



OPINION

**Proposed definition of abandonment and
closed list of reasons for dogs and cats
to enter and leave the care of facilities
and organisations**

Original title in French

**Proposition d'une définition de l'abandon
et d'une liste fermée de motifs d'entrée et de sortie
des chiens et des chats dans les structures d'accueil**



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare



Observatoire
de la protection
des carnivores
domestiques

Proposed definition of abandonment and closed list of reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave the care of facilities and organisations



Requested by

OCAD Steering Committee



Date of request

20/04/2022

Date delivered by the FRCAW

12/07/2023

Date of most recent version in French

12/07/2023

Date of publication in English

05/05/2026



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Suggested citation for the English version

Julia Souyris, Camille Bezançon, Agnès Tiret, FRCAW experts, Geneviève Aubin-Houzelstein. Opinion of the FRCAW for the OCAD, proposing a definition of abandonment and a closed list of reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave the care of facilities and organisations. FRCAW / CNR BEA. 2026. Translated by Teresa Bridgeman

DOI: [10.17180/epsc-hb49](https://doi.org/10.17180/epsc-hb49)

Suggested citation for the original report in French

Julia Souyris, Camille Bezançon, Agnès Tiret, Experts du CNR BEA, Geneviève Aubin-Houzelstein. Avis du CNR BEA pour l'OCAD sur l'élaboration d'une définition de l'abandon et d'une liste fermée de motifs d'entrée et de sortie des chiens et des chats dans les structures d'accueil. CNR BEA. 2025.

DOI: [10.17180/j7h0-f043](https://doi.org/10.17180/j7h0-f043)



Summary

The fight against abandonment has been a major issue for French society for several years. Given this situation, the French Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores (OCAD) was set up in 2021, in order to create a partnership between the main interested parties that would extend knowledge and identify appropriate solutions to combat abandonment. As the OCAD's expert body, the French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (FRCAW) was asked by the OCAD's Steering Committee to 1. draw up lists of defined reasons why dogs and cats enter and leave the care of facilities and rescue organisations (pounds, shelters, pound-shelters and associations without shelter facilities), which would be established in order to track more closely the pathways followed by abandoned animals and 2. create a definition of abandonment on which the future work of the OCAD could be based.

In response to this request, the FRCAW 1. created and distributed an on-line questionnaire for facilities and organisations to identify the main reasons encountered on the ground as to why dogs and cats enter and leave their care, with responses from more than 800 establishments or organisations, 2. carried out a benchmarking exercise on the regulatory management of abandonment and on initiatives concerning the management of dogs and cats in other European countries and internationally, and 3. devised and conducted semi-structured interviews with a pool of 16 interviewees forming a representative sample of the full range of stakeholders involved in the abandonment of dogs and cats, in order to better understand the mechanisms of abandonment and to propose a definition accompanied by a typology that would be as comprehensive as possible.

The FRCAW's recommendations include the following: that the OCAD's Steering Committee should make use of the lists of reasons for entry and leaving, the definition of abandonment, and the typology of abandonment established in the report, to establish a common position shared by all those involved, on which the OCAD's future work can be based, thereby improving the monitoring and management of abandoned dogs and cats.

Keywords

Abandonment / Dogs / Cats / Accommodation / Pounds / Shelters / Rescue Organisations / Definition

[> VIEW ALL WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE FRCAW](#)



Context as defined by the requesting body

‘The Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores (OCAD) was created to provide public decision makers with evidence-based opinions supported by all stakeholders.

In March 2022 the FRCAW, in its capacity as the expert body, provided the Steering Committee with an initial opinion containing a number of recommendations concerning the future work that was required.

In conjunction with the present further request, the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food will allocate funding from the national Recovery Plan for initiatives to train the various animal welfare associations so that they may participate in the OCAD's work and provide information for its database in accordance with the recommendations of the expert body.’

Request

‘The FRCAW’s report of 4 March 2022 provides an initial overview of the situation concerning the abandonment of dogs and cats in France and identifies a number of priority actions to guide public policy, which mission falls within the remit of the Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores.

The FRCAW first recommended that a precise definition should be established for the abandonment of animals. This work indeed appears essential and the FRCAW is in the first instance hereby requested to consult with the appropriate actors and arrive at the most appropriate definition possible, which must be applicable to all abandoned animals. In the second instance, it is asked to propose criteria for the assignment of animals to different categories of abandonment, each calling for different management measures, with a view to combating abandonment more effectively on the ground.

At the same time, on the basis of existing registration practices and the needs identified in its initial report, the FRCAW will work with pounds and shelters and with associations that foster animals in private households, to draw up a closed list of defined reasons for entering and leaving the care of these facilities and organisations.’

Reference documents

- + Camille Bezançon, Agnès Tiret, FRCAW experts, Geneviève Aubin-Houzelstein, Alain Boissy. Opinion of the FRCAW on the first actions to be taken within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores (OCAD). FRCAW / CNR BEA. 2022. (In French: [10.17180/p5dn-3y69](https://doi.org/10.17180/p5dn-3y69))



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Glossary (English version)

Animals found roaming

‘Any dog that, other than for the activities of hunting, guarding, or protection of herds and flocks, is no longer being effectively monitored by its master and finds itself beyond earshot of the voice of its owner or of any similar sound-producing instrument that would allow it to be called back, or which has moved more than 100 metres away from its owner or the responsible person, is deemed to be found roaming. Any unattended dog, left to its own devices is roaming, except if it is participating in an act of hunting and if it is demonstrated that its owner has engaged in all possible steps to find it and retrieve it, including after the act of hunting is over. [...] Any unidentified cat found more than two hundred metres from dwellings, or any cat found more than one thousand metres from its owner's home, and which is not under the direct supervision of the latter, as well as any cat whose owner is unknown and which is collected from the public highway or from the property of another person, is deemed to be roaming’. (Source: Article L.211-23 of the French Code Rural et de la Pêche Maritime, CRPM)

Animals removed by administrative order

As discussed in this report, such animals are removed from the place they are kept and placed in a holding facility by decision of the French Prefect (or local Mayor) as part of the following remit: control of biting dogs and scratching cats.

Animals removed by court order

As discussed in this report, animals that are removed from the place in which they are kept and placed in a holding facility or other accommodation by order of the French judicial authority (by order of a judge or public prosecutor) in the following situations: imprisonment of the owner, judicial police investigation, illegal keeping of classified dogs.

Animals taken to pounds by the competent authorities

As referred to in the present report these are animals found roaming on the public highway, captured ‘by the municipality (municipal police, highways officers), the national police or the gendarmerie’, and delivered to a pound.

(Source: www.amf.asso.fr/documents-regles-applicables-aux-animaux-errants-ou-en-etat-divagation/8240)

Association without shelter facilities (AWS)

Animal welfare association or group that does not operate a shelter facility (Article L. 214-6-5) and that instead fosters the animals it cares for in private homes.



Declaration of abandonment

Document required by certain shelters when an owner surrenders their animal. This document formalises the fact that there has been a transfer of ownership between the relinquishing party and the shelter. The declaration is definitive and without restrictions or conditions. (Source: I-CAD)

Domestic carnivores

Domestic carnivores generally include the following species: cats, dogs and ferrets. In this report, the term 'domestic carnivores' refers exclusively to dogs and cats.

Facilities and organisations providing animal accommodation and care

Provision made for accommodation and care by the authorities or welfare associations for abandoned animals. As discussed in this report, these include shelters, pounds, pound-shelters and fostering services provided by associations without centralised shelter facilities.

Free cat

A cat living in a public space in France that has been identified and sterilised by the municipality. Its identification is linked to a legal entity (such as an animal welfare society) that provides/pays for its care. Free cats are therefore not counted as part of the adoption system once they have been identified and sterilised. (Source: Article L.211-27 CRPM)

Independent animal protection association (as defined in this report)

Refers to an animal protection association or society with or without shelter facilities and that may or may not have been registered as an association under the 1901 Act, which takes care of animals. These associations may receive financial assistance from public utility associations but are not run by the latter.

Identification

Procedure carried out by a vet. A unique number is assigned to an animal by inserting a biocompatible implant under the skin (microchip) or tattooing, and this is recorded in the French national identification database. Dog identification may also be carried out by an approved tattooist. Pet identification is the sole official link in France between an animal and its owner. (Source: www.i-cad.fr)

Lost animals

As referred to in this report, a lost animal is a dog or cat, whether registered or unregistered, that has an owner (evidenced by a chip, tattoo or collar) but is found roaming (taken into the care of an authority or organisation). If the owner of a lost animal cannot be found by those who have taken charge of the animal, it is considered to be abandoned.



Pound

A pound in France can be a public (municipal, intercommunal) or private (SACPA, etc.) facility designed to receive and house strays and animals found roaming. Animals are held for 8 working days (cf. Articles L.211-25 and L211-26 of the CRPM), after which animals unclaimed by their owners are either transferred to an animal protection association or may be euthanised if there are no shelter places available.

Pound-shelter

Operation combining the activities of a pound and a shelter on one or more sites.

Removed animals

Dog or cat removed from a property by the French gendarmerie or national police or by the DDPP veterinary services (Article L.214-23 CRPM) on the grounds of active and/or passive (negligence, inattention) abuse, and placed in the care of a shelter or a society for animal protection. (Source: service-public.fr)

Shelter

Non-profit facility run by an animal protection trust or association that has been recognised as such in France by the Prefect, receiving and looking animals that have either come from a pound, having exceeded the prescribed holding periods under Articles L.211-24 and L. 211-25 of the CRPM, have been surrendered (directly) by their owners, or have been removed from a private home.

Sterilisation/neutering

Surgical procedure removing male or female reproductive organs to render an animal unable to reproduce.

Stray animals*

Stray animals as defined in this report are animals that have no known owners and are living in the wild. Stray animals are neither identified nor sterilised. These animals can be considered to be abandoned and are thus included in the companion animal processing and adoption system. [*translator's note. It should be noted that this definition differs from common definitions of stray animals in English-speaking countries]

Transfer of ownership

Whenever an animal that has been previously identified and registered on I-CAD is sold, the seller must register the change of ownership with I-CAD (Article D212-68 of the CRPM). This involves changing the ownership details on the animal's electronic identification file to those of the new owner. (Source: www.i-cad.fr)



Additional information (in alphabetical order)

Administrative formalities for animals taken into the charge of pounds

According to Article AR.211-12 of the CRPM, information for the public must be permanently displayed by the mayor in the municipal offices concerning the arrangements in operation for taking charge of strays and animals found roaming within its jurisdiction. In particular, the notice must provide: 'i) the contact details of the services responsible for the capture and care of such animals, along with a description of the circumstances in which these services may be called upon; ii) the address, telephone number, and opening days and hours of the pound and the holding facility referred to in Article L. 211-21'.

Example provided by the municipality of Brive: 'Any dog or cat delivered by a private individual during the opening or closing hours of the pound service must be accompanied by an authorisation form from the municipal authority where the animal was captured, providing the details of the person who brings in the animal (surname, first name, address, telephone number)'. A private individual cannot therefore take a stray animal directly to the pound. They must first notify the competent authority that they have found the animal before the animal can be taken into the pound's charge.

(Source:

<http://www.brive.fr/wpcontent/plugins/deliberations/donnees/documents/FIC6066.pdf>)

Association for the protection of animals recognised as a public utility

In France, an association for the protection of animals is formed by at least two people. It may or may not be registered as an association under the 1901 Act. If registered, an association may apply for recognition as a public utility. Associations recognised as being in the public interest can benefit from legal and tax advantages in the receipt of legacies and gifts. (Source: <https://www.legalstart.fr/fiches-pratiques/association/association-utilite-publique-comment-ca-marche/>)

The associations discussed in this report that are recognised as being in the public interest are as follows: the French Société Protectrice des Animaux (SPA, society for the protection of animals); the Fondation Brigitte Bardot; the Confédération Défense de l'Animal and the Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis (30 million friends foundation). These associations own and manage shelters throughout France.



These same associations also provide financial and legal support to other independent animal protection associations (with or without shelter facilities).

Capture of animals found roaming on the public highway

According to the French Association of Mayors, ‘The capture of stray animals or animals found roaming: dogs, cats or other animals, can be carried out by the municipality (municipal police, highways department, etc.), the national police or gendarmerie, or may be entrusted to private or public organisations (specialised companies, department pound, etc.)’.

(Source: <https://www.amf.asso.fr/documents-regles-applicables-aux-animaux-errants-ou-en-etat-divagation/8240>)

Management of stray cats by the municipality

Under Article L.211-27 of the CRPM, the municipality has the option to arrange the capture of unidentified cats that lack owners or keepers and are living in groups in public places within its jurisdiction, and their subsequent release at the place of capture following identification and sterilisation. The mayor thus has the power to issue a decree (Article L.211-27 of the CRPM) ordering a **sterilisation campaign** for stray cats. The animals must be registered in the name of either the municipality or a delegated association (Article L.211-27 CRPM).

Municipal duty to provide a pound service

Article L.214-24 of the CRPM states that ‘each municipality [...] shall have a pound suitable to receive and keep, in conditions that permit the care of their welfare and health, dogs and cats found as strays or roaming, until the end of the holding periods set out (in Articles L. 211-25 and L. 211-26). This pound may be shared with another public establishment for intercommunal cooperation (EPCI) or with a closed joint syndicate of different authorities. The competent municipality may set up a local pound within its own boundaries or use the services of a pound established within another municipality, with the agreement of that municipality. Where it does not operate the pound itself, the municipality may entrust the public pound service to animal protection foundations or associations that operate shelters, in the form of a delegation of a public service and under the conditions laid down by decree in the Conseil d'Etat’.

In this report, pounds run by municipalities or their local communities are distinguished from pounds run by animal welfare associations or private companies (SACPA) under a public service delegation agreement.

Municipality

In France the municipality is the most local unit of government administration and is managed by the **Mayor**. A municipality may be rural or urban.



Prefect

In France, a Prefect is the State's representative in a Department or Region.

Registration of facilities providing accommodation and further regulations depending on capacity

Articles L. 214-6-1 and L. 214-6-5 of the CRPM require pounds, shelters, pound-shelters and associations without shelter facilities that provide fostering in private homes to register with the prefecture. Additionally, larger facilities housing dogs may be subject to the French environmental protection regulations for classified establishments, depending on their capacity (this does not apply to the accommodation of cats). (Source: *Arrêté du 08/12/06 relatif aux prescriptions générales applicables aux installations classées soumises à déclaration*)



List of abbreviations

30MA

Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis (30 Million Friends Foundation)

AC

Accommodation capacity

AWS

Association without shelter facilities

BBEA

Bureau du Bien-Être Animal (Animal Welfare Office)

BNO

Base Nationale des Opérateurs (French operator database)

CNDA

Confédération Défense de l'Animal (Confederation for the Defence of Animals)

COFIL

Comité de Pilotage de l'OCAD (OCAD Steering Committee)

CRPM

Code Rural et de la Pêche Maritime (French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code)

DOMTOM

Départements et Territoires d'Outre-Mer (French overseas Departments and Territories)

ENSV

École Nationale des Services Vétérinaires (National School of Veterinary Services)

FBB

Fondation Brigitte Bardot (Brigitte Bardot Foundation)

FRCAW

French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (in French: Centre national de référence pour le bien-être animal (CNR BEA))



I-CAD

Base de données du fichier national d'identification des carnivores domestiques
(French identification database for domestic carnivores)

OCAD

Observatoire de la Protection des Carnivores Domestiques (Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores)

POSH

Pound and shelter

POU

Pound

SACPA

Service pour l'Assistance et le Contrôle du Peuplement Animal (Service for Assistance and Control of Animal Populations)

SHE

Shelter

SPA

Société Protectrice des Animaux (Society for the Protection of Animals)

STSG

Scientific and Technical Study Group



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1 Context and timetable for the report

This report is the second to be produced by the FRCAW for the Observatoire de la Protection des Carnivores Domestiques (OCAD) and the questions it addresses arise from the recommendations set out in the FRCAW's initial report for the OCAD. That first opinion, which took stock of the available data on the abandonment of dogs and cats in France, highlighted the contextual and multifactorial nature of abandonment and the difficulty of putting an exact figure on the number of abandoned animals in France using the data currently available in the I-CAD. A number of recommendations were therefore made with a view to increasing knowledge on this topic and better tailoring measures undertaken to combat abandonment to the reality of the situation on the ground. Some of the recommendations arising from that first report have been selected by the OCAD Steering Committee (COFIL) as the focus for the next expert report to be commissioned. They represent key steps towards an understanding of abandonment and towards the establishment of concrete measures that can be implemented rapidly.

In order to expand and refine the data available to the OCAD, this report has two main objectives: (1) to draw up a definition of abandonment with regard to domestic carnivores and (2) to propose a closed list of reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave the charge of facilities and organisations that accommodate and care for abandoned animals.

1.1 Needs identified by the FRCAW's initial expert report for the OCAD

1.1.1 Have access to a closed list of reasons for entering and leaving facilities for the accommodation of abandoned animals

Current figures on abandoned animals are produced by monitoring the flow of animals through pounds and shelters. The accounting system for abandoned dogs and cats is therefore built on transfers of ownership registered in the national domestic carnivore identification database (I-CAD), and on first registrations of unidentified animals. Figures for five categories of animal were accordingly discussed in the first report corresponding to the classifications recorded in the database, but uncertainties persist in the estimation of abandonment numbers and in the characterisation of the five categories (*Figure 1*).



