

## NEWSLETTER

November 2008

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of underprivileged animals. We are concentrating on squatter camp animals and feral cats. Read more about both in our column "WHAT FOUR PAWS IS ABOUT"(page 5).

### SQUATTER CAMP PROJECTS:

**The main problem in these poor areas is that people simply do not have the means, transport or finances to provide their animals with basic health care and veterinary treatment. As a result, many animals suffer unnecessarily. We provide primary health care services, veterinary treatments and sterilisations free of charge.**

We still experience the devastating after effects of the Xenophobia attacks. So many dogs were abandoned in various squatter camps, when their owners fled for their lives. These dogs scavenge from the rubbish dumps in order to survive, but most of them are facing **starvation or deadly diseases**, like billary. **The mommy dog and puppies in the pictures below** were some of the lucky ones. We found them in time, but the mommy was already so scared and bewildered, that we had to trap her with our dog trap. **She and her puppies were covered in ticks, fleas and lice!**



The **puppies** are now at **Puppy Haven** where they have been dipped, de-wormed and vaccinated. If anyone can offer any of these puppies a good home, please contact **Sam on 083 534 5107**. The **mommy dog** is at **Canine Edu' Centre, Retha can be contacted on 073 252 8785**.

We very recently started working in a squatter camp close to Lanseria, called Malatjie. The biggest problem we come across when we visit a squatter camp for the first time, is the huge overpopulation. Our main function is therefore to sterilise as many dogs as possible in as short a time as possible.



**The first 5 dogs from Malatjie, on their way to be sterilised**

## FERAL CAT PROJECTS:

Feral cats are a direct result of humans, not sterilising their cats, starting many years ago. Cats and kittens ended up on the streets, multiplying even more. We trap, sterilise and release ferals and urge people to feed them. Ferals cannot be re-located due to their nature and adult ferals are almost impossible to tame.

We received a call from Melanie from Muldersdrift, who was feeding two ferals, probably siblings, on their work premises. She was concerned because there have been threats by the management to kill them. She said that one is pregnant and the other one looks injured. Fortunately we were able to trap both cats, but we were horrified by our vet's findings. **The cat in the picture below was in fact pregnant, but the other one had been shot!** Unfortunately our vet was unable to save the cat and she had to be put down.



The remaining cat was obviously not safe where she used to live, so we couldn't release her back after sterilisation. Fortunately, she was quite tame for a feral cat and **Sam from Kitty & Puppy Haven** agreed to take her in. If anyone can offer this special cat a loving home, please call **Sam on 083 534 5107**.

It is **"kitten season"** again, as this time of the year is breeding season for cats. We come across numerous litters of kittens. We tame and re-home as many of them as possible, but unfortunately the feral cat population is growing by the day, making it impossible for us to take all of them into our care.

While trapping ferals at the gym in Olivedale, we found two kittens, soaking wet and freezing cold, after a big storm the previous evening. **Many feral kittens drown in rainstorms.**



A concerned member of the public, Carrie, called us, after spotting a **deserted house in Newlands, with several cats** in the (what used to be!) garden. On arrival, we found one of the worst cases of animal abuse and neglect, we have ever come across. There were cats everywhere; difficult for us to estimate the number.

We also found 2 very tiny kittens, only a few days old. They are now in the care of our vet, dr Shelagh Hahn. There were **carcasses and skeletons of cats** lying all over in the garden. Empty bowls were lying around with only some rainwater inside.

According to the neighbours, who hate the cats because they are killing their baby rabbits (yes, these people are breeding with rabbits!), a very old lady used to live in the house, but when she fell ill, her son removed her and left all the cats behind. This was approximately 6 months ago!

The cats are all in a poor condition and some of them have become wild from being left to fend for themselves for so long. The house was locked and we suspected that there were more kittens inside the house.

The next day, the Newlands police broke the lock on the kitchen door, allowing us access to the house. Four more kittens were found inside the house as well as more body parts and skins of cats. This suggests that, cats either died of hunger and were eaten by the others, or cats have been slaughtered, or both! There was also the biggest mess inside the house we had ever seen. Rubbish and cat faeces were covering the floors throughout the house.



**Body parts and skins of cats**



**Rubbish and faeces covering all the floors**



**Some of the cats we have rescued, in our care**



We are still continuing our rescue operation, however many factors are complicating the situation and therefore hampering our rescue attempts. The old lady's son, Mr Vermeulen, changed the locks on the door and gate and started threatening us. We asked the Newlands police to arrange a meeting at the house with Mr Vermeulen, to shed some light on all the unanswered questions and allow us to continue our rescue operation. He denies having anything to do with the cats dying at the house and also claims that they are all stray cats and do not belong to his mother. The police told us that they cannot investigate the case any further.

With all the commotion going on, the cats disappear during the day and only return at night. We are now leaving traps overnight, something we NEVER do, but this is our only hope to get the rest of the cats out. We have trapped another 4 cats this way, which brings the total to 17. We thank our vet, dr Shelagh Hahn for taking the kittens into her care and for sterilising the adults. We also thank Amanda from Friends of The Cat, for taking some of the cats into their care.

