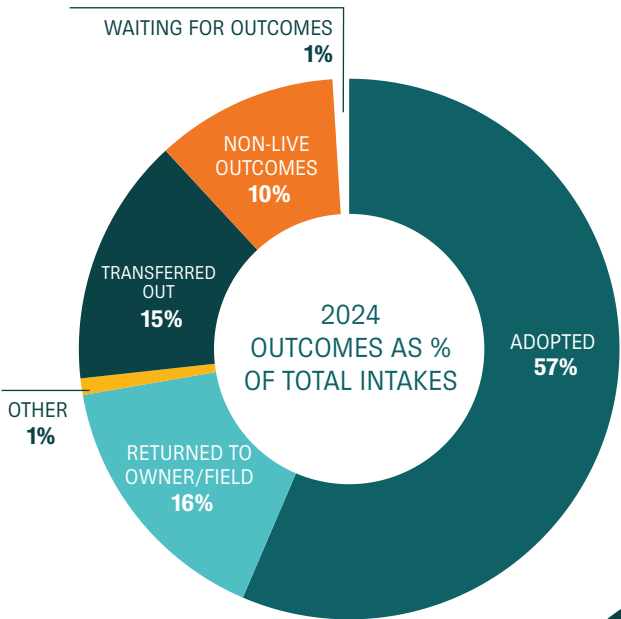
# 2,994,000 DOGS

had a community outcome in 2024.\*

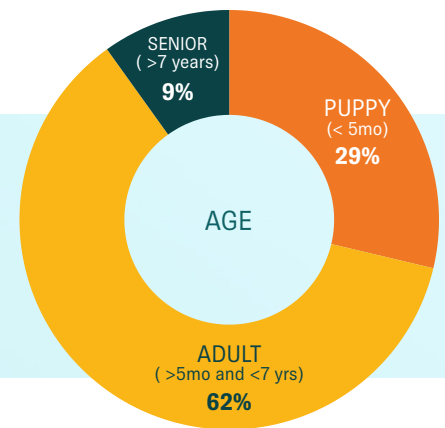
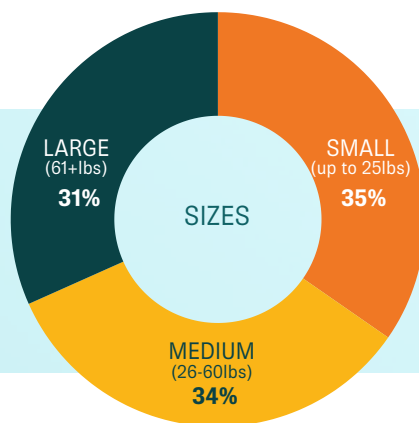


In 2024, dog adoptions experienced a slight decline, falling 1% (22,000) compared to 2023. However, adoption rates for dogs entering organizations showed an encouraging trend, with 57% of dogs adopted—an increase from 56% in 2023 and 54% in 2019, indicating progress in adoption outcomes despite fewer overall adoptions.

Conversely, fewer dogs were reunited with their owners in 2024. The number of dogs returned to their owners dropped by 20,000 compared to 2023, continuing a concerning downward trend. Since 2019, returns to owners have declined, with 16% of dogs reunited with their owners in 2024 compared to 17% in 2019. This highlights an ongoing challenge in facilitating reunifications between lost pets and their families.



## What kinds of dogs entered shelters in 2024?\*

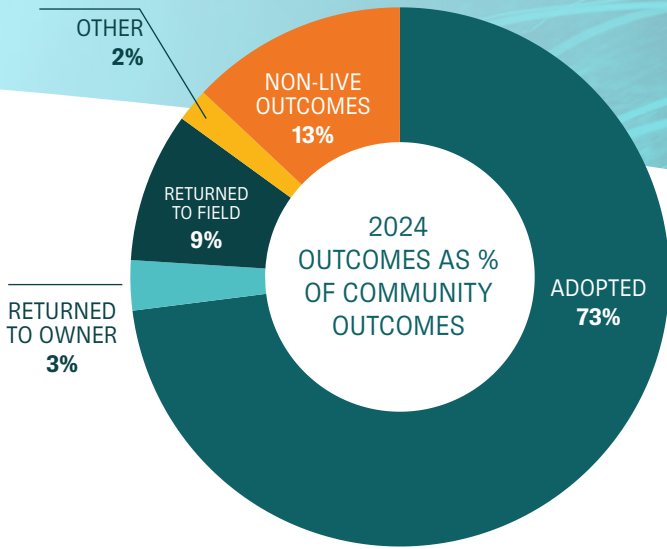


\*Community outcome totals do not include transfers to ensure a clear count of animals receiving a final outcome in their community, avoiding double counting.

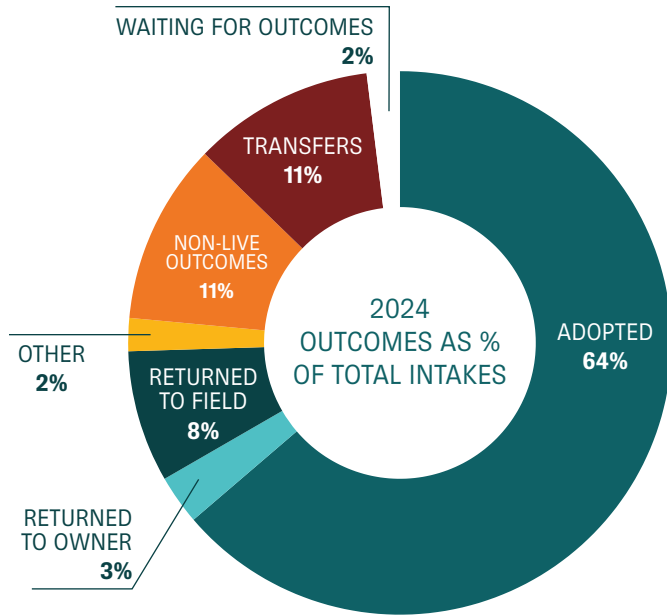
\*\*This data is made possible through Shelter Animals Count's Animal-Level Data, which captures detailed information on each animal in shelters and rescues—including age, size, intake type, and outcome—helping to identify trends and support data-driven decisions in animal welfare.

# 2,965,000 CATS

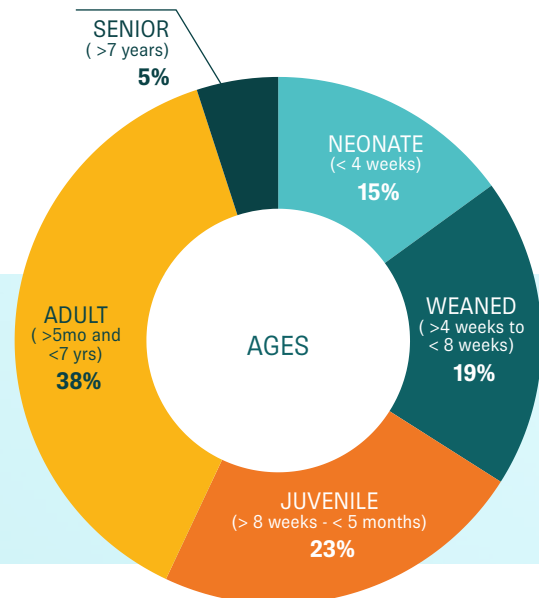
had a community outcome\* in 2024.



