

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**Animal
Services
Center**
OF THE MESILLA VALLEY

The Mission of the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley is to provide safe shelter for all lost, mistreated and abandoned animals of the Mesilla Valley and surrounding communities. The Center utilizes all avenues available to it in placing each animal into a safe, loving and permanent home whenever possible. We strive to meet the highest standards of humane animal care and husbandry, and to promote responsible pet ownership through public education and outreach.



Background

The municipal animal shelter facility located at 3551 Bataan Memorial West, in Las Cruces, NM is the only open admission animal shelter operating in the Doña Ana County area. The facility was built in 1985 and had been operated by a third-party contractor, the Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS). The City of Las Cruces (City) and Doña Ana County (County) have been the primary financial supporters of this facility.

On January 29, 2008, the City and County entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to temporarily operate the animal shelter after DACHS notified the City and County that it would no longer operate the animal shelter. The City and County determined that it was imperative that they enter into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to create an independent public agency to provide animal sheltering related services. The JPA was entered into by both Parties on August 4, 2008. This public agency is named the “Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley” (ASCMV).

The Board charged with governing this agency consists of local officials from both the City and County.

This will be the twelfth comprehensive annual report released by the ASCMV, highlighting the progress made by the agency towards achieving the community’s euthanasia reduction goals during the past year.



Letter From the Executive Director

2020 was a year full of change, progression, backtracking, sidestepping, adaptation, collaboration and – most importantly -- wonder. Collectively, we did a lot of good!

For the first time ever, our live-release rate for dogs exceeded 90 percent. Our overall live-release rate was at an all-time high of 83.6 percent! That is the highest LRR ever achieved at the ASCMV!

Working with the City of Las Cruces Animal Control and Doña Ana County Animal Control, the ASCMV saw the lowest number ever of impounded animals in 2020.

Our rescue coordinators worked every day to save lives. They made it possible for more than 2,200 animals be rescued. They worked so hard, we had more animals leave via rescue than via adoptions!

Despite all the hard work done by ASCMV staff, challenges remain. Owner surrenders became our second-largest cause for intake. In 2021, we will be looking at the “why” regarding these surrenders. We have food banks and training services in place, and we refer owners to them every day. Some people just did not want the added responsibility of having a pet.

COVID-19 also brought multiple staffing issues. The ASCMV was split into two teams, and both teams worked hard under a lot of added pressure to keep everything clean. Despite all the precautions, the ASCMV had several employees affected by the COVID-19 virus. The exposures and COVID-19 cases were so numerous the ASCMV had to close to the public. However, my coworkers continued to come to work! The animals were all cared for and never suffered a reduction in quality of care. I am so proud of my coworkers. They all came together and picked up the slack when COVID-19 struck, even when individual team members had to recover or be in quarantine.

What next? Where do we go from here? The plan is to get better and do better at all we do. It’s a process, and nothing ever goes exactly as planned, but we keep doing better as we keep learning there is “better” out there to do. In 2021, we will be building a new adoption center! We are excited to see this start and be involved in the construction process. We have new staff coming on board in important positions and welcome them to the ASCMV family!

This is not a race that can be won alone. Everyone carries the burden while also shouldering the responsibility inherent to moving forward toward even broader positive outcomes. Thank you to everyone for an impressive year!

For the animals,

Clint

Statistical Report

This report focuses on the following categories:

1. Intake Statistics

- **Methods of Intake**
- **Monthly Intake**
- **Species Intake**

2. Outcome Statistics – Adoptions, Euthanasias, Reclaims by Owners, Rescue Transfers, etc.

- **Overall Outcomes**
- **Adoptions**
- **Rescue Transfers**
- **Live Release Rate**
- **Euthanasias**

3. Public Services and Community Outreach

- **Pet Sterilization Surgeries**
- **Public Attendance**
- **Community Outreach**

