



JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR

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Animal lovers call for help

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RUANGAN

News

MUKA SURAT

2-3

PENANG

Animal lovers call for help

Stray cats, dogs have fighting chance to survive if the public are aware and provide necessary aid

Stories by **BERNARD SEE**
north@thestar.com.my

SALLY Loo is moved to tears whenever she thinks of stray cats suffering in the streets.

And the 70-year-old is not one to sit around doing nothing. She takes action by giving a home to the felines that are sick or on the verge of death.

"I cannot bear to just walk by and do nothing. I have taken in countless such cats over the past 10 years, and managed to nurse them back to health. Presently I have 30 staying with me in my rented flat.

"They are my joy and they keep me company as I'm a divorcee living alone," said the Jelutong, Penang, resident.

But caring for the cats is a costly endeavour, when you factor in food and medical needs. And Loo struggles especially when some need to undergo surgery.

"Most of the local veterinarians tend to waive their consultation fees when I come in with sick cats, but I still have to pay for the medicine," she said in an interview with *StarMetro*.

As an independent rescuer not



Loo cradling a stray she rescued. The cat was left paralysed after being hit by a car. — Photos: KT GOH & AHMAD ZHAFFARAN NASIB

attached to any organisation, the former waitress raises her own funds by selling used items like clothes, electrical goods and shoes at the Lorong Kulit flea market in George Town

on weekends.

She is able to get by more or less, but there are times that she falls short on funds and needs to ask for help.

"Cat food costs at least RM1,200. Coupled with my RM850 flat rental and other expenditures, my total operating cost is about RM3,000 a month.

"I don't really like to solicit for donations unless I have substantial surgery costs, as I prefer to get my funds by selling used items at the flea market," she said.

Most of her customers are foreign workers and her best sellers are usually T-shirts, she said.

As for cats available for adoption, there is a white kitten with heterochromia (different coloured eyes — blue and yellow), that is looking for a loving permanent home.

But what she really needs is a bigger place for her cats to play and roam.

She fervently hopes that someone would offer such a place for free or at nominal rental.

Loo said that anyone interested in adopting a cat or donating used items in good condition

For dogs not lucky enough to find a permanent home, we will shelter, love and feed them."

Ooi Yu Li

could contact her at 016-420 0963.

Another animal lover, David Yim, plans to organise a trip to Pulau Gazumbo, a small uninhabited island between Penang island and the mainland, to rescue seven stranded dogs.

"I am currently raising money to hire a boat and take a group to Gazumbo to bring the dogs back to the island.

"The dogs are being fed by two fishermen with food provided by well-wishers, but the island is not a good place for them as there is no proper shelter," he said.



Dogs being taken to their new home in Balik Pulau by volunteers. — Courtesy pix

Welfare group urges farmers, estate owners



Choong says there is lack of awareness among the public on importance of neutering dogs.

BALIK Pulau farmers and estate owners needing dogs to guard their property should adopt instead of breeding their own.

International Aid for the Protection and Welfare of Animals (IAPWA) Penang president Choong Koon Yean said the organisation has many healthy dogs for adoption that have been neutered.

"I find that in general, there is still a lack of awareness among the public on the importance of neutering dogs, which is to prevent unwanted puppies from becoming strays," she said.

Choong, who spoke at the launch of the Penang Island City Council's (MBPP) Trap-Neuter-

Release or Rehome programme called "TNR For A Sustainable Balik Pulau", said the dog abandonment and stray problem would only get worse if the situation was not controlled.

"This programme will allow us to provide the neutering service to the farmers in Balik Pulau for free. This is a way for us to encourage them to stop breeding and abandoning dogs.

"Our aim is to neuter at least 200 dogs in Balik Pulau this year through this programme.

"We will collect the dogs, bring them to the veterinarian and neuter them before returning them," she said, thanking

Sdn Bhd for its sponsorship of the programme.

"Only healthy, injury-free and fit-for-neutering canines above four months old will be accepted for this programme," she said and lauded MBPP for its proactive and effective approach to managing stray dogs in the state.