In 2024, 2.6 million cats experienced a live outcome in their community, representing a 1% increase (26,000 cats) compared to 2023 and a 2% increase (51,000 cats) over 2019. Cats entering organizations in 2024 were more likely to be adopted than in previous years, with 64% of cats finding adoptive homes. This adoption rate is noticeably up from 62% in 2023 and 57% in 2019. Increased cat adoption rates suggest that the cats entering organizations in 2024 may be more likely to find homes than in previous years.



Meanwhile, the rate of cats returning to their home or colony decreased slightly by 1 percentage point compared to 2023, though it remains 1 percentage point higher than in 2019.



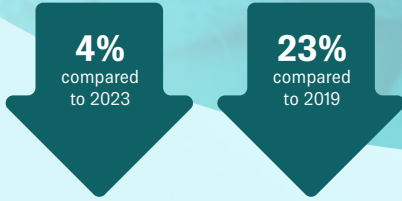
## What age groups of cats entered shelters in 2024? \*\*

\* Community outcome totals do not include transfers to ensure a clear count of animals receiving a final outcome in their community, avoiding double counting.

\*\* This data is made possible through Shelter Animals Count's Animal-Level Data, which captures detailed information on each animal in shelters and rescues—including age, size, intake type, and outcome—helping to identify trends and support data-driven decisions in animal welfare.

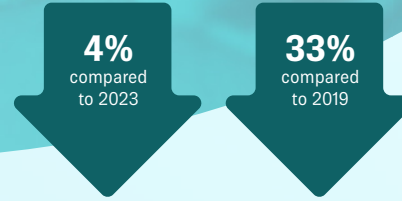
In 2024  
**1,189,000**

dogs and cats transferred **in**  
 to sheltering organizations



In 2024  
**893,000**

dogs and cats transferred **out**  
 of sheltering organizations



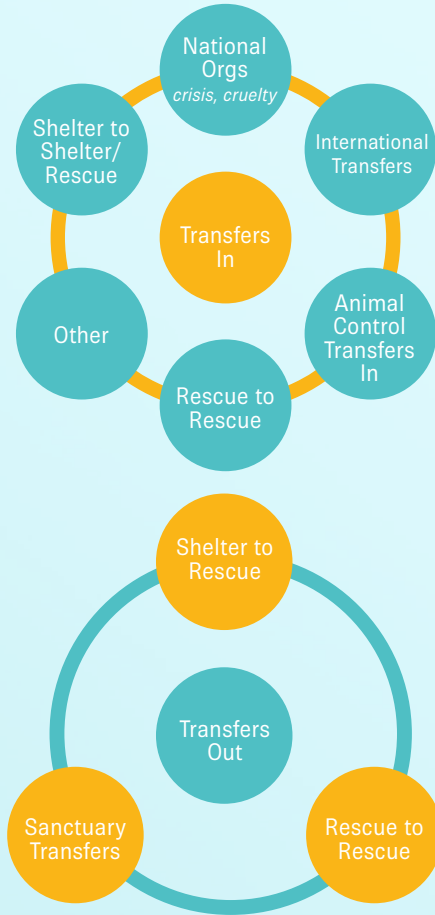
### Transfers Still Decreasing

The animal transfer system continues to face challenges in rebounding to pre-pandemic levels, with the number of animals transferred among organizations showing a decline again in 2024.

**IN:** In 2024, transfers into organizations dropped 4.1% compared to 2023, with 680,000 dogs (down 5.6%) and 510,000 cats (down 2.2%) transferred. Transfers in, which may include non-sheltering sources, remain a vital intake type for many organizations.

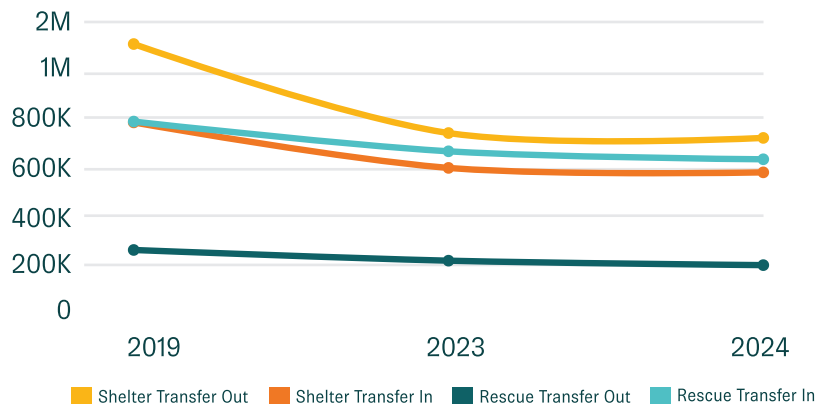
**OUT:** Transfers out continued to decline in 2024, with 524,000 dogs (down 4.5% from 2023 and 37.6% from 2019) and 369,000 cats (down 3.7% from 2023 and 27% from 2019) moved within the sheltering system.

Overall, transfers for dogs and cats dropped 4.1% from 2023 and 33.6% from 2019, highlighting systemic challenges like reduced resources and capacity, underscoring the need for collaboration and strategic planning.



Understanding the data of animals moving within the transfer system is complicated. In many cases, we have excluded transfers throughout this report so we could analyze the intakes and outcomes that are occurring from the community and avoid double-counting.

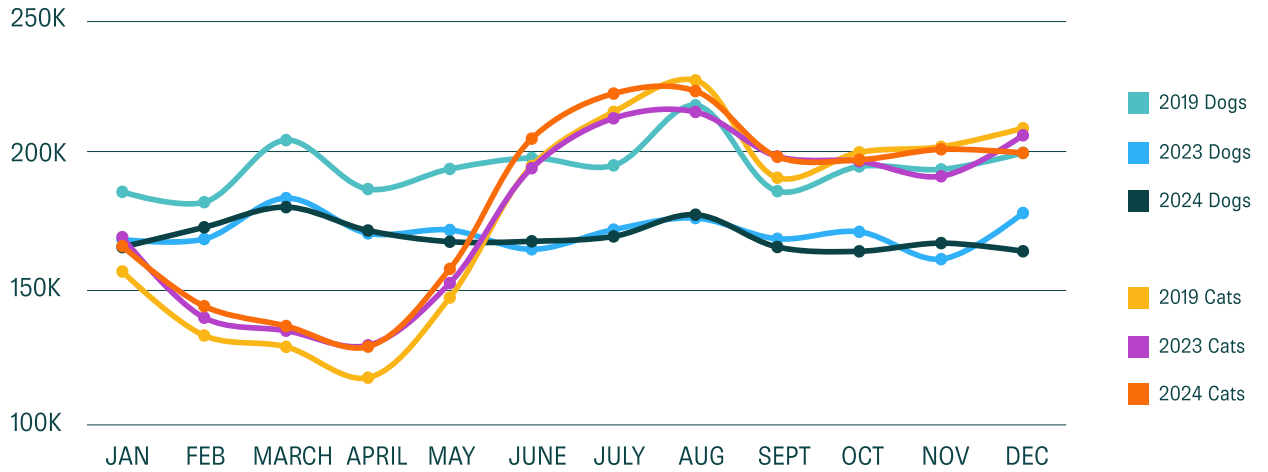
**Shelter and Rescue Transfers Year-over-Year**



In 2024

# 4,192,000

dogs and cats were adopted.