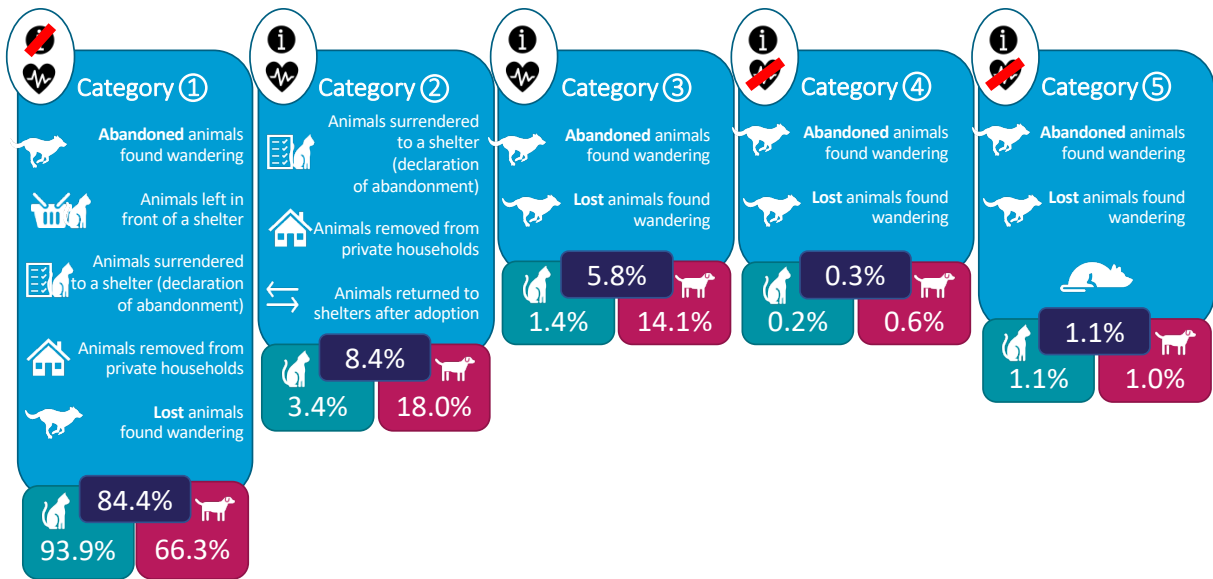


Figure 1. Overview of the five categories of abandoned animals recorded in the I-CAD database (CNR BEA, 2022).

The FRCAW here provided a breakdown of the various possible reasons for an animals' entry into the system of care for abandoned animals as they apply to each of the five I-CAD categories.

To attempt to further characterise the reasons for animals leaving formal care and fostering facilities, additional analysis using I-CAD data was carried out, identifying several scenarios. However, a significant proportion of exits from pounds and shelters are currently recorded under 'Other' for both species (*Table 1*). The FRCAW therefore recommended, in its first report for the OCAD, that the reasons for leaving should be systematically recorded in order to guarantee more detailed monitoring of the animals (CNR BEA, 2022; Recommendation 21).

Table 1. Tracking data for dogs and cats having entered pounds and shelters in 2019 (CNR BEA, 2022)

The first set of figures concerns animals in pounds, the second concerns animals transferred from a pound to a shelter.

Animals entering a pound		Species	Outcome	Proportion
		Cats	Die in the pound	5%
			Transferred to a shelter	50%
			Owner reclaims animal	18%
			Rehomed directly by the pound-shelter	2%
			Other	25%
		Dogs	Die in the pound	1%
			Transferred to a shelter	32%
			Owner reclaims animal	49%
			Rehomed directly by the pound-shelter	3%
Other	15%			
Animals transferred to a shelter		Species	Outcome	Proportion
		Cats	Die in the shelter	4,5%
			Rehomed	79,5%
			Other	16%**
		Dogs	Die in the shelter	3%
			Rehomed	84%
			Other	13%**

Taking all these factors into account, the FRCAW recommended in its first report (Recommendation 10 - Evaluation of the categories used for abandoned animals) that I-CAD should be provided with all the data necessary to distinguish between specific cases, i.e. the pathways by which animals enter and leave facilities for their accommodation and care, enabling more rigorous monitoring of the data: *‘Some animals are currently considered to be abandoned on the basis of their identification status and of the registered data flows that relate to them, despite being simply lost (and not found) or wandering. This is in part due to the fact that the recording of abandoned animals is currently based on their identification status. It would therefore appear imperative for the OCAD to establish its own database so the incidence of abandonments can be calculated in a more precise way (without focusing solely on identification status) and in accordance with a definition to be approved by all members of the steering committee.’*

The drawing up of a definitive list of reasons for dogs and cats entering and leaving the care of facilities and organisations providing accommodation is an effective and rapid way to gather accurate data on pet pathways.

Collected data relating to the search for the owner, reasons for abandonment and how the owner came by the animal will then be relevant in deciding on actions to be taken (CNR BEA, 2022; Table 16).



1.1.2 Improving on existing definitions of abandonment

In its first report, the FRCAW set out the different legal definitions in existence concerning the abandonment of domestic carnivores in France. These definitions, which derive from different legislative agendas, are in part contradictory.

In the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code (CRPM) (Article L211-23), abandonment is approached from the point of view of animals found roaming. Article L211-19-1 states that allowing an unattended animal to roam the public highway is prohibited. This prohibition applies to both cats and dogs. An animal found roaming will be considered to have been abandoned only if it is not claimed by its owner within eight working days of its removal from the highway. Animals found roaming, whether identified or unidentified, are recorded in I-CAD and are currently included in the figures for animals designated as abandoned by the OCAD. However, not all animals found roaming and unclaimed by their owners are abandoned. Such animals may be lost or may be strays (in which case they have no owners). Additionally, under French case law, any person leaving an animal without care, food or water is deemed to have committed the offence of pet abandonment (CA Orléans, 6 October 2020, no. 18/00160). This definition takes greater account of the impact of abandonment on animal welfare.

In neither of these two interpretations is the abandonment of an animal at a shelter considered.

In view of its findings, the FRCAW's first recommendation in this first report addressed the need for a definition of abandonment that could achieve the greatest consensus. Abandonment occurs in many different contexts, and not all professionals and private individuals necessarily define it in the same way. This lack of a common definition leads to distortions in the way abandoned animals are counted. The FRCAW therefore made the following recommendation: *'As abandonment is a complex and multifactorial subject, it appears necessary for the continued work of the OCAD to establish a precise definition of the term 'abandonment' and of the categories of animals it includes. Indeed, estimates of the number of abandonments in France vary according to the definitions on which they are founded. The FRCAW urges that this task should be conducted with the collaboration of relevant practitioners by collecting information from a large number of actors (managers and staff in shelters and pounds) on their understanding of abandonment. Last, the FRCAW considers it to be essential that consideration for animal welfare should be a core element of the definition of abandonment'*. (CNR BEA, 2022; Recommendation 1).

The development of a definition of abandonment should thus be based on the opinions and recommendations of those who work in the sector and must deal with abandoned animals in their daily lives.



1.2 Other initiatives contributing to the definition of abandonment

In the current French legislative context of legal measures to improve the health monitoring of domestic animals (LSA 2016, updated 2021) and the assessment of the situations of domestic carnivores (Law 2021/1539 2021), a number of initiatives designed to centralise information are in hand, so that factual indicators on animal flows and pathways can be identified. The information gathered will provide effective guidance for public decision-making on these issues. The French Ministry of Agriculture, via its contractor, Ingenium Animalis, is working to achieve this through the creation of a national database of operators (BNO) to record administrative information on operators, and the development of the I-CAD, in line with legal requirements and the work carried out by the OCAD.

The list of reasons for dogs and cats entering and leaving shelters and pounds is being compiled for inclusion in the I-CAD after discussion with OCAD members.

1.3 Report schedule

In April 2022, in consultation with the members of the OCAD Steering Committee, the objectives of the request for expert advice were clarified and a working strategy was established.

Figure 2 shows the schedule of work to meet the two objectives set out in the OCAD's Second Request (see *1. Context and timetable for the report*).

Once the operational objectives had been defined by the FRCAW in agreement with the Animal Welfare Office of the French Ministry of Agriculture (BBEA) and validated by the OCAD Steering Committee, the FRCAW began its preliminary investigations on the definition of abandonment by conducting a literature review and a benchmarking exercise that looked at the regulatory management of dog and cat abandonment in 14 other European countries and Canada.

The purpose of these exercises was to i) gain an overview of the information available in the scientific literature on the topic of abandonment, and ii) establish the nature of regulations and initiatives in other countries to manage and combat abandonment, paying particular attention to explicit definitions provided in legal texts.

The FRCAW then worked between July and October 2022 on drawing up a closed survey document. The main aim of this questionnaire, which was destined for managers of facilities and operations that accommodate and care for abandoned dogs and cats, was to identify the reasons for animals entering and leaving their charge.



The questionnaire was issued on 7 November 2022 with a deadline for returns of 31 January 2023 (making it available for 3 months).

Meanwhile, the FRCAW conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with practitioners involved in pet abandonment and owners who had abandoned their pets. In preparation for these interviews, the members of the FRCAW working group were trained by an expert in sociological methods for qualitative surveys. These methods and techniques concerned the choice of the respondent sample group and communication strategy, the drawing up of interview guides, the conduct of interviews and the analysis of interview transcripts. Interviews were conducted from 28 November 2022 to the end of March 2023.

The responses to the closed questionnaire and qualitative surveys (interviews) were then analysed during the remainder of 2023.

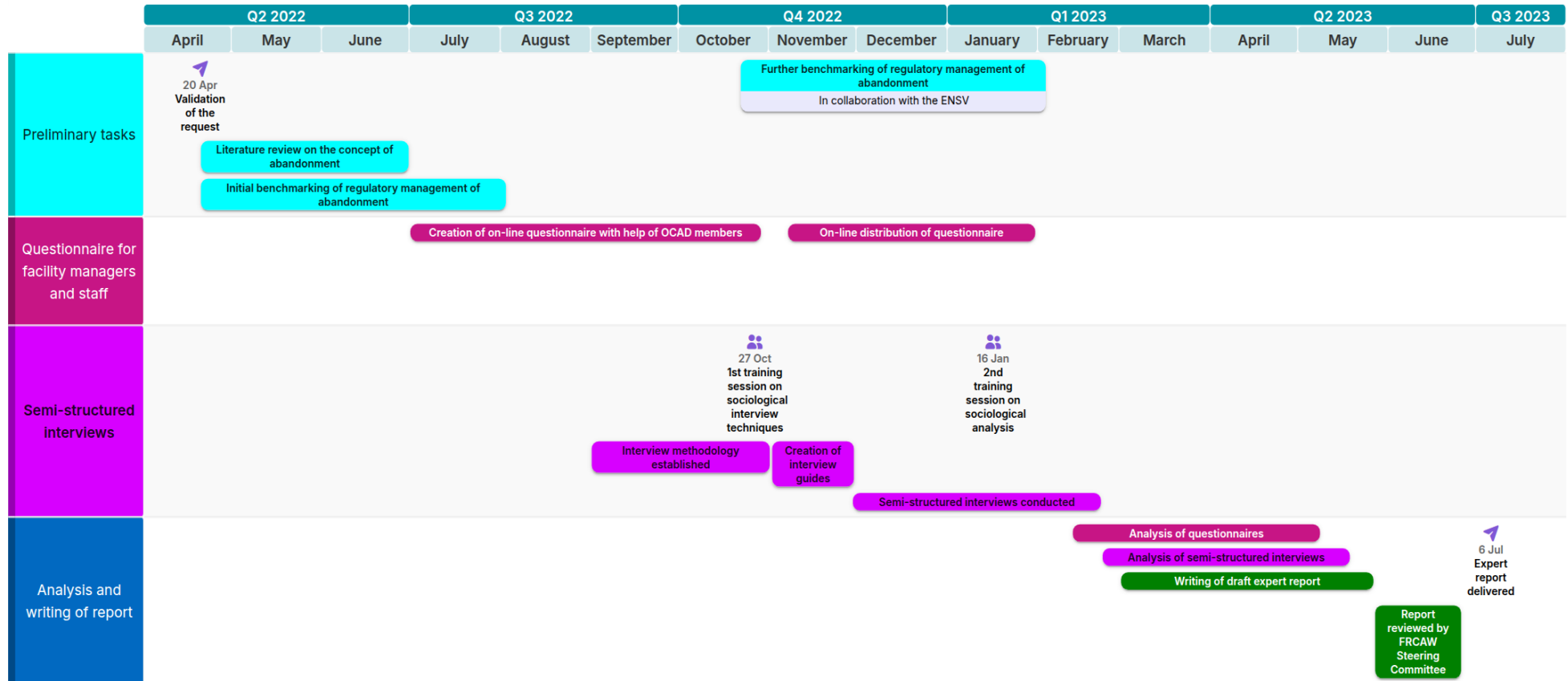


Figure 2. 2022-2023 FRCAW work schedule for the second OCAD report (Source: FRCAW)

2 Production of a closed list of reasons for animals to enter and leave the care of facilities and organisations

2.1 Methodology: closed questionnaire for facility managers and staff

2.1.1 Questionnaire design

The creation of a questionnaire was a necessary step for the production of a closed list of the reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave the care of facilities and organisations, since detailed information on how animals come to be admitted to and discharged was required.

The questionnaire was produced using Sphinx Déclic 2 software version 4.28. As it was intended for managers (or staff) of facilities and organisations that accommodate and care for animals, it was designed to fit the four types of accommodation system for abandoned animals in France, namely, pounds, shelters, pound-shelters and rescue associations with no shelter facilities that operate using foster carers. Depending on the species they dealt with, respondents could choose to answer with regard to 1) dogs and cats, 2) dogs only, and 3) cats only.

For the sake of accuracy (and with specific questions for each type of accommodation and care), the questionnaire was organised into 9 topic areas as shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Information gathered using the questionnaire for the 4 types of accommodation, classified by topic.

Topic	Pound (POU)	Pound-shelter (POSH)	Shelter (SHE)	Association without shelter facilities (AWS)
Type(s) of facility/operation run by respondents	Which designation best describes the facilities/operation for which the respondent works			
Demographic data concerning the respondent	Age, gender, legal status of the facility or parent organisation			
General information on the facility or fostering operation	Demographics, species accommodated, capacity, periods of low and high activity, length of stay beyond the designated impoundment period and reasons for extended stays.	Demographics, species accommodated, capacity, periods of low and high activity, length of animals' stay (SHE), length of stay beyond the designated impoundment period and reasons for extended stays (POU).	Demographics, species accommodated, capacity, periods of low and high activity, length of animals' stay.	Demographics, species accommodated, number of foster households, periods of low and high activity, length of time animals stay with foster carers.
Frequency of occurrence of each reason for admission to a facility or organisation's care, by species	How often each reason for admission (specific to each type of accommodation) on the list provided is encountered, saying whether these are recorded in a register and whether records are on paper or in electronic form (see <i>Appendix 1</i>).			
Owner search ¹	Procedures in place to find the owners of identified/unidentified animals, success rates for identified/unidentified animals, reasons given by owners for not collecting animals, frequency with which owners come forward to collect unidentified animals. NB: For POSH, questions referred only to the pound side of operations.			

Topic	Pound (POU)	Pound-shelter (POSH)	Shelter (SHE)	Association without shelter facilities (AWS)
Characterisation of abandoned animals as opposed to strays ¹	Criteria used to determine whether an animal has an owner, details of the criteria used, criteria to distinguish between abandoned and lost animals. NB: For POSH, questions referred only to the pound side of operations.			
Reasons for abandonment ¹	Frequency of occurrence of each reason for abandonment on the list provided			
Frequency of occurrence of each reason for departure by species	How often each reason for departure (specific to the type of facility or operation) on the list provided is encountered, saying whether these are recorded in a register, whether they are on paper or in electronic form (see <i>Appendix 1</i>).			
Risk factors for abandonment ¹	Most common age, sex and breed/racial type of animals accommodated.	Most common age, sex and breed/racial type of animals accommodated. Most common source of animals accommodated (SHE side of operations).	Most common age, sex, breed/racial type and source of animals in the facility/organisation's charge.	

In order to elicit information on the reasons for dogs and cats entering and leaving the charge of facilities and organisations, comprehensive lists of reasons, tailored to the type of facility or operation and to the species concerned, were provided to respondents. These were compiled from the information gathered by the FRCAW in its first report to the OCAD and from additional details and clarifications provided by representatives of the SPA, the Fondation Brigitte Bardot and a pound manager.

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they encountered each reason, choosing between 'never' (the reason is encountered in less than 5% of cases), 'rarely' (the reason is encountered in 5 to 10% of cases), 'sometimes' (the reason is encountered in 10 to 30% of cases), 'often' (the reason is encountered in 30 to 60% of cases), 'very often' (the reason is encountered in 60 to 90% of cases), and 'always' (the reason is encountered in more than 90% of cases). When respondents identified a reason for entering or leaving their

¹ The information collected under these headings in the questionnaire has not been analysed in the present report. The questionnaire for managers and staff was more wide-ranging in its scope than was required for the present survey alone and provides additional data for future analysis of other topics relating to the issue of abandonment to be conducted in due course. The widespread distribution of this questionnaire presented the FRCAW with a significant opportunity to collect additional data not available through I-CAD.



charge that was not included in the lists, they were given the opportunity to list this reason under the 'Other' category and to specify how often it was encountered.

Because the questionnaires were tailored to the circumstances of respondents, the time taken to complete the questionnaire varied according to the type of facility or operation. The estimated time was 40 minutes for pounds (POU), 50 minutes for facilities operating as both pounds and shelters (POSH), 30 minutes for shelters (SHE) and 20 minutes for associations without shelter facilities (AWS).