## A special thank you to our donors:

**Annatjie Prinsloo, Tersia Brits, Lourene Horn, Annamarie Fockema, Nicole Hattingh, Michael Rosenmann, Anine Louw, Laura Grove, Glynnis Jackson, Andrea Decker, Marius v d Walt, Sheena Volmer, Naomi du Toit, Jenny Blight, Mrs R F Blight, Jolene Rich, Sanet van Mazijk, Denise Wait, Lynda Denny, Lu Dowell, Jacqui Moskovitz, Colin Levin, Rose Tanziani, Steve Clare & Angie Carter, Debbie Tiley, Alec Gullan, Simon Reif, Beverley Thole, Natalie Bell, Catherine Russell, Pam Duffield, Sarah Karas, FP Benade, Giles Chippendall, Gillian Bourne, Tessa (Vet to Pet - Paulshof), Karen (Vet to Pet - Lonehill), Lesley Soskin, Petro (Animal Lover Group-Meyersdal), Wiida Malan, Noeline v d Berg, Renee Harrison, Jenny Selby -1000km Challenge, Ernestine Strini, Chris Herbst, U-care, Sacha Fraser, Nikki Raubenheimer, Linda Brink, Lynn Grace, Susan & Philip Kleijnhans, Mark & Millie, Fenya Popof, Liz Hillman, Jeanette Esterhuizen, Anthony Grohovaz, Sue Wells, Anso Goncalves, Melissa & Alan Riback-Blanketdrive, Annette Werth, GWIS Irrigation, Bridget Kelly, Proworx Technologies, Cristina Botef, Angelique de Bruyn, Tessa Papadopoulos, Natalie Botha, Surei de Wet, Amy Groves, Gregor Holzer, Xenia Kyriacou, Jan Coetzee, Angela Kenney, Willem Engelbrecht, Caryn Vos, Marlisa Plint, Taryn Schoeman, Jodi White, Bridget Kelly, Wendy Flint, Belinda SBU, Danielle Douglas, Thursia Hardenberg, Krysia Back, Charnelle Opperman, Helen Wells, Nicole Anderson, Janet Ellis, Lyndel & Shey Claassen, E Krige, Monique Friedland, L Walters, Louise Burger, Heather Saunders, L A Sloan, Samantha Huxham, Brian Penrose, Darnell Human, T Scanlen, Welma Joubert, Olwin Kleve, B A Jones, Mel Beck, Rhona Jones, Kugandrie Moodley, Bernice Hammond, Luiza v Vuuren, Traci Hampel, Will Culhane, J Cabrie, Tessa Verwey**

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Thank you to our two veterinarians, **dr Shelagh Hahn (Blue Bush Animal Clinic)** and **dr A S Leonard (Northriding Animal Clinic)**, for doing sterilisations and treatments at reduced costs.

### **Banking details**

FOUR PAWS

Nedbank, Fourways

Branch code: 168405, Acc no: 1684110750

**WHAT FOUR PAWS IS ABOUT:**

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of underprivileged animals. In our urban surroundings there are two main categories: squatter camp animals and feral cats.

**Squatter camp projects:****The problems with our underprivileged dogs and cats are:**

- Malnutrition, insufficient shelter & a lack of food and water.
- Animals become sick and injured and there is no medical care available.
- Animals are knocked over by cars on the roads, because there are no fences.
- Dogs are put on chains mainly due to a lack of education and also because there are no fences.
- Animals are multiplying uncontrollably because there are no sterilisation programmes.
- Communicable diseases like distemper, parvo, snuffles, etc. are spreading, because animals are not vaccinated.
- Unwanted animals, especially litters of puppies and kittens, due to overpopulation.

**What we do:**

- Dipping and de-worming to prevent internal and external parasites.
- Intensive sterilisation campaigns to prevent overpopulation and straying of animals over the roads in mating seasons.
- Removal of unwanted animals and re-homing to suitable homes.
- Vaccination to prevent deadly diseases.
- Veterinary treatment for injuries and diseases.
- Education about proper pet care.
- Humane euthanasia of terminally ill animals.
- Instilling awareness and respect for animals and the environment.
- Confiscation of animals where intentional cruelty occurs.

**Feral Projects :**

Feral cats are a direct result of humans' irresponsibility not to have their cats sterilised, starting many years ago. This has resulted in a huge overpopulation of cats and kittens living on the streets, multiplying even more.

**The facts and problems with our underprivileged cats are:**

- People want to "get rid" of ferals, when in fact it is impossible to get rid of them. There are many thousands of ferals living all over in our surroundings.
- Where ferals are removed, a void is created and ferals from other areas soon fill that void.
- A sterilised feral colony will not allow other ferals to move in
- Ferals keep the rat population under control, as rats are attracted to the same areas as ferals, normally where food is thrown away.
- Feeding ferals will ensure good health and minimize the spreading of diseases.
- Feeding ferals will not stop them from hunting rats, as hunting is a basic instinct.
- Ferals who are forced to live on rats, mice and left over food only, suffer from malnutrition and diseases.
- Ferals are being shot, poisoned and trapped & drowned all over by people.
- Ferals pose NO threat to humans
- Ferals cannot be re-located due to their nature, removing ferals therefore means killing them.

**What we do:**

- Trap, sterilise and release ferals.
- Educate people about ferals.
- Encourage people to take responsibility for ferals in their area and feed them.
- Trap as many feral kittens as we can, tame and re-home them, instead of letting them grow up on the streets. It is however, a very difficult and time-consuming process to tame feral cats.