



ANIMAL BALANCE

ALCALDÍA
ISABELA

Agencia de Regulación y
Control de la Bioseguridad y
Cuarentena para Galápagos

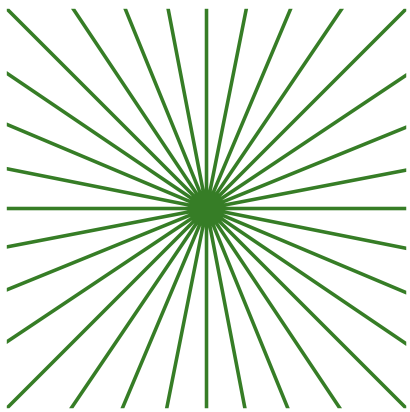


2024

ISABELA ISLAND GALAPAGOS

COORDINATED BY
JESSICA GONZALEZ

TECHNICAL ADVISOR
JOHN BOONE



CONTENTS

1
2
3
4
5

- Introduction
- Methodology
- General results
- Analisis and conclusions
- Recomendations



ANIMAL BALANCE

Introduction

This report details the results obtained during the urban fauna census (dogs and cats) conducted on Isabela Island. The goal of the census was to count the population of dogs and cats present in Puerto Villamil and the urban area to plan future activities related to the humane control of dog and cat populations, such as sterilization campaigns, control policies, and awareness efforts.

Animal Balance has worked alongside local authorities in Galápagos since 2004 and has performed more than 8,500 dog and cat sterilization surgeries in the archipelago since then. Of these, around 2,000 surgeries have been carried out on Isabela, generating a positive impact on the control of dog and cat populations on the island.

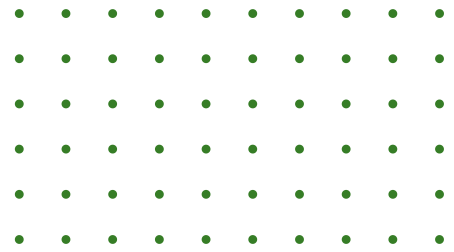
Population censuses or counts are important tools that form part of a set of strategies for effective population control of dogs and cats in the territory. It is important to mention that, prior to conducting this census, the results obtained in the 2022 National Population Census were reviewed to ensure alignment between the questions asked, data presentation, and to corroborate trends.



Methodology

The census was conducted through door-to-door surveys in the main urban and rural neighborhoods of the island, combining direct observations and interviews with pet owners. A mobile application designed to record data in real time was used, including species identification, sex, age, reproductive status, and vaccination and registration status.



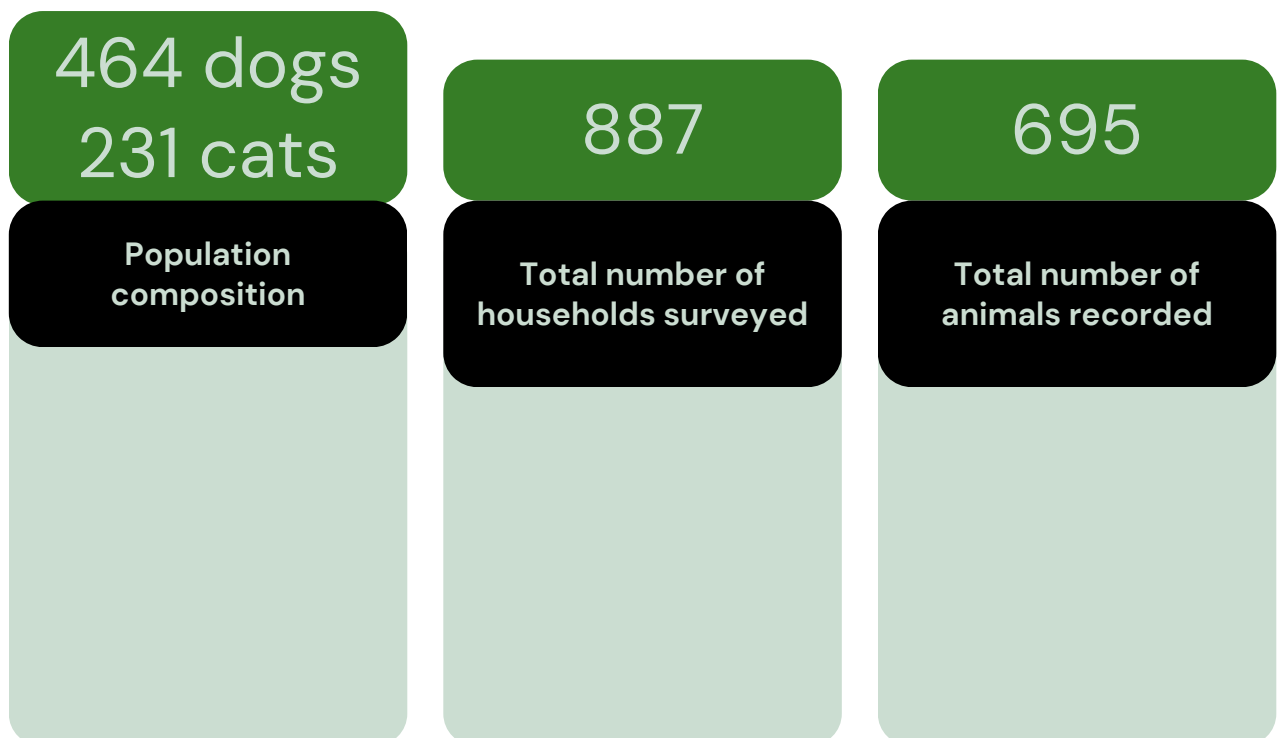


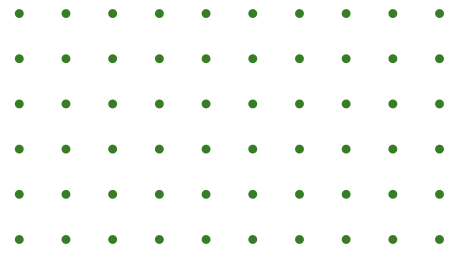
General Results

The census achieved considerable coverage, recording 695 animals in 887 households, indicating that on average, 1 out of every 1.28 households has a pet. Dogs represent two-thirds of the recorded population, suggesting a higher prevalence of dogs than cats on the island.

