

PET WELLNESS

MAY 2024

SASKATOON
STARPHOENIX

Health alert: Watch for more ticks this spring and summer

Page 9

Community Veterinary Outreach offers resources to people and pets at risk

Page 21



PET LICENSING

LICENSING PROVIDES PEACE OF MIND!

If your pet ever escapes, a valid pet license provides identification, safe shelter and direct return home.

Purchase or renew your pet license online at saskatoon.ca/petlicensing or visit one of our pet license vendors.

VENDORS

Animal Pound
5028 Clarence Avenue S.

Cumberland Veterinary Clinic
#20 - 1010 Taylor Street E.

Early's Farm & Garden Centre
2615 Lorne Avenue

Early's Farm & Garden Centre
502 51st Street E.

Erindale Animal Hospital
#11 - 410 Ludlow Street

Pet Planet
40 - 1519 8th Street

Saskatoon Animal Control
1925 Avenue B N.

Saskatoon SPCA
2250 Hanselman Avenue

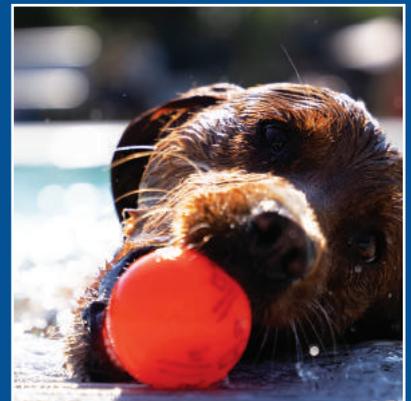
PET LICENSING FEES

DOG

Spayed/Neutered\$35
Not Spayed or Neutered.....\$71.50
Juvenile (Under 1 Year).....\$35
Replacement Tag\$11

CAT

Spayed/Neutered \$22
Not Spayed or Neutered..... \$48.50
Juvenile (Under 1 Year)..... \$22
Replacement Tag \$11



2024

SASKATOON'S TOP PET NAMES

1. Buddy
2. Max
3. Molly



1. Max
2. Luna
3. Oliver

DOG DAY OF SUMMER

FREE END OF SEASON
LICENSED POOCH SWIM

MAYFAIR POOL
1025 AVE F NORTH

For updates please visit
saskatoon.ca/dogdayofsummer





PET WELLNESS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pet license vendors	2	Do you have a passion for pigeons?	15
Happy pet, happy owner: City of Saskatoon Animal Services	4	To the rescue: Volunteer groups tackle Saskatoon's cat crisis	16
City of Saskatoon Dog Parks Map	7	How can we co-exist with coyotes and other urban wildlife?	18
Behaviour awareness training sessions back by popular demand	8	SPCA Auxiliary supports animals for over 50 years	19
Health alert: Watch for more ticks this spring and summer	9	Animal Protection Services provides education and enforcement	20
Agency expands continuum of care for animals in our community	10	Community Veterinary Outreach offers resources to people and pets at risk	21
New space, new beginning for Saskatoon SPCA	13	Animals get a second chance at Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation	22
Walking your dog? Put your phone away	14	USask develops a pet-friendly rental housing guide	23

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PET LICENSING

Cat licenses as
low as \$22/year.



HAPPY PET, HAPPY OWNER

City of Saskatoon Animal Services team dedicated to supporting responsible pet ownership

BY JEANNIE ARMSTRONG

Pets bring unconditional love into our lives and deserve the best of care.

To ensure the health and happiness of your pet, it's vital to be a responsible pet owner. The City of Saskatoon Animal Services team is here to help, says Melissa Meacham, open space consultant with Animal Services.

Animal Services provides helpful information, resources and programs to educate Saskatoon residents about what it means to be a responsible pet owner.

ONLINE SUPPORT

Helpful information about responsible pet ownership is just a click away, by visiting the City of Saskatoon's Animal Services web pages (saskatoon.ca/animalservices).

By visiting this convenient online site, pet owners can purchase or renew a license for their dog or cat. The web page offers information on how to comply with bylaws regulating pet ownership in our community. Residents can also learn about upcoming pet-friendly events, the latest dog park developments and programs including the Subsidized Spay and Neuter Program (SSNP).

PET WELLNESS GUIDE

It's been ten years since the City of Saskatoon Animal Services first partnered with the Saskatoon StarPhoenix to publish Pet Wellness, a free annual publication promoting responsible pet ownership in our community.

Pet Wellness is a great resource for pet owners or people who are thinking about introducing an animal to their family, says Meacham. "Over the years, Pet Wellness has featured countless articles with helpful information from local experts and animal health professionals — from fun ways to connect with your pets to animal health concerns," says Meacham.

Copies of Pet Wellness are distributed through the StarPhoenix, at local pet license vendors and participating veterinary clinics, at Saskatoon City Hall, City of Saskatoon Leisure Centres and online at saskatoon.ca/animalservices.



A valid pet license gives dog owners many benefits, including access to the 13 different off-leash parks developed by the City of Saskatoon Animal Services. (CITY OF SASKATOON)

WHY LICENSE YOUR PET?

A fundamental pillar of pet ownership is to license your pet. Annual licenses can be purchased online at saskatoon.ca/personline, at City Hall or from participating vendors (listed on page 2 of this guide).

"As of January 1 of 2024, new rates for pet licenses have been implemented," says Meacham. The fee for licensing a spayed/neutered dog is now \$35. If the dog has not been spayed/neutered, the fee is \$71.50. The fee for a juvenile dog, under one year of age, is \$35.

The fee for a spayed/neutered cat is \$22. If the cat has not been spayed or neutered, the fee is \$48.50. For a juvenile cat, under 12 months of age, the fee is \$22.

Pet licenses are valid for one year from the date of purchase and must be renewed annually.

"It's important to license your cats and dogs," says Meacham. "Licenses serve as a means of identification, so if your animal is found by someone in the neighbourhood or Animal Control, the pet can be directly returned home to its owner." If the cat or

dog is microchipped, that information can be entered in the Animal Service license database, making it even easier to reunite the pet with its owner.

Pet owners who do not license their dog or cat over the age of four months risk receiving a \$250 fine.

One of the great benefits that comes with a pet license is the Pet At Large (PAL) Perk. "It's essentially a 'get out of jail free' provision, redeemable once during the pet's lifetime. When the PAL Perk is applied, the \$100 at-large fine is waived, and the animal will be returned at no cost. If the owner can't be contacted immediately and the animal is taken to the pound for safekeeping, the PAL Perk means that impound fees will be waived," says Meacham.

As of January 1, the City of Saskatoon entered into a new agreement with the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency to operate the City of Saskatoon Animal Pound, located at 5028 Clarence Avenue South, in addition to their existing contract to provide enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw.



A valid license also gives dog owners privileges to use the variety of off-leash parks developed by the City of Saskatoon. “You must have a valid license to access off-leash parks with your dog,” says Meacham.

How are license fees utilized by the City of Saskatoon? “The funds help support the many programs provided to the community by Animal Services, including the development and maintenance of dog parks, providing a safe shelter for lost and homeless animals at the pound, and enforcement of the Animal Control and Dangerous Animal bylaws,” says Meacham.

“The funds also support the Subsidized Spay and Neuter Program (SSNP), which provides lower-income pet owners with access to significantly discounted spay and neuter veterinary services.”

DOG PARK NEWS

One of the reasons that Saskatoon is such a pet-friendly city is the large number of off-leash dog parks developed by the Animal Services team. The City’s off-leash parks saw over 1 million visits by owners and their dogs over the past year!

There are currently 13 off-leash dog parks in Saskatoon, from small urban parks such as Hyde Park and Caswell, to large rural spaces like Chief Whitecap and the Sutherland Beach dog park.

“In 2023, we opened two new off-leash parks which can only be used by small dogs, located at Hyde Park, north of the existing all-dog off-leash area, and Charlottetown Park, located north of the Cosmo Civic Centre off Laurier Drive. These parks are intended for dogs that weigh less than 20 pounds and measure under 16 inches at the shoulder,” says Meacham.

A sign posted at the entry gate of both parks, featuring a cut-out of a small dog, helps owners check if their dog is the right size to access the small-dog off-leash area.

“It’s great to see residents with smaller dogs using these parks as part of their daily or weekly routine,” says Meacham.

“At Charlottetown Park, we installed a dual gate that separates the entry and exits to the off-leash park,” she adds. The dual gates help ensure that dogs don’t get in or out accidentally, when entering or leaving

the park.

