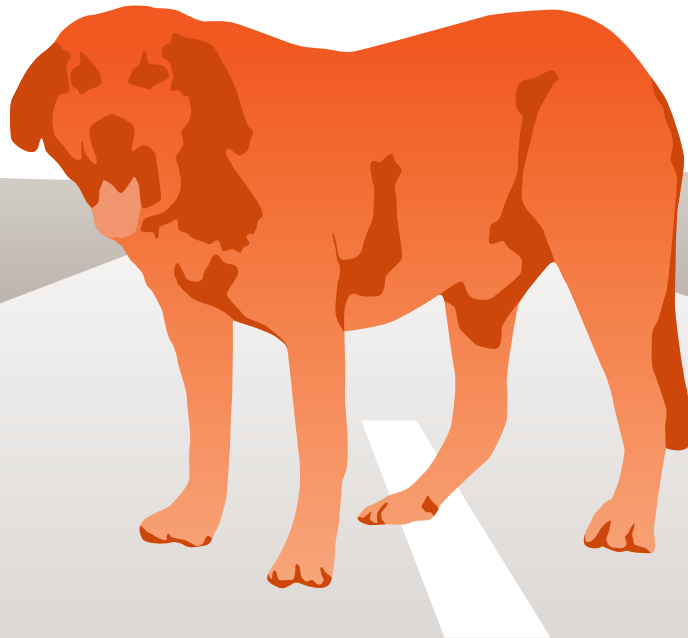




FOUNDATION
—1987—

Study They would never do it 2020

Abandoned, lost and adopted animals in Spain
during 2019



The Affinity Foundation and its commitment to the abandonment problem

For 25 years, the Affinity Foundation, in collaboration with animal protection organisations, has been carrying out the annual study “They would never do it”, to gain an understanding of **the abandonment, loss and adoption of dogs and cats in Spain**. It is **the only study that currently offers representative data on the situation in Spain**.

Our aim is to put the situation into figures and **to raise awareness of this serious problem, the main one affecting dogs and cats in Spain**.



Changing situation: the study is adapted

The methodology of any ongoing study must be reviewed periodically to adapt it to a changing reality. The growing suspicion that the figures for abandonment could be much higher than those estimated so far, has prompted us to **review the methodology** we used to carry out the study. The aim is to be able to better reflect the actual abandonment situation at the present time and to demonstrate statistically what many of us had already imagined: that **abandonment is a more serious problem than previously thought**.

What changes does the study include?



In this latest revision of the study, there are changes primarily in two aspects:

1. The census

Seeing that there was no official census of companion animal shelters in Spain and that there were indications that there were more organisations than we were aware of, we decided to undertake the study with **the creation of the Census of Companion Animal Shelters, the only one that exists to date, based on the Foundation's historical database and intensive research work.**

As a result of this work, we now know that **there are just over 1,500 companion animal shelter organisations in our country.** This census has been created thanks to the involvement of companion animal shelter organisations, local councils and collaborations such as the one we have with the adoption platform Miwuki.

Thanks to this, we have been able to improve the estimates and obtain more precise results in our study. We intend to continue updating this database on a regular basis.

Total number of foster homes 1,544
 Companion animal shelters **1,294**
 Local councils (municipal companion animal shelters) **250**



2. New method for estimating the results

Thanks to this census, we have obtained information on a significant proportion of the companion animal shelters existing in our country. With this information **we have classified the organisations according to their size**, i.e. according to their capacity to admit animals.

From the 387 companion animal shelters that responded to the questionnaire this year, we have obtained the number of admitted animals.

In 2020, as we have a census with more detailed information on the companion animal shelters, we have adopted **a new method of estimating results** that gives a much better picture of the actual situation of all the pet foster homes in Spain.

This new method takes into **account the capacity of the companion animal shelters to take in animals**, both those that have participated in the study and those that are part of the overall census. In other words, we assume that shelters with a similar capacity will also hold a similar number of animals.

Sample

A significant number of these companion animal shelters participate in the study. (387). Taking into account the total number of companion animal shelters (1,544) we can affirm that this is a reliable sample, as it means that we have collected information from 27% of the total number of companion animal shelters.