Total number of households surveyed: 887

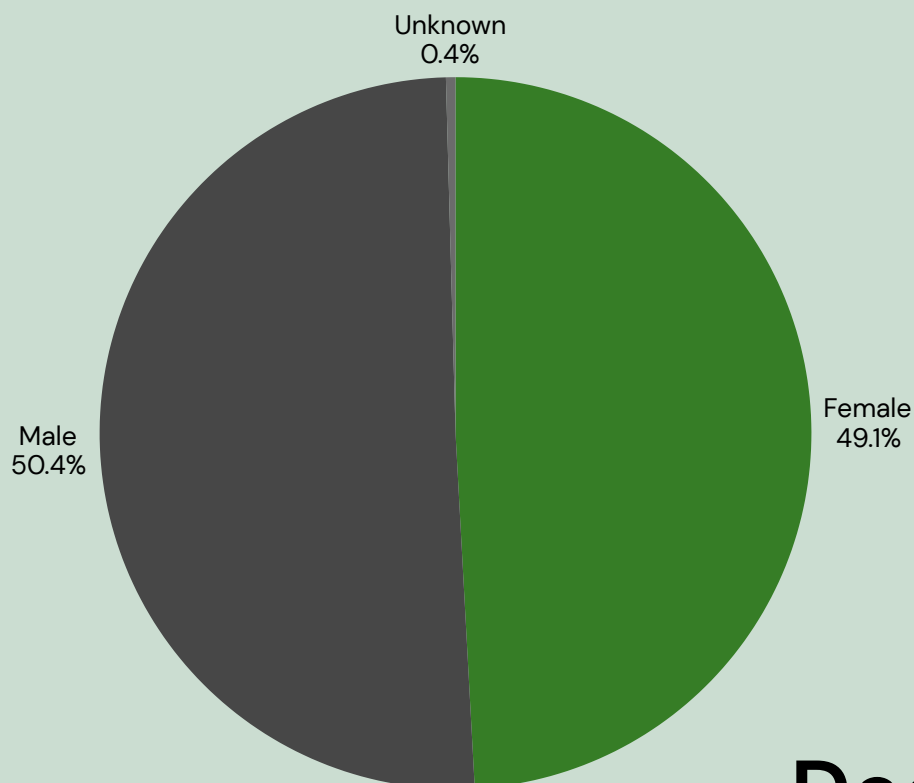
Total number of animals recorded: 695



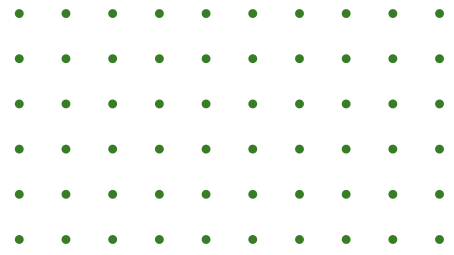


Distribution by sex

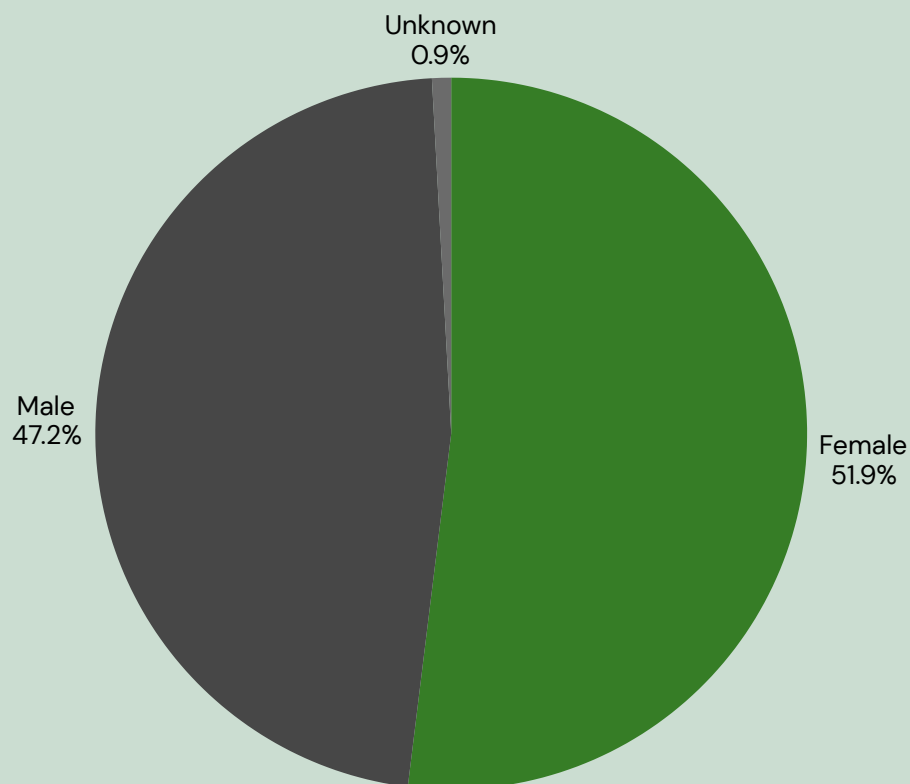
The sex distribution of dogs and cats is relatively balanced, although there is a slight prevalence of females in the cat population. The number of animals whose sex was not identified is marginal, reflecting a high level of precision in data collection.