2.1.2 Distribution of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was issued to the shelter networks of the French Société Protectrice des Animaux (SPA), the Fondation Brigitte Bardot (FBB), the Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis (30 MA), the Confédération Nationale Défense de l'Animal (CNDA), Solidarité Peuple Animal, the Service pour l'Assistance et le Contrôle du Peuplement Animal (SACPA) and Ingénium Animalis (I-CAD contractor). Each organisation circulated the link to the questionnaire internally, specifying that it formed part of the FRCAW's expertise work for the OCAD. The questionnaire was distributed by all the organisations to their networks on 14/11/2022 and a total of two reminders were issued on 6/12/2022 and 9/01/2023. Responses were accepted until 31/01/2023.

2.1.3 Questionnaire, methods of analysis

2.1.3.1 Selection of data of interest

Analysis of the questionnaire concentrated on those answers relevant to the compilation of a list of reasons for animals entering and leaving the charge of facilities and organisations. As shown in *Table 3* only certain sections of the questionnaire were retained for the present analysis.



Table 3. Topics from the questionnaire selected for analysis to generate the lists of reasons for entering and leaving the charge of each of the four types of facility/operation.

Topic	Pound (POU)	Pound-shelter (POSH)	Shelter (SHE)	Association without shelter accommodation (AWS)
Characterisation of the respondent's facility/organisation	Type of facility/organisation			
Frequency of occurrence of each reason for entry by species	Proposed reasons for entry specific to the type of facility/organisation, recording of reasons in a register, form of record-keeping (paper, electronic)			
Frequency of occurrence of each reason for exit by species	Proposed reasons for entry specific to the type of facility/organisation, recording of reasons in a register, form of record-keeping (paper, electronic)			

2.1.3.2 Size and capacity of facilities

For pounds, shelters and pound-shelters, the size classification of the facilities was based on the accommodation capacity declared by each respondent for each species taken into their charge. For associations without shelter facilities, the size of the operation was calculated on the basis of the number of foster households.

Accommodation capacity (AC) refers to the maximum number of animals permitted under the regulations concerning surface area allocation standards for individual animals (Order of 3 April 2014: Annexe II, Section 1, Chapters 1 and 2). Under the current regulations in France, each facility must provide a minimum area of 5m² per dog and 2m² per cat – accommodation capacity is therefore calculated from these parameters.

In order to provide a better picture for the remainder of the analysis of the various sizes of facility generally available, the accommodation figures (or number of foster households in the case of associations without shelter facilities) for each species were added together to give a total accommodation figure (or total number of foster households for associations without shelter facilities) representing the total number of animals that could be taken in by the facility. Following this step, an analysis of the breakdown of total accommodation figures (or total number of foster households) by type of organisation was carried out, so that each organisation could be allocated to one of four size categories: small, medium, large and very large.



2.1.3.3 Classification of reasons for entry and exit

The basic information on admission and departure patterns (describing the frequency of each pattern by species) was further processed to generate a 'score' for each pattern by species.

The FRCAW decided here to base each reason's 'score' on a word scale showing frequency of occurrence (from 'never' to 'always'), calculating the relative number of respondents who selected each category on the scale. The final scores thus obtained provided a better measure of the overall frequency of occurrence for each reason. To calculate the scores, each word category was assigned a value from 0 to 5:

- > 0 for 'never'
- > 1 for 'rarely'
- > 2 for 'occasionally'
- > 3 for 'often'
- > 4 for 'very often'
- > 5 for 'always'

The final score for a reason was then calculated as the ratio between the score associated with the reason and the maximum score obtainable from the total number of respondents (see *Box 1*).

Box 1. Method used to calculate the 'score' for an entry or exit pathway

The figures given here are random and bear no relation to the actual results of the survey.

1. Reason for a dog to enter a pound: 'the dog is brought in by its owner'

Frequency of occurrence of the reason: Never (5), Rarely (10), Occasionally (2), Often (34), Very often (7), Always (29)

2. Calculation of the score for the reason suggested: $5*0 + 10*1 + 2*2 + 34*3 + 7*4 + 29*5 = 289$

3. Calculation of the maximum possible score: If N=87 (total answers giving this reason), the maximum score is obtained thus: $87 \times 5 = 435$

4. Calculation of the final score: The final score is obtained as the ratio between the score associated with the reason and the maximum possible score, which in this instance is $289/435$.

→ **Final score 6/10**



The 'score' thus obtained enables comparison between species and between establishments/organisations of the frequency of occurrence data concerning entry and exit pathways.

In addition, although all pounds are responsible for recovering stray animals from the public highway, some entry pathways are not authorised for all pounds. For example, some pounds are either unable or not authorised to remove an animal directly from the public highway once it has been reported. The competent authority, often the municipal police force, is then responsible for capturing the animal and taking it to the pound. For this reason, the term 'unauthorised' was added to the suggested reasons for entry in the questionnaire. This was assigned a value of 0 in the score calculations for entry and exit reasons.

2.2 Map of facilities

2.2.1 Number of respondents and representativeness of the sample

First of all, it is important to note that it is impossible to test how representative the FRCAW's sample of respondents is, because information is not available for all shelters in France. As matters currently stand, official data is provided on the number of staff in shelters and pounds in each department. However, some of the data available from certain departments are inconsistent and would appear not to reflect the reality on the ground. Indeed, the official registers reveal wide disparities between the numbers of pound services per department. Some departments record lower figures than others, including even their close neighbours and departments with smaller geographical areas. This initial data-gathering method using staff numbers, reveals inequalities and disparities between departments in the way they deal with strays and animals found roaming. The new national database of operators (BNO) will soon make it possible to carry out a more reliable official census of accommodation provision for strays and animals found roaming.

In this respect, the FRCAW was unable to test the representativeness of the sample of respondents to the questionnaire, due to the lack of reliable information on the target population(s).

By the time the questionnaire closed on 31 January 2023, 820 managers (or other staff) had responded. Responses containing repeated inconsistencies regarding the species managed were removed from the sample, as were responses containing missing data for the questions of interest for the present analysis. As a result, 800 responses (97.56%) were retained and analysed.

When the figures are broken down by type of organisation, associations without shelter facilities predominate, accounting for 63% of respondents. Shelters were also more likely to respond (21%) than were pound-shelters and pounds, which together accounted for 17% of respondents (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Distribution of the different types of facility and operation in the survey sample

Percentages are calculated in relation to the number of retained survey respondents.

Type	Number of respondents	Percentage
Shelter	167	21%
Pound	44	6%
Pound / Shelter	87	11%
Association without shelter accommodation	502	63%
Total	800	100%

2.2.2 Geographical distribution of types of facility or operation for which survey respondents worked, shown by department

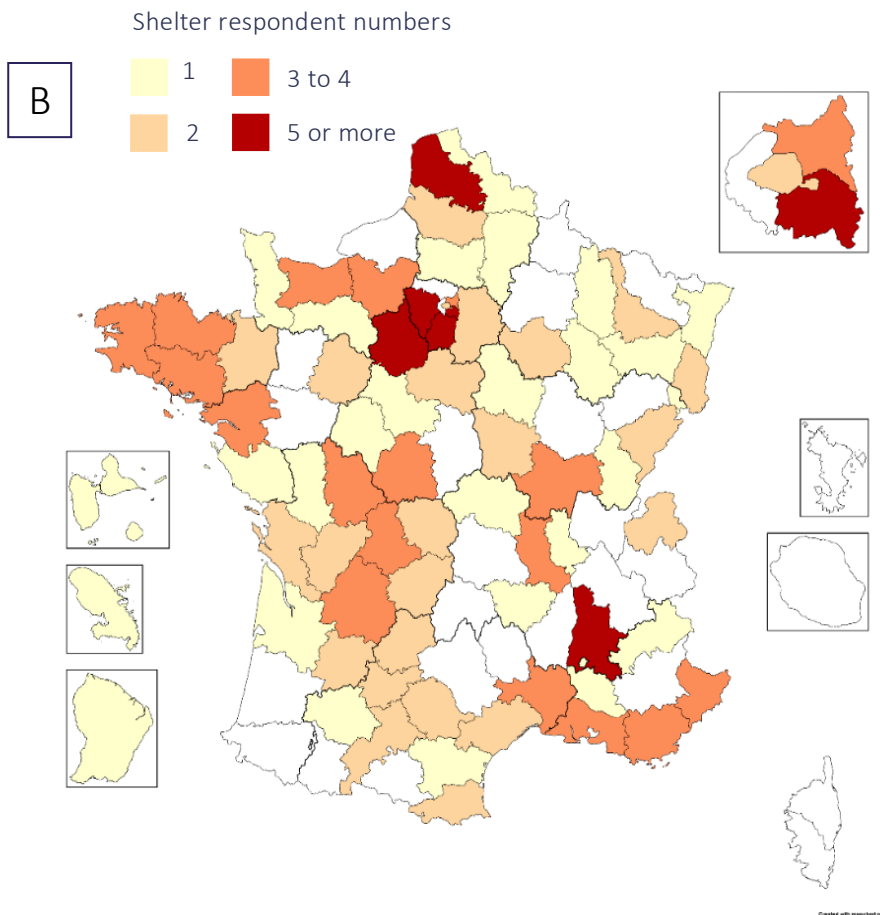
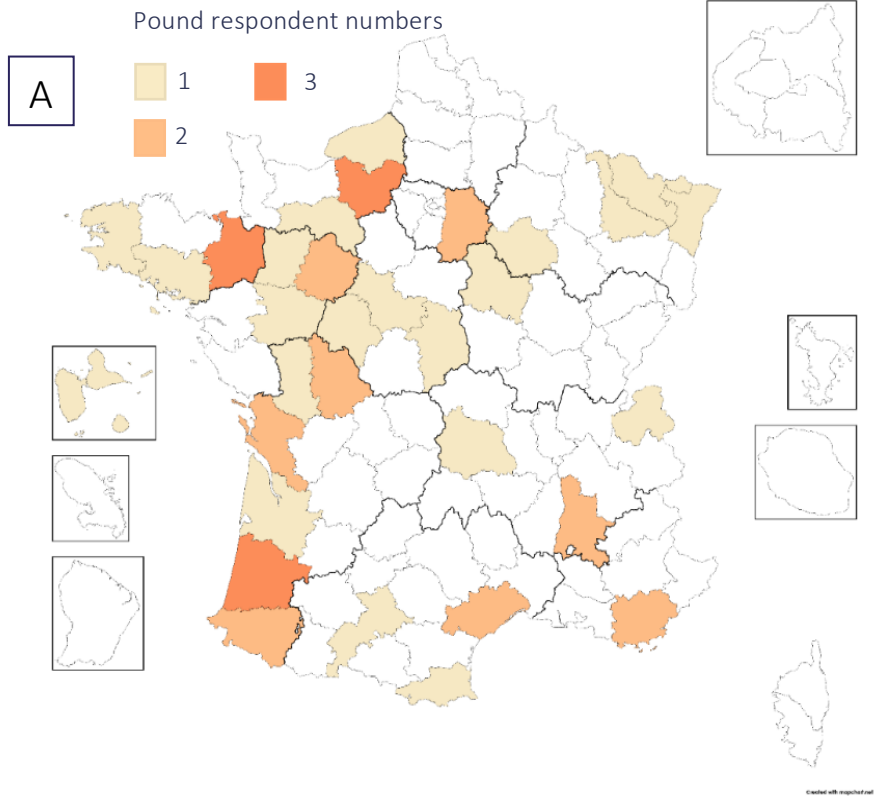
The spread of respondents for each of the various types of provision was not even across the geographical area covered (mainland France and overseas departments and territories (DOMTOM)) (*Figure 3*).

In fact, pounds in the survey tended to be concentrated in the west of mainland France, with at most three facilities per department, compared with other types of facility (*Figure 3, A*). Among respondents from the DOMTOM, one mentioned the existence of a pound in Guadeloupe.

More shelters responded, giving a more even spread across France and with as many as 7 facilities responding from the Val de Marne. The DOMTOM were also represented in the shelter respondent figures, with respondents reporting from one facility in each of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana (*Figure 3, B*).

The number of respondents from pound-shelters was fairly small, with 1 to 4 facilities responding per department. The pattern of departments with at least one responding pound-shelter was fairly evenly distributed across France (*Figure 3, C*). Overseas, two facilities in Martinique responded.

A large number of respondents worked in associations without shelter facilities in south-eastern France, with 26 responding from the Bouches du Rhône, 24 from Var and 22 from Hérault. At least one association responded from each DOMTOM represented in the responses to the questionnaire, with two in La Réunion and two in Mayotte (*Figure 3, D*).



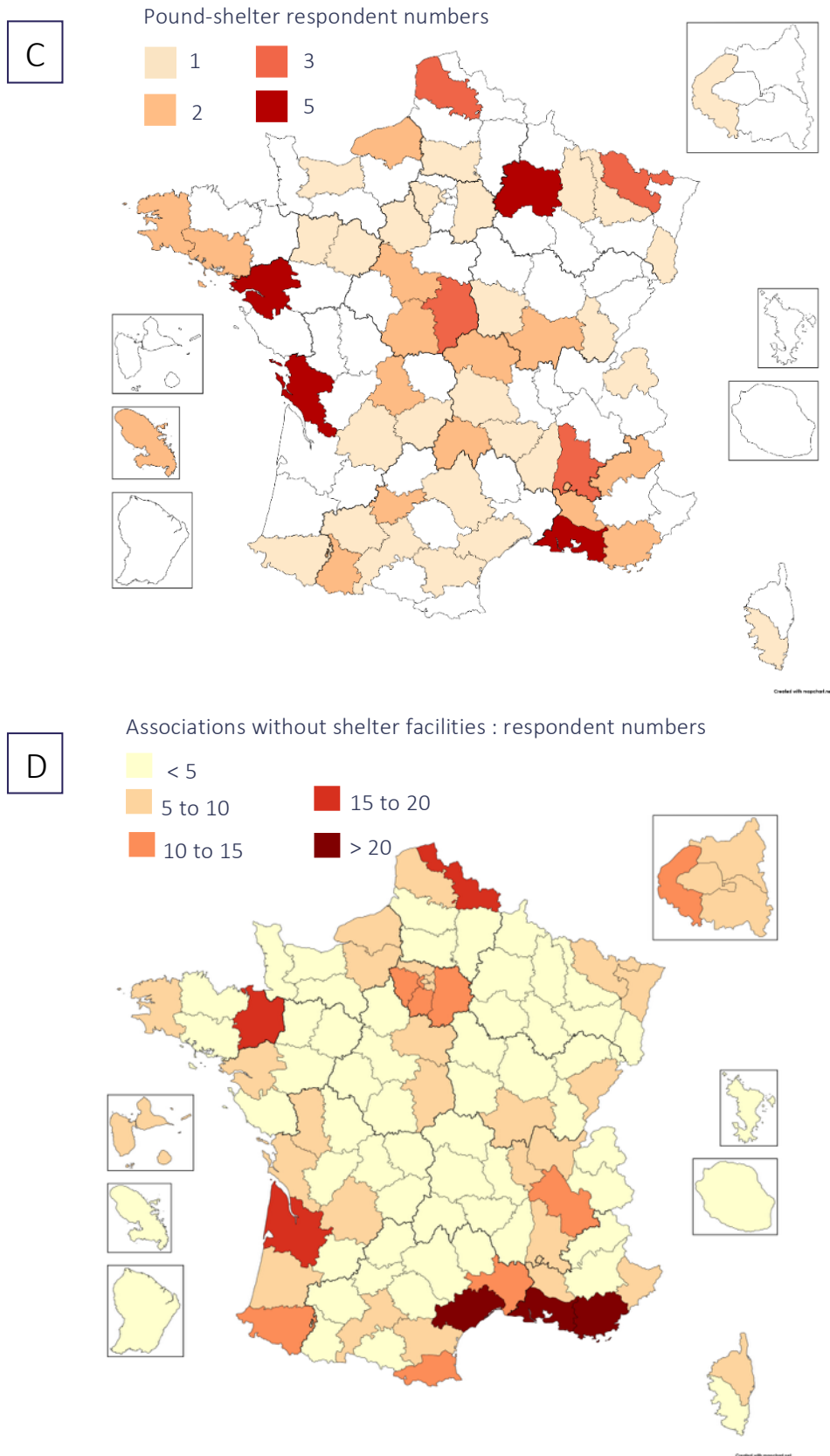


Figure 3. Respondents shown for each type of accommodation by French department

Map A shows the numbers for pounds. Map B shows the numbers for shelters. Map C shows the numbers for pound-shelters. Map D shows the numbers for associations without shelter facilities. Maps were obtained by processing the data using MapChart

The distribution of responding facilities and associations across the country, particularly in the case of pound services (pounds and pound-shelters) was uneven. These types of accommodation had the lowest number of respondents per department and were concentrated in rural areas (see 2.2.3). These figures appear low, given that each municipality is required to provide a pound service. This distribution could, however, be explained by the fact that such facilities are legally permitted to serve several municipalities, providing (mandatory) care of stray animals and animals found roaming on behalf of different municipal authorities. In fact, under Article L.211-24 of the CRPM, councils may elect to provide a pound service located within the boundaries of another municipality. This means that a single pound (or pound-shelter) can receive animals from a very large area. Moreover, the number of pounds that responded to the questionnaire does not necessarily match the total number of pounds in a given area, meaning that the sample of respondents may not be representative of the actual distribution in the area.