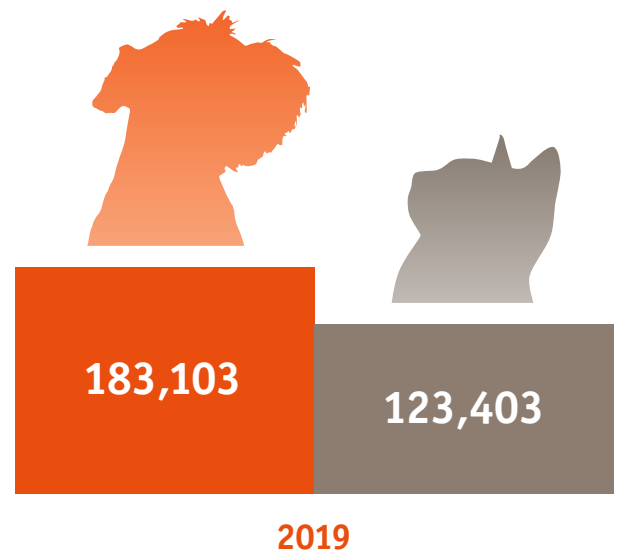
Abandonment in Spain

+300,000

How many animals are taken in by Spanish companion animal shelters?

The results of this new methodology indicate that **the problem of abandonment is much more serious than previously thought**. The figures show that the number of dogs and cats admitted to companion animal shelters is much higher than previously thought.

Specifically, we are talking about **306,000 pets taken in** by Spanish companion animal shelter organisations in 2019, with a margin in our estimate that could range from 287,000 to 320,000 animals. **Of these, 183,000 are dogs and 123,000 are cats.**



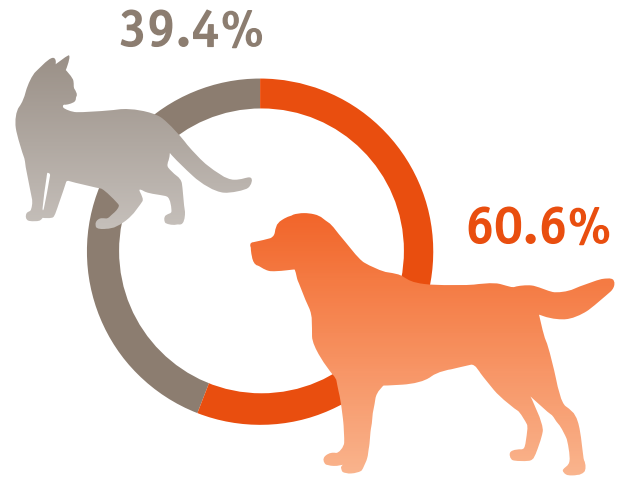
We have a more solid and robust study

While the pet population in our country has been increasing, the number of animals taken in has fallen slightly, remaining **at around 3% of the total number of dogs and cats estimated to live in Spain**. Even so, the number of animals arriving each year at the companion animal shelters is a cause for concern.

The results obtained with this new methodology give us **greater reliability**. We assessed different methods, including those used in other countries, until we found the one giving the most accurate results, so we can be sure that **we have a more solid and robust study**.

Do more dogs or cats arrive at the companion animal shelters?

Companion animal shelters continue to take in far more dogs than cats, although the numbers are gradually getting closer together. In 2007, cats accounted for 25% and, in 2019, they have increased to 40%.

