



Newsletter

Winter 2015 /
Spring 2016



Care4Cats Ibiza Autumn 2015 Neutering Visit

Dear Friends of Care4Cats, here is an idea of some of the work that we have done this year to neuter, rescue, and rehome the homeless cats in Ibiza.



This beautiful cat was abandoned onto the streets when his owner left the island. Sadly, the cat was wearing a collar and at some stage he got his leg trapped through the collar and pull as he might, he could not get his leg out. When he was found and Care4Cats took him to one of our vets, the collar had become embedded into his neck and he had to be sedated before they could cut this hard collar off with a strong pair of scissors which then revealed the extent of the deep wound as you can see from the photos.

He is the sweetest male neutered cat and we are looking for a home with a caring person who will never abandon him again.

The cat stayed in the vet's for more than a week and is now being fostered until a good home can be found.

Please don't put collars on cats. We have seen disastrous results from these on other cats. They do get their legs caught somehow in the collars, and sometimes the collars get hooked on fences and then they hang there and it could mean a slow death unless they are found and rescued.



430 Cats Neutered

This October going into November we had 12 trappers from the UK and Germany, who worked very hard trapping and taking cats to and from the vets. The weather was very unhelpful in that we had several storms that prevented trapping on some days, plus one public holiday in the middle when the vets were closed.



Despite these problems, a total of 445 cats were neutered on both sides of the island.

We had one or two large colonies to trap of 20 and in one case 30, and more cats, plus endless jobs for smaller colonies, some just 3 or 4 cats. As usual in some of the jobs, there was perhaps one that refused to be caught, so some of these were caught later on and some have had to now go onto our Jan/Feb list. It is always a problem, especially if the one is a female cat.

Bad Publicity!

We had a nasty scare almost as soon as we arrived in that a free lance journalist had 'done us a favour' and wrote a large article in El Diario which is the most popular Spanish newspaper with a huge readership, that; quote – "BRITISH VETS ARRIVING TO NEUTER FERAL CATS". What they should have said was TEAMS OF CAT TRAPPERS are coming to trap feral cats for neutering by local vets". So there was an immediate investigation by the veterinary authorities, who called a meeting to discuss this invasion of British vets, and what they were going to do to stop them working. They did not approach Care4Cats, but just assumed the newspaper article was correct. So after a long investigation, when they realised that we have been paying Ibiza vets for cat neutering for 15 years, and many thousands of euros were going into their economy from Care4Cats, they were very kind and gave us permission to do the work we had come to do. But said that next time, we must just ask permission more as a courtesy, so it ended well although it did cause some upsets that we had to get over.

West team

The first team that were covering the west of the island, were staying for two weeks, and after many problems with the weather, they did very well with their trapping, working mornings and evenings. Another two teams arrived a week later for one week and together they trapped and neutered 245 cats.

East team

The east team were 5 and working for one week, including their travel, and as they all but one had been before, they just got down to the work and trapped and neutered 185 cats.

Emergency calls

We had many emergency call outs – one cat who lived outside a hotel, and her right eye had swollen, and was bulging. She had to have it removed unfortunately, but we managed to find a home for her rather than put her back on the street with only



sight in one eye. She is a very friendly cat, so that helped. She has been taken in by the very kind Abraham

who was featured in one of the earlier newsletters with all the dogs and cats he has given a home to. Another emergency was from a tourist on Cala Gracioneta beach who said a little kitten with an infected eye was begging for food on the beach, so this kind tourist stayed with the cat from the morning until the afternoon when we managed to get Amanda, one of our volunteers, to go and trap it. But Amanda just put some food in a cat carrier and she couldn't wait to get to it, and then they shut the door, and the cat was then driven to the vet. Apparently we heard afterwards that all the cats around this hotel had been poisoned a few days before and it was now closed, so this cat was lucky to escape, so we could not put her back there. She has had the eye removed and is fine and being fostered. She was not tame and so the fosterer has been working with her to tame her so that we can find a good home for her. So far so good! She does not realise she is staying at a very upmarket address next to the Cathedral in Dalt Vila which all the tourists visit.