Recommendation 1

In conjunction with the planned official census of facilities to be conducted by the BNO, the FRCAW recommends that a more detailed characterisation (location, size, species cared for, etc.) of facilities and associations accommodating strays should be carried out at the level of regions and departments, so that their distribution can be mapped and details of their organisation and operation can be recorded. Such analysis could, for example, identify disparities and gaps in provision by shelters, associations without shelter facilities and pound services in certain departments, and encourage the creation of new shelters in targeted areas where appropriate. One or more bodies delegated by the DGAL could be assigned responsibility for this survey.

2.2.3 Breakdown of facilities and organisations by geographical setting

‘Geographical settings’ (rural/urban/semi-rural) for facilities and operations were also recorded in the questionnaire (*Figure 4*).

Generally speaking, almost half of all respondents (46%) said they were located in rural areas. Unlike other facilities and organisations, associations without shelter facilities were more likely to be found in towns rather than in semi-rural areas. This may be explained by the absence of a physical facility for these respondents, who then gave the locations of their head offices rather than those of their foster households. The ‘other’ section was used by organisations describing themselves as being based mainly in the mountains. For associations without a shelter, some respondents stated that their foster households were distributed throughout the area.

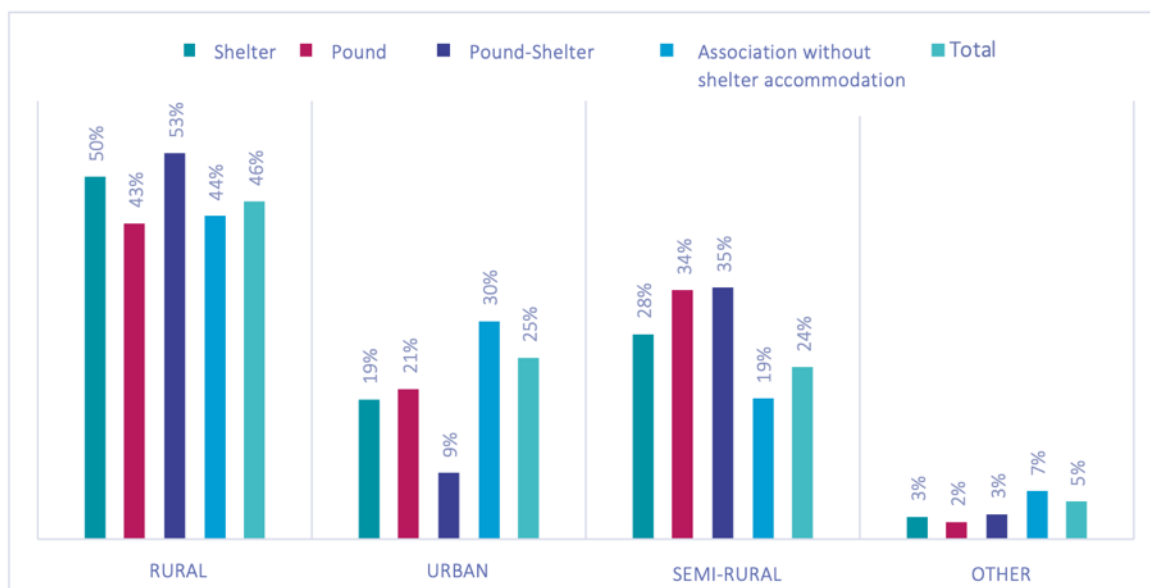


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents in the sample according to type of facility or operation and 'geographical setting'

2.2.4 Legal status of facilities or associated organisations and authorities

The operations that responded differed in their legal status, some being independent (i.e. not belonging to a recognised animal welfare association), some belonging to a recognised animal welfare association (SPA, CNDA, FBB, etc.) or private company, and others operating as contractors for a local authority. The vast majority of those that responded (76%) were independent. Those that were not independent were either attached to an animal welfare association (SPA or CNDA; 5% or 10% respectively), operated as a private company (SACPA; 3%) or were contracted to a municipality or inter-communal group of authorities (4%) (Table 5).

Table 5. Legal status of facilities or their associated organisations and authorities

Percentages relate to the number of retained returns for each class of organisation (total 800).

Legal status of facility /associated organisation or authority	Example of organisation	Respondents (N)	% percentage
Animal welfare association recognised as being of public utility	SPA	43	5%
	CNDA	79	10%
	Fondation 30 Million d'Amis	1	0,1%
Private company	SACPA	21	3%
Independent operation		609	76%
Facility overseen by a municipality or intercommunal group of authorities		34	4%
Other		13	2%
Total		800	100%

Organisations linked to OCAD partners were not as well-represented as independent organisations. This can be explained by the very high proportion of associations without shelter facilities in the pool of respondents to the questionnaire, with shelters making up the second largest group (see [Table 4](#)). Pounds and pound-shelters were the facility types most frequently run for or by an animal welfare association, a private contractor (SACPA in particular) or a municipal authority (see [Figure 5](#)). As municipalities are obliged to accommodate animals found roaming on the public highway, these either operated their own pound service or contracted this service to a private company or animal welfare association. Shelters were exclusively run for or by animal welfare associations, some of whom were recognised as being of public utility, while others were independent. Last, 96% of associations without shelter facilities (AWS) that responded were independent. Only 2% of this group described themselves as answerable to a municipality or intercommunal group of authorities ([Figure 5](#)).

Those organisations that selected ‘Other’ did not specify their status in the questionnaire.

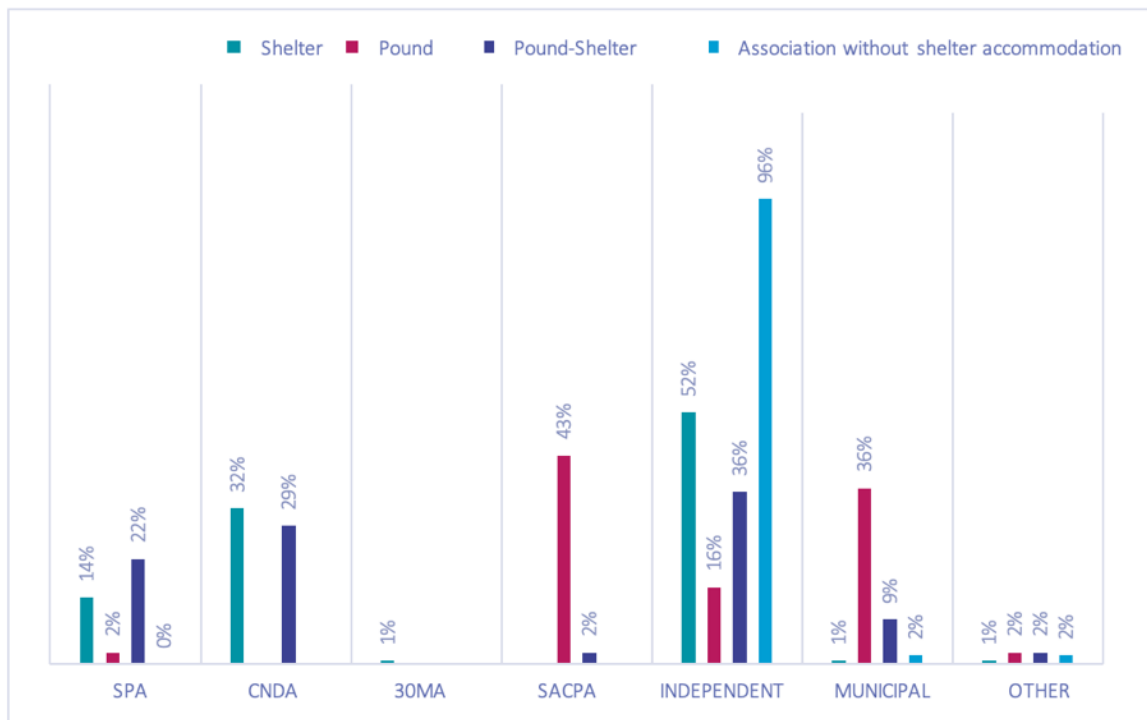


Figure 5. Accommodation types (shown as a percentage of total responses for that type) for each major welfare organisation or legal class of facility

Percentages are calculated in relation to the number of returns. NB, the single shelter owned by the Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis is shown with a notional value of 1% on the graph, but this value is not included in the total percentage for this shelter type.

2.2.5 Demographics of responding facility and operation managers and staff

Statistical analysis of the demographic data collected, shown in *Table 6* and *Table 7* was carried out using Sphinx Déclic 2 software. Statistical tests were run for data relating to the gender and age of the responding staff members according to the type of facility they worked for. For the data in each of the tables:

- Chi-square tests were performed,
- Values shown in bold are significantly over-represented (difference = +) or under-represented (difference = -), with a 5% risk threshold, in relation to the figures in each column.

In the pool of respondents, women outnumbered men by 684 to 113. Three respondents defined themselves differently from the two genders named in the questionnaire.

Of additional note is the fact that the gender distribution figures by type of facility or operation (*Table 6*), show just over 60% of those working in pounds or pound-shelters to be women, while 36% and 39%, respectively, were men. Thus, while women were still in the majority in pounds and pound-shelters, their proportion in these establishments was significantly lower than in associations without shelter facilities, in particular. Correspondingly, men were significantly over-represented in pounds and pound-shelters compared with associations without shelter facilities.

Table 6. Relationship between respondents' gender and type of organisation for which they worked

($p \leq 0.01$; $\text{Khi}2 = 89.46$; $\text{ddl} = 6.00$). Percentages are calculated in relation to the number of returns. Values in bold are significantly over-represented (difference = +) or under-represented (difference = -), with a 5% threshold.

	Female			Male			Other	
	N	%	Diff	N	%	Diff	N	%
<i>Shelter</i>	141	84.40%		24	14.30%		2	1.20%
<i>Pound</i>	27	61.40%	-	16	36.40%	+	1	2.30%
<i>Pound / Shelter</i>	53	60.90%	-	34	39.10%	+	0	0%
<i>Association w/o shelter accommodation</i>	463	92.20%	+	39	7.80%	-	0	0%

Turning to the age of respondents (N=800), the vast majority were over 50 (455). Three other age ranges could be chosen by respondents:

- > 40 to 50 (176 responses)
- > 30 to 40 (120 responses)
- > 18 to 30 (50 responses)



The age distribution of managers and responding staff members across the different facilities and accommodation types is shown in *Table 7*.

Managers and responding staff members aged over 50 (N=455) were represented in higher numbers in shelters than in other types of accommodation. In pounds, the 40-50 and 18-30 age ranges were over-represented, while the over-50s were under-represented in pounds compared with other facilities. The 18-30 age range was under-represented in pound-shelters, while the 30-40 age group was over-represented here, compared with other facilities.

Over-50s were present in greater numbers among the responding staff members of associations without shelter facilities than other age groups.

Table 7. Relationship between age of respondents and type of facility/organisation for which they worked

($p \leq 0.01$; $\text{Chi}^2 = 89.46$; $\text{ddl} = 6.00$). Percentages are calculated in relation to the number of returns. Values in bold are significantly over-represented (difference = +) or under-represented (difference = -), with a threshold of 5%.

	18 - 30			30 - 40			40 - 50			Over 50		
	N	%	Diff	N	%	Diff	N	%	Diff	N	%	Diff
<i>Shelter</i>	8	4.80%		20	11.90%		33	19.60%		106	63.50%	+
<i>Pound</i>	6	13.60%	+	8	18.20%		14	31.80%	+	16	36.40%	-
<i>Pound / Shelter</i>	1	1.10%	-	22	25.30%	+	17	19.50%		47	54%	
<i>Association w/o shelter accommodation</i>	35	7%		70	13.90%		112	22.30%		285	56.80%	

2.2.6 Species accommodated by the facilities and organisations in the sample

Most shelters for dogs or cats in the sample also took in the other species (80% and 85% of respondents respectively) (*Figure 6, A et C*). In the case of pound-shelters, the 3% described as ‘mixed’ accommodated a single species in the pound section and both species in the shelter section.

The shelters in the sample were the most varied in terms of the species they looked after (*Figure 6, B*), with 50% taking in both species, 31% cats only and 19% dogs only. Last, cats were the species most cared for by AWS respondents (65%) (*Figure 6, D*). Associations without shelter facilities taking in both species accounted for 26% of respondents, and only 9% of AWS specialised in fostering dogs.



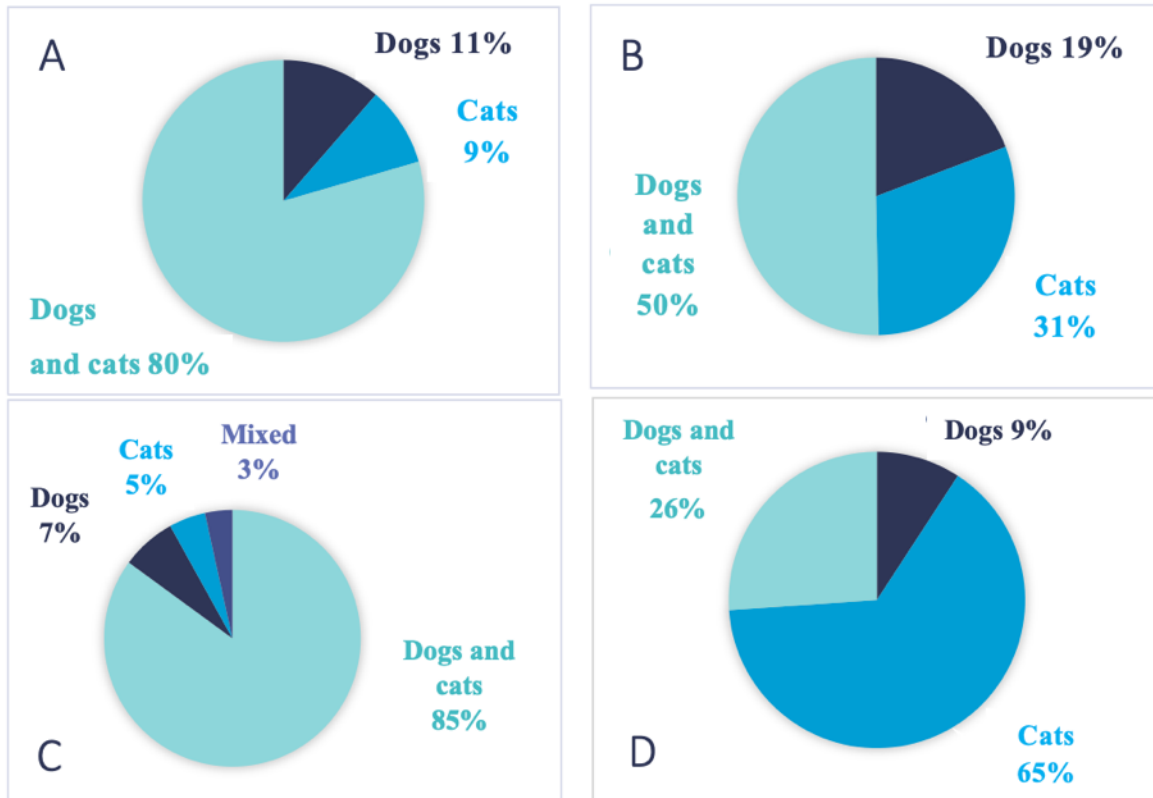


Figure 6. Distribution of each species (dogs and cats) in the charge of the four types of facility or operation that responded to the questionnaire

A. Pounds. B. Shelters. C. Pound-shelters. D. Associations without shelter facilities.

*Mixed denotes accommodation in pound-shelters for both species (dogs and cats), where both species are accommodated in the shelter part of the operation and only one of the two species is accommodated in the pound.

2.2.7 Size of facilities and operations in the sample

First, the capacity of each facility or operation was analysed (*Table 8*) and size classes were established for each of the accommodation types.

Table 8. Analysis of accommodation capacity data reported by responding facilities or organisations

		N	Min-Max	Mode	Median	Mean	SD	CV
CATS	Pound	39	1-120	10	23	29.21	27.11	0.93
	Shelter	135	0-300	50	49.5	64.98	53.91	0.83
	Pound-shelter (pound)	79	0-300	20	20	34.10	53.93	1.58
	Pound-shelter (shelter)	81	5-450	50	64	86.85	74.28	0.86
	Association w/o shelter accommodation	456	0-410	10	6	13.57	27.23	2.01
DOGS	Pound	40	2-120	49	18	25.45	24.53	0.96
	Shelter	116	1-199	49	49	47.51	33.24	0.70
	Pound-shelter (pound)	89	1-204	10	10	25.55	40.35	1.58
	Pound-shelter (shelter)	83	3-400	49	50	82.54	67.85	0.82
	Association w/o shelter accommodation	177	0-200	2	4	9.04	18.72	2.07

For pounds, the capacity reported by respondents ranged from 1 to 120 for cats (N=39) and 2 to 120 for dogs (N=40). These figures indicate highly variable pound sizes in the survey, with the average (mean) numbers of animals accommodated being 29 for cats and 25 for dogs. Last, the most frequently reported capacity (mode) was 49 for dogs and 10 for cats.

Broad ranges of shelter capacities were also reported by respondents, from 0 to 300 for cats (N=135) and from 1 to 199 for dogs (N=116). The shelters in the sample had a mean capacity of 65 for cats and 48 for dogs. Two shelters stated that they had no capacity for cats. One said it took in cats only as part of sterilisation campaigns. The most frequently cited capacity was 49 for dogs and 50 for cats.

For the pound-shelters in the sample, capacities ranged from 0 to 300 for cats and from 1 to 204 for dogs on the pound side. The range was even greater for shelters, with capacities ranging from 5 to 450 for cats and 3 to 400 for dogs. On average, pound-shelters could accommodate 34 cats and 26 dogs. The mean capacity of the shelter side of operations was higher, at 87 for cats and 83 for dogs. The most frequently reported capacity for dogs was 49 in shelters and 10 in pounds. For cats, the most frequently reported capacity was 50 in shelters and 20 in pounds.