Other improvements continue to be made at each of the City’s off-leash parks. “In 2023, Animal Services completed upgrades to 10 of the 13 off-leash areas, adding concrete pads to the entryways. The concrete pads will help prevent erosion,” says Meacham.

New signage promoting dog park etiquette has also been installed at the entrances to all 13 off-leash areas, says Meacham. “We want to ensure everyone has a positive off-leash experience. The signage reminds everyone of the four pillars of dog park etiquette.”

These four principles are:

1. To use the dog park, a dog must have a valid City of Saskatoon pet license.
2. Scoop the poop. Animal Services provides bags for owners who may have forgotten one at home.
3. Have a leash with you at all times in the dog park. Utilize the leash as required to control your dog, as well as when entering and exiting the dog park. Keep your dog leashed when in the parking lot, as this is not part of the off-leash area.
4. Maintain voice and sight commands when in an off-leash area. Keep your dog within sight at all times. Be aware of what your dog’s body language is telling you and be prepared to intervene if necessary, including putting the dog on-leash to have better control.

DOG PARK AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

“Animal Services continues to offer an array of programs to pet owners in Saskatoon. This year, we are focusing on revitalizing our Dog Park Ambassador program and the Scoop the Poop programs which help bring a sense of community to our off-leash areas,” says Meacham.

The Dog Park Ambassador program is a community-based volunteer initiative designed to assist Animal Services in monitoring conditions of the off-leash parks and providing input for improvements.

It’s one more way that Animal Services encourages dog park etiquette, responsible pet ownership and bylaw compliance through interactions with the community.

“When the pandemic happened, we saw



In 2023, Animal Services opened two new off-leash parks for small dogs only, located at Hyde Park and Charlottetown Park. Owners are encouraged to check the size of their dog against the convenient sign posted at the entrance to each of the small dog parks. (CITY OF SASKATOON)

a decline in people participating in the Dog Park Ambassador program. We’re really trying to revitalize the program which strengthens the sense of community that dog park users experience. The dog parks become a hub in the neighbourhood. It’s a great way for people — and dogs — to socialize,” says Meacham.

“We’d like to get more park ambassadors out there to be the ‘ears and eyes’ at the park, be a positive liaison for the community and to help people have the best possible experience at the dog park.”

Dog Park Ambassadors also help promote the various Animal Services programs offered in the off-leash areas, including Behaviour Awareness Training Sessions, park clean-up initiatives and the Dog Day of Summer pool party.

To become a Dog Park Ambassador, call Animal Services at 306-975-8478, email animal.services@saskatoon.ca, or visit saskatoon.ca/dogparks.

SSNP PROGRAM

“Additional programming continuing in 2024 is the Subsidized Spay and Neuter (SSNP) program,” says Meacham. The program helps lower-income pet owners access significantly discounted spay/neuter

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Dog licenses as low as \$35/year.



veterinary services. Over the past five years, more than 1,000 pets have been spayed or neutered through the SSNP program.

“Thanks to the partnership we have with the Saskatoon Academy of Veterinary Practitioners, something new that we’ve added to the program is microchipping. During the surgery, the participating vet will insert a microchip, which is an additional layer of identification if your pet loses its collar or license tags,” says Meacham.

DOG DAY OF SUMMER POOL PARTY

If your dog has a valid pet license, you’re invited to join the Dog Day of Summer event, taking place Tuesday, Aug. 20, at Mayfair Pool.

The event is increasing in popularity every year, notes Meacham. “In 2023, we included a small dog session and we will be continuing this in 2024. To accommodate demand, and so more owners and their dogs can experience the event, we are looking at increasing the number of sessions throughout the day.”

Attendance is by online pre-registration only, with each 55-minute session limited to a maximum of 60 dogs. All dogs who participate



The City of Saskatoon’s popular Dog Day of Summer pool party returns Tuesday, Aug. 20, to Mayfair Pool. (CITY OF SASKATOON)

must be licensed, well-socialized, vaccinated and accompanied by an adult owner.

Registration for the 2024 Dog Day of Summer event will begin Tuesday, July 9, closing on Sunday, Aug. 18.

For more details and to check for updates, visit saskatoon.ca/dogdayofsummer.

BYLAW REVIEW

Every two years, the Animal Control and Dangerous Animal Bylaws are reviewed by the Animal Services Working Group, which includes representation from organizations such as the Saskatoon Animal Control

Agency, Saskatoon SPCA, Public Health, various animal industry professionals and City of Saskatoon administration.

“The last report was taken to City Council in October, 2022, and the Animal Services Working Group is currently evaluating various areas of the Animal Control Bylaw and Dangerous Animals Bylaw and will be reporting any changes in Fall 2024 to council,” says Meacham.

To ensure you and your pet are up to date on the latest services, programs and regulations regarding pet ownership, visit: saskatoon.ca/animalservices.

Dog Park Etiquette

Here are some reminders for a safe and successful off-leash experience.

All dogs must have a valid Pet License. Fines start at \$250.



Purchase or renew online at saskatoon.ca/petlicensing.



Bring a leash. Use when entering and exiting the Dog Park and to maintain control of your dog during your visit.



Keep your dog in sight and ensure you have voice command. Off-leash doesn't mean unattended.



Scoop your dog's poop. Bring a few extra baggies, just in case.



Have fun! When dogs and owners play by the rules, everyone has a good time!

If you have concerns about the behaviour of a dog or its owner while at the Dog Park, contact the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency at 306-385-PETS (7387).



saskatoon.ca/dogparks



DOG PARKS

All dogs must have a valid pet license to access the dog parks. For more information on Dog Park openings & closures, visit saskatoon.ca/dogparks.



- 1 AVALON**
At the end of Broadway Avenue, south of Glasgow Street.
- 2 CASWELL**
Avenue F North or Avenue G North and 31st Street West.
- 3 CHARLOTTETOWN (SMALL DOG DOG PARK)**
Enter from the parking lot behind Cosmo Civic Centre, Laurier Drive.
- 4 CHIEF WHITECAP**
Accessed via Saskatchewan Crescent off of Cartwright Street.
- 5 FRED MENDEL**
Avenue W South and 17th Street West.
- 6 HAMPTON VILLAGE**
North of 33rd Street, along Junor Avenue, around Hampton Circle, north on Dawson Way, follow grid. Dog Park next to airport.
- 7 HYDE**
Enter North Gate from Slimmon Road. Alternate South Gate (foot traffic only).

- 8 HYDE (SMALL DOG DOG PARK)**
Enter from Slimmon Road.
- 9 PAUL MOSTOWAY**
Richardson Road, east of McClocklin Road.
- 10 PIERRE RADISSON**
Between 33rd Street and 32nd Street at Faulkner Crescent.
- 11 SILVERWOOD**
Access off Kinnear Avenue or the east end of Adilman Drive.
- 12 SOUTHWEST**
North of Cedar Villa Road off Valley Road.
- 13 SUTHERLAND BEACH**
Accessed via grid road with entry off of Central Avenue, 50 m north of Attridge Drive.

DOG PARKS FOR SMALL DOGS

Dogs must be under 40 cm (16") at the shoulder and less than 9 kg (20 lbs). Dedicated spaces for small dogs available at Hyde and Charlottetown Dog Park.

Behaviour awareness *training sessions* back by popular demand

To have a better dog park experience, attend a free behaviour awareness training session offered by Animal Services at off-leash areas across Saskatoon.

BY JEANNIE ARMSTRONG

A visit to one of Saskatoon's 13 off-leash dog parks should be an enjoyable experience for everyone — dogs and owners alike.

With that goal in mind, the City of Saskatoon Animal Services team invites local dog owners to take advantage of free behaviour awareness training sessions that are being offered this season — from May 20 to Oct. 14 — at various off-leash parks in the community.

The training sessions were first introduced two years ago as part of a pilot project to enhance dog park user experiences. “We created the program to bring awareness of what’s required to be successful while visiting an off-leash area,” says Melissa Meacham, open space consultant with Animal Services.

“Close to 500 participants have taken part in those sessions since the program was introduced.” The program has proven so successful, it is being offered again this summer and fall.

Led by a certified professional dog trainer, the sessions are beneficial for all owners who want to bring their dogs to an off-leash area.

“The sessions provide a clear understanding of the expectations that are required when attending an off-leash area. The tips that are provided help build a better bond and understanding between the owner and the dog, and promote positive play as opposed to nuisance behaviour. It really comes down to responsible pet ownership and doing what’s right,” says Meacham.

At the sessions, participants are reminded of the four principles of responsible dog park etiquette:

- Ensure that your pet is licensed
- Always carrying a leash within the dog park
- Pick up your pet’s poop
- Maintain voice and sight commands



To have a better dog park experience, attend a free behaviour awareness training session offered by Animal Services at dog parks across Saskatoon.