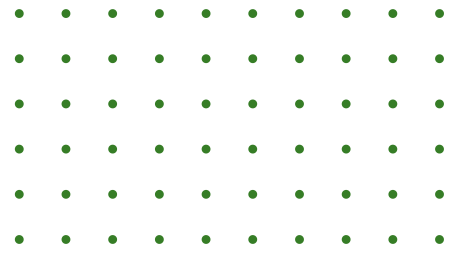
Dogs



Distribution by sex

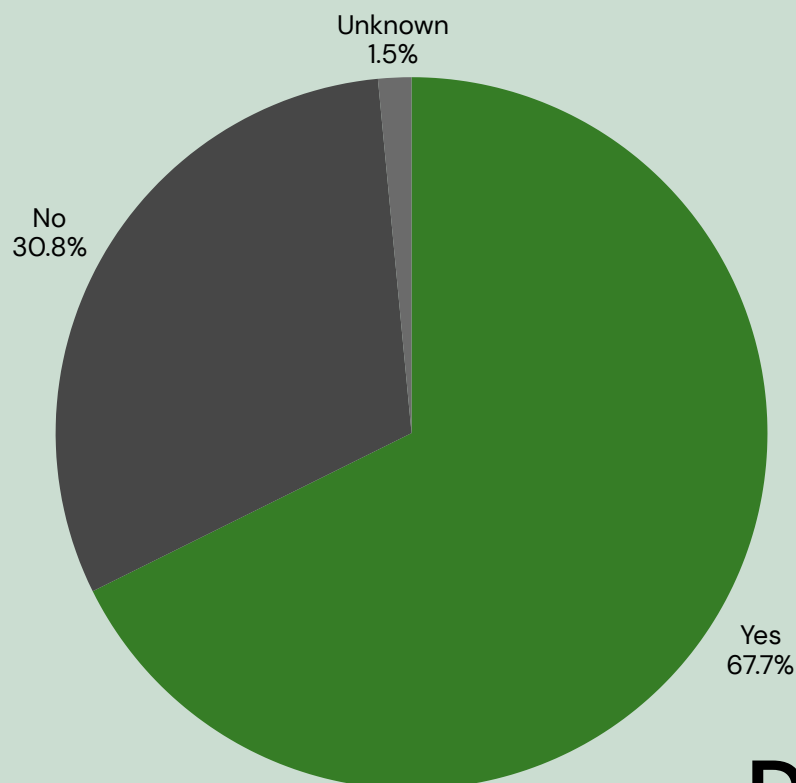


Cats

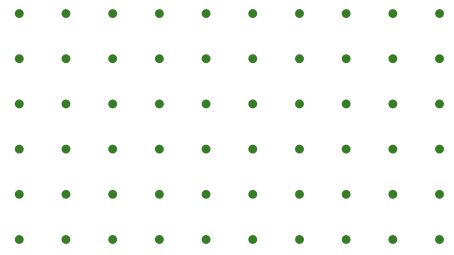


Reproductive Status

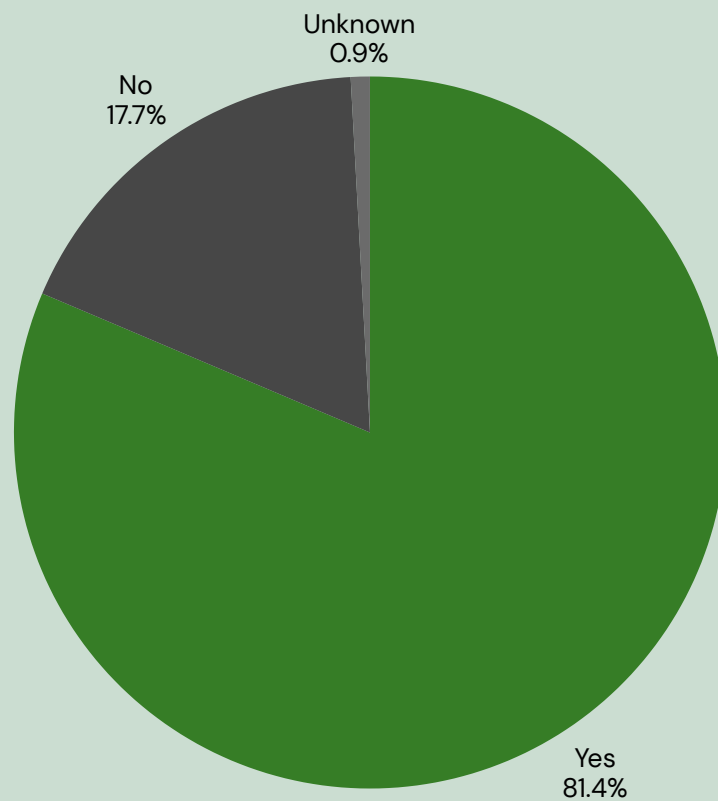
The sterilization rate is quite high for both dogs (67.7%) and cats (81.4%). This is a positive indicator that a good share of the animal population is under reproductive control. However, 30.8% of dogs remain unsterilized, which could increase the risk of overpopulation if sterilization efforts are not reinforced.