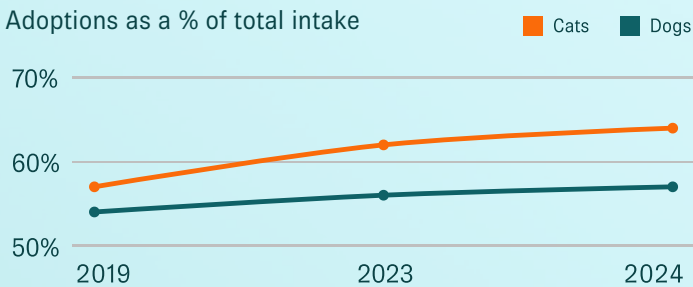
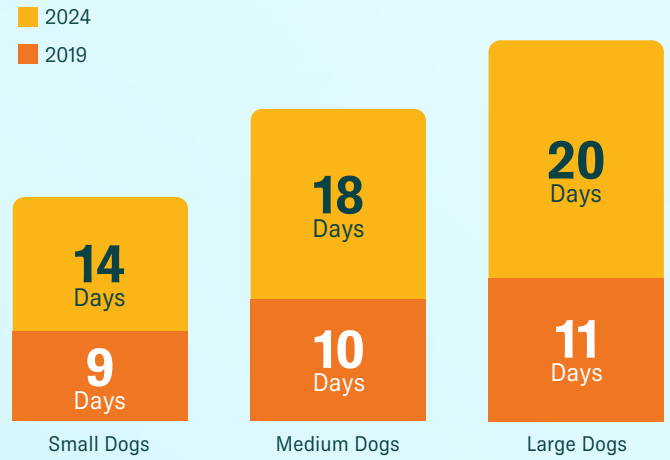


In 2024, total adoptions for dogs and cats reached 4.2M (2M dogs and 2M cats), a slight 0.4% increase (17,000 more adoptions) from 2023 but still 5.6% lower than 2019, with over 250,000 fewer animals finding homes since then.

Dog adoptions continued to decline, dropping 1% (nearly 22,000 fewer adoptions) from 2023 and 13.2% (308,000 fewer adoptions) since 2019. Conversely, cat adoptions grew 1.8% (nearly 39,000 more adoptions) over 2023 and surpassed 2019 levels by 2.7% (58,000 additional adoptions), with peak growth during summer months.

This highlights the ongoing challenge of declining dog adoption numbers while building on gains in cat adoptions.

### Median Length of Stay Increases for Dogs until Adoption



### Organizational Comparison:

Compared to 2023 data, adoptions have risen by 0.4% for dogs and 2% for cats in shelters. This growth is driven by government organizations, which saw increases of 3% for dogs and 4.5% for cats. In contrast, private shelters experienced a 2.6% decline in dog adoptions but a 1% increase for cats. Rescues reported a 4.2% drop in dog adoptions, while cat adoptions rose by 1.4%.



In 2024

# 748,000

dogs and cats had a non-live outcome.



**2023**  
1% down (2.3k)

**2019**  
9% up (32k)

**2%**  
compared  
to 2023

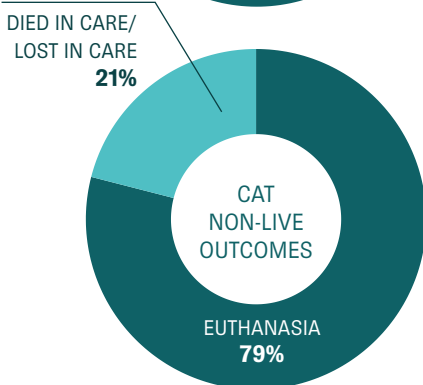
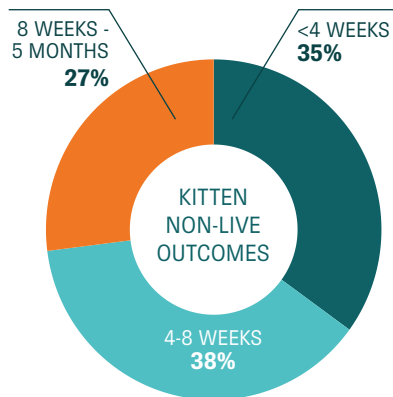
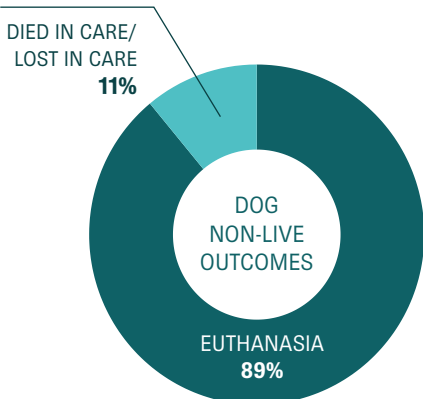
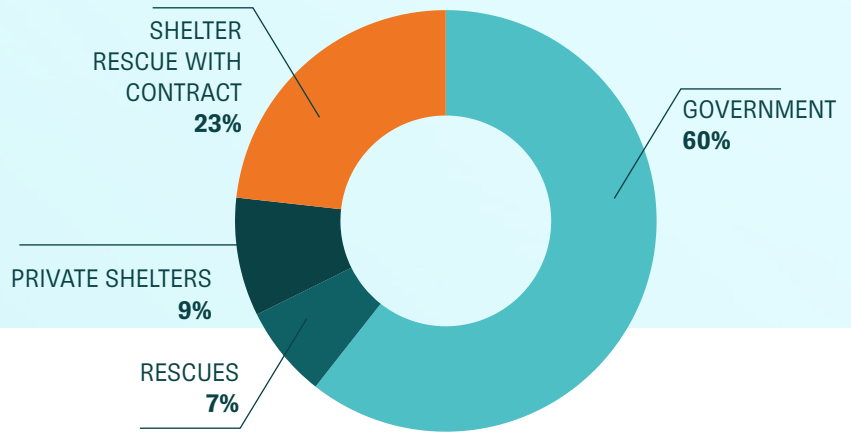
**20%**  
compared  
to 2019

**2023**  
3% down (10k)

**2019**  
37% down (223k)

Non-live outcomes in shelters have risen by 0.5% for dogs but dropped by 15% for cats. The increase for dogs is driven by government organizations, where non-live outcomes grew by 1.5%, now standing 17.5% higher than in 2019, with a non-live outcome rate of 15% of total intakes. For cats, all shelter types have seen declines in non-live outcomes. Rescues also reported decreases, with non-live outcomes down 15% for dogs and 4.6% for cats.