A very lucky cat

Yet another emergency one lunchtime. A call from a country restaurant that they had been feeding a stray cat for over 2 weeks and the restaurant was closing that evening and there would be no one there the next day, and could we please come and take the cat! We felt we had no choice even though we have no sanctuary and did not know where she was going to go, but one of the



volunteers agreed to take her back to the apt. after a visit to the vet, and then try and find her a home. She was the most friendly and loving cat ever and already neutered privately, so must have been lost. The volunteer was leaving the island in 3 days so we had not much time to find her a home. By chance, one of our members who supports our work mentioned that he and his partner would like to find another cat as their old one had died at the age of 22 years, so we practically pounced on them and begged them to look at this lovely cat; and after meeting the cat, they were smitten and fell in love straight away, and she is now happy in her new home in Germany and gets on well with their other cat. Whew!

Stopped in Tracks!

Jill and Angela got a phone call one day, - a cat has just been hit by a car and was unconscious in the road. Can you please come and take it to the vet! Jill was already on her way to another appointment, but just turned the car around and rushed to Es Canar, where they had put the cat onto a cushion and she was still breathing, but with some blood evident. She took her as quickly as she could to the nearest vet, and they had her for over a week; she was making progress, but all of a sudden, she started to deteriorate and it seemed she had suffered brain damage and we had to let her go. She was a little feral cat with no owner but she had been fed for a few years by a kind lady that feeds a lot in her area like her.

Amazing cat feeders

There are hundreds of people in Ibiza that feed very large colonies every day that are homeless. Our champion feeder is Cristel (right) who gets up at 5 o'clock every morning and before she goes to work, she goes on her cat route to feed over 400 cats who are all waiting for her. People, when



you tell them, can't believe it! But it is true. She goes to 15 different locations and has been doing this for more than 20 years. As a friend said, "Well I was feeding 48 outside our house for many years, and when they moved Care4Cats volunteers took over the task. They are all neutered and look very well. I had one of these 48 come to my apartment the other day and I gave him a bowl of cat biscuits – a superior variety and he walked away!!!" Two people take it in turns to feed them. Their numbers have lessened over 10 years for lots of reasons, and this is the result of the neutering which we do.

Fund Raising Afternoon

Whilst the UK trappers were on the island, we held a stall outside a hotel on the beach and it was not very well attended as it was last minute, but a lot

of our friends who support us came, and all spent money on cakes and goodies that we sell, and we made €185 and as one of our fosterers brought 5 kittens along for rehoming,



she was so happy as two went to excellent homes on the island that day. A ginger and a black one. You can see the photos. It was nice to chat to our supporters as well. You can read about the adoption of one of these kittens on the following page, with his photo.

Lucky Arnau

Two of our members/volunteers, Kerry and Paul, who visited our stall, to support us, were immediately drawn to this beautiful little kitten. They picked him out of the cage, and he was so loving and relaxed they felt it was meant to be that they take him home! They named him Arnau (below) and they tell us he is very special and gets on well with their 6 other cats! He and Flash, the little black one, were found dumped by the bins in San Carlos when they were only a few hours old, so very lucky to survive that! Flash is now in the UK with one of our volunteers Emma and all the family are crazy about him! Sounds like they are both very special cats, with lovely natures, and imagine someone dumping them!



Our small cat sanctuary

We made a visit to a recently built small cat house for 10 cats, in the countryside as someone allowed us to use a corner of their large plot of land.

The cats are visited nearly every day and given far too much food, and they have a warm place to sleep, and the freedom to explore the lovely countryside all day. We try and stay with them for at least half an hour and they love that. We are looking for a home for one of them who has had nearly her whole tail amputated and I must admit it does not look very

pretty now, but we hope someone will want her. She has a very affectionate nature, and wants lots of love and really needs to be with a family. She is tortoiseshell and small and lively. About 8 months old.



Dilemma

Sandra from Germany and Evelyn from Ibiza, working together, tell of a dilemma. In Figuerel there was a mother with one 8 week old kitten. After trapping the mother, the weather was very stormy and they were worried about how the kitten would be overnight without his mother, especially in such awful weather, and being all alone, so they solved the problem by building the kitten a cosy wooden outdoor cat shelter where the kitten could stay dry and warm overnight. When they returned the mother cat the following day, they were both very happy to see that the kitten was absolutely fine and pleased to get his mother back. Sandra and Evelyn were both relieved and happy at this outcome. You can see the photo of them having a meal after their ordeals.