“If everyone meets these four requirements, everyone will have a more positive experience in the dog park,” says Meacham.

“The sessions also help owners understand and interpret the body language and behaviours their dog might present in the park, with tips on when to intervene and correct the dog. Even experienced dog owners may be surprised at what they will learn.”

For example, a dog’s posture, facial expression, eye contact and position of its tail can speak volumes about whether the animal feels afraid and stressed, angry and reactive, or just plain happy.

“As more dog owners understand what their dog’s body language is telling them, they will have a more positive experience at the dog park and not have to address nuisance behaviours, such as chasing, biting or other aggressive actions.”

Approximately 50 sessions are scheduled over the next few months, says Meacham. Each session runs between 30 and 45

minutes, with a maximum of 15 participants. “All dogs are required to be on-leash while the session is happening. We try to hold the sessions in a quieter area of the dog park or sometimes just outside of the park so the animals aren’t distracted by other dogs.” For the exact location in the dog park where the session will take place, look for signage posted by Animal Services.

The final 10 or 15 minutes of each training session are reserved for questions from participants. “The sessions offer some high level tips for behaviour awareness. For people who have lots of questions and dogs with complex needs, it’s an indication that they need to seek additional one-on-one training with a professional. It’s impossible for a trainer to fix your dog with one comment,” says Meacham.

To view dates and times of upcoming training sessions, visit saskatoon.ca/dogparks. Signage at off-leash areas also feature a QR code which is linked to the website.



Health alert: Watch for more ticks this spring and summer

BY HILARY KLASSEN

Mild winters increase the rate of ticks' survival, growth and reproduction. This means Saskatoon will see a longer tick season and an uptick in the populations of the clingy arthropods.

"Ticks can start becoming active once the temperature outdoors is higher than 4°C," says Dr. Karen Sheehan, a clinical veterinarian at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM).

Tick season in the Saskatoon area typically runs from mid-to-late April until the end of July or even early August. Sheehan says the season began earlier this spring and expects it will extend later into the fall.

“ Ticks can start becoming active once the temperature outdoors is higher than 4°C ”

Dr. Karen Sheehan

Pet owners can take various precautions to reduce the risks to their animals. "The more high-risk potential for exposure is going to be in longer grass and leaf litter, and/or areas where there's more possibility of indirect or direct contact with wildlife, which often act as a vector for the vast majority of ticks," says Sheehan.

Over a period of years, Sheehan has noticed an increase in Saskatoon's tick population. When she did an internship at WCVM from 2003-2004, there were no ticks. "I went to Chief WhiteCap Park in Furdale and ticks were unheard of in central Saskatchewan," she says. "It wasn't until maybe 2017 when taking my dogs to Furdale that they were picking up ticks. The prevalence is going up."

If you're taking your pet for a romp in a high-risk area, be sure to check for ticks afterwards. Ticks prefer moist areas, so

checking under the tail and in the groin area is key. Also check the head and ears, eyelids, under the collar and under the arms. Run your hands over the animal's back in the opposite direction that their fur lies. Check any bumps that you feel.

In addition to physically checking for ticks on your animal, Sheehan says tick prevention medication is effective. Protection can come in the form of a repellent such as a flea-and-tick collar.

The other alternative is oral tablets. Isoxazoline is a parasiticide in tablet form that is safe for the pet and will ultimately kill the tick. "Once a tick has landed on a pet, it takes anywhere from 24 to 48 hours for it to decide where it is going to take its blood meal," says Sheehan. "Once they take that blood meal they're ultimately killed because that parasiticide is already in the dog's bloodstream."

Oral products tend to be popular because some are effective for 30 days. Bravecto has been shown to have efficacy up to 12 weeks in both dogs and cats. Another oral option is Nexgard Spectra for dogs and Nexgard Combo for cats.

It's still important for owners to check for ticks because no tick prevention is 100 per cent effective. It can be especially challenging to find ticks on dog breeds with longer and thicker hair. Using a preventive medication can provide reassurance that ticks are being addressed.

A commercial product known as a tick twister is recommended for the removal of ticks. Pet owners need to ensure removal is complete, including all of the tick's head and mouth parts. Additional monitoring is necessary after tick removal. Tick parts left inside your pet can cause local inflammation, swelling, draining and infection. Pet owners who want to contribute to tick surveillance in the province can take a photo and report your tick to "etick"

Lyme disease is carried by deer ticks and is very common in southern Manitoba. "Thankfully do we not have a whole lot



Clinical veterinarian, Dr. Karen Sheehan, says tick prevention in the form of repellents or deterrents can be effective, but not as effective as oral medications these days. (WCVM)

of Lyme disease in Saskatoon but the incidence of that is going up," Sheehan observes. Not many dogs become ill from Lyme disease, but in humans, the disease is very serious, so it pays to be cautious. Signs of Lyme disease can take up to four months to show up.

With the threat of a longer tick season and a greater number of ticks, everyone is encouraged to take the necessary precautions in order to keep both animals and humans safe and healthy. Pet owners should choose medications and preventions in consultation with a veterinarian, to find the best match for their animal.

Agency **expands** continuum of care for animals in our community

In addition to animal control services and bylaw enforcement, the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency has now been contracted to operate the City of Saskatoon Animal Pound.

BY JEANNIE ARMSTRONG

Established in 2004, the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA) has a 20-year history of keeping animals and humans safe in our community.

The agency is contracted by the City of Saskatoon to provide enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw, as well as to provide animal control services.

In January of this year, SACA expanded its role and was contracted to operate the City of Saskatoon Animal Pound, located at 5028 Clarence Avenue South. Animals found at large are impounded and cared for at the facility, which previously housed the Saskatoon SPCA.

“We are now wearing two different hats, says Eva Alexandrovici, president of the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency. “We are not only picking up the stray animals, we are also looking after them if they come to the pound facility.

“We’re also still in charge of doing bylaw enforcement. Our animal control officers and dispatcher continue to work from our other location at 1925 Avenue B North.”

The added responsibilities meant SACA had to double its staff, says Alexandrovici. The team has expanded to 25 people, working from the pound facility and the bylaw enforcement office.

The City of Saskatoon, which owns the pound facility on Clarence Avenue, has recently completed extensive renovations to the building, including the addition of new dog enclosures and cat condos, a reconfiguration of the front lobby to make it more secure, a new heating system and fresh paint.

Operating the pound extends the continuum of care provided by SACA, says Alexandrovici. “Our goal is always to reunite the lost animals with their owners without them having to



Eva Alexandrovici, president of the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA), urges dog and cat owners to license their pets. A valid license helps identify your pet and assists SACA officers in providing a safe return home for the animal. (CITY OF SASKATOON)



come to the pound. Unfortunately, if they have no identification, or we cannot contact the owner, they will come to the pound facility for safe housing.”

OVERPOPULATION CRISIS

Every day of the year, SACA receives calls about dogs and cats that are running at large in our community. These numbers increased significantly in 2023 over the previous year, a trend that greatly concerns Alexandrovici.

In 2023, SACA officers picked up 859 dogs and returned 259 to their owners. In 2022, the number of dogs running at large that were picked up was 749, with 276 returned to their owners.

SACA officers picked up 1,590 cats in 2023 and were only able to return 77 cats to their owners. The number of apprehended cats was down slightly from 2022, when 1,601 cats were picked up.

“Our biggest concern is the increased number of at-large animals in Saskatoon. This affects not just the pound but also bylaw enforcement. We’re concerned about the increased number of animals we’re seeing on the streets. We’re also seeing animals, including litters of puppies and kittens, abandoned in public areas,” says Alexandrovici.

“We, along with other rescue agencies and the Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan, are facing a pet overpopulation crisis in Saskatoon. There are just not enough homes for these animals.”

The solution to the animal overpopulation crisis is responsible pet ownership, says Alexandrovici. “It’s important for people to spay or neuter their pets to help reduce the number of unwanted animals in our community. If you have a pet, make sure it is properly licensed and microchipped, so if we do find the animal, we can provide a safe return home.”

LOST AND FOUND

When the SACA team responds to a call about a dog or cat running at large, the goal is always to ensure the animal’s welfare. Every effort is taken to reunite the pet with its owner, a task that is



One of SACA’s registered veterinary technicians conducts a health exam on one of the cats awaiting adoption at the pound. (SACA)

made so much easier when the animal has been licensed by the City of Saskatoon.

A pet license provides the SACA officer with contact information to reach the animal’s owners. The SACA officer will also scan the dog or cat for a microchip, another helpful means of identification which can be linked to the City of Saskatoon’s license database.