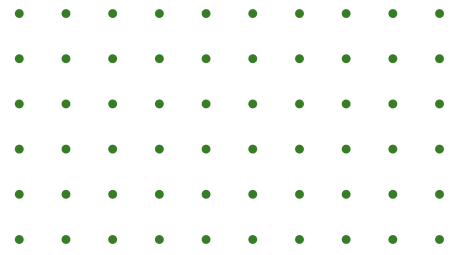
Dogs



Reproductive Status

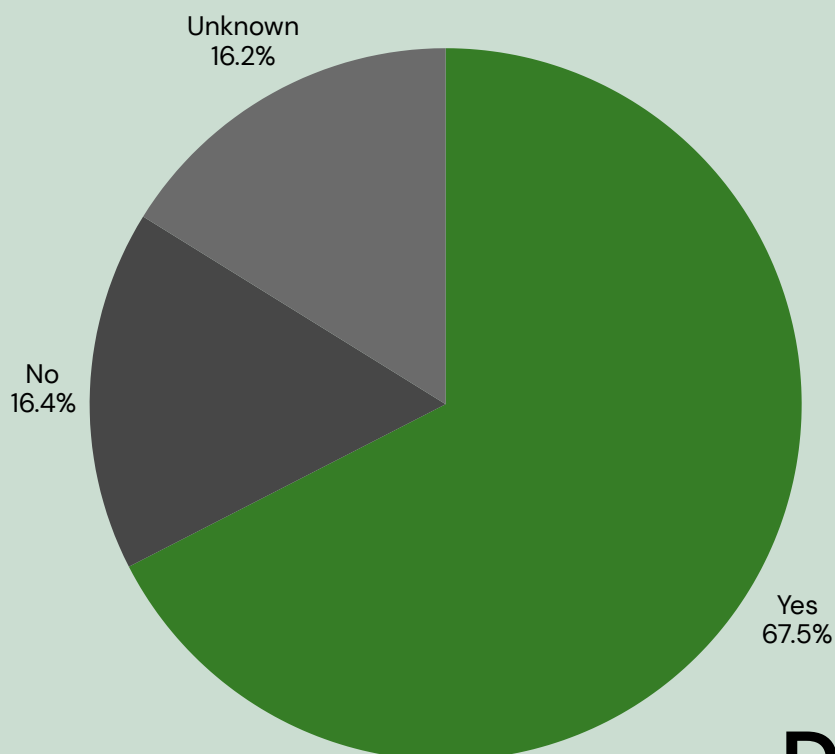


Cats

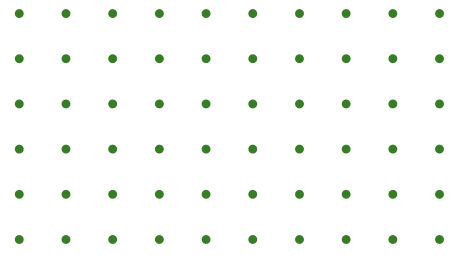


Vaccination

Two-thirds of the dogs recorded are vaccinated, which is a good sign of disease control; however, the fact that 16.4% are not vaccinated and another 16.2% of owners do not know suggests that more education and follow-up on vaccination are still needed.

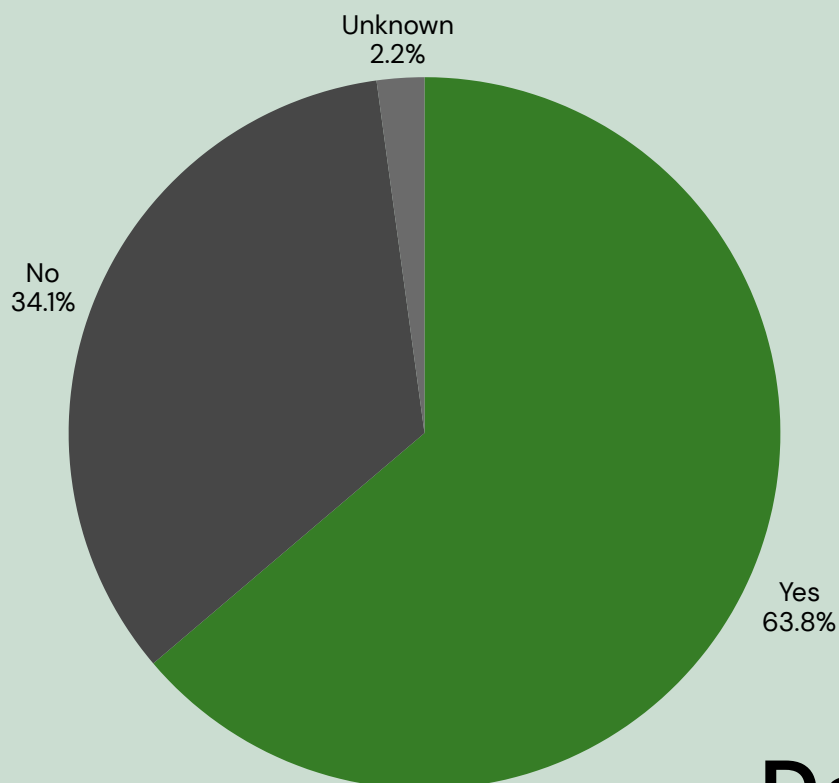


Dogs

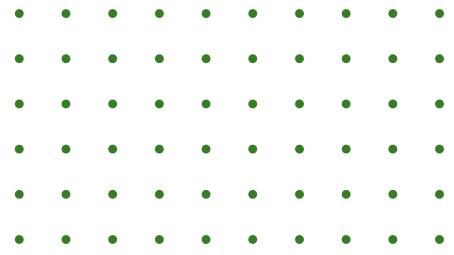


Official dog registration

63.8% of recorded dogs have official registration. (microchipping), which facilitates monitoring and control. However, there is still a significant percentage of unregistered dogs (34.1%), indicating the need to implement stricter registration policies.