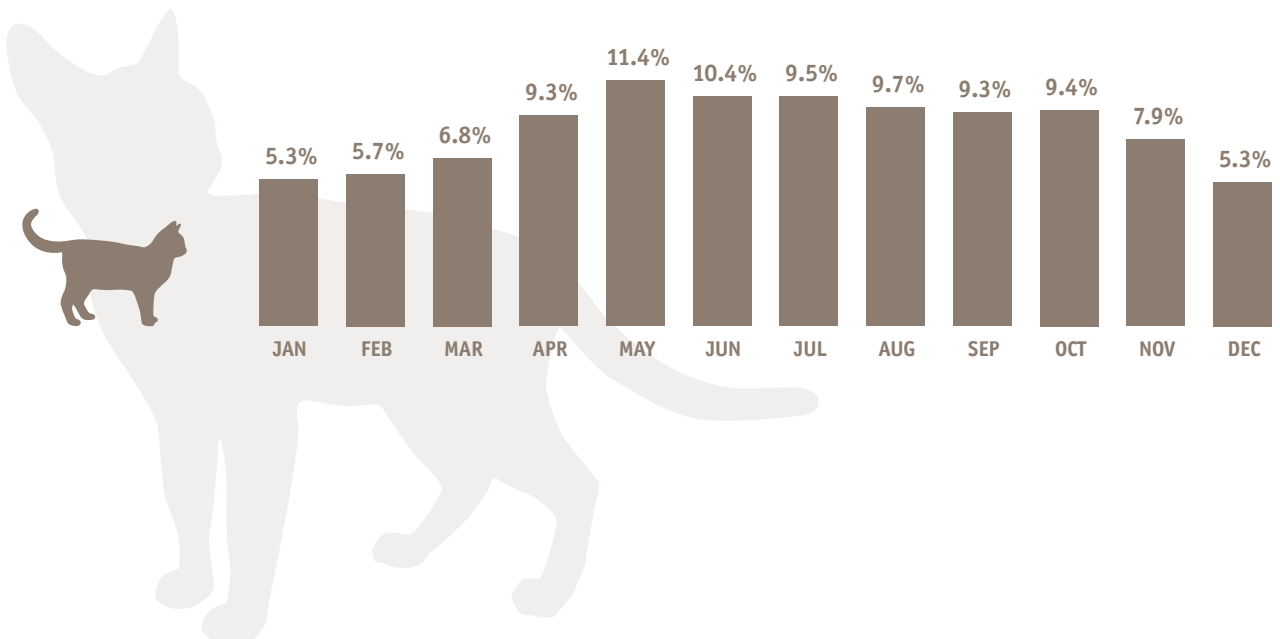
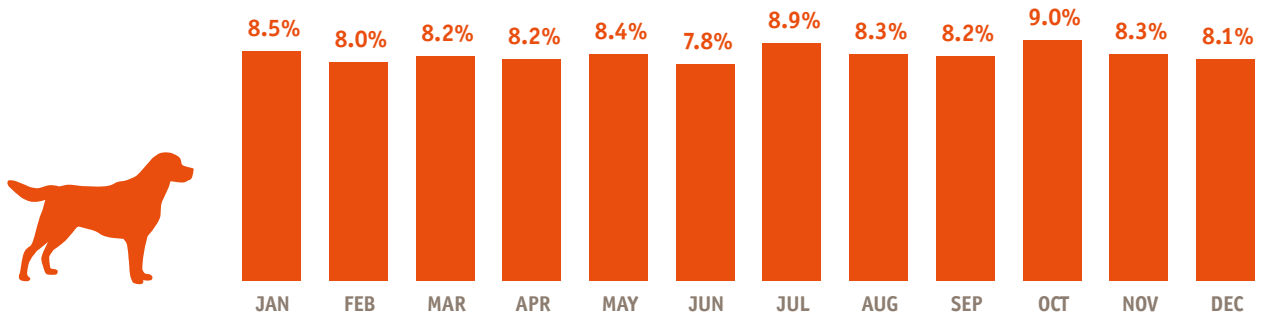


When are most animals taken in?

The number of dogs taken in is not seasonal, i.e. it remains stable throughout the year. However, this is not the case for cats. In the second four-month period, between April and October, the number of cats admitted to companion animal shelters increases due to their seasonal reproductive cycle.

In the second quarter of the year, the number of cats taken in by companion animal shelters has increased

Seasonal nature



What is the profile of the animals taken in?



Size

8 out of 10 dogs arriving at the companion animal shelters are medium-large sized.



Age

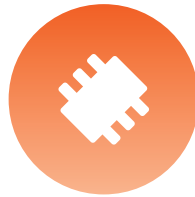
Six out of 10 dogs taken in are adults. On the other hand, in the case of cats, almost half of those arriving are kittens. These figures remain unchanged compared to the previous year.



Breed

Most of the dogs taken in by companion animal shelters are mixed-breed (60%), while the rest are purebred. Compared to the previous year, the number of mixed-breed dogs collected has decreased and the number of purebred dogs has increased.

In the case of cats, the difference is more significant. Almost all cats taken in (95%) are mixed-breed.