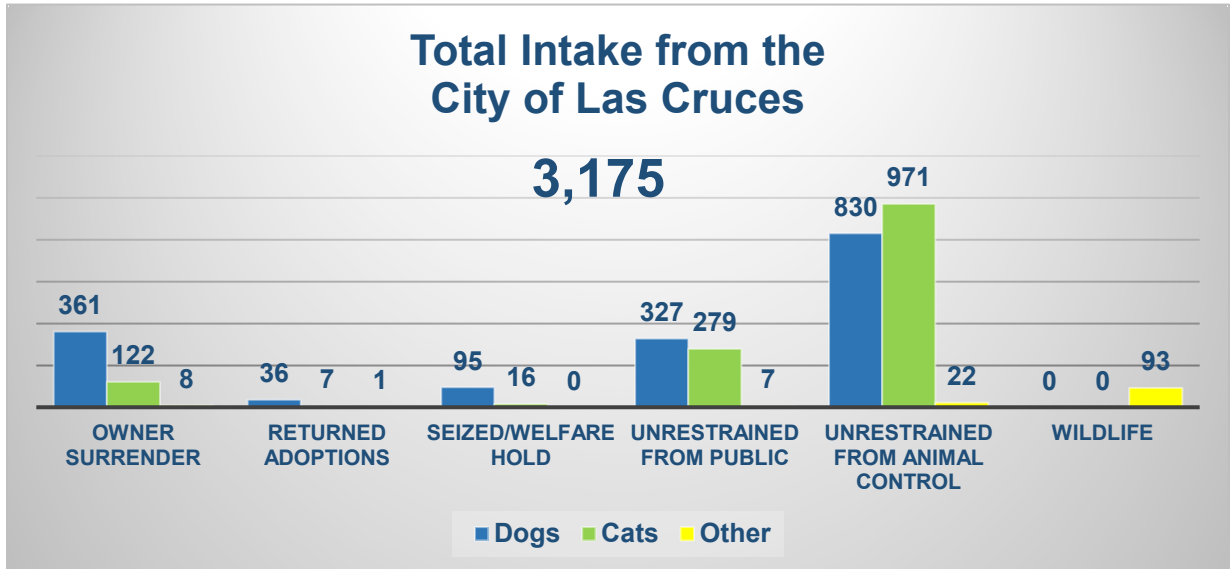
4. Volunteer Program

5. Financial Overview

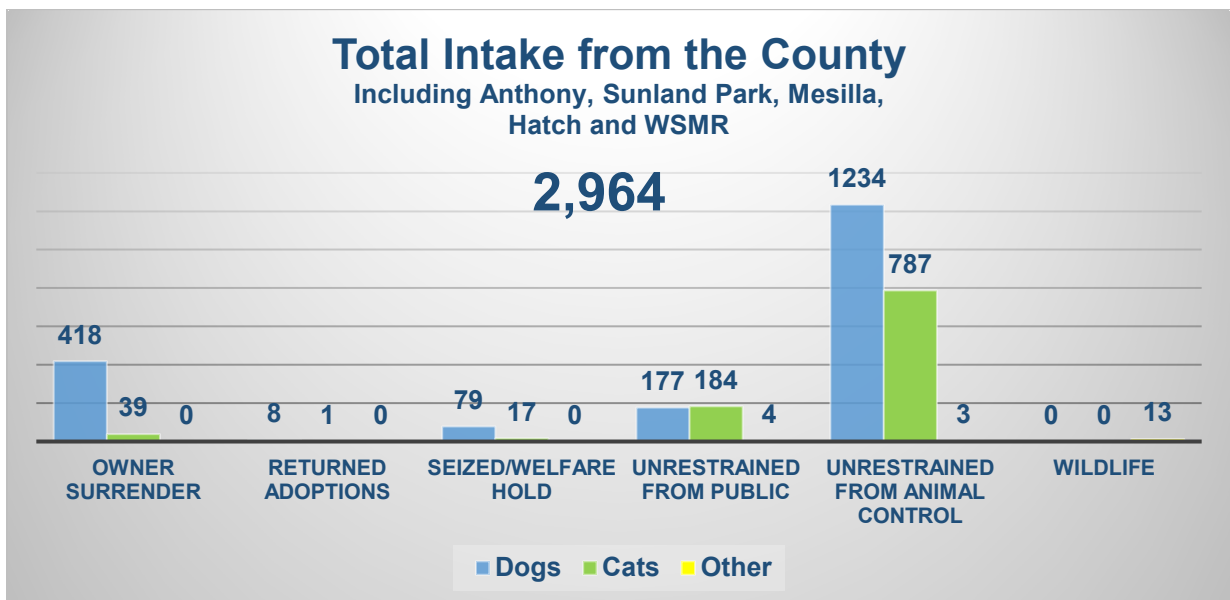
1. Intake Statistics

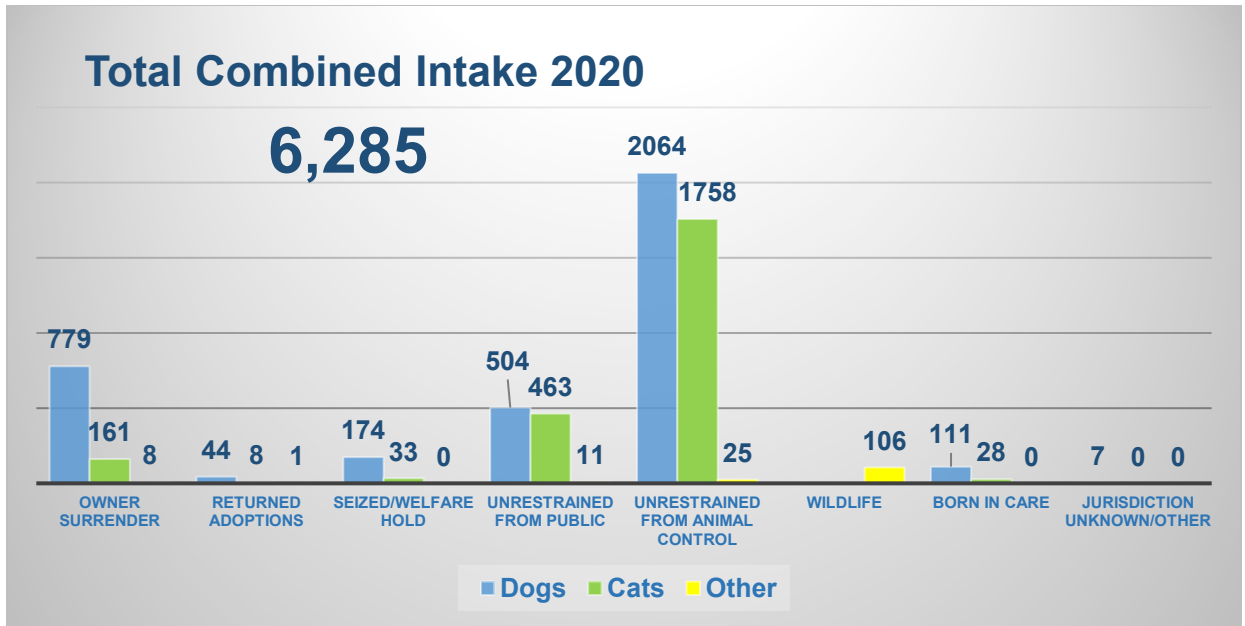
• Methods of Intake

The **ASCMV** is the only **open-admission** shelter in Dona Ana County. As such, animals can enter the shelter through several different means. This includes **unrestrained** animals brought in by **Animal Control** or by the **public**, animals **surrendered** by their owners (including **returned adoptions**), animals **seized** by Animal Control, and those animals that are **born** while in **shelter care**.