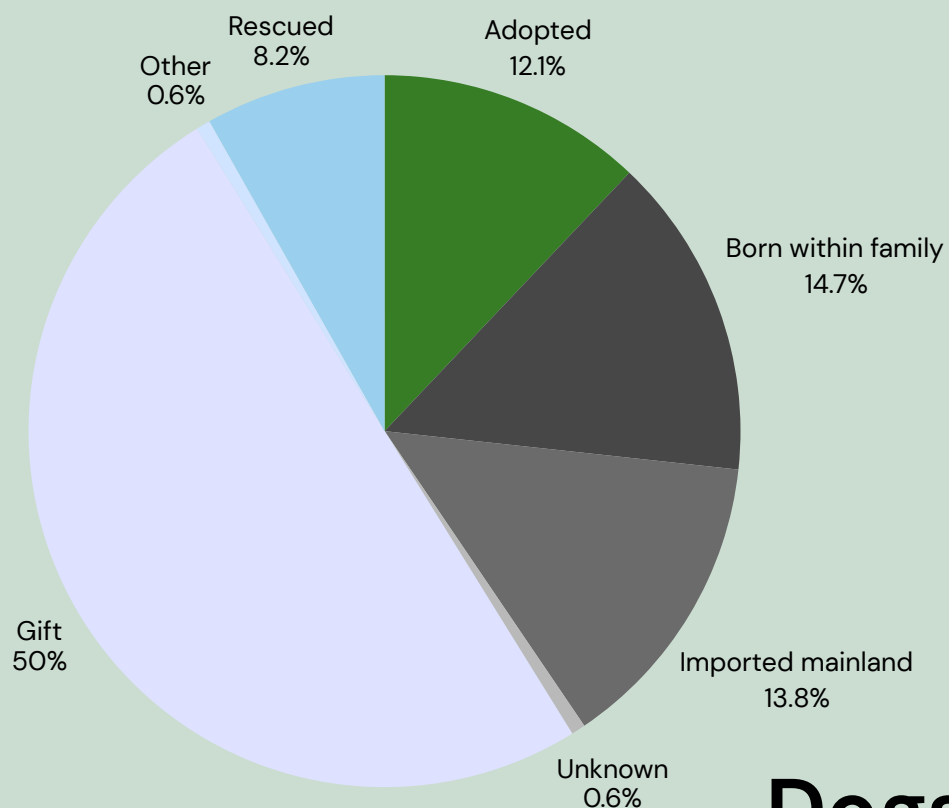


Dogs

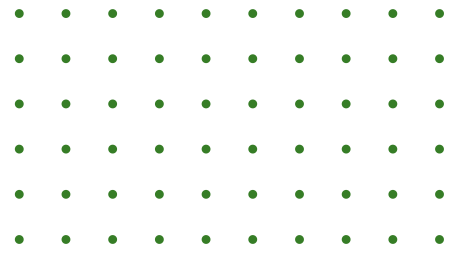


Origin of dogs and cats

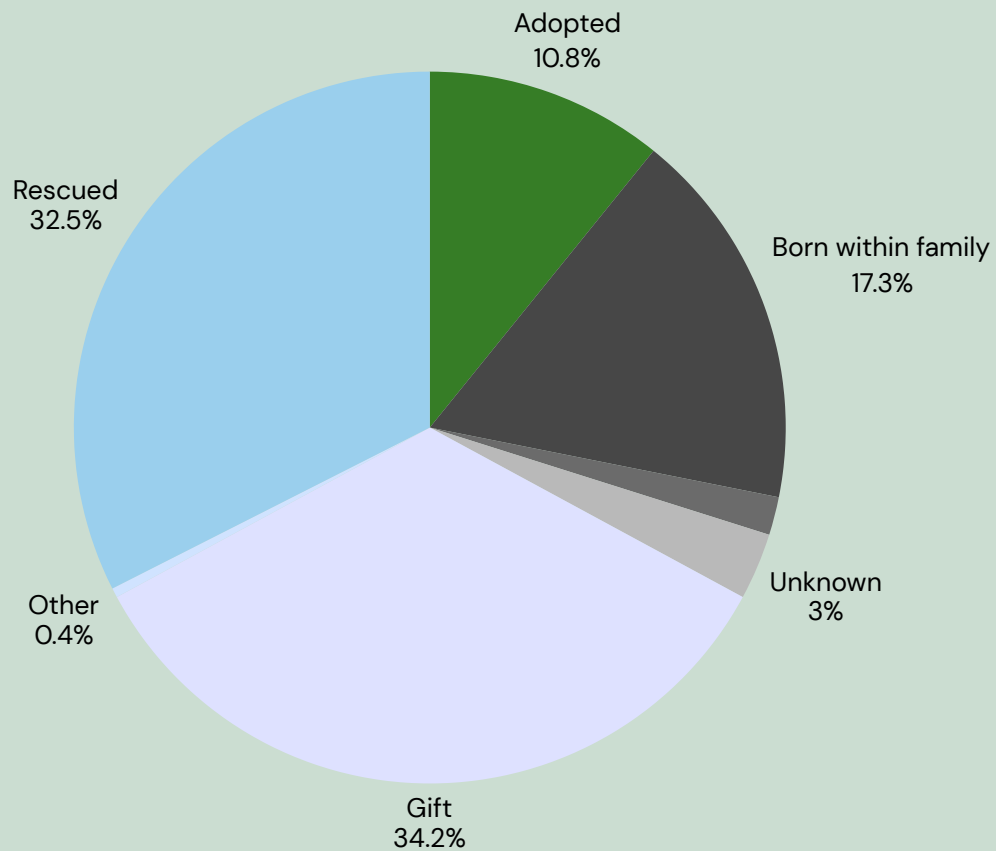
Most of the recorded dogs and cats come from gifts or litters born within the family. Notably, almost one third of cats were rescued, indicating a higher tendency to adopt cats compared to dogs. It is also notable that 13.8% of dogs were imported from mainland Ecuador, which may imply a risk of disease introduction and a challenge for fauna management on the island.