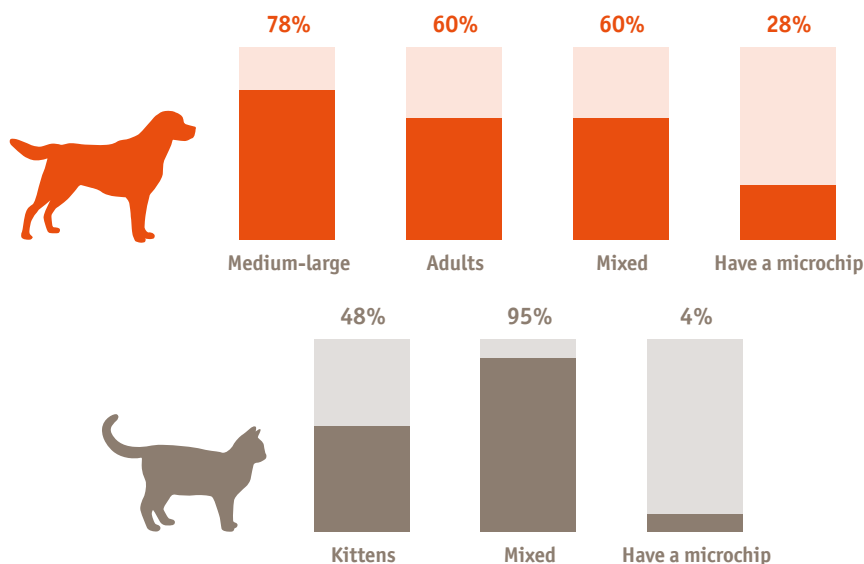


Microchip

Of the animals taken in by companion animal shelters, **the vast majority (77%) arrived without a microchip.** Of those with microchips, almost 70% were returned to their owners, a figure that has increased considerably compared to the previous year.

There has been hardly any increase in the use of microchipping compared to the previous year, despite the fact that it is compulsory and one of the main strategies to reduce abandonment. 28% of the dogs taken in had this identification device, compared to 4% of the cats.

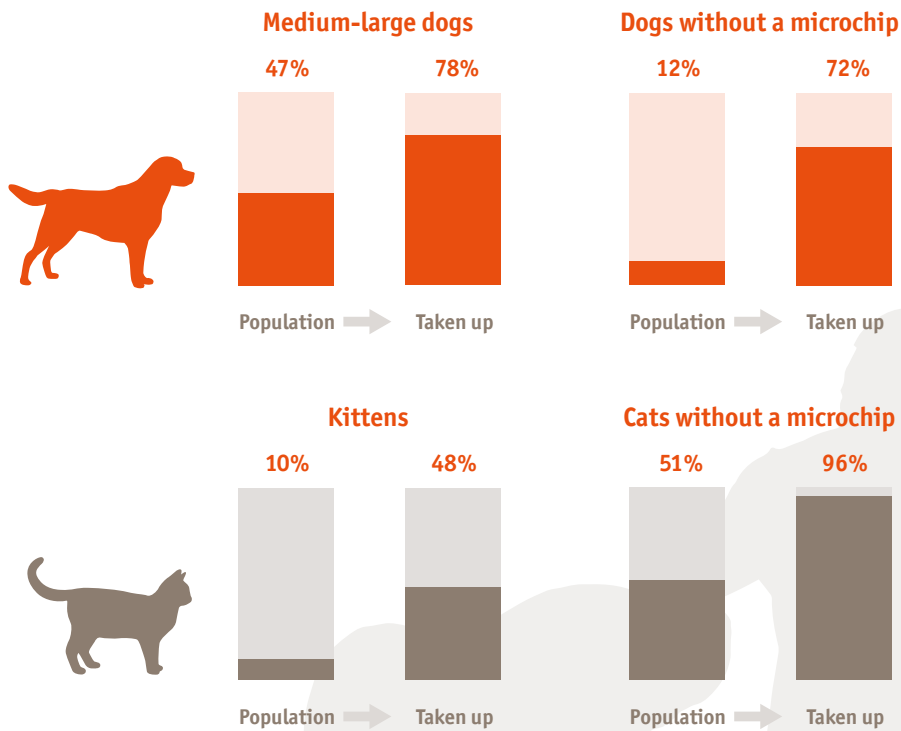
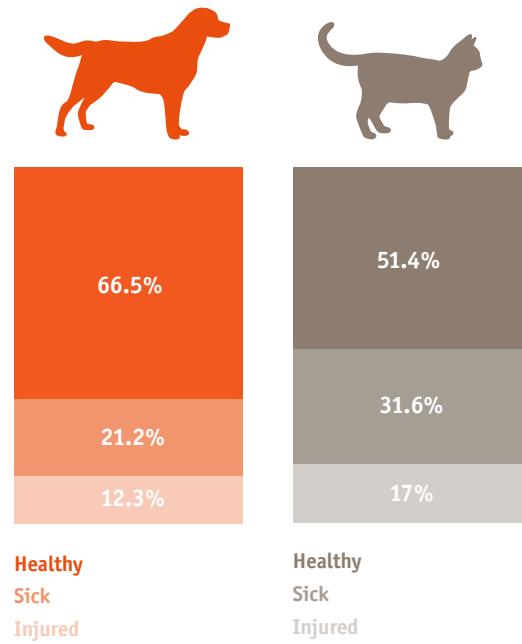
Animal profile



State of health

There are no major differences in the state of health of the animals arriving at the companion animal shelters compared to previous years. Of all the dogs taken in, the majority (66%) had no health problems, 21% were sick and 12% had some kind of injury. The pattern is similar for cats: 51% were healthy, 31% were sick, and 17% were injured.