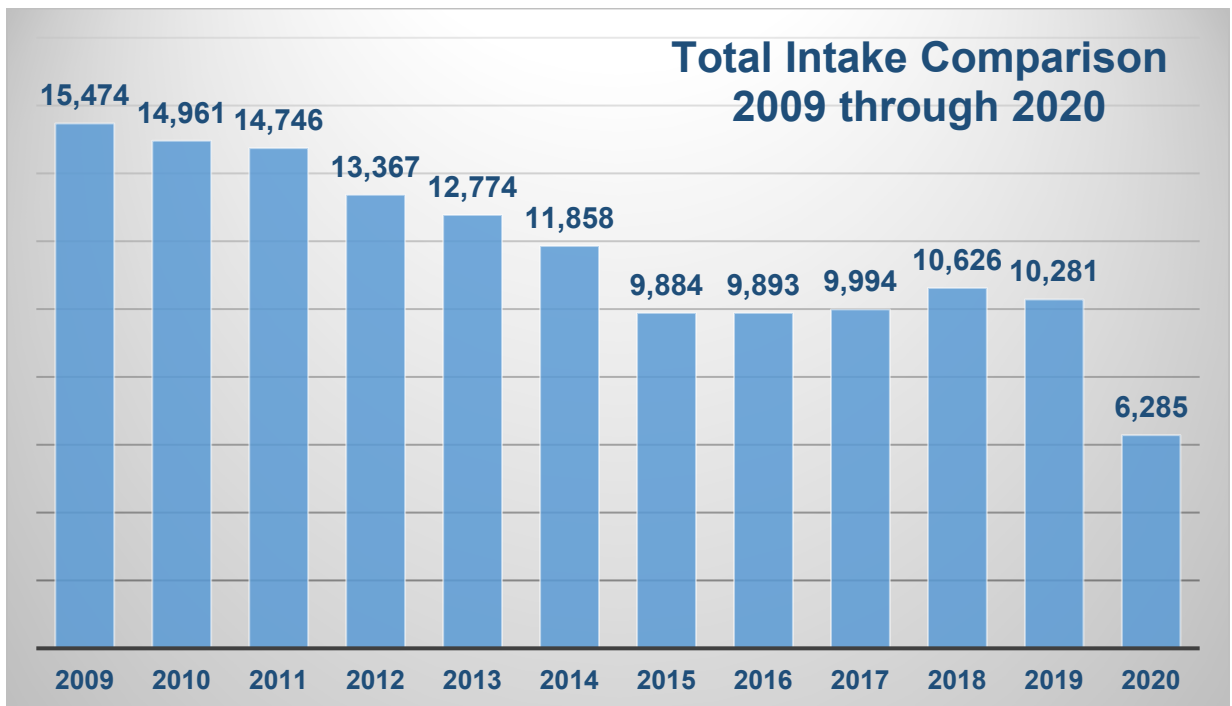


Animals brought in from the City of Las Cruces accounted for nearly 5% more than those brought in from the rest of the County for the year 2020.



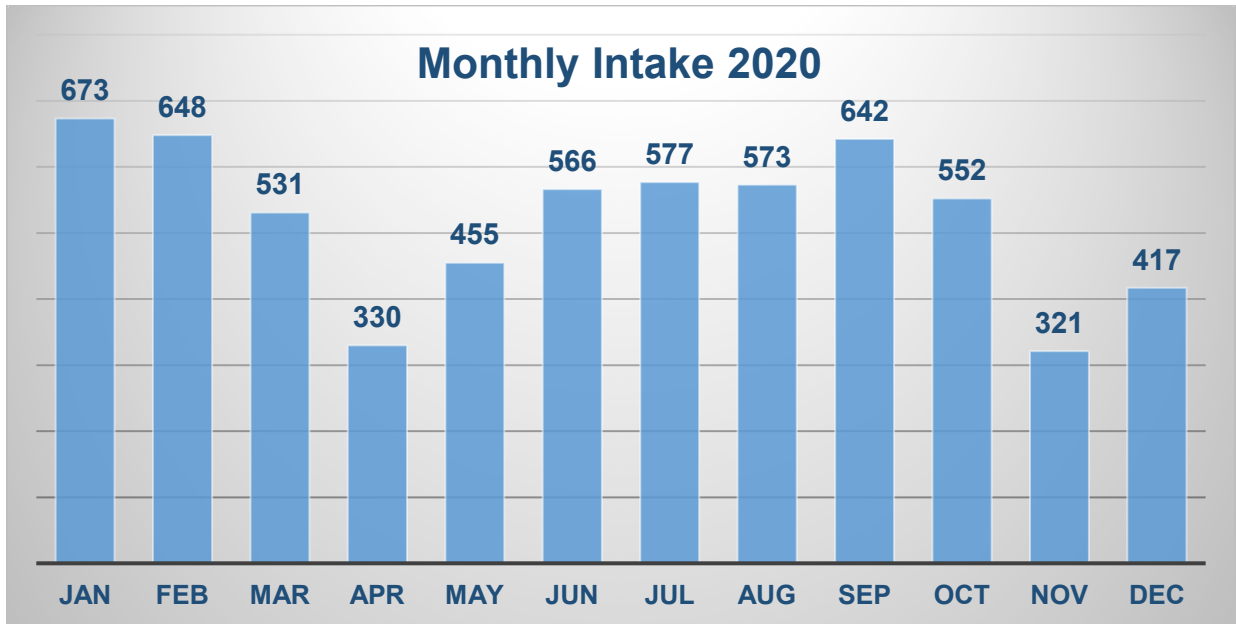


In 2020, a total of **6,285** animals entered the shelter. This was a significant drop from **10,281** animals in 2019. This was mostly due to the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Because of the public health orders which were issued starting in March of 2020, staffing was limited. Therefore, a collaborative effort was made between the shelter, Animal Control and the community in order to reduce the number of animals that were brought to the shelter.



