

**Question on request for implementation of
“Trap-Neuter-Return” programme in Peng Chau
(Paper TAFEHCCC 37/2020)**

Written Reply of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)

Question 1 – Is TNR successful? A. Yes

From the SPCA’s perspective the trial has been a success. We had slightly different parameters we were looking at including the welfare and health of the resident dogs and the reproductive potential (numbers of puppies prevented and born) as well as any impact on the baseline population resident in and around the cemetery on Cheung Chau.

The SPCA advocates a modified approach were animals that are suitable for re-homing can be removed for re-homing – most of the time this will be young puppies that may be born.

The SPCA started to trap dogs at the end of March 2015 and reached an 80% neutering level within 8 months of starting. During the first 3 years 37 female dogs were neutered – preventing them from giving birth to puppies that would have maintained or increased the dog population at the cemetery. In addition over the first 3 years 49 dogs were removed for adoption (and 26 of those were females). This eventually resulted in an overall decrease in the baseline population at the trial site by 14 % (as per AFCD).

The wider benefit of this programme is that many puppies may suffer and die during their first year of life and much of this is prevented, also as dogs are born and there is more population pressure and competition for resources in the area where the primary dogs live the new dogs may be pushed out and increase populations at other locations. Without TNR local residents will come across more puppies and may want to take care of them and this can overload communities and animal rescue / re-homing groups. With TNR much of this is prevented or reduced.

To put the positive impact of TNR on decreasing the reproductive potential (birth control) in perspective 37 female mongrels neutered and the 26 female puppies removed for re-homing ie 63 female dogs could have given birth to around 315 puppies (based on an average litter size of 5) in just one 6 month reproductive cycle (dogs will often reproduce twice a year).

In 2018 the programme was extended for another 3 years. Up until June 2020 4 dogs (including 1 female were neutered and returned). 1 female has been unable to be caught despite numerous attempts. 21 puppies have been removed for re-homing (mostly the offspring of the one female that remains elusive). We continue to do monthly surveys and the carers monitor and feed on a daily basis.

It should be noted that alongside TNR there also has to be community work to educate owners and control and manage the owned dogs population otherwise they or their offspring will also contribute to the feral / free-roaming dog population.

Question 3.

SPCA supports the broader introduction of TNR methodology as part of the range of dog management tools and is happy to work with and support different parties to that end.

We are happy to support other parties who would like to become the key party (programme coordinator – PC) and also would consider being the PC for some new dog TNR programmes in certain areas if the conditions were correct and enough resources were available.

For the conditions to be suitable there would have to be:

A suitable population of dogs living in a suitable area.

Community support and understanding of the programme (ie that dogs will remain).

Reliable carers who can comply with the requirements and rules of the programme and monitor the dogs on a daily basis.

A less bureaucratic more streamlined approach.

We would also have to consider resource requirement moving forward re the different projects and their needs.

We are currently considering whether some additional sites may be suitable for adding as new programme areas (including on Peng Chau and other parts of Cheung Chau) although this is at a preliminary stage and assessment has / is being impacted by COVID.

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