For the associations without shelter facilities in the sample, the number of foster households was recorded rather than the number of animals that could be accommodated. For those taking in cats (n=456), the number of foster households per organisation varied widely, from 0 to 450 homes. For dogs (N=177), the number of foster



households per organisation ranged between 0 and 200 homes. The two associations that reported no foster households for dogs did not provide details. Associations without shelter facilities operated with an average of 14 foster households for cats and 9 foster households for dogs.

Generally speaking, and for all types of facility and operation, accommodation capacities reported by the respondents were diverse, and major differences in the size of the facilities can hence be observed (significant standard deviations). Additionally, the repeated references to a capacity of 49 for dogs tell us little about the facilities (other than AWS), as this figure represents a threshold concerning the health, animal welfare and technical standards to which pound and shelter facilities that house dogs must adhere. If a facility can accommodate more than 49 dogs, it becomes subject to the Environment Code, whose regulations are a priori more restrictive in terms of procedures and the time required for approval (Article L512-1 of the French Environment Code), (see *Additional information (in alphabetical order)*). Where this figure is cited in responses, it accordingly suggests that the organisations in question have taken a decision not to accommodate more than 49 animals, particularly in the case of dogs.

In addition, while some respondents, particularly associations without shelter facilities, recorded their capacity as 'zero', this was not always in line with answers given elsewhere in the questionnaire. In such cases, these data have been retained in the analysis because the other data these respondents provided was consistent, particularly in relation to reasons for animals' entry and exit. In some cases, it would be reasonable to assume that facilities and organisations reported an accommodation capacity of 'zero' when cats entered their charge only during sterilisation campaigns. Indeed, for both male and female animals, the provision in this context involves only a single day's accommodation. It does raise the question, though, of the type of accommodation provided to animals by facilities and organisations during sterilisation campaigns. In other cases where a 'zero' accommodation capacity was recorded, this could indicate that these facilities make no provision for a particular species but will take animals in anyway because there are no other options for their accommodation.

With regard to the size of the accommodation (see 2.1.3.2) available in each type of facility or operation, a specific scale of size classes was established for each type based on the capacities recorded by respondents.

Table 9 shows the size classes for pounds. 'Small' pounds (fewer than 35 animals) were the class most frequently recorded by respondents, based on the combined figures for both species (*Figure 7*).

The 'large' and 'very large' pounds that responded (more than 70 animals) accommodated both species.



Table 9. Size classes of pounds in the survey

Class	Capacity (number of animals housed)
Small	0-35
Medium	36-70
Large	71-105
Very large	>106

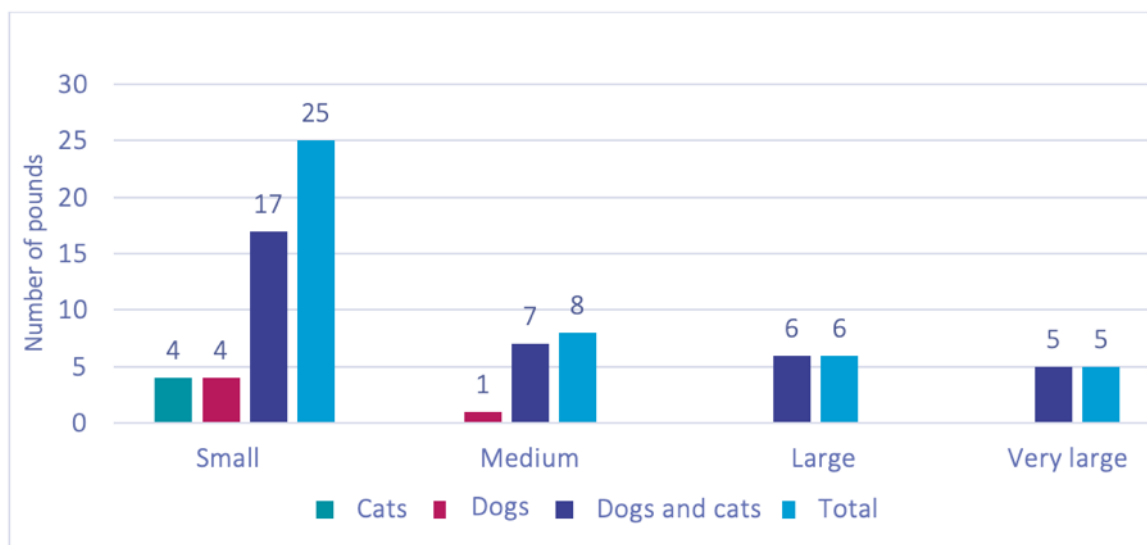


Figure 7. Distribution of pounds in the survey by size and species

Size classes for shelters are shown in *Table 10*. **Shelters** in the sample were **mainly medium-sized** (*Figure 8*). Distribution differed according to the species cared for. Specialised cat shelters were more likely to be small, while specialised dog shelters were mostly of medium size. Shelters for both species were mainly distributed across the medium, large and very large classes of facility.

Table 10. Size classes of shelters in the survey

Class	Capacity (number of animals housed)
Small	0-45
Medium	46-90
Large	91-135
Very large	>136

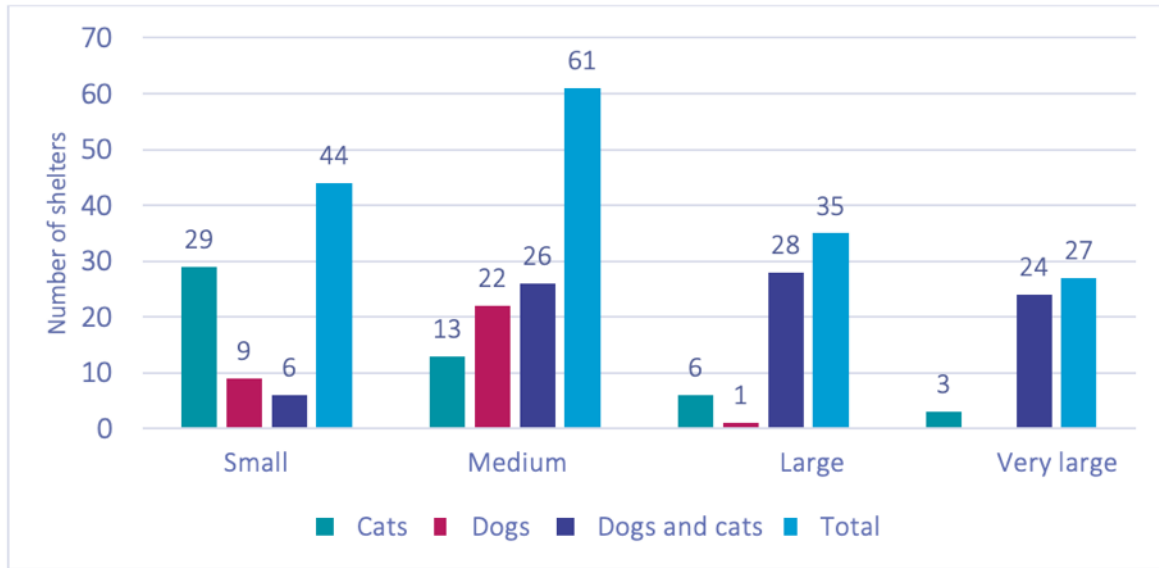


Figure 8. Distribution of shelters in the survey by size and species

For the pound-shelters (POSH) in the survey, the size classes assigned to the pound side of operations were equivalent to those of separate pounds, while those assigned to the shelter side of operations were equivalent to individual shelters (Table 9 and Table 10). The majority of POSHs had somewhat **small** pounds overall for **both species** (

Figure 9). On the pound side of operations, pounds that only took in cats were mostly small, with only one being described as large. Dog-only pounds were also described as small. Last, pounds taking in both species were found in all classes. On the shelter side of operations, the size distribution of shelters for all species was the reverse of that for pounds (Figure 10). **Most of the POSH shelters in the sample are very large.** In almost all cases, large and very large facilities looked after both dogs and cats.

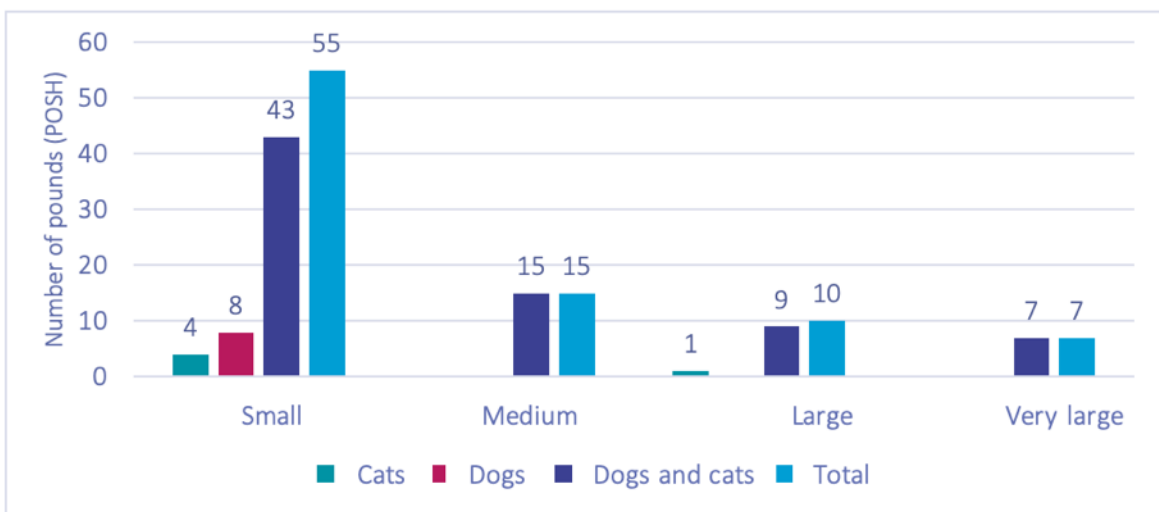


Figure 9. Distribution of pound-shelters in the survey (pound side of operations) by size and species

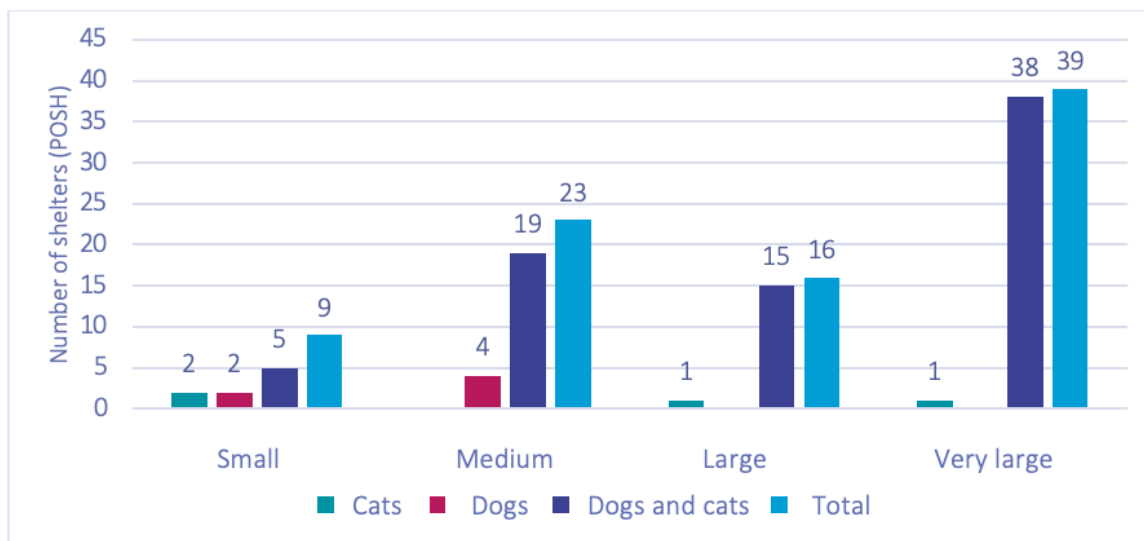


Figure 10. Distribution of pound-shelters in the survey (shelter side of operations) by size and species

The size classes for the associations with no shelter facilities that responded are shown in *Table 11*. The vast majority of cat AWS were small, but they were nevertheless to be encountered in all classes, including 23 very large associations each working with more than 31 foster households. This distribution was more or less similar for AWS fostering only dogs and those that fostered both species (*Figure 11*).

Table 11. Size classes of associations without shelter facilities in the survey

Class	Capacity (number of animals housed)
<i>Small</i>	0-10
<i>Medium</i>	11-20
<i>Large</i>	21-30
<i>Very large</i>	>31

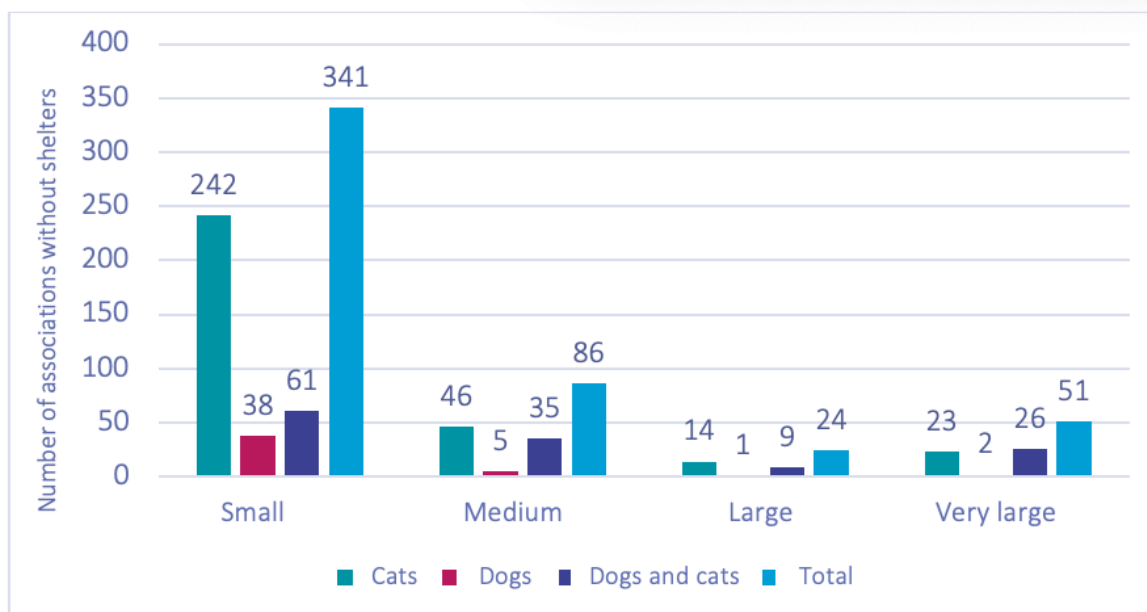


Figure 11. Distribution of associations without shelter accommodation in the survey by size and species

2.3 Proposal for a closed list of reasons for entering and leaving the charge of authorities and organisations

2.3.1 Reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave pounds by frequency of occurrence: results and discussion

2.3.1.1 Reasons for entry

A score for each reason why cats were admitted to a pound is shown in *Table 12* while scores for dogs on the same basis are shown in *Table 13*.



Table 12. Scores for reasons why cats entered pounds in the survey

Reasons for cats to enter pounds	Score
Captured by pound staff	6/10
Dead animal	6/10
Delivered by the authorities	4/10
Sterilisation campaign	4/10
Brought in by a third party	3/10
Captured by the pound following notification by a third party	2/10
Removal ordered by a court	2/10
Removal by the authorities	2/10
Tied up/left in front of the pound	2/10
Investigation into animal abuse	1/10
Brought in by the owner in person	1/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	1/10
Other	0/10

Cats mainly entered the facilities following their capture by pound staff while on patrol or their capture by the authorities (*Table 12*) with scores of 6/10 and 4/10 respectively. Dead cats were also very often collected by pounds, with a score of 6/10.

Sterilisation campaigns were a further common reason for a cat to enter a pound (4/10) (see *Additional information (in alphabetical order)*). Also, despite the fact that pounds are not always authorised to accept a cat brought in by a third party (see *Additional information (in alphabetical order)*), this reason for entry was nevertheless chosen by respondents (3/10). Because direct surrender by owners is frequently unauthorised for pounds, this remained a minority reason for admission. Pounds also sometimes found themselves obliged to admit animals brought in by vets.

Last, the removal of animals ordered by the courts or responsible authorities and the accommodation of cats involved in investigations into abuse were only infrequently selected as reasons for entry to pounds.



Table 13. Scores for reasons why dogs entered pounds in the survey

Reasons for dogs to enter pounds	Score
Captured by the pound	6/10
Delivered by the authorities	5/10
Dead animal	5/10
Removal ordered by a court	4/10
Investigation into animal abuse	4/10
Removal by the authorities	3/10
Brought in by a third party	3/10
Tied up in front of the pound	2/10
Captured by the pound following notification by a third party	2/10
Brought in person by the keeper	1/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	1/10
Other	0/10

Like cats, dogs mainly entered a pound following their capture either by the pound or a competent authority, with scores of 6/10 and 5/10 respectively (*Table 13*). The recovery of dead dogs was also a frequent reason selected (5/10).

For dogs, removals ordered by the courts or responsible authorities and the accommodation of dogs during investigations into abuse scored fairly highly (4/10). Last, as with cats, dogs were regularly brought to the pound by a third party (a priori not the animal's owner), but rarely by the animal's keeper or a vet (1/10).