• **Monthly Intake**

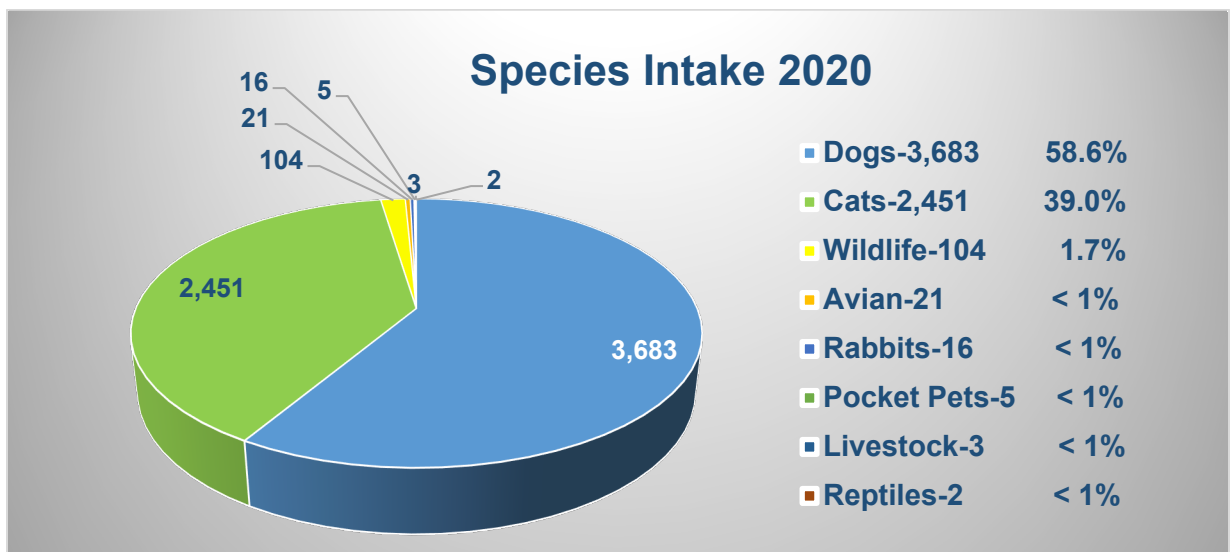
Even with the drop in intake numbers, a seasonal pattern was still seen in the monthly intake numbers as in previous years, with intake numbers increasing over the summer months.



An average of nearly 20 animals was received by the ASCMV **each day**.

• **Species Intake**

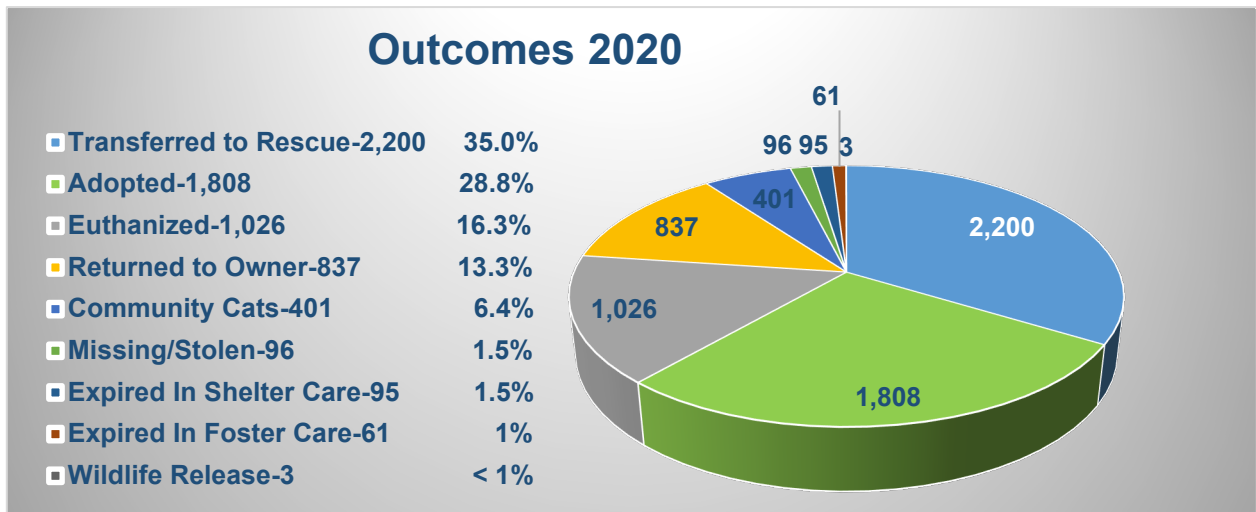
Dogs and **cats** are still the main source of intake for the ASCMV, with the overall intake ratios remaining nearly the same as in 2019.



2. Outcome Statistics – Adoptions, Euthanasias, Reclaims by Owners, Rescue Transfers, etc.

There are **4** basic potential **Dispositions** for each animal received by an animal shelter. The most preferable being: **Reclaimed** by the Original Owner (which would arguably include releasing wildlife to their original habitat). Second and third being: **Adopted** or **Transferred** to a reputable Rescue Organization. The last and least preferable: Death (which would include **Expiring** in the Shelter and **Euthanasia**).