If the dog or cat cannot be identified, or the owner can’t be reached immediately, the animal will be taken to the pound, now operated by the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency.

“We have a veterinarian and registered veterinary technicians (RVTs) who give them a health exam,” says Alexandrovici.

The care provided to the animals is quite comprehensive, she explains. “They get vaccinated and dewormed. If they require minor medical treatment, we’re able to do that here at the pound, under the direction of our veterinarians. If the animals require emergency care, we’ll take them to a veterinary clinic outside of the pound facility.”

Once the animal’s health has been assessed, the dog or cat is placed in a kennel, where it is cared for by the SACA team. The City of Saskatoon Animal Pound can house approximately 50 dogs and 80 cats.

“We hold them for 72 hours (excluding the day of impounding), giving the owners a chance to come looking for their lost pet,” says Alexandrovici. “After that, they go through an assessment. If they’re adoptable, we try our best to find a new home for them. We also work with other rescues, like the Saskatoon SPCA. If they have room, they will take dogs and cats from us.”

The SACA website (saskatoonanimalcontrol.ca) and Facebook page feature photos of the lost dogs and cats that are in their care, with the goal of reuniting the pet with its owner. “We would definitely like to see more owners come looking for their lost pets. Our redemption rate is very low,” says Alexandrovici.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

IT’S YOUR DOODY!

Dog feces do not fertilize the ground and have negative effects on grass and plants. Be a good neighbour and clean up after your pet.



ADOPT A PET

If you're looking to bring a furry friend into your life, there are many lovable cats and dogs available through SACA's adoption centre. These lost or homeless animals are looking for a second chance with a new family, says Alexandrovici. SACA's adoption counselors are available to meet with those interested in a new pet and will help people select an animal based on their preferences and experiences.

"We're open every day for adoptions from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., but we're very accommodating and if someone comes looking for a pet we won't turn them away," says Alexandrovici.

To view adoptable animals and learn about upcoming public events, like puppy parties, visit SACA's website and Facebook page.

CAN YOU FOSTER?

To support SACA's expanded responsibilities, Alexandrovici says that two new initiatives have been introduced: a foster program and a volunteer program.

"We're inviting people who are interested in helping an animal to join our new foster program. We need people to foster puppies or kittens that aren't old enough to be adopted, as well as some adult dogs or cats," says Alexandrovici.

"We supply them with everything they need to look after the pet while it's in foster care, including food and litter. When the animal is ready, then the foster parent brings the animal back and we put it up for adoption."

Those interested in being a foster parent can apply online. "We provide instructions for care, including how many times a day the animal needs to be fed and how to keep it clean. With puppies, that includes basic housetraining. Kittens are pretty good about using litter boxes. When it's time, the animal has to come in for their vaccinations and booster shots. And of course, if the foster parent can find a forever home for the animal, we encourage that," says Alexandrovici.

CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?

Another way for people to care for animals in our community is to join SACA's new volunteer program. "It's a great opportunity for individuals who want to spend time with a dog or cat, socializing with them. We greatly appreciate that because our resources don't always stretch enough for our staff to spend as much time as they would like with the animals," says Alexandrovici.

"Our priority is to get the animals socialized and taken out for walks. We also have volunteers who are interested in helping out in the office, taking photos of the animals, assisting with laundry or washing pet dishes — but most volunteers are interested in spending time with the animals."

People interested in volunteering can go to the SACA website and fill out the online application form. "There is a requirement to complete a criminal record check at the Saskatoon Police Service, which will be free of charge. Then they go through a short orientation. After that, they can come in to volunteer in different roles, including walking dogs and socializing cats," says Alexandrovici.



SACA team member Victoria cuddles with one of the cats available for adoption at the City of Saskatoon Animal Pound. (SACA)

BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

The Saskatoon Animal Control Agency continues to provide enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw.

"In enforcing the Animal Control bylaw, we deal with licensing of cats and dogs, animals running at large, barking complaints, feces complaints and prohibited animals. Off-leash parks are also part of the Animal Control bylaws. Under the Dangerous Animal bylaw, we investigate complaints about dangerous or aggressive dogs and cats," says Alexandrovici.

The first step in complying with the Animal Control Bylaw is to license your dog or cat with the City of Saskatoon. Owners who fail to license their pets or renew that license annually are subject to a minimum fine of \$250.

Alexandrovici is quick to point out the benefits of licensing your pet. "A license helps SACA officers identify your dog or cat if it's found running at large outside of your property."

Under the Animal Control Bylaw, SACA officers are required to issue a fine of \$100 to the owner of a dog or cat caught running at large.

If the animal is licensed, then the City of Saskatoon's Pet-At-Large (PAL) Perk can be applied, and the \$100 fine for running at large can be waived. The SACA officer can then return the animal to the owner at no cost. If the owner can't be contacted immediately and the animal is taken to the pound, the PAL Perk means that pound fees can also be waived. "It's a perk that can be applied once during the lifetime of the animal. It's just one more reason that it's worth it to license your cat or dog," says Alexandrovici.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw, see the Enforcement web page under saskatoon.ca/animalservices.

To search for a lost dog or cat, view animals that are available for adoption, or to learn more about SACA's volunteer or foster programs, visit saskatoonanimalcontrol.ca.

BECOME A DOG PARK AMBASSADOR!
 Volunteer at your local dog park.
saskatoon.ca/dogparks

AMBASSADOR
 DOGE
 PET SERVICES
 ANIMAL SERVICES

New space, *new beginning* for Saskatoon SPCA

BY JENNIFER JACOBY-SMITH

The Saskatoon SPCA is slowly settling into their new digs on Hanselman Avenue. Located at 2250 Hanselman Avenue, the building has been undergoing renovations for the last few months to transform a former warehouse into an adoption centre, administration offices and an intake and health assessment area for the animals.

With 8,100 square feet, the goal was to create a space that serves the public and the animals in their care as efficiently as possible.

Extra care was taken with the design to ensure the highest standards of care while reducing anxiety and stress for the animals.

“Our director of animal care, Amber Matthews, was intimately involved every step of the way (in the design process),” explains Saskatoon SPCA CEO Fred Dyck. “We’ve taken all the professional best practices, with Amber being our lens for that, to ensure that this facility meets or exceeds shelter standards. And that’s not just for the animals, but it’s for the humans, too.”

For example, intake of new animals will only take place at the back of the building far from public areas. This means no hair-raising accidental meetings between dogs and cats during the adoption process.

Another advantage of the new location is the two furnaces and air-exchange systems — one for the medical centre and one for the adoption centre. If an animal comes into the medical assessment area with an airborne illness, it can be safely managed without infecting all the animals in the facility.

As well, Dyck points out the new and improved cat shelter which was reconfigured so cat condos don’t face each other.

“By designing the space like this we’ve reduced anxiety in the animal,” says Dyck.

During construction, many of the spaces were also given extra sound-dampening insulation, to reduce the noise levels.

The health centre has rooms for veterinary checkups for when the animal first arrives. There are also two grooming stations, spacious laundry facilities, a food prep area

and veterinarian examination rooms to assess the health of each animal.

The cornerstone of the SPCA’s services remains the adoption centre. Every animal that comes into the facility is spayed or neutered, microchipped and given a complete health assessment. Adoptable animals can be seen on their website or a bulletin board in the front area of the facility.

The adoption area includes three meet-and-greet rooms to facilitate members of the public meeting a potential pet for the first time. These rooms are spacious and allow for potential pet owners to meet a dog or cat in private.

The SPCA hopes to expand services to include dog behaviour classes, a pet food bank and educational seminars. The goal is to support pet owners at all stages of their journey with their furry family members.

“We see ourselves as the hub in central Saskatchewan for all things in your relationship with your dog or your cat,” says Dyck. “We have expertise that could help you.”

Currently, the organization is raising funds

for a capital campaign with a goal of \$1.6 million to cover the cost of the renovations.

“The new version of the SPCA is fully self-funded,” says Dyck. This year donations from corporate and individual donors will account for 75 per cent of total revenue streams.

One of the most obvious perks of the new building is the location. Hanselman Avenue is in the airport industrial area, along a bus route. Public transportation makes this location much more accessible for staff, volunteers and the public. Dyck says the response from the community has been very positive. Since their first weekend in the new building, the SPCA has bustled with activity.

While it’s a new chapter for the organization, some things will remain the same for the Saskatoon SPCA. “We’re really excited about our role in the community... It’s not like our ambitions have changed, but we’re in a better place to focus on our goals and accomplish them.”