2.3.1.2 Reasons for leaving

Scores for reasons why cats left the charge of pounds are shown in *Table 14* and those for dogs are shown in *Table 15*.



Table 14. Scores for reasons why cats left pounds in the survey

Reasons for cats to leave pounds	Score
Transferred to a shelter	7/10
Collected by the owner	4/10
Transferred to an AWS	3/10
Euthanised due to poor health	3/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	2/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	2/10
Died following injury	2/10
Died for no known reason	2/10
Died of old age	1/10
Euthanised because no alternative available	1/10
Euthanised following a court order	0/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Transferred to another pound	0/10
Other	0/10

Transfer to a shelter and collection of the cat by its owner were the most common reasons for leaving a pound’s charge, with scores of 7/10 and 4/10 respectively. Transfers to AWS ranked third, despite a low score of 3/10.

Euthanasia featured as one of the reasons given by pounds for cats leaving their charge. Several reasons for euthanasia were given, with euthanasia on the grounds that the animal was in poor health being that most frequently selected (3/10). Euthanasia for public health or behavioural reasons was selected less frequently, but still scored 2/10. The reason ‘euthanised because no alternatives available’ was chosen even less often (1/10). Exits due to the death of the animal were also mentioned. The death of cats from old age scored very low but was nonetheless reported by some respondents as a reason for leaving their charge.

Three reasons for leaving a pound identified by the FRCAW and included in the questionnaire appear never have been encountered by respondents: euthanasia following a court order, euthanasia for another reason, and transfer to another pound (*Table 14*).

Table 15. Scores for reasons why dogs left pounds in the survey

Reasons for dogs to leave pounds	Score
Transferred to a shelter	7/10
Collected by the owner	6/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Died following injury	2/10
Died of old age	2/10
Died for no known reason	1/10
Transferred to an AWS	1/10
Euthanised by order of a court	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	1/10
Euthanised because no alternative available	1/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Transferred to another pound	0/10
Other	0/10

The main reasons for dogs to leave the pound were transfers to shelters and collection by their owners, with scores of 7/10 and 6/10 respectively. ‘Euthanised due to poor health’ and ‘died following injury’ were two further reasons selected for leaving the pound, with low scores of 2/10. The reasons for departure most rarely selected were euthanasia ‘because no alternatives available’, following a court order, for public health reasons or for behavioural reasons, transfers to an AWS and unexplained deaths (1/10).

The exit reason ‘transferred to another pound’ seems never to have been encountered by respondents in the case of dogs in pounds (*Table 15*).

3.1.3. Recording reasons for entry and exit in a register

In the majority of cases, for both species, managers kept a register of reasons for animals entering the pound (over 60% of cases) (*Figure 12*).

Registers were mainly either on paper or in the form of a computerised document. For the departures of animals, reasons were more frequently entered in a register (in more than 95% of cases) with use of paper or electronic documents (paper, computer or both) in the same proportions as for admissions.



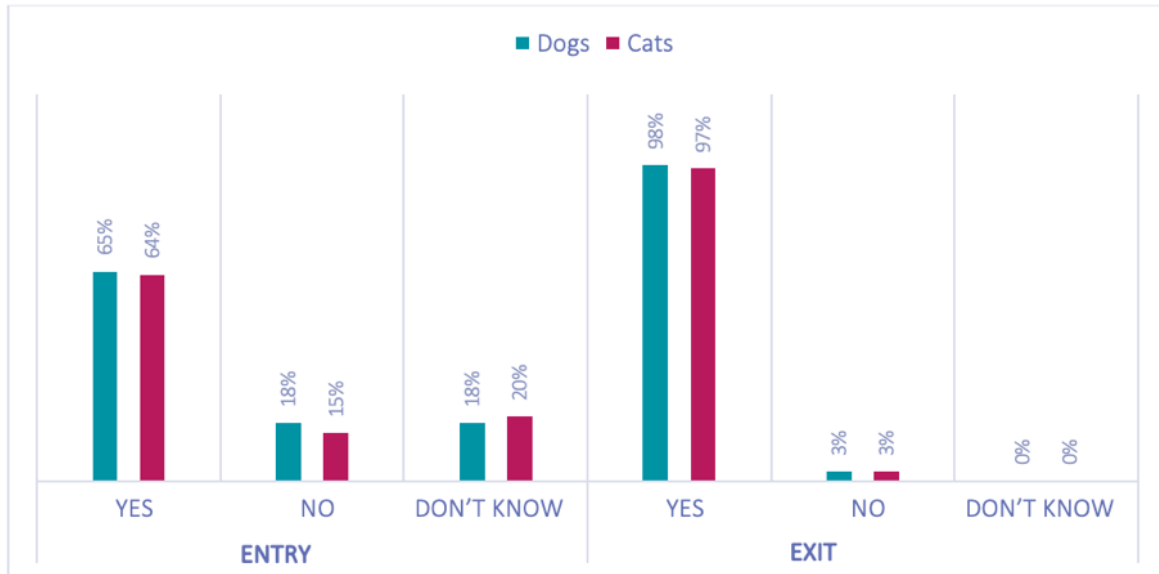


Figure 12. Pound manager or staff responses on keeping a register of reasons for entry and exit of dogs and cats

2.3.1.3 Discussion: reasons for entering and leaving pounds

The reasons most frequently selected for cats and dogs to enter pounds are consistent with the latter’s statutory duties and correspond to the most common system of animal management in operation in France, i.e., capture by the pound or the responsible authorities (see *Additional information (in alphabetical order)*).

It should be noted that the high frequency score for entries of dead animals reflects the fact that cats and dogs roaming the public highway can be at greater risk of dying.

An additional matter of note is the apparently greater likelihood for dogs (as compared with cats) to be seized by order of the courts or as the result of decisions by responsible authorities, and to be associated with investigations into abuse. This difference could indicate that dogs are more frequent victims of abuse than cats, or are at least more likely to be reported as such.

The primary function of a pound is to take charge of any animal found roaming and find its owner as quickly as possible, i.e. within 8 working days. After this period, if animals are not collected by their owners or if the owner is not found, they become the property of the pound, which becomes responsible for what happens to them (see *Glossary* (English version)). Thus, for dogs and cats alike, transfers to shelters or collection by their owners are both outcomes consistent with the legislative framework for the management of animals in pounds. When no spaces are available in shelters, or none in the area, associations without shelter facilities are an important option for the rehoming of animals from pounds.

In addition, the score for ‘collected by the owner’ was higher for dogs than for cats. This raises the question of identification. The fact that dogs are more easily identified makes it simpler to find their owners and increases the chance of success (CNR BEA, 2022).

All the reasons listed for euthanasia were reported by respondents and were scored consistently lower for both species than the other reasons discussed above. Nonetheless, in the case of animals found roaming, ‘euthanised due to poor health’ was the most frequently cited reason. Here again, the hazards associated with roaming could explain the frequency of this reason. Where the euthanasia of dogs by court order was selected, this could be linked to cases of dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs. Last, no information was given on transfers between pounds.

2.3.2 Reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave shelters by frequency of occurrence: results and discussion

2.3.2.1 Reasons for entry

A score for each reason why cats were admitted to shelters is shown in *Table 16* while scores for dogs on the same basis are shown in *Table 17*.

Table 16. Scores for reasons why cats entered shelters in the survey

Reasons for cats to enter shelters	Score
Brought in by the owner in person	4/10
Transferred from a pound	4/10
Brought in by a third party	3/10
Left in front of the shelter	3/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	3/10
Investigation into animal abuse	3/10
Transferred from another shelter	2/10
Returned by the adopter (beyond end of trial period)	2/10
Other	2/10

According to the respondents, cats admitted to shelters were mainly either brought in by their owners or came from a pound (both 4/10) (*Table 16*).

They could also be brought in by a third party or a vet, or were left outside the shelter. Cats associated with investigations into abuse were also entrusted to shelters (3/10). Last, cats could be transferred between shelters or returned by adoptive households after the trial period set by the shelter had expired. Beyond this period, ownership would have been transferred from the shelter to the new keeper.



In almost all entries under ‘Other’ reasons, with a score of 2/10, respondents stated that animals were admitted following a reported case, or a refusal by the public authorities to take charge of the animal. Respondents recorded that such reports came from private individuals who had found cats in their gardens, dustbins or the street. Additionally, some respondents indicated that their shelter captured cats directly on the street, a practice that is not permitted under the current legal policy framework for stray cat management unless agreement is given by the mayor.

Last, one respondent commented that cats from associations abroad are also admitted by certain shelters.

Table 17. Scores for reasons why dogs entered shelters in the survey

Reasons for dogs to enter shelters	Score
Brought in by the owner in person	5/10
Transferred from a pound	5/10
Investigation into animal abuse	4/10
Brought in by a third party	3/10
Left outside the shelter	3/10
Transferred from another shelter	3/10
Returned by the adopter (beyond end of trial period)	3/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	2/10
Other	1/10

Respondents suggested that dogs were brought to shelters by their owners and from pounds in equal proportion (5/10) (*Table 17*). Dogs were often admitted in association with investigations into abuse, scoring 4/10. Dogs were also brought to the shelter by a third party or left tied up in front of the shelter (3/10), and could be transferred between shelters or returned from adoptive households. They were less frequently brought in by vets than were cats. With a score of 1/10, respondents also provided details of other reasons for dogs to enter shelters. The reasons given were as follows:

- > Unattended dogs were picked up directly by the shelter. Some specified that these were dogs found roaming on the public highway or in the forest;
- > In the DOMTOM, admittance could involve the capture of stray dogs adopted by local residents and then abandoned again by their new keepers;
- > Rescue of dogs from other countries;
- > Dogs had been retired or retrained after breeding.



2.3.2.2 Reasons for leaving

The score for each reason for an animal’s departure from a shelter is shown for cats in *Table 18* and for dogs in *Table 19*.

Table 18. Scores for reasons why cats left shelters in the survey

Reasons for cats to leave shelters	Score
Adopted	7/10
Died from old age	3/10
Collected by the owner	2/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Died following injury	2/10
Died for no known reason	2/10
Transferred to another shelter	1/10
Transferred to an AWS	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10
Euthanised for other reasons	1/10
Euthanised following a court order	0/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	0/10
Other	0/10

The survey results show that the main reason for cats to leave shelters was adoption, with a score of 7/10 (*Table 18*). The second most common reason for leaving the shelters was death from old age (3/10). Although some cats were collected by their owners, this reason did not score highly (2/10). Shelters also euthanised animals in a very poor state of health (2/10), and similar proportions of cats died following injuries or without explanation. The reason ‘euthanised for other reasons’ was selected by some respondents and was reported to be due to contagious diseases and, to a lesser extent, lack of space. Euthanasia for public health reasons scored very low.

Two exit pathways identified by the FRCAW for cats from shelters would appear not to have been encountered by respondents: euthanasia by court order and for behavioural reasons.

Table 19. Scores for reasons why dogs left shelters in the survey

Reasons why dogs left shelters	Score
Adopted	8/10
Died of old age	3/10
Collected by the owner	2/10
Transferred to another shelter	2/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	2/10
Died following injury	2/10
Died for no known reason	2/10
Transferred to an AWS	1/10
Euthanised following a court order	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10
Euthanised for other reasons	1/10
Other	0/10

Adoption was the main reason selected in the survey for dogs to leave shelters (8/10) (*Table 19*). The significant gap between this score and those of all other reasons for departure points to the predominance of this exit pathway. Dogs did nevertheless die of old age in shelters, with a score of 3/10, as did cats, and owners sometimes reclaimed their pets (2/10). Dogs were also euthanised in shelters, first for behavioural reasons and because their general condition had deteriorated too much (2/10), and to a lesser extent for legal or health reasons (1/10) and for lack of space, the reason given by all the respondents who selected euthanasia for ‘other reasons’.

2.3.2.3 Recording reasons for entry and exit in a register

In the majority of cases, shelter managers kept a register of reasons for entry and exit (over 55% of cases) (*Figure 13*).

Nevertheless, up to a third of respondents reported that they recorded no details for dogs. The most common form of records were on paper for both pathways (entry and exit). Other records mentioned were adoption contracts and the keeping of files associated with the animals. Some respondents specified that they used the official CERFA registration system.



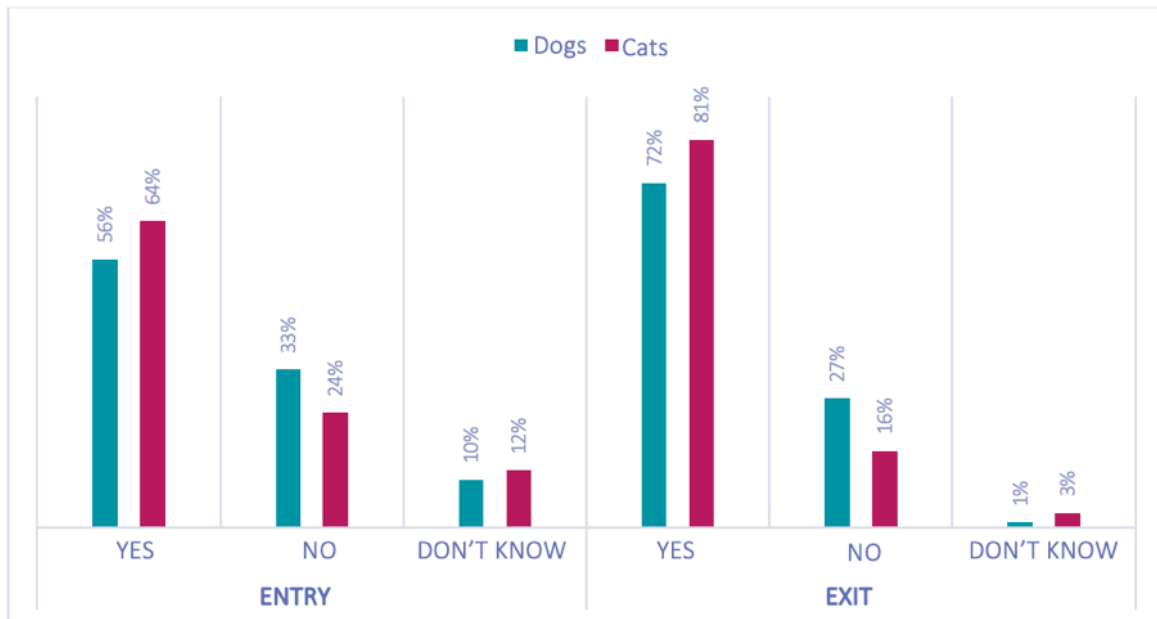


Figure 13. Shelter manager or staff responses on keeping a register of reasons for entry and exit of dogs and cats

2.3.2.4 Discussion: reasons for entering and leaving shelters

Some animals in shelters were reclaimed by their owners. This reason thus applies to lost animals that have been mistakenly classed as abandoned. The fact that this reason appeared in responses from shelters suggests that owners had failed to identify their animals or to update their registration details, making the task of finding them harder for pounds. As a result, the reunification process had taken too long and the animals had been transferred to a shelter following the statutory 8-day stay in the pound.

Meanwhile, some shelters specified reasons for entry other than those proposed by the FRCAW in the questionnaire. Here, the reason most frequently cited for entry for both dogs and cats was that the shelter admitted strays and animals found roaming.

Regarding reasons for departure, the appearance of animal 'died of old age' among shelter returns may reflect the large numbers of older and unadopted animals that can fill shelters. This is a major problem for shelters.

Last, in the case of dogs only, euthanasia for behavioural reasons was selected as an exit pathway. This species may be more prone to behavioural problems that are considered problematic or even dangerous.

2.3.3 Reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave pound-shelters by frequency of occurrence: results and discussion

2.3.3.1 Reasons for entry

Scores for each reason why cats were admitted to a pound-shelter are shown in *Table 20* while scores for dogs on the same basis are shown in *Table 21*.

Table 20. Scores for reasons why cats entered pound-shelters in the survey

Reasons cats entered <u>the pound side</u>	Score	Reasons cats entered <u>the shelter side</u>	Score
Brought in by a third party	7/10	Transferred from a pound	7/10
Brought in by the authorities	6/10	Brought in by the owner in person	6/10
Tied/left in front of the facility	4/10	Left in front of the facility	4/10
Captured by the pound	3/10	Brought in by a third party	3/10
Captured by the pound following notification	3/10	Brought in by a veterinarian	3/10
Investigation into animal abuse	3/10	Returned by the adopter (beyond end of trial period)	3/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	3/10	Investigation into animal abuse	3/10
Dead animal	3/10	Transferred from another shelter	2/10
Sterilisation campaign	3/10	Other	0/10
Removed by order of a court	2/10		
Removed by the authorities	2/10		
Brought in person by keeper	2/10		
Other	0/10		

On the pound side of operations, the highest-scoring reason for entry was that a third party brought a cat directly to the pound (7/10) (*Table 20*). By comparison, this reason scored only 3/10 in responses from individual pounds. The next most frequent entry routes for cats were through the actions of the competent authorities (6/10) or being left in front of the pound (4/10). Veterinary practitioners also seem to have brought cats directly to pound-shelters more regularly. The reasons associated with the legal duties of pounds (capture by the pound, collection of a dead animal, investigation into abuse) were selected less frequently (3/10), along with sterilisation campaigns. Legal or administrative seizures and direct surrender by the keeper occurred still less frequently but nevertheless featured as reasons for entry with a score of 2/10. The death of an animal was also given as a reason.