### Non-Live Outcomes by Org Type:



### Animal Level Data for Non-Live Outcomes by Species

Shelter Animals Count's unique animal-level data, powered by new technology, provides critical insights into intakes, adoptions, and non-live outcomes **in this report**.

For dogs, 89% of non-live outcomes are due to shelter euthanasia, while 11% result from dying or being lost in care.

For cats, 79% stem from shelter euthanasia and 21% from dying or being lost in care. Vulnerable populations, like underage kittens, significantly impact these numbers.

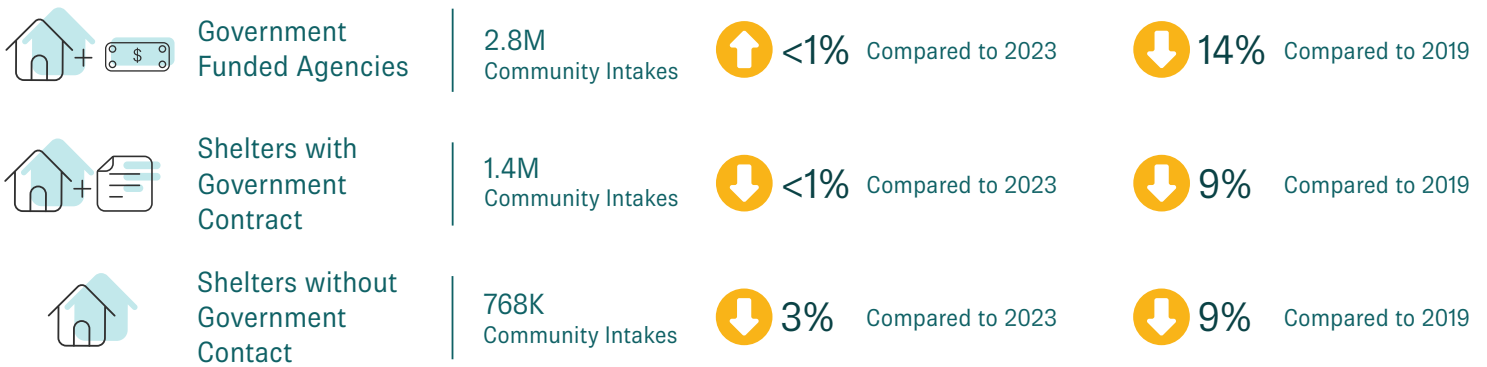
Thanks to this data, we can analyze specific populations in the shelter, such as kittens. Among kittens under 5 months, 35% of non-live outcomes occur in those younger than 4 weeks, 38% in kittens 4-8 weeks old, and 27% in those 8 weeks to 5 months.

# ORGANIZATIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

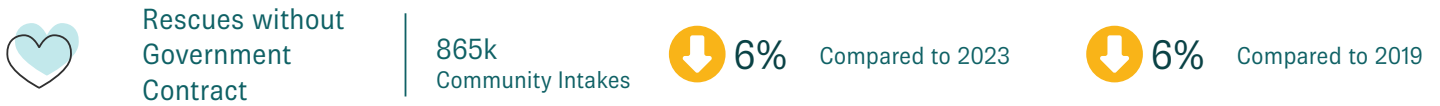
The 2024 data highlights key differences in intake, adoption, and transfer trends across government agencies, contract-holding shelters, private organizations, and rescues. These variations underscore the distinct roles each plays in animal welfare, their challenges, and opportunities.

## Community Intakes by Organization Type (Dogs and Cats Combined)

### SHELTERS

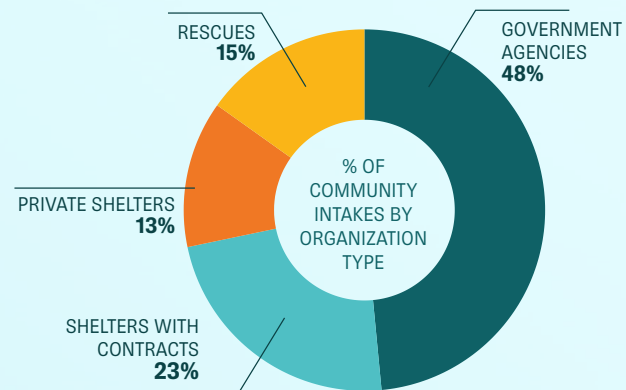


### FOSTER-BASED RESCUES



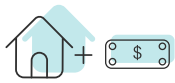
#### Diving Deeper into the Data:

- Government organizations saw a slight increase in community intakes (<1%), driven by a 1% rise in cat intakes, while dog intakes remained steady. Dogs continue to make up 56% of their total intakes, unchanged from 2019.
- Shelters with a government contract had minimal changes in intake in 2024, with stable cat numbers and a slight decline in dog intakes. Intakes are down 9% compared to 2019.
- Private shelters experienced the largest intake decline (3%), primarily due to a drop in dog intakes, shifting their intake composition from 41% dogs in 2019 to 37% in 2024.
- Rescues saw a 6% decline in community intakes compared to 2023, continuing a downward trend since the pandemic. While dog intakes decreased 19% from 2019, cat intakes rose 9%, reflecting a shift in rescue focus.



# Adoptions (Dogs and Cats Combined)

## SHELTERS



Government  
Funded Agencies

1.2M  
Adoptions



4% Compared to 2023



3% Compared to 2019



Shelters with  
Government  
Contract

881K  
Adoptions



<1% Compared to 2023



6% Compared to 2019



Shelters without  
Government  
Contact

959K  
Adoptions



<1% Compared to 2023



10% Compared to 2019

## FOSTER-BASED RESCUES



Rescues without  
Government  
Contract

1.2M  
Adoptions

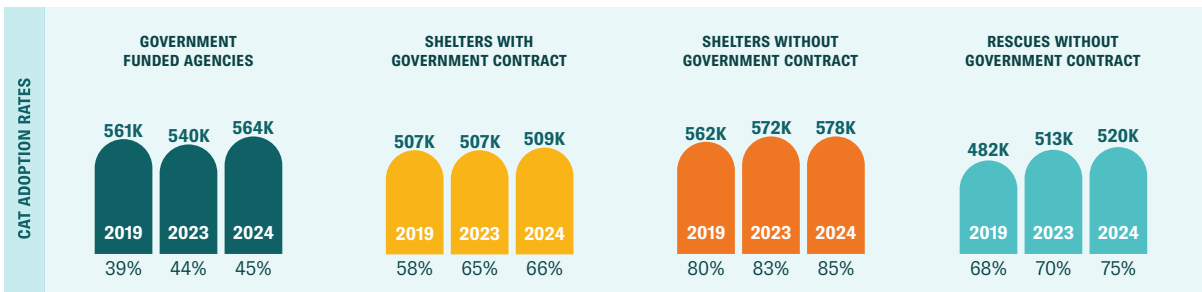
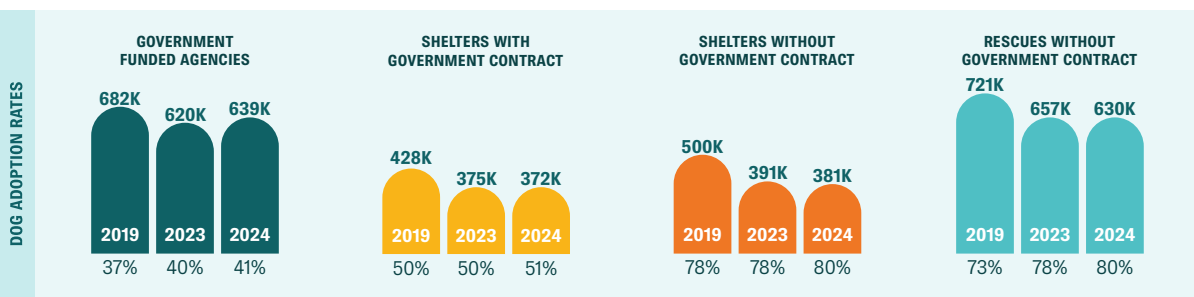


2% Compared to 2023



4% Compared to 2019

Adoption trends varied by organization type, with cat adoptions increasing across all groups, while dog adoptions remain below 2019 levels.