For more information, visit saskatoon-sPCA.com.



The Saskatoon SPCA’s new facility on Hanselman Avenue includes a dedicated intake and health assessment area for animals, in addition to its adoption centre and administration offices. The centre is designed to ensure the highest standards of care while reducing anxiety and stress for the animals. (SUPPLIED)

Walking your dog? Put your phone away.

BY PAUL SINKEWICZ

Adam Beck knows what goes into a great dog walk. After all, he's a professional.

Beck is the owner of Adventure Tails Pet Services, which offers dog walking services. He says what makes for the best dog walk is being connected and 'present in the moment' when you are out with your canine companion.

He is a big believer in turning off the cellphone and focusing when out on a dog walk. And for safety, don't just put on headphones and tune out the world around you — especially your dog.

“It's just like with humans. We change our desires and our likes. We want to slow down the pace and we want to just enjoy things rather than hustle, hustle, hustle.”

Adam Beck

“The world is busy and distractions are always present. You can take your eyes off your animal for a second and things can change very quickly,” Beck says. “It's important to always be paying attention to what's going on around you when you're out and about.”

Walking is a great way to de-stress, relax and get some healthy exercise for both human and animal. For that to work, the mental aspect can be critical.

“A really good tip, that I think really makes or breaks a walk, is your mindset as you're walking out the door. If you're already in a bad mood, that's going to set the tone for your animal, as well,” Beck says. “As an instinctual being, they're going to pick up on your stress and anxiety and that upset, and that's going to translate.”

Some dog owners like to incorporate other activities into a walk, like fetching, or

behaviour training.

But even when you are going out to work on training, just taking the time to focus on your intention for the walk can make all the difference in how that walk goes, he says.

It's about planning and being prepared. And it's also important to figure out what your dog wants.

Choose the right kind of space or route for your walks, especially if there will be some retrieving activities and off-leash time involved. It is important to understand where you can and cannot do things from the perspective of City of Saskatoon bylaws.

“Some dogs love to move fast. Some dogs want kilometers. Some dogs want to sniff. Some dogs like to walk on the street, some want to walk in the park. So, giving them a bit of what they want is also going to make it more enjoyable.”

Being connected to your animal is important to give them what they want. Being on your phone, and perhaps even using a hands-free leash, is going to affect everything that is going on, Beck says.

Another thing to consider is that dogs do change over time, especially as they age, he says.

“It's just like with humans. We change our desires and our likes. We want to slow down the pace and we want to just enjoy things rather than hustle, hustle, hustle.”

Beck works with a lot of reactive, non-confident, high-drive animals, which can be a challenge for many owners.

“In all of those situations, what they really want to do, and what's going to give them the most exercise and stimulation, is going to be a casual, sniffing type of walk.”

All of those traits lead to them wanting to explore their surroundings with their noses, he says.

“So, if you are constantly just pulling your dog away from those things that are making them happy, it's kind of ruining the walk.”

It's totally fine to use part of the walk for recall training and distraction training, but there needs to be some give and take, adds Beck. “You're there for them, so let them



Professional dog walker Adam Beck of Adventure Tails Pet Services advises dog owners to stay connected with their pets when out for a walk, by turning off the cellphone and focusing on the dog's needs. (SUPPLIED)

have their moments.”

He said dog service providers, like his, can improve the quality of life for owner and pet, alike.

“Some clients just need a bit of help to take the pressure off when they are busy. But there's also the extra component of exposing your dog to a professional who is catering to your animal. Their skills and confidence benefit from the interactions.

“We currently have a lot of dog clients, COVID dogs especially, who don't really have human interaction social skills. And it creates this situation where ‘Oh, my dog is so great — for me.’ But they don't like other people and don't do well with other dogs, because they haven't experienced it.

“We might just be coming to walk them once or twice a week, but that is still an experience where they are learning to see the world and trust the world and do it outside the cocoon of ‘mom’ or ‘dad,’” says Beck.

“And we do see an improvement in behaviour, because they are having to learn and listen from someone who isn't their primary caregiver.”

Do you have a *passion* for pigeons?

Here's what pigeon fanciers in Saskatoon need to know

BY RAY PENNER

What has wings and costs US\$1.9 million?

You might guess a private jet, but in this case it would be a Belgian-bred racing pigeon purchased by a Chinese billionaire in 2020.

If you're thinking of owning pigeons in Saskatoon and don't have that kind of nest egg, don't worry. Although even some local birds can cost hundreds of dollars, you might find a pigeon fancier who will start you off for free. But before you start building your loft — only chickens live in coops — let's start at the beginning.

"The Canadian Pigeon Fanciers Association is a great resource," advises Melissa Meacham, open space consultant with the City of Saskatoon. Local members can provide ongoing mentorship to help you decide what pigeon breeds to get, what's involved with building a loft and how to best care for your pigeons.

Saskatoon pigeon fancier Trevor Schwan knows the benefits of the association firsthand. When COVID hit, Schwann, in his fifties, "got bored" and decided to rekindle his childhood interest in pigeons. "I'm new to the game, but I'm well into it," says Schwann. "I've surrounded myself with some great pigeon

fanciers here in Saskatoon."

Rollers? High flyers? New York flying flights? Do you want to raise them for their exotic plumage or because you want to race them? There are dozens of breeds to choose from, depending on your interest. Schwan currently has homing pigeons, but a fellow fancier is encouraging him to get into racing pigeons. As for capturing and owning wild pigeons that you see on park benches and church steeples, Schwan does not mince words: "Definitely not"

Even with the special breeds, you should expect to lose some of your favourites during their exercise period. "I've lost a lot of pigeons, especially the young ones, when training them," says Schwan. "All it takes is a hawk attack and they'll chase those pigeons so far away that they don't find their way home. Even a strong wind can take inexperienced flyers too far away."

Regardless of your pigeon preferences, Schwan strongly emphasizes the importance of being a good neighbour before you start raising pigeons. "Go around to all your neighbours, especially the ones next to you, and talk to them."

Later on, as an owner, molting of the birds can be challenging. "You have to be a good neighbour and go clean up those feathers.

My neighbour right behind me gets the most feathers, so I'll go back there with a vacuum to pick them up."

Schwan also ensures that his pigeons stay off his neighbours' buildings. His flock remains in the loft until he releases them for regular exercise, usually for an hour or so. He then calls them back, by whistling and rattling some food in a container, so that they land only on his property.

PIGEON REGULATIONS

The City of Saskatoon also encourages pigeon fanciers to remain good neighbours. "Those who want to have a loft on their property are required to have permission from the City," says Meacham.

"Our Pigeon Loft Request Form provides the different steps you're required to take, such as listing how many pigeons you will be keeping, and the breed, if known." One of the most important requirements is an actual plan of the loft, showing its exact location on your property, to ensure you're following the zoning bylaws. This plan needs to be approved by the City and the structure must be inspected by a zoning bylaw officer and approved, by letter, before you're allowed to proceed.

Trevor Schwan's loft is six feet by 12 feet, with a four-by-six-foot aviary (outside enclosure). He points out that overcrowding can stress the birds. "You should allow 1.5 square feet of floor space per bird," recommends Schwann. The loft must provide good ventilation but prevent drafts. It does not need to be heated. "Pigeons are as hardy as a sparrow or a raven," explains Schwan. "They can endure some really wicked weather — as long as there is no wind on them."

The City of Saskatoon also takes an interest in the welfare of domestic pigeons. Once your loft has been officially approved and you've acquired your flock, you can expect an annual visit at any time from an animal control bylaw officer. Keeping your loft clean is a critical, ongoing responsibility as an owner.

Despite the obligations, Schwan says it is all worth it. "People don't get it, but I find pigeons so relaxing. Especially in the summertime, I'll spend time just watching them."



It's important to provide pigeons with ample space and ventilation, says Saskatoon pigeon fancier Trevor Schwan. His homing pigeons live in a six-by-12-foot loft and adjacent four-by-six-foot aviary. (SUPPLIED)

To the rescue: Volunteer groups tackle Saskatoon's *cat crisis*

BY JENNY GABRUCH

It's a growing problem in Saskatoon and across the province. The number of stray and feral cats and kittens has exploded in recent years, with several organizations trying to find solutions to the overpopulation crisis.

Among them is SCAT Street Cat Rescue, a foster-based group that provides foster care and adoption services for cats and kittens that are abandoned, stray or born on the streets.

"We take in an average of 700 cats a year," says Nikki Gorgichuk, president of SCAT. "There's always a need."

The majority are taken into foster homes for socialization and support and kept there until adoption is possible. The group also arranges medical care for injured felines.