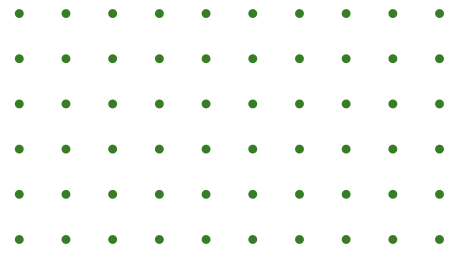
Dogs



Origin of dogs and cats

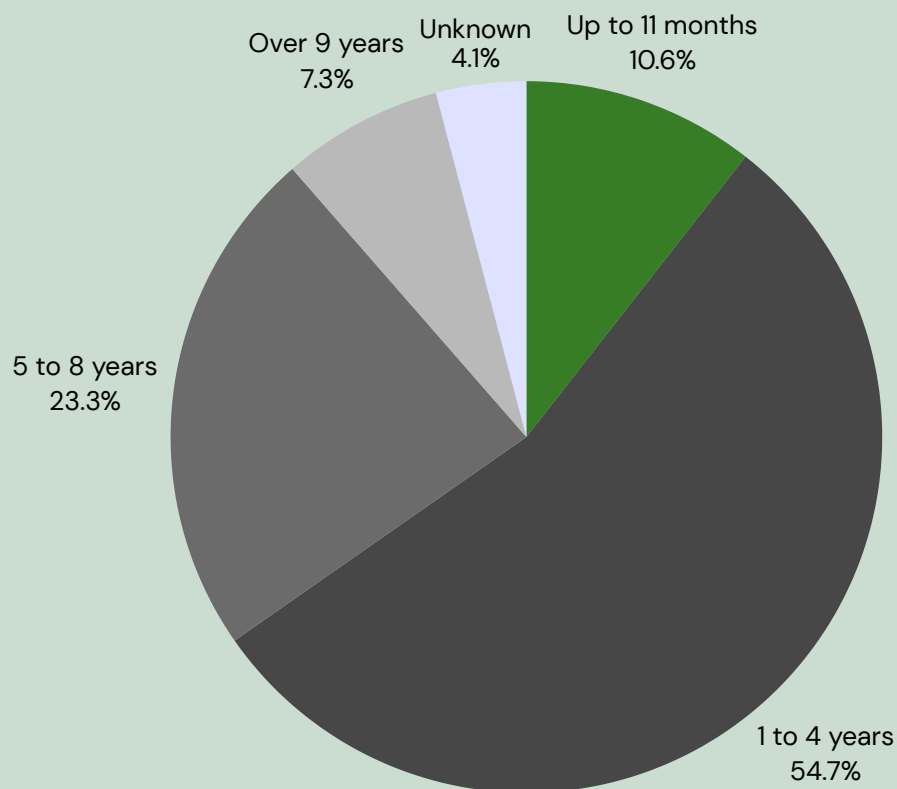


Cats

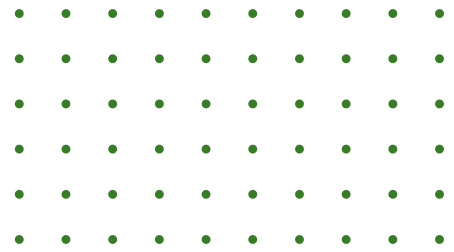


Age of dogs and cats

Most dogs and cats are between 1 and 4 years old, suggesting a predominantly young population. This is relevant for planning future sterilization and vaccination campaigns, as younger animals tend to be more fertile and active.