### Diving Deeper into the Data:

- Government organizations saw an overall increase in adoptions, with cat adoptions returning to pre-pandemic levels. Dog adoptions remain 6% lower than 2019, but 41% of dogs entering these shelters were adopted, an increase from 2019 rates.
- Contract shelters reported stable adoption numbers, with cat adoptions unchanged since 2023 and 2019, while dog adoptions were 1% lower than 2023 and still 13% below 2019.
- Private organizations had less than a 1% change in adoptions compared to 2023 but remain the furthest from pre-pandemic recovery, especially for dogs which are still 24% below 2019 numbers.
- Rescues experienced the largest decline in adoptions, primarily due to a 4% drop in dog adoptions. However, with fewer intakes, their adoption rate for dogs increased to 80%, up from 78% in 2023 and 73% in 2019.

# Transfer In (Dogs and Cats Combined)

## SHELTERS










	Government Funded Agencies	32K Transferred In	 9% Compared to 2023	 18% Compared to 2019
	Shelters with Government Contract	150K Transferred In	 5% Compared to 2023	 37% Compared to 2019
	Shelters without Government Contact	385K Transferred In	 2% Compared to 2023	 23% Compared to 2019

## FOSTER-BASED RESCUES

	Rescues without Government Contract	622K Transferred In	 5% Compared to 2023	 20% Compared to 2019
---	-------------------------------------	---------------------	---	--

# Transfer Out (Dogs and Cats Combined)

## SHELTERS

	Government Funded Agencies	493K Transferred Out	 2% Compared to 2023	 33% Compared to 2019
	Shelters with Government Contract	159K Transferred Out	 12% Compared to 2023	 40% Compared to 2019
	Shelters without Government Contact	59K Transferred Out	 14% Compared to 2023	 40% Compared to 2019

## FOSTER-BASED RESCUES

	Rescues without Government Contract	182K Transferred Out	 9% Compared to 2023	 26% Compared to 2019
---	-------------------------------------	----------------------	---	--

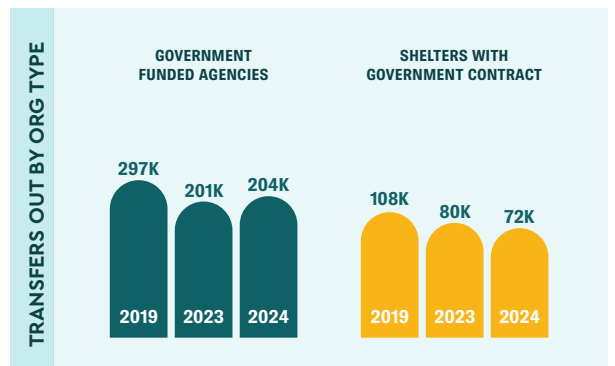
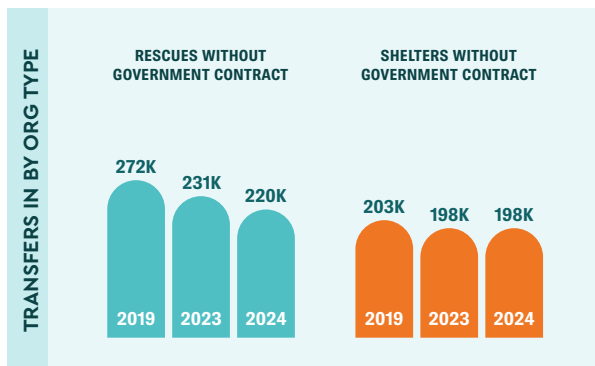
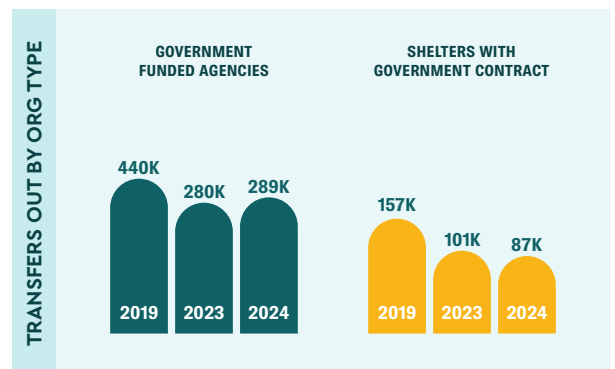
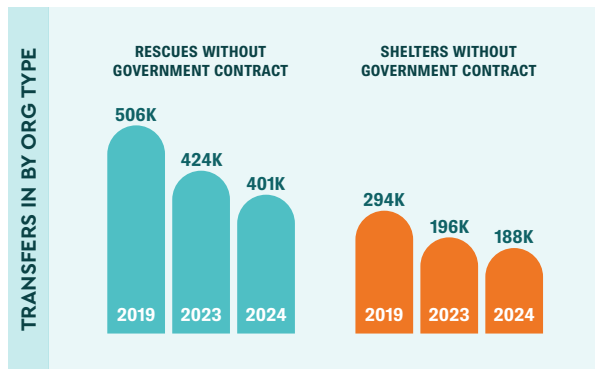
# Understanding Transfers:

## A Deep Dive into the Main Transfer Partner Data

Transfers play a vital role in balancing shelter capacity and increasing live outcomes for animals. Shelters and rescues rely on strong transfer partnerships to move animals between organizations based on space availability, adoption demand, and specific care needs. The main transfer-in partners for dogs and cats have historically been rescues without government contracts and shelters without government contracts.

Since 2019, their transfer numbers have declined, while the main transfer out partners - government funded agencies and shelters with government contracts - have seen shifting data year-over-year.

In 2024, both transfer-in and transfer-out numbers dropped by approximately 4% compared to 2023, with a more significant decrease since 2019. While government-funded shelters remain the largest source of transfers out, rescues and private shelters—often the key transfer-in partners—are taking in fewer animals due to reduced adoption rates and capacity limitations.