Also present at the launch in City Hall was MBPP's stray and abandoned dog sub-committee chairman Connie Tan who revealed that since the start of the TNR programme in March 2018, more than 4,800 dogs had been neutered as of March 31 this year.



Independent rescuers feeding dogs on Pulau Gazumbo during their rescue trip in 2021. — Courtesy pix

Pulau Gazumbo is not under anyone's jurisdiction. It is believed to be an island created in the early 1980s during the construction of the first Penang Bridge, either by the changing of currents or by excess building materials.

In 2021, a Selangor-based group of animal lovers mounted a rescue at the island and brought back two adult dogs and six puppies, which were handed to IAPWA Penang to be rehomed.

Yim said the group was supposed to go back for the remaining dogs, but the rescue mission was cancelled indefinitely when one of the group members died.

Determined to rescue the remaining dogs, he plans to make a trip to the island but requires funds.

"I suspect the dogs could have been abandoned after the fish farmers stopped operating their aquaculture projects," he added.

Yim is appealing to those interested in helping in the mission to contact him at 012-480 2725.

In Balik Pulau, Penang Stray Rescue Society (PGSR) has successfully relocated its 150 dogs after being asked to vacate its premises in Teluk Bahang late



Yim plans to rescue the remaining dogs stranded on Pulau Gazumbo.

last year.

Society founder Ooi Yu Li, 41, said they moved to their new 0.6ha premises on April 15 after raising RM80,000 to build new kennels.

"We are a 'no kill' shelter registered with the state, and we operate entirely on public donations.

"Up to RM15,000 is needed to feed our dogs and to pay the salaries of three permanent staff.

"For dogs not lucky enough to find a permanent home, we will shelter, love and feed them.



Dogs being fed at their new home in Balik Pulau by a PGSR worker.

"We have numerous old and middle-aged dogs that will live out their lives here," he said, adding that PGSR would accept new arrivals if more space was created through adoption.

To adopt, send the society a private message via its social media page or email (pgstrayrescue@gmail.com) to make the

necessary arrangements.

PGSR, a registered non-profit animal shelter, aims to rescue and rehome injured and abandoned dogs and cats.

It was founded in 2015 by Ooi and animal rescuers Lim Sel Lin and Tay Ching Szu.

For details, visit www.facebook.com/penangstrayrescue

to adopt stray, neutered dogs

10,000 stray dogs on Penang island, and the MBPP has achieved almost 50% neutering rate with the help of IAPWA.

"We also no longer have a kill policy on strays since adopting the TNR programme where strays are placed back in their original areas for their feeders after neutering," she said in her opening speech at the programme launch.

Tan said there were many hilly areas and farms in Balik Pulau, which made MBPP's effort to control the stray and abandoned dogs problem more challenging than in the north-east district.

She urged pet owners to

quickly spay their dogs and those wanting pets should "adopt and not shop" as there were thousands of dogs and cats housed in the numerous shelters throughout Penang.

Pentamaster Technology executive chairman Chuah Choon Bin later handed a contribution of RM40,000 to IAPWA Penang in support of the programme.

The mock cheque presentation ceremony was attended by former Penang island mayor Datuk A. Rajendran and his predecessor Datuk Yew Tung Seang.

Yew said MBPP would work closely with the Penang Fruit Farmers Association to make

the programme a success.

He also urged dog owners to obtain and renew their dog licence via ulesen.mbpp.gov.my

Chuah said Pentamaster was happy to support MBPP's TNR programme.

"We feel sad for the strays and abandoned dogs as they have to face countless dangers and hardships, and are subjected to abuse in their daily lives.

"We also strongly feel that we should play our part to help them and the state," he added.

For more details on the "TNR For A Sustainable Balik Pulau" programme, call MBPP at 04-281 0850 or WhatsApp IAPWA at 010-388 3487.



Tan says more than 4,800 dogs have been neutered as of March 31 this year since the start of the TNR programme in March 2018.