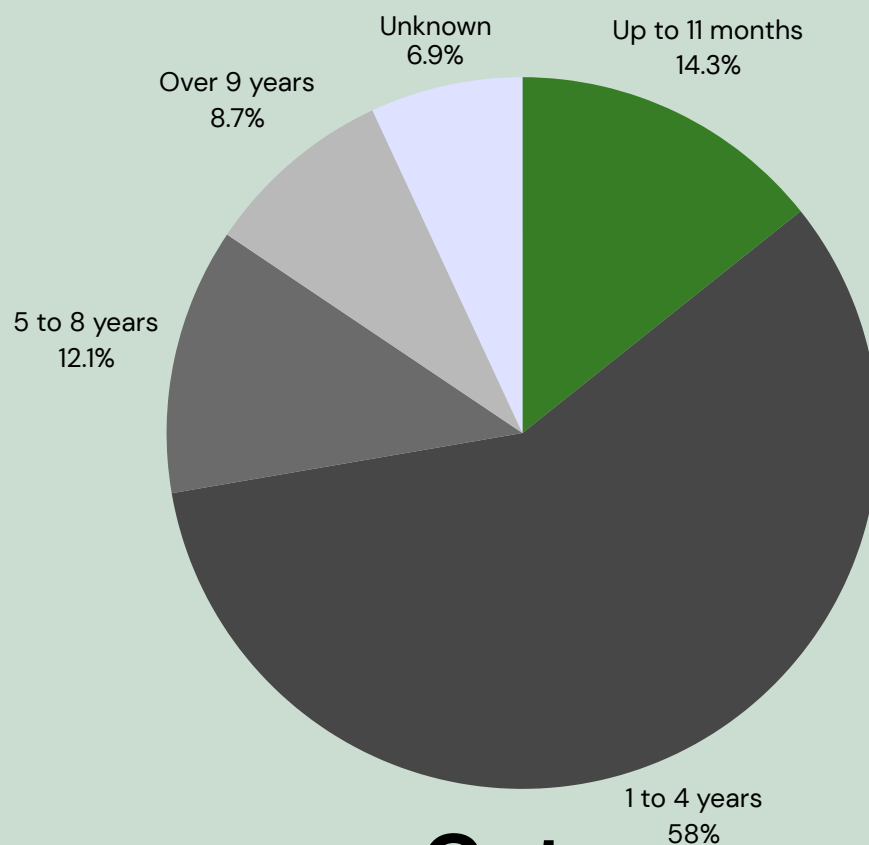


Dogs

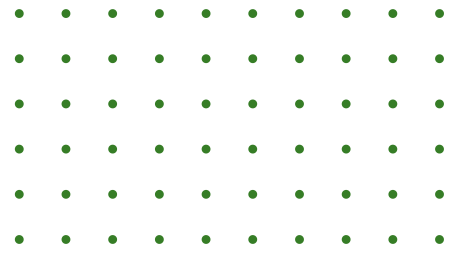


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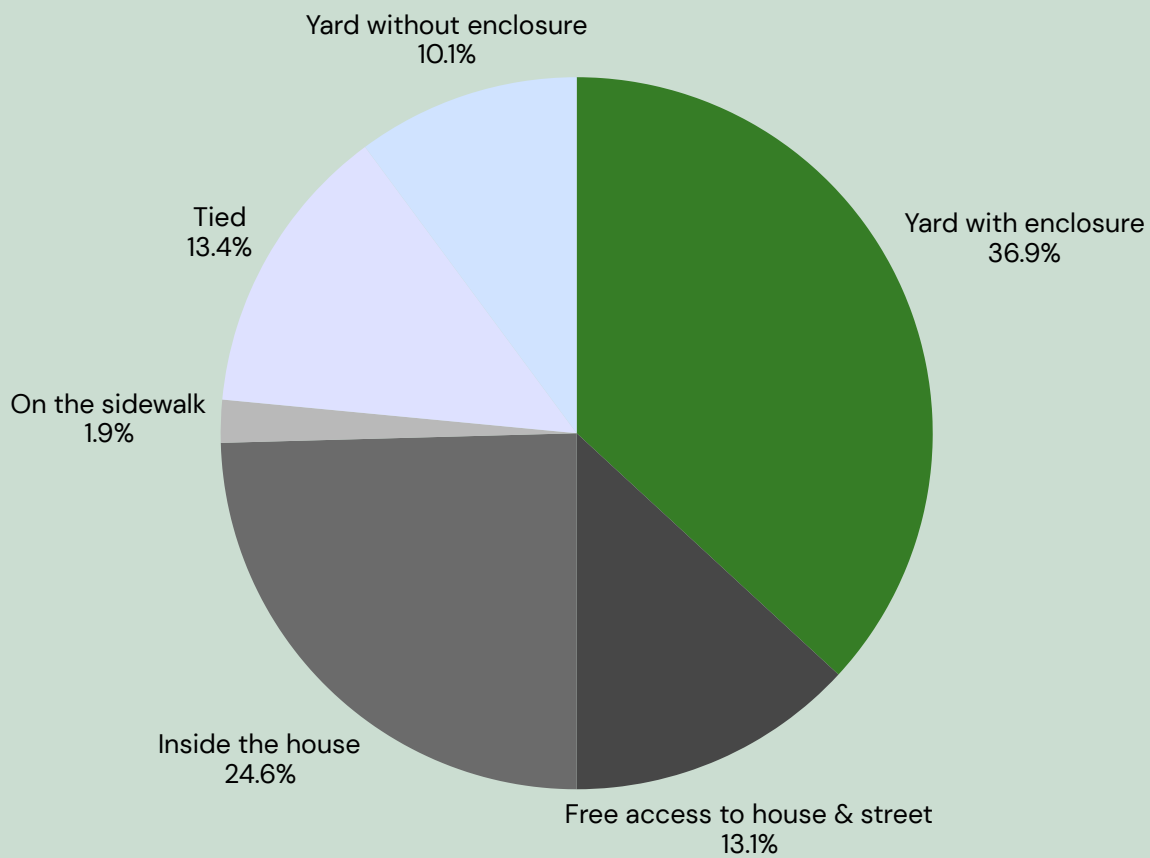