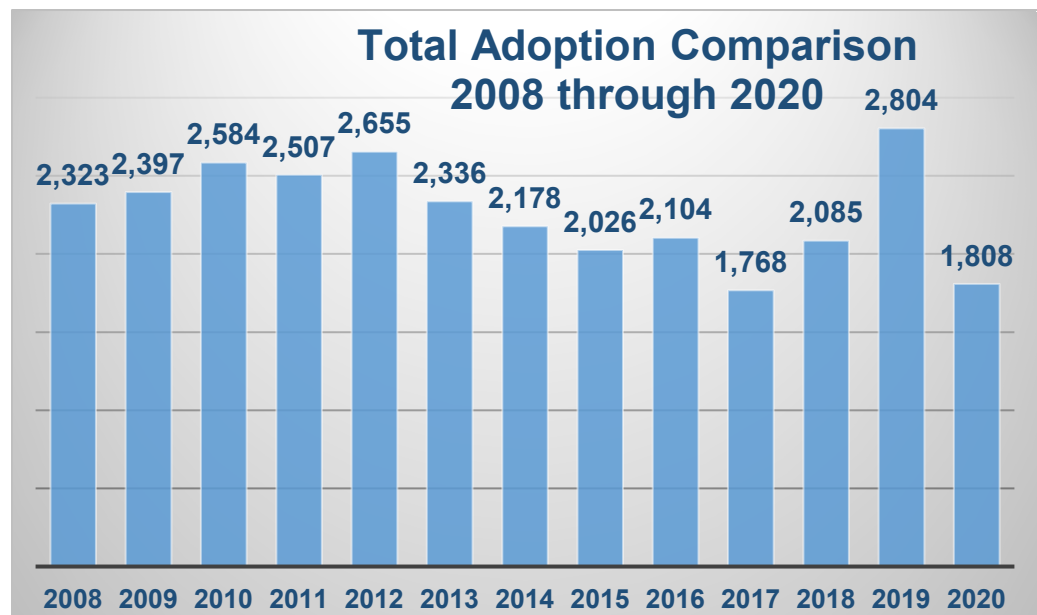
• Overall Outcomes

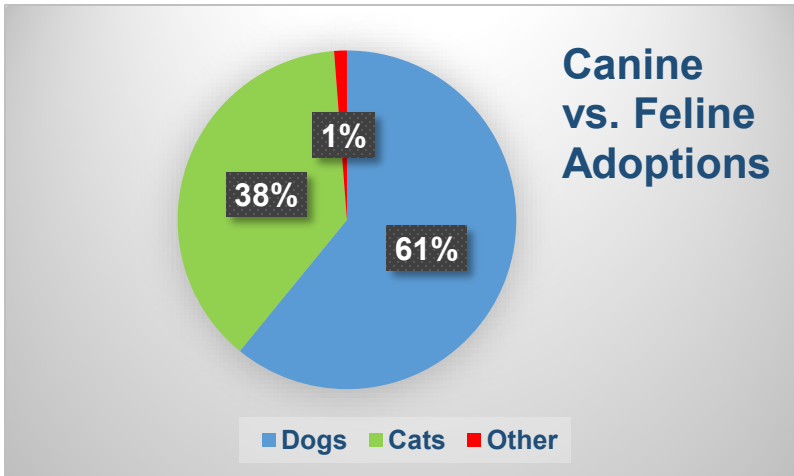


The euthanasia rate **decreased** in 2020 by nearly **2%**, from 18.2% in 2019 to 16.3% in 2020. This contributes to an **increase** in the **Live Release Rate**.

• Adoptions

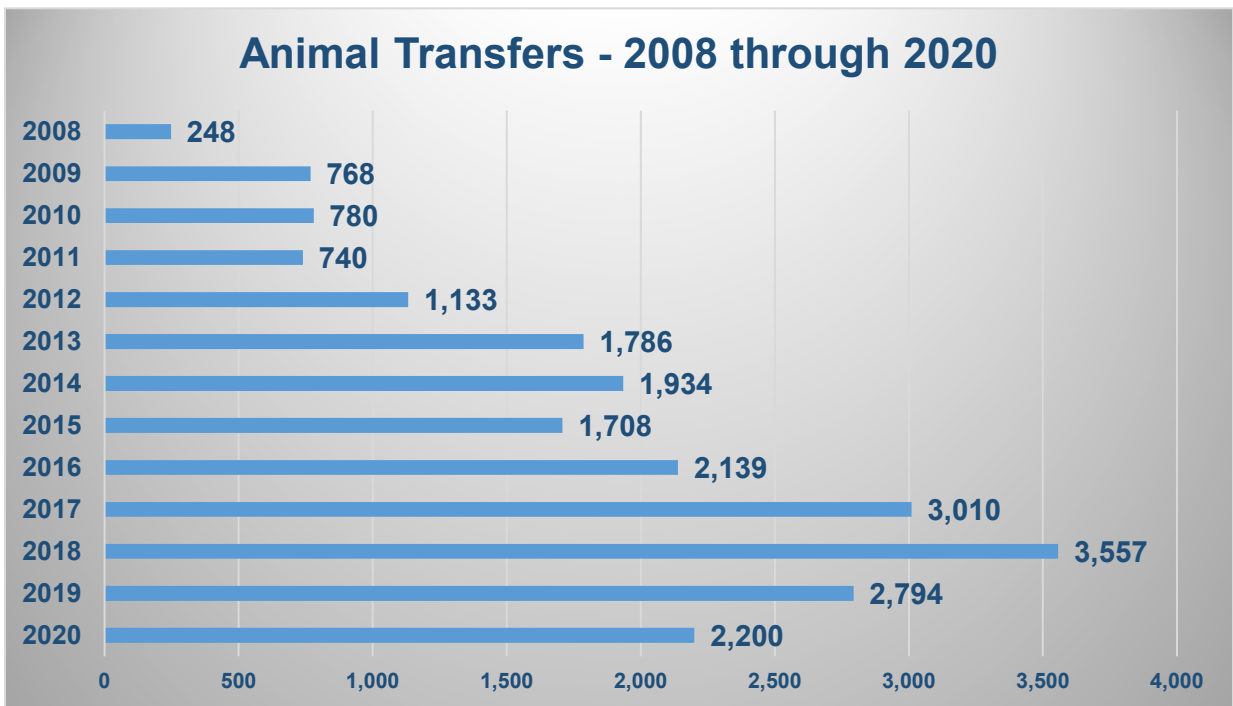
And although the actual number of adoptions decreased from last year, the percentage of adoptions **increased** by **1.5%**, from 27.3% in 2019 to 28.8% in 2020. This also contributed to an increase in the Live Release Rate.





As in previous years, the number of **dog** adoptions is more than **20% greater** than the number of **cat** adoptions.