If we compare this data with that of the overall population of dogs and cats in Spain, we can see that **there are animals that are more likely to arrive at a companion animal shelter: large-sized dogs, kittens, as well as unidentified and unsterilised dogs and cats.**



Fuente de datos poblacionales: U&A Ipsos

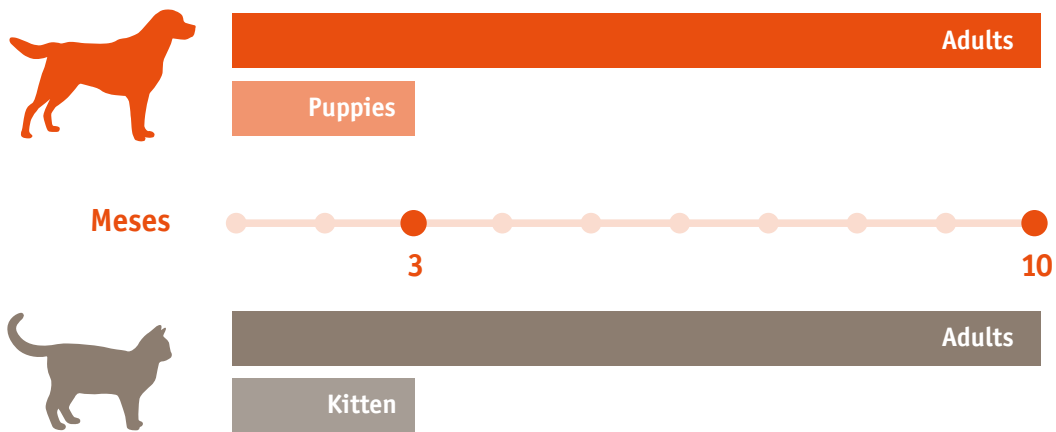
How long do animals spend in the companion animal shelter?

The average time spent by dogs and cats in companion animal shelters varies considerably in function of whether they are puppies or kittens or adults. Thus, the time a puppy or kitten spends in a shelter is still much shorter than that of older dogs and cats.

In the case of puppies, the average stay is around 3 months, while in the case of adults this figure rises to 10 months.



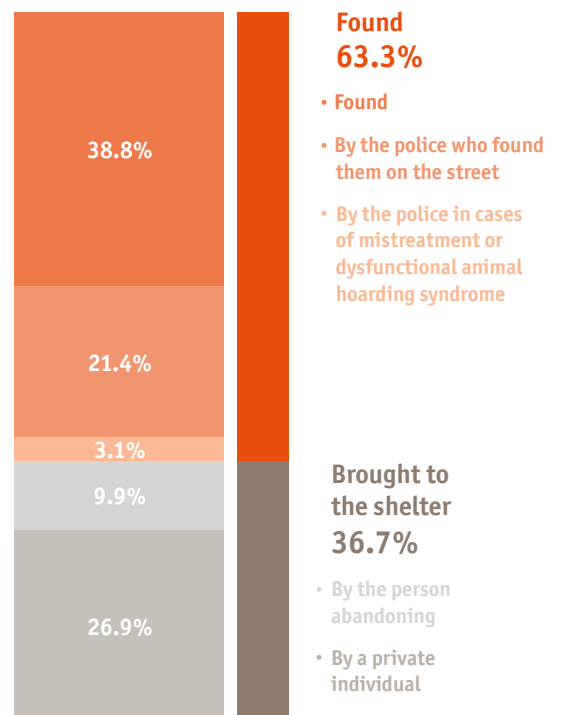
Time spent in companion animal shelters



How do they arrive at the companion animal shelters?

Most of the animals (63%) are found or picked up on the street, while just over a third of the total (36%) are brought to the companion animal shelter, either by the person who abandons them or by someone who finds them. These figures are similar to those of previous years.