On the shelter side, cats were mainly transferred from the pounds or were brought in by their owners, with scores of 7/10 and 6/10 respectively. Veterinary practitioners also brought animals directly into the shelters (3/10) and cats were left in front of the facility (4/10). Returns of adopted animals, investigations into abuse and animals brought in by a



third party were also reasons given, with a score of 3/10. Of stated reasons for entry, transfers between shelters were the least frequent (2/10).

Table 21. Scores for reasons why dogs entered pound-shelters in the survey

Reasons dogs entered <u>the pound side</u>	Score	Reasons dogs entered <u>the shelter side</u>	Score
Brought in by authorities	7/10	Brought in by the owner in person	7/10
Brought in by a third party	6/10	Transferred from a pound	7/10
Removed by order of a court	4/10	Brought in by a third party	4/10
Ongoing abuse inquiry	4/10	Returned by the adopter (beyond end of trial period)	4/10
Tied up in front of the pound	4/10	Investigation into animal abuse	4/10
Captured by the pound	3/10	Left in front of the shelter	3/10
Removed by the authorities	3/10	Transferred from another shelter	3/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	3/10	Brought in by a veterinarian	2/10
Dead animal	3/10	Other	0/10
Captured by the pound following notification by a third party	2/10		
Brought in person by the keeper	2/10		
Other	0/10		

As with cats, dogs entered the pound side of pound-shelters mainly through the actions of authorities or third parties, scoring 7/10 and 6/10 respectively (*Table 21*). Leaving dogs tied up in front of the pound was also an entry pathway (4/10). Last, a greater proportion of dogs than cats arrived at pounds run as part of POSH operations following legal removal of the animal and as part of investigations into abuse, with slightly fewer arriving as the result of a decision by the competent authority (4/10 and 3/10). As in the case of cats, reasons associated with the pound’s legal duties (capture by the pound, removal of a dead animal, seizure) were less frequent (3/10 or 2/10), while the direct surrender of animals by their keepers scored 2/10.

On the shelter side of operations, dogs were mainly brought in by their owners or were transferred from the pound, with identical scores of 7/10. The other common reasons for dogs to be admitted to the shelter were ‘brought in by a third party’, ‘returned by the adopter’ or associated with an ‘investigation into abuse’ (4/10). A smaller proportion of dogs were left outside the shelter, transferred from another shelter or brought in by a vet.

2.3.3.2 Reasons for leaving

Scores for reasons why cats left the charge of pound shelters are shown in *Table 22* and those for dogs are shown in *Table 23*.



Table 22. Scores for reasons why cats left the charge of pound-shelters in the survey

Reasons cats left <u>the pound side</u>	Score	Reasons cats left <u>the shelter side</u>	Score
Transferred to a shelter	7/10	Adopted	9/10
Collected by the owner	6/10	Collected by the owner	2/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10	Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Died following injury	2/10	Euthanised for public health reasons	2/10
Died from old age	2/10	Died for no known reason	2/10
Transferred to an AWS	1/10	Died from old age	2/10
Euthanised by order of a court	1/10	Transferred to another shelter	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10	Transferred to an AWS	1/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	1/10	Euthanised for behavioural reasons	1/10
Died for no known reason	1/10	Died following injury	1/10
Euthanised for lack of an alternative	0/10	Euthanised by order of a court	1/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10	Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Transferred to another pound	0/10	Other	0/10
Other	0/10		

On the pound side, transfers to the shelter were the most common exit pathway for cats from the pound (7/10). Cats were also often reclaimed by their owners (6/10) (*Table 22*). The other reasons selected for leaving the pound were similar to those for pounds with no shelter accommodation, being ‘euthanasia due to poor health’ or cases of death from old age, both of which obtained the lower score of 2/10.

On the shelter side, adoptions were the main reason for leaving, with a score of 9/10. The other reasons selected scored much lower. Cats were reported to be reclaimed by their owners, or were euthanised for public health reasons or because their general condition had deteriorated too much (all with a score of 2/10). Transfers to an AWS or another shelter were also cited, but rarely.

Table 23. Scores for reasons why dogs left the charge of pound-shelters in the survey

Reasons dogs left <u>the pound side</u>	Score	Reasons dogs left <u>the shelter side</u>	Score
Transferred to a shelter	7/10	Adopted	9/10
Collected by the owner	6/10	Collected by the owner	3/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10	Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Died following injury	2/10	Died of old age	2/10
Died of old age	2/10	Transferred to another shelter	1/10
Transferred to an AWS	1/10	Transferred to an AWS	1/10
Euthanised by order of a court	1/10	Euthanised by order of a court	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10	Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	1/10	Euthanised for behavioural reasons	1/10
Died for no known reason	1/10	Died following injury	1/10
Euthanised because no alternative available	0/10	Died for no known reason	1/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10	Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Transferred to another pound	0/10	Other	0/10
Other	0/10		

On the pound side of operations, as for pounds without shelter facilities, the highest scoring pathways for dogs to leave the pound were to be transferred to the shelter or reclaimed by their owners, with scores of 7/10 and 6/10 respectively (*Table 23*).

Euthanasia, death, and transfers to an AWS were also given as reasons, but to a lesser extent. Transfers between pounds were never mentioned.

On the shelter side, adoptions were the main reason for departure (9/10). Owners also reclaimed their dogs (3/10). Euthanasia and transfers were the least common reasons for dogs to leave the shelter.

2.3.3.3 Recording reasons for entry and exit in a register

In the majority of cases and for both species, pound managers kept a register of reasons for animals entering the pound (*Figure 14*). A small proportion of respondents did not record reasons for entry. Reasons for leaving were recorded almost across the board (96% of respondents for cats and 98% of respondents for dogs).



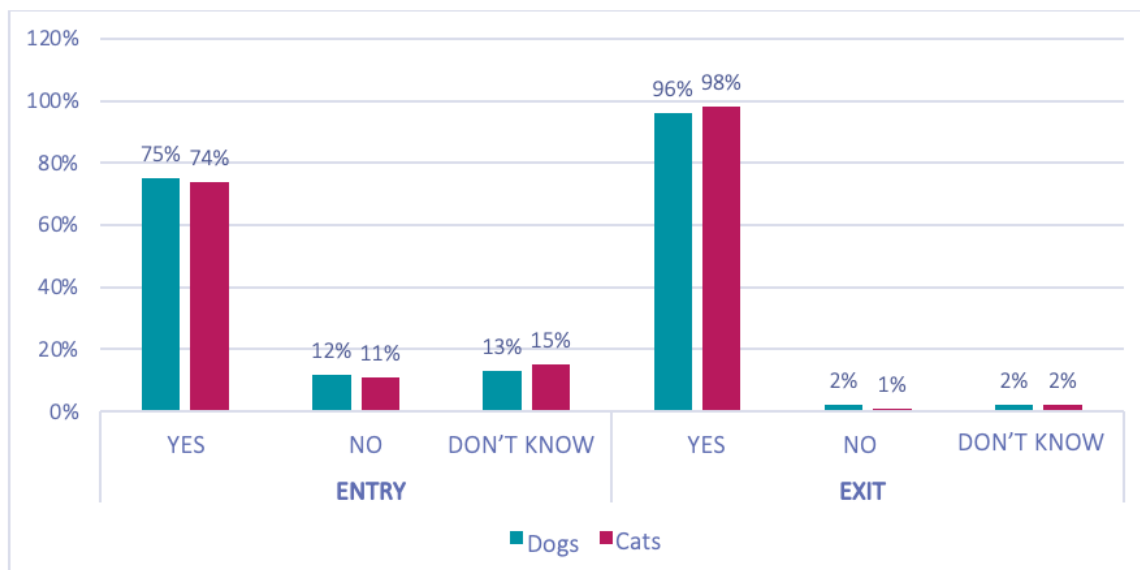


Figure 14. Pound-shelter manager or staff responses concerning whether a register is kept of reasons for arrival and departure of dogs and cats

2.3.3.4 Discussion: reasons for entering and leaving pound-shelters

It is notable that the bringing in of animals by third parties was the highest-scoring entry pathway for dogs and cats to pound-shelters. The high frequency of this reason may be linked to the particular nature of these operations where two different types of facility (pound and shelter) are combined. People may associate the entire facility with its function as a shelter rather than a pound, and this could account for why animals found roaming the streets are brought in directly by private individuals. It could also explain the quite high scores for the reasons ‘tied up/left in front of the pound’ and ‘brought in by the keeper in person’. Last, despite their low scores, all of the reasons proposed for euthanasia (health, behavioural, legal), were selected by some respondents for both species and in relation to both pounds and shelters. No other reasons were suggested by respondents.

2.3.4 Reasons for dogs and cats to enter and leave the care of associations without shelter facilities by frequency of occurrence: results and discussion

2.3.4.1 Reasons for entry

A score for each reason why cats were admitted to the charge of an AWS is shown in *Table 24*, while scores for dogs are shown in *Table 25*.

Table 24. Scores for reasons why cats entered the charge of associations without shelter facilities

Reasons for cats entered AWS	Score
After a notification	5/10
Brought in by the owner in person	4/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	3/10
Transferred from a pound	2/10
Investigation into abuse	2/10
Other	2/10
Removed by a court order	1/10
Transferred from a shelter	1/10

The main pathways for cats to be admitted to the care of associations without shelter facilities were ‘after a notification’ and ‘brought in by the owner’, with scores of 5/10 and 4/10 respectively (*Table 24*).

Cats being brought in by vets also featured as an arrival route (3/10). As seen in the figures for pounds, transfers from pounds were also reported to occur. To a lesser degree, cats were reported to arrive from shelters. Admissions for ‘Other’ reasons received a score 2/10. These could involve various scenarios:

- > Capture of cats roaming on the public highway (particularly female cats and/or kittens). This was the scenario most frequently mentioned by respondents. Some AWS stated that they had agreements with the municipality or were asked the municipal police to take certain cats into their charge;
- > Capture of free cats. AWS respondents appear to be heavily involved in sterilisation and identification campaigns for stray cats. Additionally, some respondents mentioned that, during these campaigns, they collect the cats that appear most familiar with humans for possible rehoming in domestic households.

Table 25. Scores for reasons why dogs entered the charge of associations without shelter facilities

Reasons for dogs entered AWS	Score
Brought in by the owner in person	7/10
Transferred from a pound	3/10
After a notification	3/10
Transferred from a shelter	2/10
Brought in by a veterinarian	2/10
Investigation into abuse	2/10
Other	2/10
Removed by order of a court	1/10



With regard to the entry of dogs into the charge of associations without shelter facilities, analysis of the answers relates only to those AWS that took in dogs exclusively (N=46) (this was the result of a technical problem with the questionnaire, whereby only associations without shelter facilities that catered exclusively for dogs had access to the question on the reasons for dogs entering their charge).

Dogs were mainly brought to the AWS by their owners (7/10) (Table 25). They also arrived via a pound or were collected following a report (3/10). Fewer dogs than cats were brought to the AWS by vets. Seizures by court order also led to a small proportion of admissions to the AWS. Under ‘Other’, respondents mainly cited the capture of stray dogs, and one mentioned the recovery of unsold puppies or dogs previously kept for breeding.

2.3.4.2 Reasons for leaving

Scores for reasons why cats left the charge of associations without shelter facilities are shown in Table 26 and those for dogs are shown in Table 27.

Table 26. Scores for reasons why cats were reported to leave the charge of associations without shelter facilities

Reasons cats left AWS	Score
Adopted	8/10
Euthanised due to poor health	2/10
Died for no known reason	2/10
Died from old age	2/10
Died following injury	2/10
Collected by the owner	1/10
Transferred to a shelter	1/10
Transferred to another AWS	1/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	1/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	0/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Euthanised by order of a court	0/10
Other	0/10

By far the most frequent pathway for cats to leave an AWS, with a very high score of 8/10, was adoption (Table 26). The score for the next most frequent reason fell sharply to 2/10. Euthanasia for reasons of poor health topped the group of reasons with this score, followed by reasons for death (‘died for no known reason’, ‘died from old age’ and ‘died following injury’). A very low proportion of cats were reclaimed by their owners, in contrast to the figures for shelters. Last, euthanasia for behavioural reasons or by court order did not feature among the reasons selected by respondents from associations without shelter facilities.



Table 27. Scores for reasons why dogs were reported to leave the charge of associations without shelter facilities

Reasons why dogs left AWS	Score
Adopted	9/10
Died from old age	2/10
Collected by the owner	1/10
Transferred to a shelter	1/10
Transferred to another AWS	1/10
Euthanised for reasons of poor health	1/10
Died following injury	1/10
Died for no known reason	1/10
Euthanised by order of a court	0/10
Euthanised for public health reasons	0/10
Euthanised for behavioural reasons	0/10
Euthanised for another reason	0/10
Other	0/10

Dogs, like cats left associations without shelter facilities mainly through adoptions (9/10) (*Table 27*).

As with cats, various reasons were selected for the death of dogs ('died from old age', 'died following injury', 'died for no known reason') and euthanasia featured for dogs in poor condition. Dogs in the charge of associations without shelter facilities were not euthanised for public health or behavioural reasons, or by court order.

2.3.4.3 Recording reasons for entry and exit in a register

Managers were more likely to record the reasons for an animal's departure from their charge than reasons for its arrival (*Figure 15*). Indeed, for both species, only half of respondents said that managers kept a register of reasons for admission, compared with over 80% who said that reasons for departure were recorded. A quarter of respondents said that no reasons for admission were recorded, while the other quarter did not know whether or not reasons were recorded.



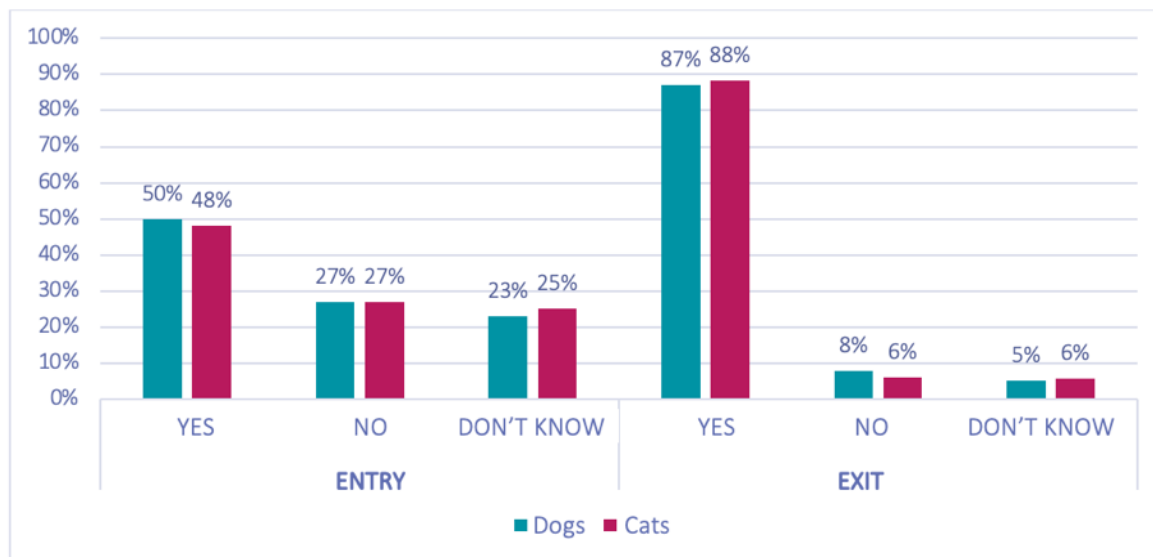


Figure 15. Manager or staff responses from associations without shelter facilities concerning whether a register is kept of reasons for the arrival and departure of dogs and cats

2.3.4.4 Discussion: reasons for entering and leaving the charge of associations without shelter facilities

Some owners chose to surrender their animal to an AWS rather than a shelter, so that the animal would be cared for by a foster household. Very few animals entered the charge of these associations via pounds, which is consistent with the low exit scores for transfers from pounds to AWS. Transfers did, however, occur in both directions between AWS and shelters, possibly due to lack of space or in order to provide a different environment for certain animals. The AWS did also have dogs and cats euthanised, but the scores associated with these cases were very low, if not zero.

Also of note are the reasons for entry added by respondents, which provide information on the role played by associations without shelter facilities in the management of animals found roaming, particularly cats. The questionnaire did not include ‘animal found roaming’ as a pathway for admission to the charge of these associations with no shelters since, from a legal standpoint, these organisations have no authority to capture cats and place them directly with adoptive households (under Article L211-22 of the CRPM, municipalities should designate pounds to receive these animals). However, the mention of this reason, which is not authorised by the regulations, suggests a degree of inconsistency between what is permissible by law and the facts on the ground. A new legal framework may hence be called for.

Last, the fact that managers record more reasons for leaving than for admission in their registers is worthy of further investigation.

2.4 Summary and conclusion concerning the list of reasons for admission and departure

Recommended lists of reasons for entry and exit finalised by the FRCAW following analysis of the survey results appear below.

Analysis of the responses showed that some of the reasons for entry and exit listed in the questionnaire were not selected by any respondent in the sample (score of 0/10) and that, generally speaking, all the reasons selected by respondents applied to both species. The FRCAW therefore took the decision not to differentiate between dogs and cats and to include in the finalised preliminary lists only those reasons for entry and exit that had scored at least 1/10.

On the other hand, the analysis confirmed that the lists proposed by the FRCAW in the questionnaire of both entry and exit pathways to and from pounds and pound-shelters, and of exit pathways from shelters and associations without shelter facilities, appear to have covered all possible scenarios (in these lists, 'Other' received scores of 0/10).

In light of these findings, the FRCAW has created two preliminary lists that are tailored to the different facilities and organisations on the basis of the scores obtained for each reason.