The volunteer organization gives priority to the most vulnerable felines, such as pregnant cats, kittens and cats with injuries or medical problems that require veterinary care.

"Our biggest need is fosters," says Gorgichuk. "We provide all the supplies needed — cages, kitty litter, food, beds, blankets, playpen, toys, you name it. People don't need a lot of room to foster."

OVERPOPULATION CRISIS

Gorgichuk says the stray cat population has reached epidemic proportions.

"There is a cat crisis in Saskatoon and in the province of Saskatchewan," she says.

An unaltered female cat can produce three litters a year, with the average litter size ranging from four to six kittens. This means that a single, unaltered female cat and her offspring can produce more than 400,000 cats in their lifetimes.

Gorgichuk emphasizes pet owners need



SCAT Street Cat Rescue is among the volunteer organizations providing care and helping to find homes for stray cats and kittens. Here, Nikki Gorgichuk comforts one of the kittens being cared for by SCAT Street Cat Rescue. (SUPPLIED)

to take personal responsibility for spaying or neutering their cats.

The City of Saskatoon offers a Subsidized Spay & Neuter Program (SSNP), which provides low-income pet owners access to significantly discounted veterinary services. The program is offered in partnership with the Saskatoon Academy of Veterinary Practitioners.

Gorgichuk notes cats should not be let outside to roam at large, which is against the City of Saskatoon's Animal Control Bylaw. She also advises cats to have microchip

identification and the chip is checked during the cat's annual vet check-up.

To help control overpopulation, SCAT has a program called Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR), in which at-large cats are humanely trapped, spayed or neutered, and vaccinated before returning them to their colony.

It operates the program in communities outside Saskatoon city limits, as the city's no-roaming bylaw does not allow this type of program.

SCAT also provides TNR services to farms and acreages in the area.

VOLUNTEER CORE

SCAT Street Cat Rescue has been operating since 1996, relying on a core of volunteers.

It has around 60 to 100 fosters, along with another volunteer core of 60 to 100, who assist with fundraising and adoption events. Its Facebook volunteer group has around 500 members.

SCAT's funding comes solely from donations, fundraising activities and corporate grants.

Those looking to adopt can view the cats and kittens on SCAT's website. The criteria to adopt from SCAT includes keeping the cat indoors only, except when the cat is on a halter or leash; not declawing the cat; and spaying and neutering at the appropriate age (if the procedure has not been done before adoption). The low-cost adoption fee includes medical care as well as spay and neuter surgery.

Gorgichuk notes SCAT works alongside other agencies and rescue groups such as the Saskatoon SPCA, SOS Prairie Rescue and the Saskatoon Animal Control Agency.

"We are all in this together — we just have different mandates," she says.

For more information visit streetcat.ca.



**Pets can't ADD
but they do MULTIPLY**

Fix your critter to prevent an unwanted litter.

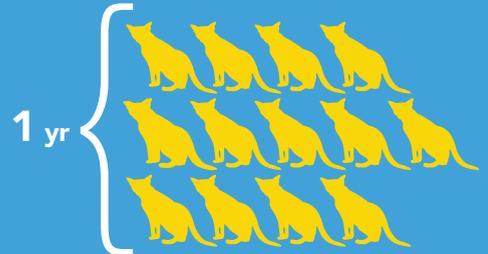


It's important to spay or neuter your cat.

- Reduces unwanted litters and cat overpopulation
- Reduces the incidence of disease and infection
- Eliminates female heat cycles and reduces male spraying
- Helps make cats more sociable and affectionate



An unaltered female cat can produce **THREE LITTERS PER YEAR** with average litter sizes ranging from **FOUR TO SIX KITTENS**



A single, unspayed female cat and her offspring can produce **more than 400,000** cats in their lifetimes



saskatoon.ca/communitycats



Recognize the **FRIGHT** before they **BITE**.

Most dogs bite out of fear.
Do your part and be dog smart.

Recognize when a dog looks fearful:

- Wide eyes
- Tail tucked
- Ears lowered
- Avoiding eye contact



saskatoon.ca/biteprevention



How can we **co-exist** with coyotes and other urban wildlife?

Saskatoon's plentiful green spaces attract coyotes, moose, porcupines, rabbits, raccoons and other wildlife. Here's what to do if you have a wildlife encounter.

BY PAUL SINKEWICZ

Saskatoon is a city where pavement meets the edge of nature in a matter of steps.

That means residents and their pets are likely to eventually encounter wildlife at some point in their travels. Education is the key to taking the drama out of those meetings, says Bonnie Dell, executive director of the Wildlife Rescue Society of Saskatchewan (WRSOS).

"We have some beautiful off-leash areas here in Saskatoon that other cities don't have. But they're still in the wild. And all along the riverbank you're going to have encounters," says Dell.

Encounters earlier this year included raccoons with canine distemper in the Sutherland Beach area and numerous coyote sightings. WRSOS picked up five raccoons within a three-week period, and they all tested positive for distemper and were humanely euthanized. She said the issue could flare up again.

"People were letting their dogs go after them, and it's so dangerous. It's dangerous for the raccoon and it's very dangerous for the dog. We had to get Public Health involved because so many dogs had actual physical contact with a sick raccoon."

Other animals pet owners may encounter include rabbits, badgers, bats, foxes, muskrats and gophers.

WRSOS is a registered, non-profit organization with a network of dedicated



The City of Saskatoon offers helpful advice to residents who have a close encounter with a coyote: Don't turn your back or run. Make noise and wave your arms to make yourself appear bigger. Keep pets under control and on a leash in known coyote areas. Don't block the coyote's escape route. (CITY OF SASKATOON)

volunteers who provide helpline, rescue and transport services. The group is committed to the idea that wildlife and humans can live together successfully and is dedicated to minimizing wildlife suffering due to human interaction. The organization responds to calls from the public to its helpline 365 days a year.

"We have volunteers throughout the province," says Dell. "If you have a question about wildlife, or you have an issue, you can call, and conflict resolution is a big part of what we do. We are all about co-existing and being humane in getting wildlife away from where you are. And if you have something that needs

rescuing, we can arrange that, as well.

"I think the number one thing you can do is educate yourself in how to respond. That's where we play a big role."

Dell has some wise advice for dog walkers.

"Keep your dog on the leash, unless you're in an off-leash area. And if you are an off-leash area and you encounter wildlife, immediately leash that dog before anyone is harmed — either your dog or the wildlife."

She also advises pet owners to keep cats indoors because they harm a lot of wildlife.

Dell says 99 per cent of conflicts between dogs and wildlife happen with off-leash dogs.



All pets must be on a leash unless in a designated off-leash area.

“It’s not just raccoons with distemper. You can run into coyotes, skunks, porcupines.”

Recently an alarming wildlife encounter happened to an acquaintance in Lakeview Park after sunset, while she was out walking her dog on a leash.

Two coyotes started following her and she didn’t know what would happen. But not to worry, says Dell.

“That’s a normal occurrence, especially at this time of year. Any predator practices what’s called escorting. When you are in their territory, and they want you out, they will follow you quite closely until you are far enough away that they feel comfortable.” She says foxes and wolves do the same thing.

In the city, it’s important to know that coyotes mate for life, and as spring approaches,

pairs get ready to den. So, they will protect their home sites, and there can be multiple dens for one pair, because they move around.

Dell says her friend was terrified during the encounter, but the coyotes didn’t become aggressive. She now understands the behaviour and will just avoid the area for a while.

In the meantime, the City of Saskatoon has put up some signs warning other walkers. There are similar signs in 14 other areas of the city where coyote sightings have occurred.

The City’s Animal Services team provides advice on the Wildlife Management section of their web page (saskatoon.ca/wildlifemanagement), with contact numbers and links to Saskatchewan Environment and Wildlife Rescue Society of Saskatchewan.

If an animal approaches, pick up your child

or small animal, and slowly back up, she said. Don’t run, just make yourself look big and make a lot of noise, and they’ll back off.

“They are inherently scared of people. They’re just trying to tell you that they are there, and if you could just give that area some space,” says Dell.

If you see a moose, phone Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment Conservation officers and they will act appropriately. “We are getting many more moose in the city. At one point last year conservation officers had removed 10 moose from the city,” says Dell.

“Saskatoon has left lots of green spaces and natural wildlife corridors. The city loves having wildlife here, and everyone should. We’re very lucky to have them here. Just be aware that you are sharing the land with these animals.”

SPCA Auxiliary *supports* animals for over 50 years

BY JENNIFER JACOBY-SMITH

You probably don’t know much about the Saskatoon SPCA Auxiliary. And they’re fine with that, according to Leslie Avant, Auxiliary secretary.