Most of the animals are found or picked up on the street



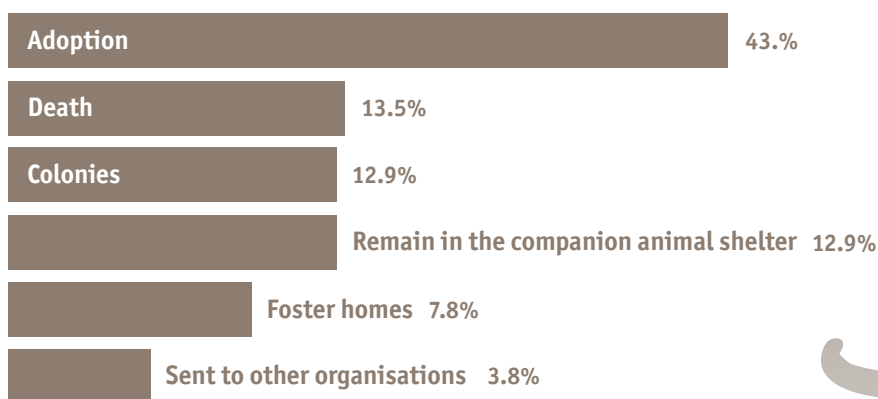
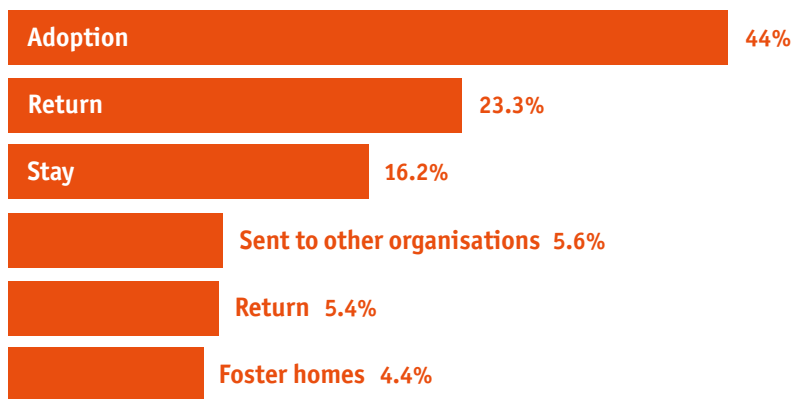
Once taken in, where do they go?

Dogs

Once in the companion animal shelter, the main destinations of dogs are adoption (44%), return to the family (23%), stay in the shelter itself (16%), transfer to other organisations (5.6%), death (5.4%) and foster homes (4.4%).

Cats

In the case of cats arriving at companion animal shelters, their main destinations were adoption (43%), death (13%), relocation to colonies (12%), stay in the shelter (12%) and foster homes (7.4%).