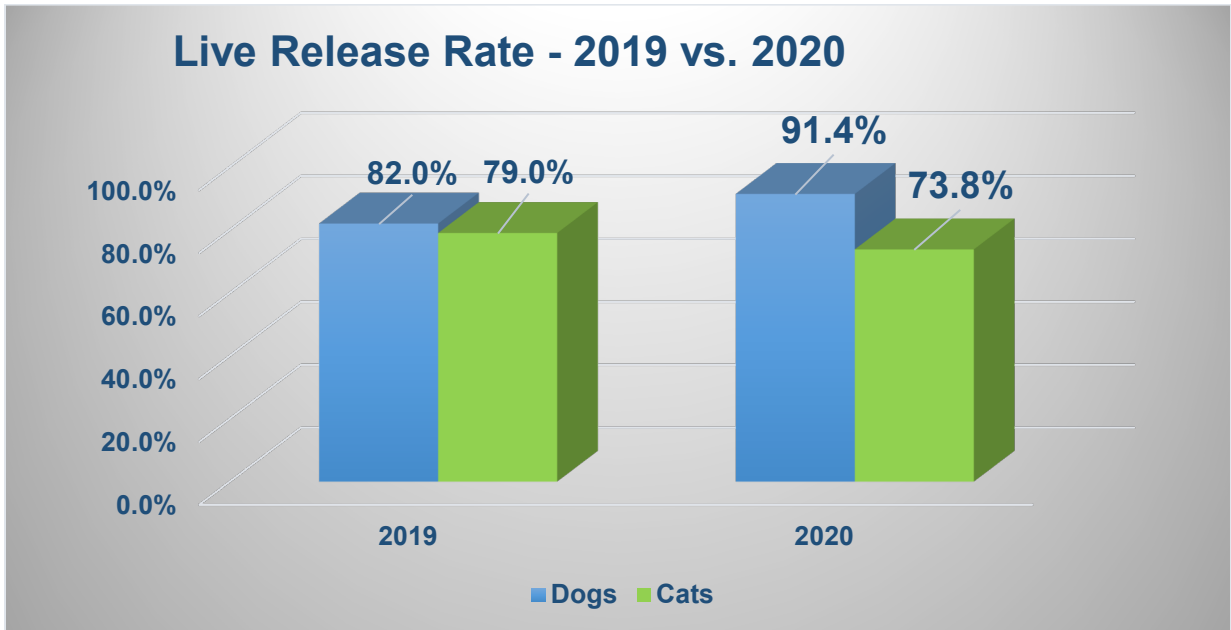
• Rescue Transfers



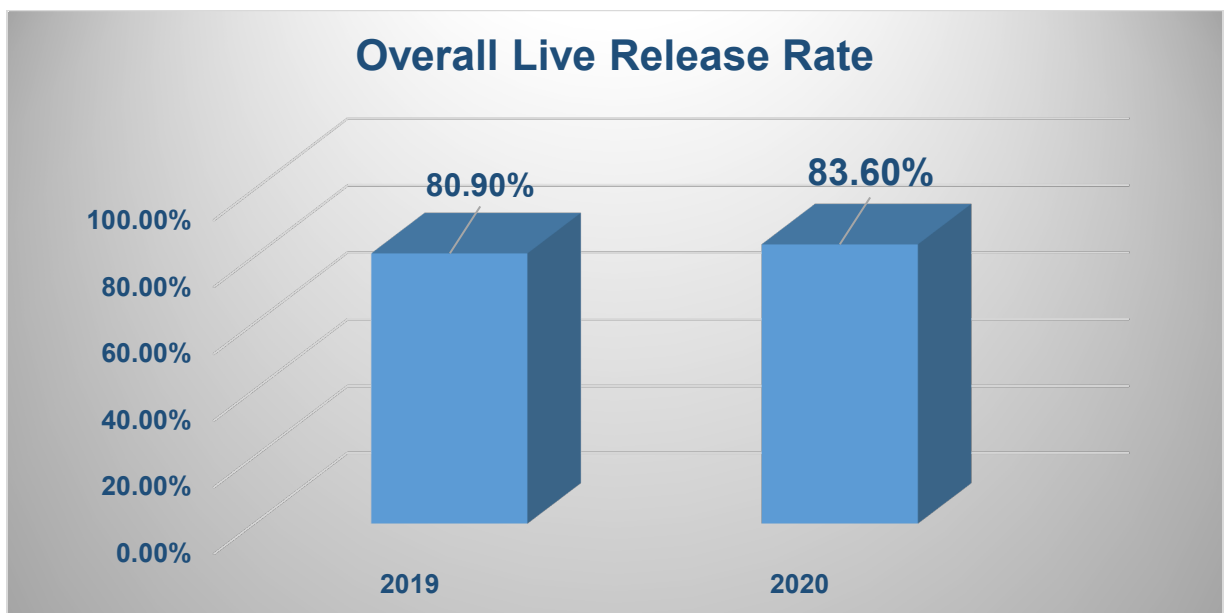
The ASCMV continues to work with **transfer partners** throughout the country. The number of animals transferred out to these other organizations unfortunately dropped, again mostly due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, the number of animals that were transferred out of the ASCMV actually surpassed the number of animals that were adopted.

- **Live Release Rate**

In February of **2014**, the ASCMV began reporting the **Live Release Rate (LRR)** along with the euthanasia numbers in order to give the community a more positive outlook on the lives of the animals coming in and out of the shelter. The Live Release Rate is the percentage of animals that leave the ASCMV through a **live** outcome.

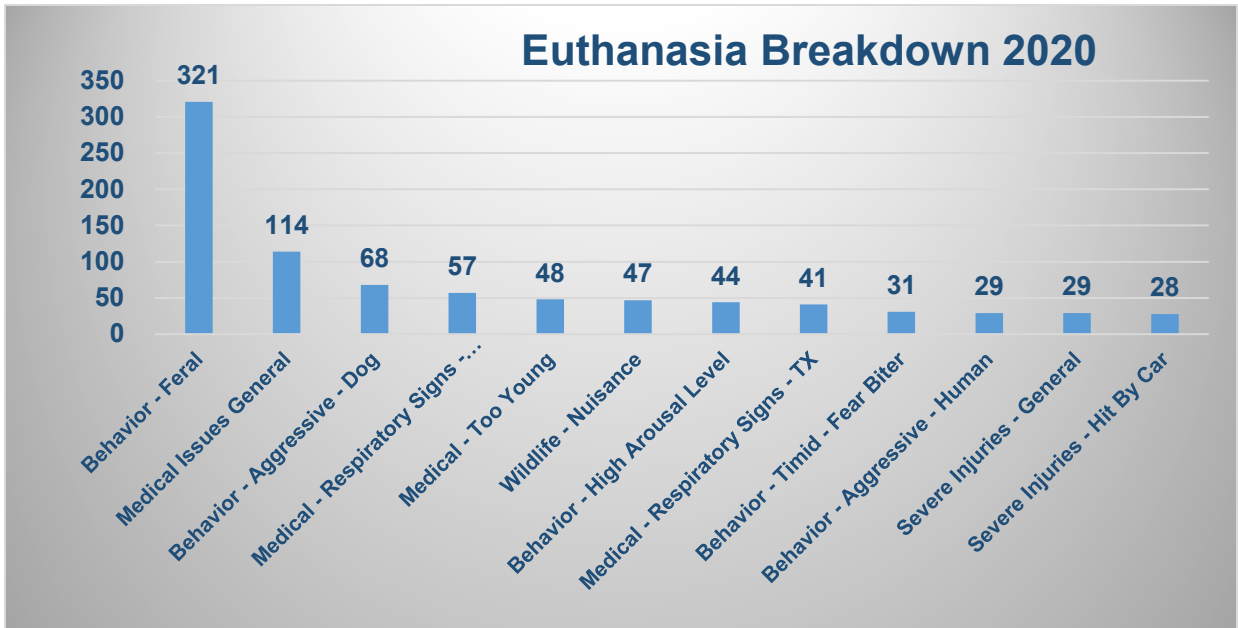


- Unfortunately the Live Release Rate decreased in 2020 for cats. However, the LRR for dogs increased. And the **overall** Live Release Rate **increased** by 2.7% from 2019. Continuing efforts are being made in our community for creating a TNR program for the Community Cats, which would also contribute to increasing the overall Live Release Rate.