In 1973, the Saskatoon SPCA Auxiliary formed as a fundraising arm of the Saskatoon SPCA. Seeing the need for ongoing funding, a group of passionate and dedicated individuals formed the Saskatoon SPCA Auxiliary. At the time, the SPCA occupied a tiny shelter located in Sutherland.

“We started out selling things like tea cozies to raise funds,” says Avant. “We had no real direction. We were just helping to raise money for the shelter.”

Fifty-one years later, the Auxiliary has 20 members who volunteer in various capacities to organize fundraisers throughout the year. They continue to support the Saskatoon SPCA through various events and fundraising efforts each year.

About 25 years ago, the group started their Second Chance fund. This fund is mainly used to pay for much needed surgeries for otherwise adoptable animals. The fund can help with cases involving extensive dental work, surgery on a broken limb, ear cleaning or eye procedures. The Second Chance fund offers

life-changing health interventions which then allows them to find their forever home.

A sweet example of the Second Chance fund in action is the shelter’s mascot, Flipper. A bright-eyed grey kitten named Flipper was abandoned because of a deformed hind leg. The Second Chance fund covered the cost of his surgery to amputate the leg.

During his rehabilitation the SPCA staff fell in love with the determined three-legged cat and Flipper became the official mascot of the Saskatoon SPCA.

“Over the years we’ve contributed to things like when they’re getting low on cat litter, toys or puppy food,” explains Avant. With the new facility on Hanselman Avenue, the Auxiliary is helping out in some key ways, namely the construction of new dog kennels that will make it safer and easier for the animals to access.

The Auxiliary works on three major fundraising events each year: two open houses (one in May and one in December) and a garage sale in July. The open houses always feature a raffle with tickets sold at various Co-op stores around the city. The funds they raise offer life-changing opportunities for furry little friends.

In addition to the events, the Auxiliary also sells catnip mice through various partners, including many veterinary clinics in the city. “Last year, we sold 900,” reports Avant.



Flipper was abandoned as a kitten due to a deformed back leg. He’s now the charming mascot for the Saskatoon SPCA, thanks to the Second Chance fund from the SPCA Auxiliary. (SUPPLIED)

Last year, the group started a new initiative: a calendar featuring photos of animals from the shelter who have been helped by the Second Chance fund. The next edition should be ready in September of 2024.

“We do work behind the scenes,” says Avant. “There’s not a lot talked about the SPCA Auxiliary and that’s OK with us. We’re there to help the shelter. The more support we can generate, the better.”

If you want to know more about upcoming events or how to get involved with the Auxiliary, visit their Facebook group or call Avant at (306) 491-9199.

Animal Protection Services *provides* education and enforcement

BY JENNY GABRUCH

Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan (APSS) aims to ensure the humane treatment and well-being of animals across the province.

With its mission to provide education and enforcement, the agency responds to concerns regarding abuse or animals in distress, under the Animal Protection Act, 2018 (APA).

That could mean everything from insufficient food, water or shelter to neglect, injuries or abandonment.

“We have consistently seen an increase in the number of calls for service,” says Don Ferguson, executive director of APSS. “It appears that the public are now more willing to call about what they perceive to be an animal welfare problem.”

The agency received nearly 5,000 calls for service, resulting in 941 investigations in 2022-23. That represents a 27.5 per cent increase from the previous year.

Those numbers consider its new responsibilities of enforcing the APA within the city of Saskatoon, taking over from the Saskatoon Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in July of 2022.

Out of the 941 files opened, the APSS had to act in 370 instances. More than 200 of these files were resolved by education and compliance.

Ferguson says 7.5 per cent of the cases resulted in animals being taken into protective custody. APSS officers seized animals in 65 separate cases, a jump from 32 cases the previous year.

In total, 1,007 animals were seized, including more than 500 companion animals, such as cats, dogs and rabbits, and over 500 livestock animals. A further 406 animals were voluntarily surrendered.

“These animals were placed with Saskatchewan SPCAs, humane societies, with veterinarians, with private caretakers, sold at auction or euthanized,” says Ferguson.

“We rely heavily on the services of SPCAs



Don Ferguson, executive director of Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan, says calls about animal welfare concerns increased by 27 per cent last year. (POSTMEDIA FILES)

and humane societies around the province, and there are usually limitations on the number and type of animals that the facilities can house.”

APSS employs 10 Animal Protection Officers within the province.

REPORTING CONCERNS

People concerned about an animal’s welfare should contact the agency at its main phone line at (306) 382-0002 or visit its website to submit a concern online.

“It is critical those witnessing potential animal neglect or abuse contact a member of our Animal Protection Services as this may be the only way our agency can become involved,” says Ferguson.

“If the circumstances involve something outside our mandate, such as animal control or wildlife issues, we will refer the caller to the appropriate agency.”

Along with investigations, an important part of its work is education. That includes educating its law enforcement partners — RCMP, municipal police services and employers of community safety officers — on their role and responsibilities in enforcing the Animal Protection Act.

APSS also provides continuing education

to members of the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association on their mandatory reporting responsibilities under the APA.

Since it began these presentations, Ferguson notes the agency has seen an increase in the number of cases being reported by veterinarians and its law enforcement partners.

SIGNS OF ANIMAL NEGLECT OR CRUELTY

Physical:

- extremely thin or emaciated animals
- wounds that are open or recently healed
- injuries that appear to be ongoing or untreated
- signs of multiple wounds or injuries
- limping, inability to walk or stand normally
- neck wounds from embedded collars or restraints
- skin or fur that is infested with parasites, fleas, ticks
- skin conditions that have been untreated (often hair loss, rashes, dryness-scaling)
- matted fur, excessively dirty coat, overgrown nails (due to inadequate care and grooming)
- heavy discharge from eyes or nose
- observation of an animal being struck or physically abused
- extreme lethargy, disorientation, or confusion
- behavioral problems
- dehydration
- obesity

Environmental:

- inadequate food and/or water (including unsanitary food and water)
- presence of toxic materials, poisons, trash, broken glass or other objects that can cause harm
- insufficient protection (shelter) from weather elements
- cages or kennels that do not allow for normal movement or are overly crowded with too many animals

HOW TO REPORT

Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan

Contact APSS from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (calls can be made anonymously)

(306) 382-0002 or toll free 1-844-382-0002

For after-hours emergencies, contact RCMP or local municipal police service.

Report online: animalprotectionservices.ca/report-animal-abuse



Community Veterinary Outreach offers *resources* to people and pets at risk

For some people living on the streets, the bond with their pets is the most significant relationship in their lives.

BY RAY PENNER

The young man was on the street again. His life had become a series of struggles; he had been in and out of jail several times. On this particular day, though, the street offered a different surprise: a newborn puppy, abandoned in a dumpster.

“The pup needed someone to love it, and the young man needed someone to unconditionally love him,” explains Dr. Dayle Borchartt, regional director of Community Veterinary Outreach in Saskatoon. The young man she describes is a family member. “He was able to turn things around for himself, because he had this other being who was ‘family,’ who was there and would never judge him. That dog literally saved his life, multiple times.”

Borchartt often tells that personal story to help explain why she became involved with Community Veterinary Outreach (CVO), a charitable organization involving veterinarians across Canada. Their mandate is “to improve the health of homeless and vulnerably housed communities through veterinary care to their pets, and to connect their humans with health and social services.”

The CVO was established over 20 years ago. When Borchartt heard about it, she decided to establish a Saskatoon region because, “This was a way I could use my skills to give back to my community.”

The CVO in Saskatoon is active in several ways. “The biggest thing we do,” says Borchartt, “is our One Health clinics. That’s where we have the most direct contact and the biggest turnout all in one place.”

Since the CVO has no physical address, it relies on its various community partners to provide a venue for a “pop-up” event. Owners and their pets are referred to the clinic by these partner organizations.

“We bring all of our equipment,” says



Dr. Dayle Borchartt is regional director of Community Veterinary Outreach in Saskatoon.

Borchartt. “We set up exam stations, we bring volunteers to run check-in and the pharmacy. The veterinarians and technicians run the appointments themselves.” Four clinics are planned for 2024.

Besides her organizing committee, Borchartt has between three and five veterinarians volunteering at each clinic. As well, the clinics are an ideal learning experience for veterinary and social work students.

In many ways, the CVO is about connecting, which explains its One Health paradigm. The Outreach’s clinics treat not only pets, but also enable health and social service organizations to reach out to the owners. It opens up lines of communication.