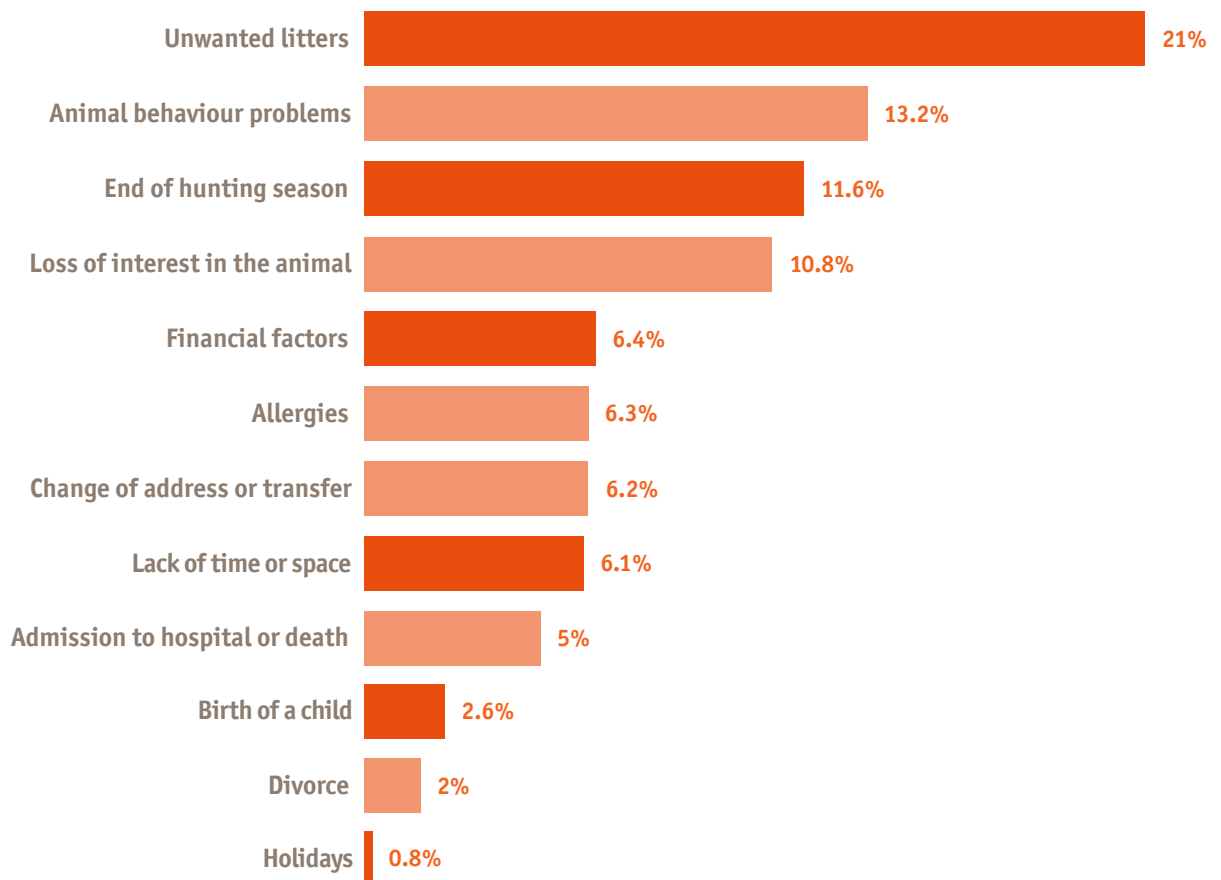


The reasons for abandonment

We cannot always know the reasons for abandonment, because in many cases the people who take the dogs and cats to the companion animal shelters are not the people who used to live with them. From the information available to us, we can see that the **reasons for abandonment are varied**. Particularly noteworthy are **unwanted litters, behavioural problems** of the dog or cat - a figure that has risen compared to last year -, the end of the hunting season and loss of interest in the animal.

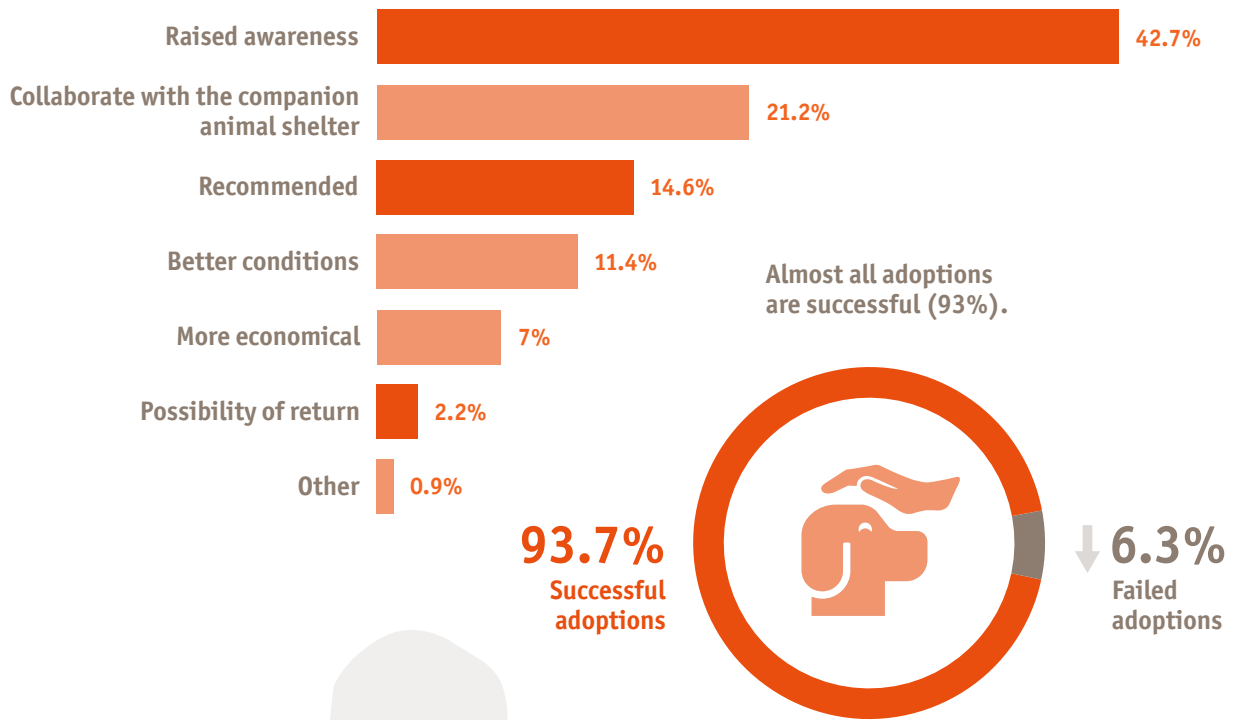
Other reasons are: **financial factors, allergies, change of address or transfer, lack of time or space, admission to hospital or death, birth of a child or divorce**, among others. Despite popular belief, **holidays are only a reason for abandonment in 0.8% of cases**.