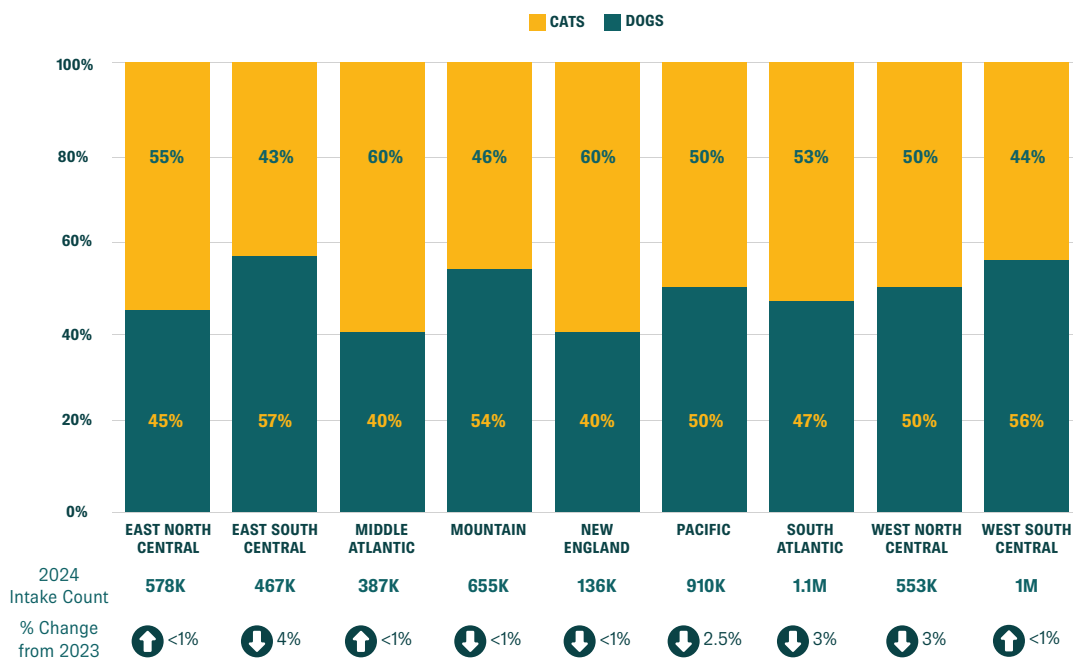
### Diving Deeper into the Data:

- Cat transfers into rescues have declined, while private shelters have seen stabilization. However, outgoing cat transfers remain down despite strong adoption performance.
- Dog transfers are seeing sharper declines, with government shelters transferring out 34% fewer dogs than in 2019, and contract shelters down 45%.
- Despite continued intake demand, rescues and private organizations—key transfer-in partners—are taking in fewer dogs, likely due to lower adoption numbers and limited capacity.

# REGIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

This section explores how intakes, adoptions, and non-live outcomes vary across different regions in the U.S., highlighting key changes since 2023 and broader trends since 2019 (for a map of regions, please see page 27).

## Regional Community Intakes by Species

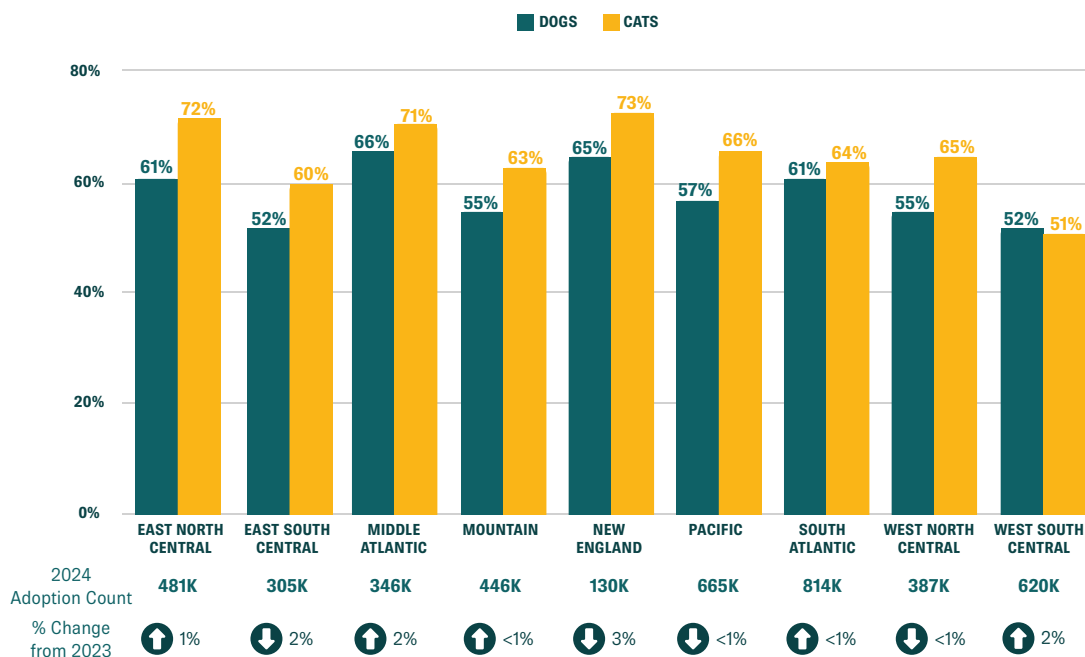


Species intake distribution varies by region, with cat intakes ranging from 43% in the East South Central region to 60% in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions. Dog intakes are more prevalent in the South Central and Mountain regions.

### The largest intake decreases compared to 2023 occurred in:

- East South Central (down 4%)—driven by a decline in dog intakes.
- Pacific region—due to a decrease in cat intakes.
- South Atlantic and West North Central—both species saw intake declines.

## Regional Adoption Rate by Species



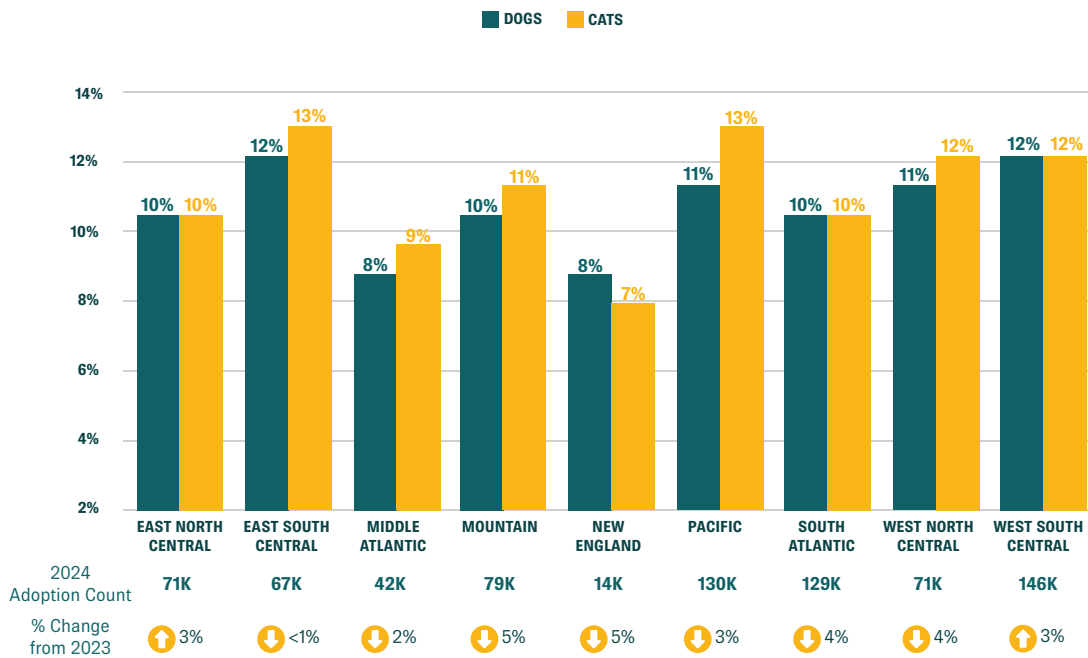
Adoption rates (adoptions as a percentage of total intakes) show that cat adoption rates surpass dog adoption rates in all regions except the West South Central. Dog adoption rates are highest in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