• **Euthanasias**

The particular **reason** for each decision to **euthanize** an animal at the ASCMV is always determined and documented. Depending on the severity of an illness, injury, or temperament issue, the ASCMV will isolate and treat such animals, as long as there is space and staff available for such care and treatment. Animals that were euthanized due to an apparent **feral** temperament was the top reason for euthanasia in 2020, the majority being feral cats.



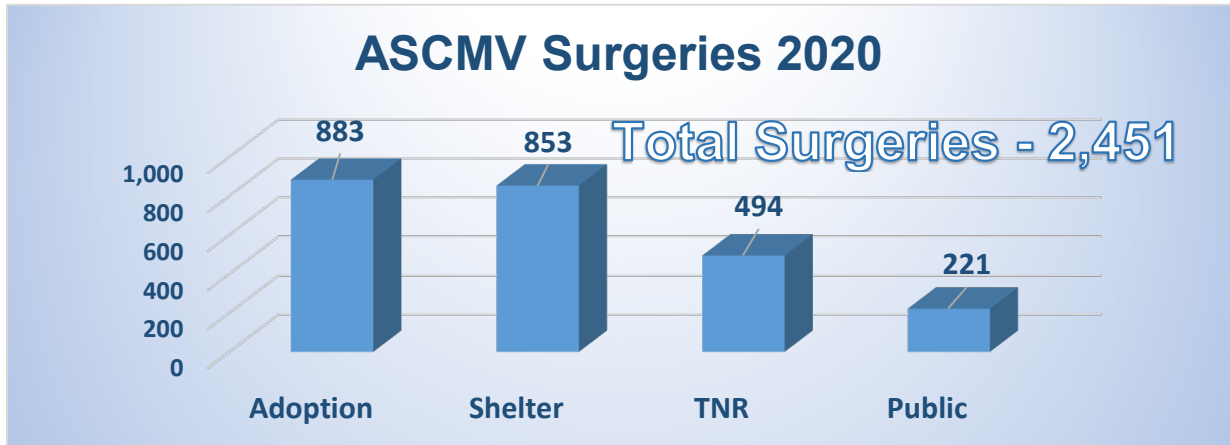
The total number of animals being euthanized at the ASCMV continues to **decrease**, which is one of our community’s main goals. **Less** animals were euthanized in 2020, over **800** animals, which was a **decrease** of nearly **2%** from 2019.



3. Public Services and Community Outreach

- **Affordable Pet Sterilization Surgeries**

The ASCMV’s Medical Team performed nearly **2,500** surgeries in 2020. Because of the limited number of visitors allowed in the facility due to COVID-19, the ASCMV focused on sterilizing the animals that entered into the **shelter**, and the animals that were in the **Foster to Adopt** program.



The ASCMV also continued to offer vaccinations, affordable pet identification microchips and licensing to animals that were brought in by rescue groups and the public for those animals which underwent sterilization at the ASCMV. About 880 animals were adoption sterilizations, and just over 200 sterilizations were performed for the public. The majority of the public sterilizations were for those animals that had been impounded at the ASCMV.

- **Public Attendance**

When the public health orders began in March of 2020 due to COVID-19, the ASCMV could no longer let visitors come into the facility as they desired. The ASCMV began to make **appointments** for visitors wanting to adopt or reclaim an animal. Therefore, the number of visitors coming in to the ASCMV dropped significantly in April. The ASCMV did allow visitors to come in without an appointment if the visit was deemed an emergency.



• **Community Outreach-Social Media**

ASCMV on Facebook:

Due to the constraints resulting from COVID-19, the ASCMV began to look more towards **social media** in order to promote the animals at the center.

The ASCMV continued to maintain a **Facebook** page, which promotes different events at the shelter including *Pet-of-the-Week*, Special Adoption Events, Rescue Transfers, Special Needs Animals, and Articles related to Pet Ownership Responsibilities. A special section called **Daily Stats** continues to give our community a better understanding of what happens at the shelter on a daily basis.

Volunteers also posted information on the ASCMV Facebook page about **lost and found** pets to help reunite animals with their owners. **Lost2Found Pets Las Cruces**, which is run by a shelter volunteer, posts all of the shelter intake photos on behalf of the ASCMV in order to assist with reuniting lost animals that enter the shelter. They also post lost and found reports that the ASCMV receives from concerned citizens in our community.

Two Facebook groups continued to be utilized. **ASCMV Volunteers/Fosters** is an open group that was formed in order to post volunteering and fostering opportunities at the shelter. **ASCMV Rescue Partners** is a closed group, used to post injured animals in need of immediate rescue.

The **Dog Cruces** Facebook page also continues to share information regarding lost and found pets in collaboration with the ASCMV and several organizations throughout our community.

The graph below shows the number of Facebook **page views** each month since the ASCMV began to publish these statistics at their regular monthly board meetings.



ASCMV Website:

The ASCMV website, ASCMV.org, went through some changes and upgrades in order to make it easier for the community to utilize the site.

All of the animals that are **impounded** at the ASCMV are **photographed** upon intake, and these pictures are posted on the **website** in order for anyone to look for a missing pet.

There is also a section available on the website for anyone to **report a found or lost** pet.