Claire Taylor MRCVS

The following is written by Claire who spent a week trapping cats this November.

Trap-Neuter-Return Programmes

All around the world there are populations of essentially unowned cats. Some are truly feral, meaning they avoid human contact and interaction and are self sufficient in providing food for themselves by hunting. Other groups, termed 'street' or 'community' cats, living either singularly or in colonies, are often rather dependent on provision of food, and sometimes shelter, by humans. Among these there may also be some previously owned cats which have been abandoned, and end up becoming a street/community cat.

Cats are prolific at breeding, an un-neutered female cat can have 3 litters of kittens a year averaging 5-6 kittens per litter, so potentially 18 offspring per year. From all those offspring also breeding, in total one female cat can be responsible for 20,000 descendents in five years.

There are a number of problems associated with having a lot of unowned cats in areas.

For the cats themselves, large numbers means infectious diseases can become rife and spread quickly. The larger the number the more strain on food resources as well, whether this is by hunting or supplied by humans – the latter can become a serious financial drain on the carer. Neutered cats are in general healthier than un-neutered cats; males fight less, and females are not having to devote a lot of their energy into pregnancy and lactation, so can sustain their own health better.

From a public perspective, street or community cats can become a nuisance; raiding bins, making a lot of noise with fighting and mating, causing injury to owned cats, and in holiday destinations, 'hassling' restaurant goers for food. Sometimes unfortunately this results in people taking it upon themselves to eliminate those cats by poisoning. This is deemed to be unacceptable from a welfare point of view, and is generally not a successful long term solution – the void left will quickly be filled by new cats & kittens colonising the same area.

Trap-neuter-return (TNR) is a well recognised system to help control the number of these cats, subsequently improving the welfare of those individual cats and the general population through disease control.

C4C have neutered over 15,000 cats in Ibiza and have treated many hundreds more for other problems.

C4C are contacted by people who have seen feral, street or community cats, often these people are the feeders, who out of the kindness of their own hearts, feed groups or colonies of cats, often paying for the food out of their own pockets.

When cats are regularly fed by these carers, it makes it much easier to trap the cats.

The feeders are asked in advance of the planned trapping, to withhold food so the cats are all hungry.

Below is a typical day in the life of a cat trapper

8am: Arrive at job site where a colony of cats are regularly fed. The feeder has been told not to feed the cats the previous night or that morning so the cats should be very hungry!



Assess site, including where the cats are usually fed, how many cats are visible and how they are behaving (confident or scared etc).

Decide where is the best place to set automatic traps, and if required as well, a manual trap. Traps are set up with a small amount of food in a little trail leading into the trap, we often use very smelly food like sardines or tuna.

It is also necessary to get the feeder to remain calm, quiet and not interfere too much, if they have not experienced a trapping before. The feeder can get quite distressed seeing the cats in the traps if the cats panic. Wait for cats to enter trap.



The first 2 are usually caught quickly – the most greedy ones, after this the other cats are usually much less inclined to go into the traps.

Having transferred cats from traps to carriers, re-set traps, possibly changing the location as required.

Paperwork also has to be completed accurately – including a consent form with a list of the cats caught for the feeder to sign, a work sheet +/- duplicate depending on the vet; and a tag to attach to the cat's carrier. The details on each bit should all match and include the job number, feeder name and location, date, number of cat, description of cat, sex if known. Eg K532, Sofi, Es Canar, 5/11/15, Number 1. Tortie and white, female.

A job can take a couple of hours sometimes, and it is common that there will be one or two left that have sussed out the situation and won't go anywhere near the traps!

If it is a quick job, you may also have other jobs to go to, or to return to from previous days, to try to trap ones left behind.

11am: Having caught as many as possible, and loaded them into the van, plus loaded the traps back in, take cats to whichever vet it has been decided to go to.

This will depend on – if they are open; how many cats you have; how many cats the other trappers have to take in, as the vet will have a maximum number they can neuter in one day. You have to liaise with the other trappers to sort this out.

At vets, unload traps and empty carriers that are on top of carriers with cats in. Take cats in, sort out paperwork. Check with vet when they will be ready to be returned.