The main reasons for abandonment include unwanted litters

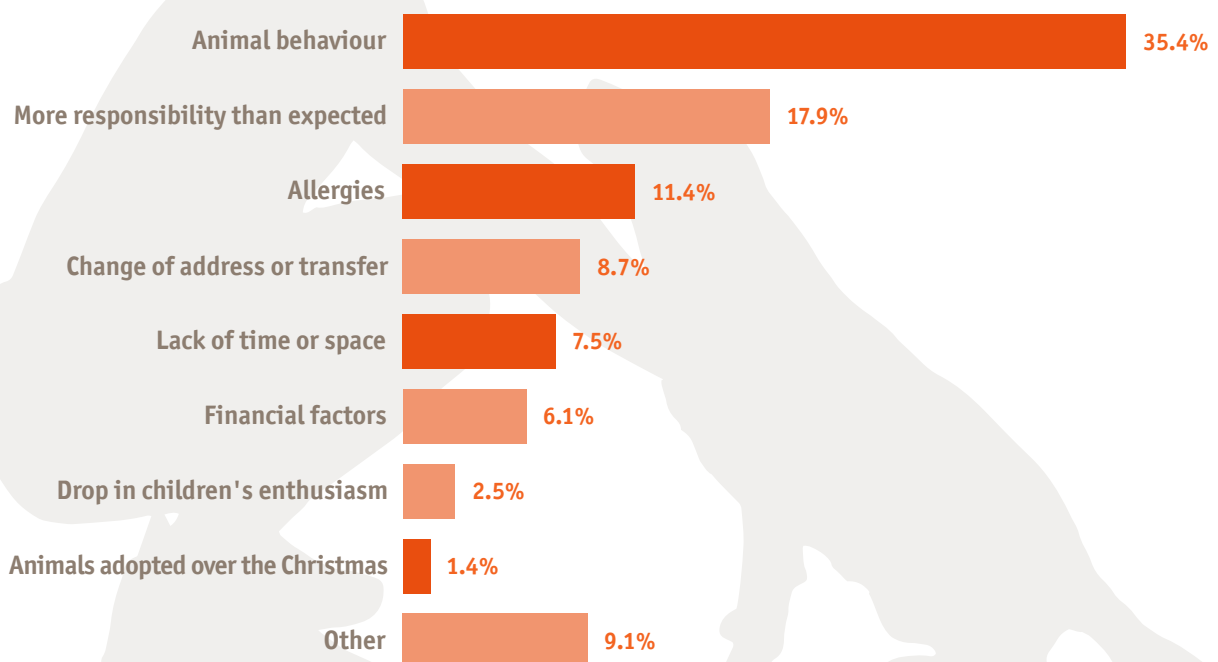


Adoption

Encouraging adoption is one of the best strategies to mitigate the problem of abandonment in the short and medium term. Most people who decide to adopt do so because they are aware of the problem of abandonment (42%), because they collaborate with a companion animal shelter (21%) or because of recommendations from friends or acquaintances (14%).



The main reasons for returning adopted animals are, in this order: the animal's behaviour, the fact that it represents a greater responsibility than expected and the appearance of allergies.



Conclusions and final reflections

This new methodology provides us with figures that show that the abandonment of dogs and cats is a much more serious problem than previously thought. These data should serve as a barometer of the problem, with the aim of encouraging reflection and action by society against abandonment.

With these results we want, first of all, to raise awareness about a very harsh situation for hundreds of thousands of animals in Spain. In addition to raising awareness, our aim is to continue improving the study with the help of companion animal shelters. Thanks to the collaboration of many more organisations, we will be able to continue learning about a problem - abandonment - that exists in every country in the world, even in the most advanced ones.

The work being carried out on different fronts over the last few years has managed to curb the problem, limiting it to a figure which, although worrying in absolute terms, is relatively stable. However, we have not managed to drastically reduce its incidence.

Improving this situation requires the efforts of companion animal shelters, organisations, public and private bodies, and society in general. Because abandonment is everyone's responsibility.

Our sincere thanks to all the Companion Animal Shelter organisations, who make this study possible and who devote their efforts to ensuring the welfare of the thousands of animals they take in every year. We would also like to thank the research teams of:

Abandonment is a complex problem and there is no single solution, but **there are measures that can help to mitigate it:**



Awareness

Raising people's awareness about our responsibilities towards our animals.



Identification

Identifying them correctly through a microchip would increase the recovery of lost animals.



Sterilization

Spaying or neutering to avoid unwanted litters.



Education

Raising them to know them better and to improve the bond and the quality of life together.



Adoption

Promoting adoption to give them a home.



Commitment

Reinforcing laws and education to achieve greater commitment and compliance with regulations.



Living together

Providing tools for families to face situations when living together becomes complicated.



Cátedra
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