“It’s a really wonderful bridge,” says Borchartt, who points out that the homeless who come to the clinic often face a lot of

stigmas. “They get told a lot about what they should be doing” she adds. “Instead, what I can talk about is their pet, about how to keep their dog healthy, and we can go from there to talk about how to keep them healthy. By helping humans, we help the pets. By helping the pets, we help humans. It’s all related.”

The partner organizations also provide a critical service by enabling the veterinarians to deliver pet medications to the owners who do not have a fixed address, or to contact them regarding their pet after the clinic. “That go-between is really a big benefit,” emphasizes Borchartt. “By linking all the different organizations that attend the One Health clinic, we can network to make sure the people get whatever it is that they need.”

“One Health” also refers to mental as well as physical well-being, and the benefits of pets can be far-reaching. “Pets are a very big part of mental health,” says Borchartt. “Homelessness is a major struggle.”

There are tangible and measurable benefits to society by keeping people with their pets. People who own pets are less likely to use illicit substances and overdose and die. Fewer end up in incarceration — simply because of a sense of responsibility to feed and care for their pet, and the fear of being separated from the one thing they love and depends on them.

Contrary to what some might think, the animals of homeless owners are often in better condition than pets that are left alone in homes every day, without exercise or companionship. Borchartt regularly sees dogs that are closer to an ideal weight, and who are well socialized and conditioned to things like street noises.

For a young person on the street, or a puppy in a dumpster, Community Veterinary Outreach can help ensure brighter days ahead — and a healthier community for everyone. To lend your support, visit vetoutreach.org, click on “Donate” and specify the Saskatoon region.

Animals get a **second chance** at Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation

BY JENNY GABRUCH

It was a milestone moment when George, a great horned owl, finally took flight.

Hit by a car and unable to stand, the owl was brought to Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation to be nursed back to health.

“We had to prop him up and feed him for quite some time,” says Jan Shadick, volunteer executive director of Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation. “Eventually, he was able to stand, and then eat on his own. The day he took his first flight was magical. We all cheered for him.”

That’s just one of thousands of rescue and recovery stories at Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation, the province’s largest wildlife rehabilitation center.

Based in Saskatoon, it cares for more than 2,000 injured or orphaned wildlife each year, offering a safe place for them to recover until they can return to their natural habitat.

The majority are birds, including songbirds, waterfowls, raptors and the occasional pelican and shorebird.

The facility also cares for injured or orphaned mammals such as foxes, rabbits, squirrels, porcupines, skunks, badgers and river otters.

It takes an army of volunteers to care for them. Songbirds, for example, are fed every half-hour from sun-up to sun-down until they fledge. They are then fed hourly. Baby mammals are typically fed every two to four hours, including throughout the night.

“Every animal is given the individual attention it needs to be successful upon release back out into the wild where it belongs,” says Shadick.

That includes specially formulated diets to meet each animal’s nutritional needs, medical care and careful handling to ensure they survive and thrive when returned to the wild.

PASSION PROJECT

Shadick became interested in wildlife rehabilitation when she volunteered at a nature center in Connecticut in 1998. Originally from California, she moved to Saskatchewan in 2001 to be near family, obtaining provincial and federal permits to rehabilitate wildlife in



Scarlet, the red-tailed hawk, was nursed back to health by Jan Shadick and the team at Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation. (SUPPLIED)

Saskatchewan in 2005.

That year, she took in 20 animals. By 2010, the number grew to more than 200, leading to the creation of Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation as a non-profit organization. In 2015, with more than 650 animals needing care, Living Sky moved to a larger rehabilitation facility in Sutherland.

Now tending to around 2,000 animals each year, Living Sky relies on volunteers, fundraising and donations to keep the facility running.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Shadick is passionate about education and advocacy, noting it is important to recognize the value of all species and the role they play in the ecosystem. Living Sky has developed educational programming and makes presentations to schools and community groups.

Educators use wildlife ambassadors, including bats and crows, in some presentations.

“When people get to know these little animals, they realize they are living beings, they have personalities and they recognize the value they bring to our environment,” says Shadick. “Attitudes really change when they meet these ambassadors.”

Living Sky also provides training



Living Sky provides care for over 2,000 animals each year, including river otters. (SUPPLIED)

opportunities and internships to students of the University of Saskatchewan’s Western College of Veterinary Medicine, vet tech programs and other related studies.

FOUND AN ANIMAL?

Shadick encourages people to call Living Sky if they spot an injured or orphaned animal.

“Hares and deer leave their young alone strategically, so predators don’t find them. When people pick them up, they are mistakenly making an orphan out of it,” she says.

“We always suggest people call us first when they are concerned about a wild animal. We are happy to provide information about the best way to respond to our wild neighbors.”

Living Sky welcomes volunteers, providing orientation twice a month. Donations are always welcome, along with support for its fundraising events.

Upcoming projects include building an aquatic mammal pen to house otters, muskrats and beavers.

“Our work is inspired every day to address the suffering of wildlife,” says Shadick. “They do not have anyone else to turn to who will help give them a second chance.”

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, call Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation at (306) 281-0554. Learn more at livingskywildliferehabilitation.org.

USask develops a **pet-friendly** rental housing guide

BY HILARY KLASSEN

Finding rental housing that welcomes pets can be challenging. “In Saskatoon we don’t have pet-friendly policies. The availability of pet-friendly rental housing is limited,” says Dr. Colleen Dell. An animal therapy researcher with the University of Saskatchewan (USask), Dell’s latest passion is finding solutions to that problem.

“We’re in a time when that human-animal bond has become really important. This reciprocal relationship is not only about our own health, it’s about the animal’s health too. And that has to be recognized in our housing,” she says.

Paws in Places (colleendell.com/guide) is a pet-friendly rental housing guide published by USask in collaboration with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, U of S One Health and Wellness office, Royal Canin and the Saskatoon pet community. Its goal is to share evidence-based knowledge to raise awareness about the potential benefits of allowing pets in the workplace, rental housing and other establishments.

“Increasing the availability of pet-friendly rental housing can be beneficial to both tenants and rental property owners. We find in the literature that renters who have a pet, rent for a longer amount of time. This could be very appealing to a property owner and it could potentially increase their rental income,” Dell says.

Policies for pets in rental housing vary across the country. Currently, there are barriers to bringing pets into rental housing in our province. The Saskatchewan Residential Tenancies Act (2006) does not make provisions for people living with pets. Rental property owners and managers can refuse to rent to



University of Saskatchewan animal therapy researcher Dr. Colleen Dell with her furry companions, E-Jay and Molly. (SUPPLIED)

individuals with pets. Those who allow pets can require a security deposit which can be up to one month’s rent. “That can be a prohibitive cost for people, even if the place does accept pets,” Dell observes.

Dell can point to a couple of Saskatoon care facilities that have pet-friendly policies, including Sherbrooke Community Centre and Preston Park.

But not everyone is so fortunate. “We hear of individuals who are moving into a senior’s care home who cannot take their pet,” Dell says. “In some cases, their partner just died and now they have multiple losses.” There’s an observable toll on their emotional and physical health.

The Paws in Places guide suggests that providing a pet resume may help renters secure housing that welcomes their companion animal. The resume should include any obedience training or certification their pet has

completed. References from a veterinarian, previous landlords, or roommates would also be helpful. The guide provides plenty of details about these and other strategies to help pet owners secure rental housing.

Emotional support animals and service animals fall into special categories, and the “no pets” rule is lifted. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission explains that these animals are not pets and no extra damage or security deposits can be applied.

The Saskatchewan SPCA and Paws in Places have established a New Pet-Friendly Housing Working Group that intends to raise awareness and take action to improve access to rental housing for people with pets. The group welcomes input from policymakers, landlords, renters and others in the know. For information, contact the Saskatchewan SPCA at saskspca.ca.



It's Your Doody



Animal Control

The Saskatoon Animal Control Agency (SACA) is responsible for the enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the Dangerous Animal Bylaw and is contracted by the City of Saskatoon to provide animal control services including:

- Reporting of animals at large
- Reporting barking and howling
- Reporting dog bites
- Complaints regarding defecation
- Reporting of dangerous animals

SACA Hotline: 306-385-7387 (available 24/7)



Responsible Pet Ownership

Make sure your pet is a positive addition to the community

- Keep them licensed – All dogs and cats (indoor and outdoor) over four months require a valid license.
- Keep them from roaming – All pets must be on-leash (no longer than 2m in length) when off private property.
- Scoop the Poop – Owners must clean up after their pets.

Be considerate and courteous to other people and children enjoying the outdoors and keep in mind that not everyone is comfortable around pets, even friendly ones.