### While adoption trends remained stable across most regions, some shifts were observed:

- New England experienced a 3% decrease in adoptions overall.
- The Mid-Atlantic and West South Central regions saw adoption increases of 2%.

# REGIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

## Regional Non-Live Outcome Rates by Species



In most regions, cats continue to have higher non-live outcome rates (non-outcomes as a percentage of total intakes) than dogs, except for New England, where dog non-live outcomes are higher.

- 7 out of 9 regions saw an overall decline in non-live outcomes.
- The Pacific region saw an 8.7% drop in cat non-live outcomes but an increase in dog non-live outcomes.

### Trends since 2019:

- All regions have seen decreases in cat non-live outcomes.
- Dog non-live outcomes have increased in all regions.
- East North Central: Dog non-live outcomes are now 14% higher than in 2019.
- West South Central: Cat non-live outcomes increased but remain 40% lower than in 2019.
- The Pacific region has seen a 24% increase in dog non-live outcomes.

These regional variations highlight the importance of localized strategies to address intake fluctuations, adoption trends, and non-live outcomes.

# INTAKES 2024 and 2023 totals with % change from 2023

Category	Dogs 2024	Dogs 2023	Dogs % Change	Cats 2024	Cats 2023	Cats % Change
<b>Stray/Lost</b>	1.7M	1.7M	↓ 2.4%	1.8M	1.8M	↓ 0.5%
<b>Owner Surrender</b>	820K	859K	↓ 4.5%	828K	841K	↓ 1.6%
<b>Other Intake</b> <small>e.g. seized, born in care</small>	369K	353K	↑ 4.6%	278K	274K	↑ 1.4%
<b>Transfer In</b>	680K	720K	↓ 5.6%	510K	521K	↓ 2.2%
<b>TOTAL INTAKES</b> <small>includes transfers in</small>	3.6M	3.7M	↓ 2.8%	3.4M	3.4M	↓ 0.9%

# OUTCOMES 2024 and 2023 Totals with % Change from 2023

Category	Dogs 2024	Dogs 2023	Dogs % Change	Cats 2024	Cats 2023	Cats % Change
<b>Adoption</b>	2M	2M	↓ 1.1%	2.2M	2.1M	↑ 1.8%
<b>Return to Owner/Field</b>	554K	574K	↓ 3.3%	362K	367K	↓ 1.1%
<b>Other Live Outcome</b>	44K	49K	↓ 11%	58K	66K	↓ 13%
<b>Transfer Out</b>	524K	549K	↓ 4.5%	369K	383K	↓ 3.7%
<b>Euthanasia</b>	334K	336K	↓ 0.6%	273K	285K	↓ 4.4%
<b>Died/Lost in Care</b>	39K	40K	↓ 1.1%	102K	99K	↑ 2.5%
<b>TOTAL OUTCOMES</b> <small>includes transfers in</small>	3.5M	3.6M	↓ 2%	3.3M	3.3M	↑ 0.1%

**GAP**

 **39K DOGS**

 **64K CATS**

**103K PETS were added to sheltered populations at the end of 2024.**



## OUTCOMES % COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Outcome Type	Dog 2024	Dog 2023	Cat 2024	Cat 2023
<b>Adoption</b>	67.2%	67.5%	72.3%	73.2%
<b>Return to Owner/Field</b>	18.9%	18.5%	12.4%	12.2%
<b>Other Live Outcome</b>	1.6%	1.5%	2.3%	2.0%
<b>Shelter Euthanasia</b>	11.0%	11.2%	9.7%	9.2%
<b>Died/Lost in Care</b>	1.3%	1.3%	3.4%	3.4%
<b>Community Live Outcomes</b>	87.7%	87.5%	87.0%	87.4%
<b>Non-Live Outcomes</b>	12.4%	12.5%	13.0%	12.6%

## OUTCOMES % TOTAL INTAKES

The percentage of animals entering the shelter that are leaving by a certain outcome type. May not equal 100% due to animals without outcomes

Outcome Type	Dog 2024	Dog 2023	Cat 2024	Cat 2023
<b>Adoption</b>	56.9%	55.8%	63.9%	62.2%
<b>Return to Owner/Field</b>	15.6%	15.7%	10.7%	10.7%
<b>Other Live Outcome</b>	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%	1.9%
<b>Transfers</b>	14.7%	15.0%	10.9%	11.2%
<b>Shelter Euthanasia</b>	9.4%	9.2%	8.0%	8.3%
<b>Died/Lost in Care</b>	1.1%	1.1%	3.0%	2.9%
<b>Live Outcomes</b> <i>includes transfers out</i>	88.4%	87.8%	87.1%	86.0%
<b>Non-Live Outcomes</b>	10.5%	10.3%	11.0%	11.2%

# Shelter Animals Count Accomplishments in 2024

In 2024, Shelter Animals Count continued to lead the way in advancing data-driven practices within the animal welfare industry. Through new initiatives, expanded resources, and collaborative efforts, we empowered organizations to make a greater impact in their communities.

## Expanding Our Reach

- Launched our expansion into Canada for data collection of animal organizations, bringing our mission and tools to new communities.
- Garnered significant media attention with 6,149 news features, achieving a total reach of over 15.5 billion impressions across various platforms.

## Advancing Data Collection and Analysis

- Initiated animal-level data collection and analysis, providing deeper insights into trends and outcomes.
- Released new and expanded dashboards for participating organizations, making it easier to track and visualize data.
  - Rehome dashboard to show shelter Rehome referrals (in partnership with Rehome, by Adopt A Pet)
  - Community services dashboard added to portal
- Developed advanced dashboards for coalitions, supporting collaboration and strategic planning.

## Improving Data Standards

- Created comprehensive best practices for animal-level data entry, setting a foundation for accuracy and consistency.
- Published the Data Basics Workbook, an essential guide for organizations to standardize and enhance their data collection processes.