Cats

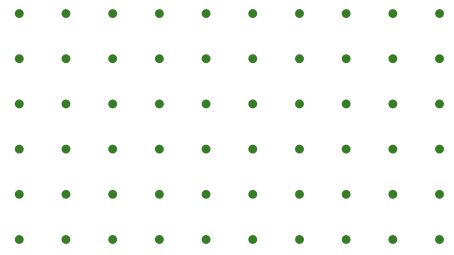


Where dogs and cats spend time

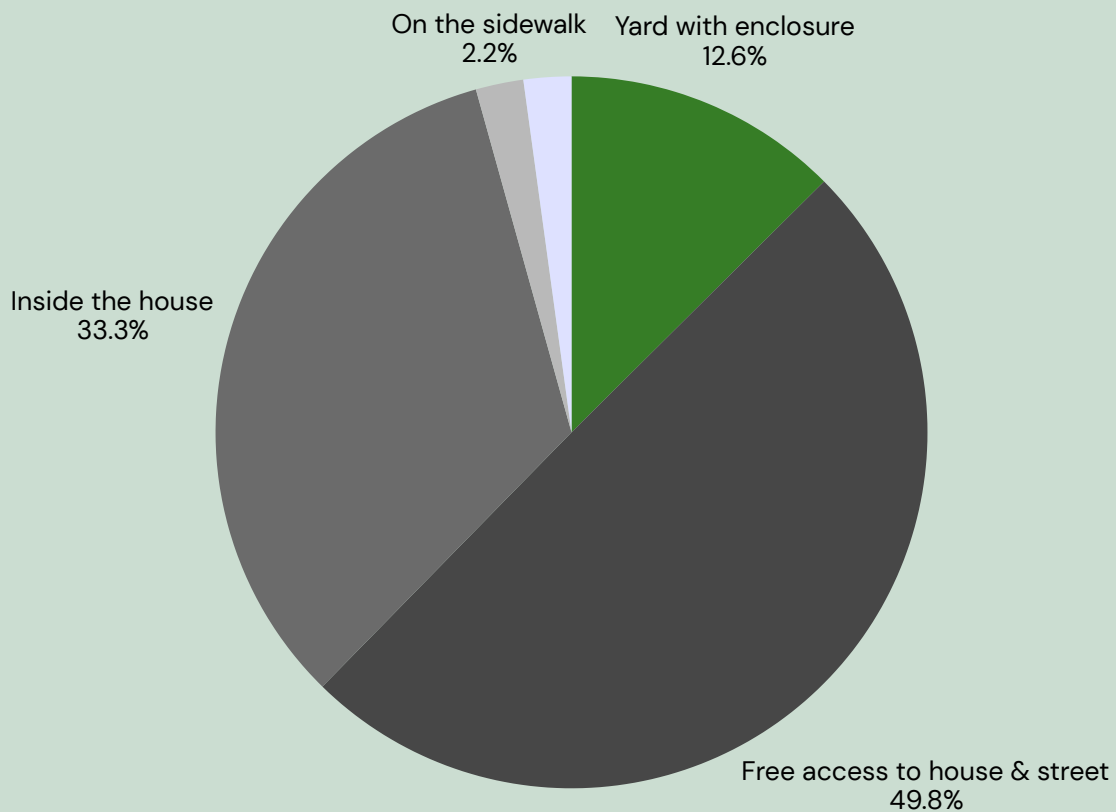
36.9% of dogs live in enclosed yards, which is positive for mobility control. However, 13.1% have free access to the street, which may pose a risk to local fauna and public safety. In the case of cats, nearly half have free access to the street, increasing interactions with native fauna.



Dogs



Where dogs and cats spend time



Cats

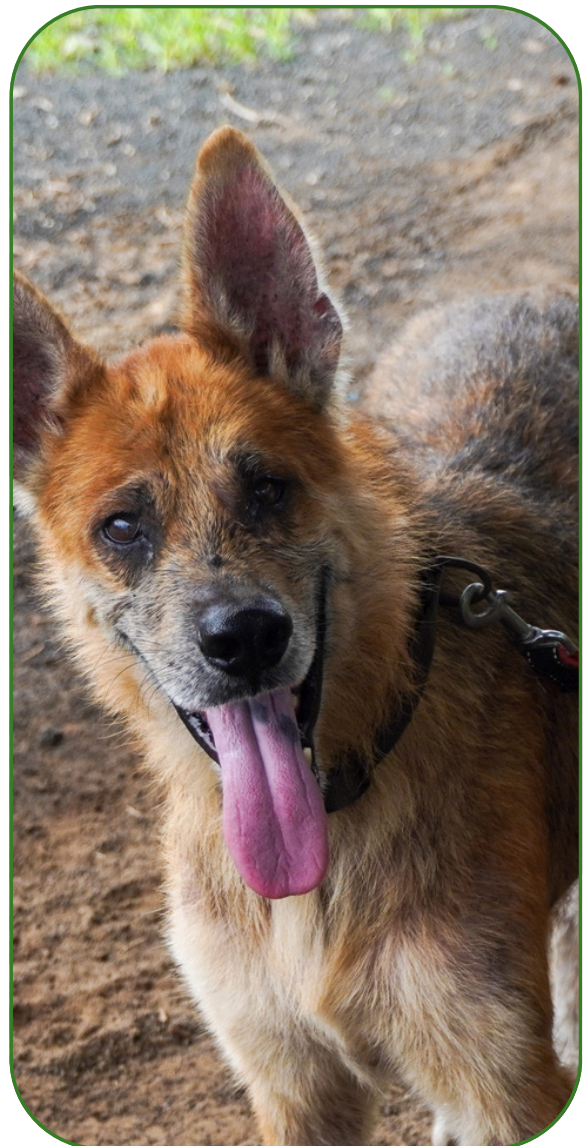
Analysis and conclusions

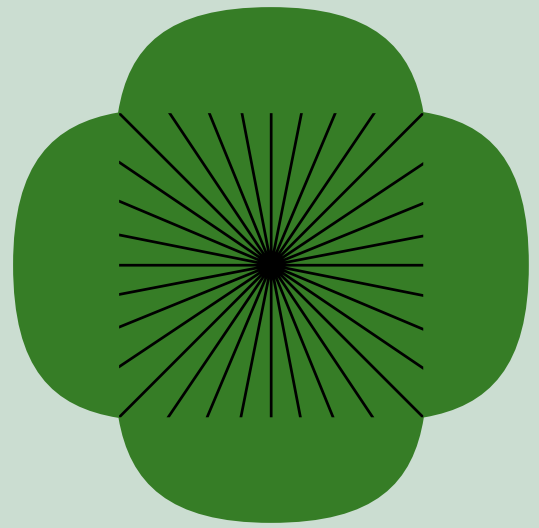
The census reveals a solid foundation of control over the dog and cat population on Isabela Island, especially in terms of sterilization and vaccination. However, there are areas requiring attention, such as controlling animal mobility and pet registration. Awareness campaigns should continue to improve vaccination rates and reduce the number of unsupervised animals in public areas.



Recommendations

- Strengthen sterilization campaigns, especially in rural areas, to reduce growth in uncontrolled animal populations.
- Intensify vaccination campaigns to cover 100% of the canine population.
- Promote the implementation of microchips or registration systems for dogs—and eventually cats—to facilitate animal control and monitoring.
- Deploy education strategies focused on responsible dog and cat ownership on the island, building public understanding of the importance of sterilization, registration, using leashes and collars to walk dogs, and keeping animals in a controlled, healthy environment.
- Conduct annual periodic censuses to monitor the impact of actions taken and adjust urban fauna management strategies.





URBAN FAUNA CENSUS

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