Collect any cats ready to be returned, double check paper work and carrier tags. Load these cats into van. Reload empty traps and carriers back into van. You may also have to go to different vets to collect more cats for returning to different locations.

11.30am: Take these cats back to their location to release. You may have to arrange with feeder to do this. There may be more than 1 location to return cats.

12-2pm: Go to car wash, unload all dirty traps and carriers to be washed. (Possibly having to unload clean carriers and put aside).

Place all soiled newspaper/incontinence sheets in bin, and dirty covers in a bag to be laundered. 1-2 Euros required to use car wash to clean & rinse all the traps and carriers.

Reload all carriers/traps into van.

12.30-2.30pm: Go back to flat for lunch.

Spend 1-2 hours making multiple phone calls to try to arrange more jobs for later in week. Expect that hardly anyone will answer phone at this time of day, leave messages and phone number to call back.

3-5pm: Depending on arranged time, set off for afternoon job(s) by prior arrangement.

Site assessment, trap setting, etc etc as for morning job.

5.30-7.30pm: Load all caught cats into van and any empty carriers on top. Set off to vets. Stefan (in Siesta) will give you a set time to be there by, which changes day by day according to his own schedule. Lida (in Ses Paisses) and Toni (in Puig den Valls) are open till 8pm.

Drop off cats at vets, checking paperwork.

Cats are usually not collected for returning to location in the evening.

6-8pm: Go back to flat. You may start getting call-backs from people you phoned earlier and need to arrange dates and times for their job to be done.

Time for having dinner, showers and downtime. Early to bed after exhausting day, ready for another one tomorrow!



Our list of jobs outstanding is enormous and we are trying our best to get through them, but we may have bitten off more than we can chew! We have just taken on 8 new volunteers who have agreed to trap cats for us, but before they start, they have to be shown how to do it, physically and the paper work.

Next week 30th November to 5th December we are going to make an effort to take out all 8 of them, in pairs, and then in December hopefully they will be able to trap cats in their area. Some do not have transport so will have to work with someone who has a car. We do have two vans that belong to Care4Cats and these can be borrowed for large colonies; otherwise it is easy to manage 4 or 5 cats in a car providing it is protected with plastic sheeting which works well. We have just been given a list of 155 cats to be caught and neutered that are the oldest on our list, so we hope to do as many as we can next week. One of the jobs is for 20 cats and one for 15, the rest 2s and 3s and some just for 1 cat!

This year has been without doubt the busiest we have ever had, with daily phone calls asking for cats to be trapped and neutered. So our list is growing much too fast. Not only that, but it has hit our bank balance, and before we go into overdraft, we have had to stop all jobs where the feeders are unable to

pay €35.00 per cat to cover our costs. (not allowing for petrol). Many of the feeders who have small numbers to have neutered are happily agreeing, as the rate now is €120 for a female cat to be neutered. So we not only trap and take the cats to our kind vets and get them neutered, but we also return them the following day, a chauffeur driven service!

Over the years we have neutered thousands of cats without donations from the feeders and have been happy to help them, but now we cannot afford to do it, and so as we get more money in, we will do some of the larger colonies where the feeders cannot afford to pay, so that they will not be left out completely, but will have to wait a little longer until our situation improves.

In saying this, we have said that if a cat is injured and needs an operation, say on its leg, or it has ear cancer, or needs urgent veterinary treatment. At this time we are continuing with this emergency service whether the caller donates or not. We hope that we can keep this going.

We seem to be making a difference in Ibiza. All the neutered cats are living long lives and many thousands of kittens are not being born, so we must never stop.

THANKS

To all our Ibiza and UK trappers for their hard work and who devote so much of their time to help the cats.

To Bonnie for the lovely seaview holiday apartment which she donates year after year...

To the following Trusts who helped us this year:

The Sheepdrove Trust; The Stuart Halbert Foundation; The Alice Noakes Trust; Animal Defence Trust; Jean Sainsbury Trust; The Harmony Fund USA; The Brigitte Bardot Foundation.

To our members and friends who support us whenever they can every year with donations and standing orders which we are very grateful for.

Thank you – we cannot exist without your support.

Angela



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