## Engaging the Industry

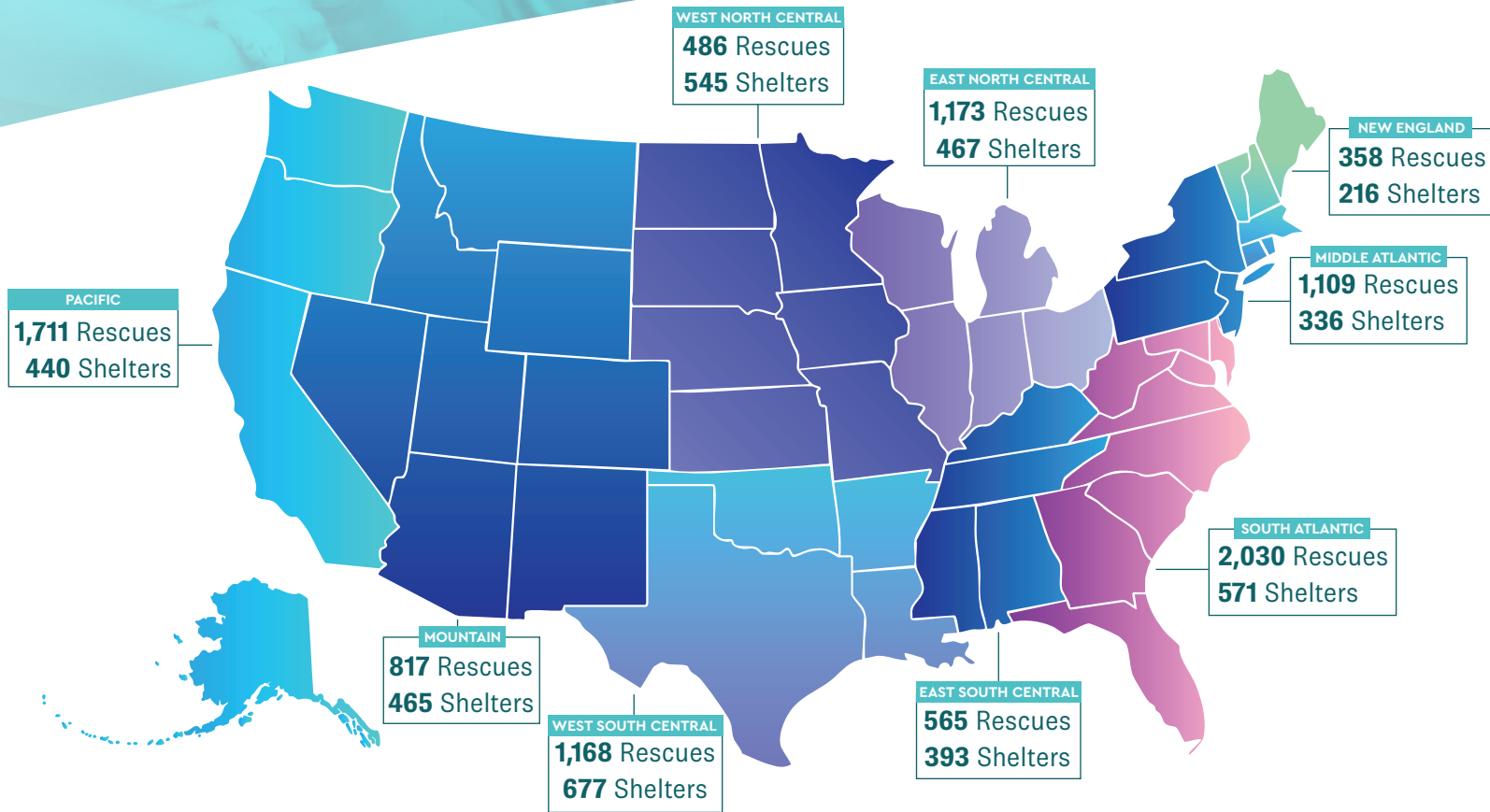
- Hosted a series of successful and impactful webinars, sharing data-driven insights and best practices, including:
  - Where Have All the Dog and Cat Adopters Gone
  - Dogs and Data with Pedigree Foundation
  - Data Foundations Series with Hill's Pet Nutrition

These accomplishments reflect our commitment to empowering animal welfare organizations with the tools, knowledge, and community they need to save lives.

There were

# 13,527

animal sheltering organizations  
operating in the US in 2024.



**4,110** Shelters | **9,417** Rescues

\*We identified an additional 700 organizations as “shelters,” but they were excluded from our new model due to the need for specific organization types. Our machine-learning model requires detailed information, which we lack for these shelters. We acknowledge their existence and aim to address this gap with further research this year. Our goal is to maintain accuracy and transparency in our estimates.

The majority (85%) of community intakes occur in shelters, with 15% coming from rescues and 27% of adoptions were performed by rescues, with 73% performed by shelters in 2024.

Shelters are brick-and-mortar organizations, whereas rescues tend to be foster-based organizations.





## About Shelter Animals Count

Shelter Animals Count is a neutral, independent non-profit organization entrusted with analyzing and sharing animal sheltering data to provide crucial information and insights to improve the lives of pets and the people who love them. Each month, 200+ data points are collected on all organization types and all species, for both sheltering and community services organizations in all 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Canada.

### Community Intakes

Total intakes excluding transfers in to show actual community activity, and avoid double counting intakes when aggregating. Includes strays, owner surrenders, and other intakes (e.g. seizures, born in care).

### Community Live Outcomes

Total live outcomes excluding transfers out. Includes adoptions, return to owner, return to field, and other live outcomes.

### Community Outcomes

Total outcomes (live and non-live) excluding transfers out. Includes adoption, return to owner, return to field, other live outcomes, shelter euthanasia, died in care, lost in care.

### Intake Rate

The percentage of community intakes that are a certain intake type.

### Non-live Outcomes

Died in care (neonatal loss, illness, etc.), lost in care, and shelter euthanasia.

### Outcome Rate of Total Intakes

The percentage of total intakes that resulted in a certain outcome type. Transfers out are included as an outcome and Transfers in are included as an intake in this calculation.

### Outcome Rate

The percentage of community outcomes that were a certain outcome type. Excludes transfers out.

### Population Change (aka Awaiting Outcome or Gap)

$(\text{Community Intakes} + \text{Transfers in}) - (\text{Community Outcomes} + \text{Transfers out}) =$  the number of animals that have entered and not had an outcome. In the specified time period, this is the number that the population in care has increased (positive number) or decreased (negative number).

### Total Intakes

All intakes including strays, owner surrenders, other intakes (e.g. seizures, born in care, and transfers in)

### Total Live Outcomes

Adoption, return to owner, return to field, transfer out, and other live outcomes.

### Total Outcomes

Includes all outcomes including adoptions, return to owner/field, other live outcomes, transfers out, shelter euthanasia, died in care/lost in care.

## Animal Welfare Glossary by Shelter Animals Count

The Animal Welfare Glossary by Shelter Animals Count provides clear definitions of commonly used terms in the animal welfare sector. Explore additional industry definitions, data collection terms, and animal terminology at [shelteranimalscount.org/glossary](https://shelteranimalscount.org/glossary).

### National Platinum Sponsors



### National Gold Sponsors



### National Silver Sponsors



### National Bronze Sponsors



### Silver Shelter Sponsors



### Bronze Shelter Sponsors



### Supporters