All animals that are **available** for **adoption** at the ASCMV are posted on the website. This allows anyone from the community to find an animal they would potentially like to adopt, and then contact the center for an appointment to visit with the animal and/or complete an adoption.

Resources are available regarding specific issues, including cat-related issues, caring for abandoned kittens, what to do if someone has found an animal and what to do if someone is considering surrendering an animal.

Conversations At the Center is a public forum that allows community members to speak openly with the ASCMV Director and staff, and local animal advocates regarding animal issues at the ASCMV and within our community. These monthly meetings are recorded and posted on the ASCMV website.



Pet-of-the-Week:

In order to promote **Pet Adoptions**, the ASCMV continues to send out **Pet-of-the-Week** information to all local media (newspapers, radio, and television), and posts a bio of the *Pet-of-the-Week* online at ASCMV.org and on the ASCMV **Facebook** page. The City and County Information Officers receive the *Pet-of-the-Week* bios and distribute the information through their respective channels as well. The **Pet-of-the-Week** format was updated to give a more **personal** touch to each animal that is highlighted.



Radio:

Local radio stations **KVLC 101Gold**, **KMVR Magic 105**, and **KXPZ 99.5 FM Zia Country** continued to host regularly scheduled spots for the ASCMV to discuss the ***Pet-of-the-Week*** and other happenings at the ASCMV. Several **public service announcements** have also been playing in order to promote **pet responsibility**.



Publications:

The **Bulletin** continues to publish a weekly promotion for the ***Pet of the Week***. We have also been fortunate to have the **Bulletin** publish wish lists on our behalf.



Several publications have assisted in providing coverage of ASCMV events whenever needed.

Television:

Television news crews responded to and covered ASCMV press releases for special events or special needs animals.



Special Programs and Events:

A special **drive-thru** vaccine clinic was held in September, offering low-cost **vaccinations** and **microchipping** for dogs. Nearly **300** man hours were put into making this event a success!

Drive-Thru Clinic Totals



- 579- Rabies Vaccines**
- 436- DHPP Vaccines**
- 240- Bordetella**
- 217- Microchips**
- 429- Vehicles**
- 688- Animals**

Wilson-Binkley Advertising and Marketing continued a powerful advertising campaign with the ASCMV, reaching out to the community through **radio and social media**. Promoting **education** and **pet owner responsibility** is always the main focus.

4. Volunteer Program

2020 was a difficult year for the volunteer program. When the public health orders began in March, and limits were placed on the number of people who could gather, the ASCMV unfortunately had to also put restrictions on the volunteers coming into the shelter. And when several employees contracted the virus, volunteers were not allowed to come into the shelter at all in order to protect their health and well-being. Once the quarantine periods were over, and staffing went back to a full schedule, volunteers were welcomed back to the shelter on a limited basis.

Volunteers resumed activities such as dog walking, cleaning the cat room, shelter animal photography, office assistance and assisting with animal transports.

One indispensable part of the Volunteer Program continued throughout the entire year. Under the ASCMV's **Foster Program**, many volunteers are able to remove an animal from the shelter environment and temporarily place him or her in their own home, while the animal recovers from an injury or illness. Often a foster is needed just until the animal can find his or her new forever home, and many of these Foster Parents are able to provide these animals with the additional time and care they need and deserve while also promoting these animals and actively seeking their new forever home. This not only helps those animals placed in Foster Homes but also allows ASCMV staff to focus on and care for other animals that remain in the center.

A volunteer program **assessment survey** was sent out to the ASCMV volunteers towards the end of the year which highlighted both some strong points and some areas needing improvement within the volunteer program. The ASCMV staff is looking forward to 2021 in order to implement some of the ideas and suggested changes together with our volunteers.

Volunteers at the ASCMV play an extremely valuable role in supporting staff and shelter operations. **We very much appreciate all of our volunteers** and their continued dedication and support of the ASCMV.



5. Financial Overview

Since the ASCMV is a JPA, most of the operating funds are from the city and the county. The ASCMV is fiscally responsible in their handling of all monies received. All expenses are carefully evaluated, and there are many: Personnel, utilities, food for the animals, vaccinations, medicines, etc. The budget for the ASCMV runs on a fiscal year, from July to June. The chart below shows the ASCMV budget for the FY19-20.

Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley Management’s Discussion and Analysis For the Year Ended June 30, 2020

Table 3 summarizes the variance between the budgeted and actual expenditures for the year ended June 30, 2020.

Table 3
Budgetary Comparison-Aggregate of All Funds
For the Year Ended June 30, 2020

	Budget		Actual	Variance	Percent Variance
	Original	Final			
Revenues					
Charges for services	\$ 297,992	\$ 272,992	\$ 163,974	\$ (109,018)	-40%
Operating grants	45,853	88,116	38,344	(49,772)	-56%
Operating contributions					
Doña Ana County	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	-	0%
City of Las Cruces	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	-	0%
Investment income (loss)	18,235	18,235	9,425	(8,810)	-48%
Other revenues	41,263	46,263	63,483	17,220	37%
Total revenues	2,903,343	2,925,606	2,775,226	(150,380)	-5%
Expenditures					
Animal services	2,856,273	2,982,773	2,662,405	(320,368)	-11%
Capital projects	65,000	81,654	48,170	(33,484)	-41%
Total expenditures	2,921,273	3,064,427	2,710,575	(353,852)	-12%
Revenues (under) over expenditures	(17,930)	(138,821)	64,651	203,472	-147%

In fiscal year 2020, the difference between the original revenue budget and the final budget resulted from an increase in local grants from Carroll Petrie Foundation COVID-19, Maddie’s Fund Pet Foster Care Stimulus, and Best Friends Animal Society’s Cat Life. The difference between the final revenue budget and the actual revenue results are related to Other Revenue/ Donations and Memorials from the Sheila Pickett Estate. The actual revenues were 5% below the final budget due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The increase from the original expenditure budget to the final expenditure budget is a result of several increases to the General Fund’s PERA employee contributions, professional and technical services, supplies, and remaining Capital Projects expenditures to complete the shelter’s building renovation. The difference between the final expenditure budget and the actual expenditures is an overall decrease in operations due the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in a global economic slowdown. The actual expenditures were approximately 12% under the final budget.