These proposed lists also incorporate the main additional reasons for entry and exit provided by respondents. Thus, accommodating stray animals or animals found roaming, and animals from other countries (via the efforts of associations or private individuals) have been added as reasons for arrival, and euthanasia 'because there was no alternative' has been added as a reason for departure.

Last, in some cases, reasons have been further subdivided to show different possibilities (sub-reasons) associated with a main reason. These are intended to facilitate data collection when the lists are integrated into the I-CAD database.

2.4.1 Preliminary list of reasons for entry

The proposed preliminary list of reasons for entry (*Table 28*) includes all the reasons given in the questionnaire, with a few adjustments to the wording in order to take account of respondents' comments as far as possible. To the first reason for entry on the list, the words 'public or private' have been added to take into account animals found roaming in forests or private gardens, as mentioned by some respondents. Similarly, for sterilisation campaigns, the word 'authorised' has been added so that only legally supervised sterilisation campaigns are included, i.e. those involving the municipality. Last, associations without shelter facilities have been added to the types of operation that take in animals found roaming, since this reason was mentioned by respondents. In addition, although the accommodation of cats and dogs from other countries is only occasionally



mentioned (by shelters), the inclusion of this category of animal on the list will enable such animals to be included in the figures for animals accommodated and offered for adoption in France. Shelters and AWS carry out sterilisation campaigns when authorised by the municipality, and these types of operation are also therefore added to those taking in animals for this reason in the proposed final list.

Meanwhile, it transpired that the entry pathway ‘Brought in by a third party’ was a frequent one for all types of operation and for both species. In particular, it was a frequently cited reason for dogs to be admitted to pounds. It is feasible that some owners claimed to have found their own animals roaming to avoid having to take responsibility for abandoning them, out of guilt, perhaps, or a desire to avoid the social opprobrium often associated with the abandonment of pets.

Last, to ensure that other reasons for entry can be identified, we propose that a free category such as ‘Other reasons’ should be retained in the final list of reasons.

Table 28. Preliminary list of reasons for admission based on analysis of questionnaire results.

The relevant facilities or organisations for each reason are indicated by a cross. POU: pound, SHE: shelter, POSH: pound-shelter, AWS: association without shelter facilities.

Lists of reasons for entry of dogs and cats	POU	SHE	POSH	AWS
Roaming animal captured on public or private land (road, forest, garden etc.)	X	X	X	X
→ Following notification from a private individual	X	X	X	X
→ While ‘on patrol’	X		X	
Dead animal recovered from the public highway	X		X	
Animal delivered by the competent authorities	X		X	
Animal admitted as part of a sterilisation campaign authorised by the municipality	X	X	X	X
Animal brought in by the owner in person	X	X	X	X
Animal brought in by a third party (not declared to be the owner)	X	X	X	
Animal brought in by a veterinarian	X	X	X	X
Animal left/tied up in front of (or near) the facility	X	X	X	
Animal transferred from another facility/organisation	X	X	X	X
→ Animal transferred from a pound		X	X	X
→ Animal transferred from a shelter		X	X	X
Animal removed from a private household	X	X	X	X
→ Following a court order	X		X	X
→ By order of the local authority	X		X	
→ As part of an animal abuse investigation	X	X	X	X
Animal returned following adoption (after the transfer of ownership has been entered in the national database for domestic carnivores)		X	X	
Animal from a country other than France	X	X	X	X
Other reasons	X	X	X	X

2.4.2 Preliminary list of reasons for leaving

The preliminary list of reasons for leaving the charge of a facility or organisation (*Table 29*) includes all the reasons given in the questionnaire. The exit pathway ‘euthanasia because no alternative’, had originally been offered only to pounds. However, responses from shelters also included the practice of euthanasia due to lack of space. Their answers described overcrowded shelters, a lack of adoptive households and the need for funding to help them avoid such decisions. Accordingly, the exit reason ‘euthanasia because no alternative’ was extended to shelters in the final proposed list.

The fact that the exit pathway, ‘Collected by the owner’, was a frequent occurrence for dog and cat shelters in the survey, demonstrates the great importance of ensuring that pets are identified, a matter that the FRCAW wishes to stress.

Last, in order to identify other reasons for leaving the charge of facilities and organisations, we suggest that a free category, ‘Other reasons’, should be retained in the final list.

Table 29. Preliminary list of reasons for leaving based on analysis of questionnaire results

The facilities or organisations to which a reason applies are indicated by a cross. POU: pound, SHE: shelter, POSH: pound-shelter, AWS: association without shelter facilities.

List of reasons for departure of dogs and cats	POU	SHE	POSH	AWS
Animal is adopted		X	X	X
Animal is transferred to another facility or organisation	X	X	X	
→ Animal is transferred to a shelter	X	X	X	X
→ Animal is transferred to an association without shelter accommodation	X	X	X	X
Animal is collected by its owner	X	X	X	
Animal dies while in the care of the facility/organisation	X	X	X	X
→ Animal dies from old age	X	X	X	X
→ Animal dies following injury	X	X	X	X
→ Animal dies for no known reason	X	X	X	X
Animal is euthanised	X	X	X	X
→ Animal is euthanised for reasons of very poor health	X	X	X	X
→ Animal is euthanised for public health reasons	X	X	X	X
→ Animal is euthanised for behavioural reasons	X	X	X	
→ Animal is euthanised by order of a court	X	X	X	
→ Animal is euthanised because no alternatives are available (lack of space, other problems, etc.)		X	X	
Other reasons	X	X	X	X



Recommendation 2

The FRCAW recommends that the proposed lists of reasons for entry and exit be used by Ingénium Animalis (manager of the I-CAD database) to populate I-CAD's files, thus enabling the authorities and organisations responsible for animal accommodation to assist in ensuring a more precise and centralised monitoring system for animals deemed to be abandoned. The lists of reasons for entry and exit must first be validated by all OCAD members.



Recommendation 3

The FRCAW recommends that, to ensure that the lists of reasons for entry and exit are as complete and accurate as possible with regard to the circumstances on the ground, known sub-reasons should be carefully filled in for each entry or exit of an animal. Additions should also be made to the lists as and when new reasons or sub-reasons are identified (dynamic document). The formation of an ad hoc working group would be useful in updating the lists.

To facilitate the inclusion of such data in the I-CAD files, a tree structure could be employed in the form of a drop-down menu listing possible sub-reasons for euthanasia, death, transfers between facilities, seizure, or capture of animals found roaming.



Recommendation 4

Euthanasia for behavioural reasons is one of the exit pathways cited for dogs and cats. The FRCAW recommends that the nature of the problematic or even dangerous behaviour leading to the decision should be specified.



Recommendation 5

In order to improve the monitoring of abandoned animals, the FRCAW recommends that a list of reasons for animals entering and leaving the charge of private individuals via acquisition and surrender should be introduced. These reasons could be provided by vets when an animal is first identified, and then by the surrendering party when an animal is transferred between private individuals.

3 Producing a definition of abandonment for domestic carnivores

3.1 Methodology for preliminary work – analysis of the regulatory and scientific literature

3.1.1 Literature review for the purpose of defining abandonment

Bibliographical research here concentrated mainly on the gathering of information that could help in the development of a definition of abandonment. Two search engines were used: Web of Science and Cairn. Keywords were in English. For the initial searches, the main selected keywords were ‘abandonment’, ‘companion animal’ and ‘animal welfare’. The term ‘abandonment’ was then replaced by ‘relinquishment’, as this term was widely used in the literature to refer to abandonment. Four publications were of particular interest, three for the methods they employed to collect data from individuals who abandon their pets (Cardoso et al., 2022; Diesel et al., 2010; DiGiacomo et al., 1998), and one for the insights it brought to the FRCAW’s thinking on the definition itself (Coe et al., 2014). This last work had conducted a state-of-the-art review of publications on the topic of pet abandonment, helping the FRCAW to formulate possible ways to construct a definition of abandonment.

3.1.2 International benchmarking of statutory requirements and initiatives for the management of dogs and cats

The abandonment of dogs and cats is widespread across the globe. How it is approached and managed varies from country to country, being dependent in particular on prevailing socio-economic conditions, but it can nevertheless be informative. The legislative frameworks put in place to address the abandonment of domestic carnivores by countries other than France are thus a source of material for analysis and comparison with the current French system that can usefully underpin the FRCAW’s general consideration of the two matters raised in the referral. The FRCAW therefore decided to carry out an exploratory study that took the form of a regulatory and technical comparison. A summary and a comparative table listing the key points of interest relating to the management of abandonment in the countries concerned and comparing these with the



situation in France, were produced jointly by the FRCAW and the Ecole Nationale des Services Vétérinaires (ENSV) based on work carried out by a Scientific and Technical Study Group (GEST) formed of 5 students. The data was collected through the analysis of regulatory texts available on government websites or on official websites equivalent to <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/> in the original language and was translated using DeepL.

A preliminary exercise was carried out by the FRCAW using data from 7 countries (England, Spain, Italy, Greece, Finland, Germany and Belgium). The GEST study group from the ENSV was then commissioned by the FRCAW to carry out a follow-up study under the FRCAW's supervision, verifying the interpretation of the data and extending the comparison to 8 further legal systems (Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Romania, Sweden, Austria, and the provinces of Manitoba and Quebec in Canada). The European countries were selected because of their geographical proximity to France, their membership of the European Union or the accessibility of their regulatory data. Quebec was included to extend coverage to another continent without complicating the research, given that this province of Canada is French speaking. The province of Manitoba is a notable innovator in the field, warranting its inclusion in this benchmarking study. The key points addressed in this exercise were divided into four main areas of investigation:

- > **The definition of abandonment.** The aim of this workstream was to find out whether the legislation of the country under study (1) provides an explicit definition of abandonment and the animals to which it applies, (2) bases its definition on particular 'types' of abandonment.
- > **The legal framework relating to abandonment and to companion animals.** This area of investigation addressed (1) the definition of the act of abandonment (as an act of cruelty or otherwise, for example) and the legal texts governing it, (2) the penalties imposed in the event of abandonment, (3) pet identification policies and (4) systems in place for recording and collecting data.
- > **The management of stray animals.** The aims of the investigation in this respect were to (1) find out whether the legislation of the country studied provides a clear definition of a stray animal, (2) identify the departments, agencies and functions of the state in managing these animals and (3) identify the organisation of and relationships between the various bodies involved in managing these animals.
- > **Measures to combat abandonment.** In this area, the main objectives were to (1) identify whether the governments studied have set up an observatory such as the OCAD or a similar body and (2) identify the measures taken by the government and the main animal protection associations to combat abandonment.

The comparative analysis revealed many similarities between countries, but also some notable differences, often characterised by innovative ideas. Indeed, some degree of innovation can be observed in all countries and provinces, sometimes longstanding, sometimes more recent, as they seek new ways to manage and contain this issue effectively. It was precisely these individual innovations that were the most worthwhile

feature of the comparison with the French system, providing a source of reflection for the FRCAW.

3.2 Methodology: semi-structured interviews to assist in developing a definition of abandonment

To arrive at a definition of abandonment that would match the reality on the ground, the FRCAW adopted a sociological survey-based approach.

Given the contextual and multi-factorial nature of the issue and the fact that it involves a wide range of stakeholders, qualitative surveys were judged to be the most appropriate vehicles for the analysis of the concept of abandonment. Indeed, qualitative surveys are useful in allowing studies to take account of the feelings and recommendations of professionals and individuals who deal with abandonment in their daily lives, making it possible to develop a shared definition of abandonment that can be used by as many stakeholders as possible.

It was therefore considered necessary to interview a broad range of individuals who have had to deal with pet abandonment from different perspectives, taking into account the social, political and animal welfare dimensions of abandonment. The qualitative survey method meets this need since, among other features, it allows the gathering of information to be structured by cross-cutting questions, while at the same time teasing out the diversity of opinions on a given subject. Interviewees answer spontaneously in their own words, making it easier for a diversity of viewpoints to be expressed and for experts to understand different ways of thinking.

3.2.1 Drawing up the interview questions and working hypotheses

The aim of this work was to ensure that the definition arrived at would reflect the theoretical dimension of abandonment, while incorporating strongly factual elements that would allow it to remain true to what occurs in practical settings on the ground. The starting questions were as follows: *What is abandonment in practical terms? How can we work with abandoned animals when we have no precise definition of what they are?* Following the various exploratory exercises and the observations previously made by the FRCAW in its initial work for OCAD, several hypotheses were proposed as a framework for further work:

- > Abandonment is multi-factorial.
- > Abandonment is contextual.
- > Abandonment has a negative impact on an animal's welfare.
- > A stray animal is an abandoned animal.

- > The characterisation of an abandoned cat differs from that of a dog.
- > Several terms are needed to define abandonment.
- > The regulations do not make it possible to tackle abandonment.

3.2.2 Creating a pool of interviewees

For the purposes of this research, the sample of interviewees was selected by applying two criteria as *a priori* indicators to achieve a representative sample of the full range of stakeholders involved in abandonment. The criteria were established on the basis of the knowledge collected on the subject in the course of the FRCAW’s initial work for the OCAD and the exploratory work described above:

- > The first, ‘temporal’, criterion reflected the nature of abandonment as a sequence of events through time, producing the categories (1) before abandonment, (2) at the time of abandonment, and (3) after abandonment. The various interviewees were divided into classes according to the stage at which they were involved with abandoned animals.
- > The second, ‘legal’, criterion allowed interviewees to be divided into three further categories: (1) private, (2) public, or (3) third sector (associations and societies). This criterion made it possible to represent the diversity of contexts in which people come into contact with abandonment.

Once the criteria had been applied, the results were cross tabulated to generate the different profile categories for interview (*Table 30*), thereby ensuring that less common profiles with distinctive ways of thinking about and approaching the subject of abandonment were not omitted.

Table 30. Establishing the different profiles to be included in the sample for semi-structured interview by cross tabulating two criteria as indicators for *a priori* diversity, one temporal and one legal

The table includes an empty cell where no individual profiles matched criteria of interest to this study.

		Temporal criterion		
		Before abandonment	At the time of abandonment	After abandonment
Legal criterion	Private	Owner Private veterinary practitioner	Owner Pound employee Public veterinarian Private veterinary practitioner	
	Public	Pound employee Municipal employee	Police officer Municipal employee Pound employee	Public veterinarian Pound veterinarian
	Third Sector	Shelter employee or volunteer/educator	Pound employee Shelter employee or volunteer	Shelter veterinarian Shelter employee or volunteer



Table 30 provides an overview of the interviewee profiles to be included in the interview sample based on cross tabulation of the two criteria. The fact that some profiles feature in more than one cell does not mean that more than one representative of these profiles should necessarily be interviewed. In line with the table, all profiles were interviewed at least once.

Once the theoretical framework for the sample of interviewees had been drawn up, a list of the various people to be interviewed was compiled (Table 31).

3.2.3 Interview process

Persons fitting the various profiles were contacted using the networks of OCAD members and professionals. Invitations to participate were accompanied by an explanation of the context of the study and a description of the general subject, i.e., ‘a survey to be carried out on abandonment as part of a scientific study to better understand the issue’. There was no mention that the final aim of the survey was to develop a definition, so that interviewees remained spontaneous in their responses. All those who agreed to participate before the allotted deadline took part in the survey.

A total of 16 interviews were conducted over 5 months (from November 2022 to March 2023), lasting between 45 minutes and 2 hours (Table 31).

Ten of the interviews were conducted in person and six by remote videoconferencing.

Table 31. List of selected participants in semi-structured interviews to contribute to the definition of dog and cat abandonment in France

n°	Date	Profile	Duration
1	28.11.22	Owner	1h10
2	29.11.22	Private veterinary practitioner	2h
3	09.12.22	Pound employee	1h30
4	19.12.22	Pound-shelter employee	1h10
5	10.01.23	Pound employee	1h30
6	16.01.23	Shelter employee	2h
7	06.02.23	Shelter employee/educator	2h30
8	17.02.23	Pound veterinarian	45 minutes
9	30.01.23	Pound employee	2h15
10	16.02.23	Elected municipal representative	1h30
11	16.02.23	Police officer	1h30
12	09.02.23	Owner	45 minutes
13	14.02.23	Owner	2h30
14	16.02.23	Pound-shelter employee	2h
15	15.02.23	Owner/veterinary assistant	1h45
16	22.02.23	Public veterinarian	1h30

3.2.4 Construction of interview guides

Interview guides were created to provide a structure for the interview questions. The guides followed a funnel technique, breaking down the starting hypotheses listed above into several themes to create groups of questions that could then be used as narrower follow-up questions during the interviews.

The final guide accordingly took the following themes as its starting point:

1. issues surrounding abandonment
2. contexts and reasons for abandonment
3. how to identify an animal as abandoned
4. how the regulations deal with abandonment
5. what a definition can achieve

Because of the wide range of profiles, 4 interview guides were developed based on these 5 themes. The wording of some of the questions was adjusted to suit interviewees' probable experiences of pet abandonment. The topics covered, organised by theme and by interviewee profile are shown in *Table 32*.

Table 32. Topics discussed during the semi-structured interviews, organised by theme and interviewee profile.

Theme	Topics covered	Relevant profiles
1. Abandonment: general issues		
Q 1.1	What is abandonment?	All
Q 1.2	Issues surrounding abandonment	All
Q 1.3	Risks of abandonment	All
2. Abandonment contexts		
Q 2.1	Abandonment scenarios encountered by interviewees in the course of their work	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 2.2	Why and how owners parted with the animal	Owner
Q 2.3	Why owners choose to abandon the animal this way and not another?	Owner
Q 2.4	Review unmentioned abandonment scenarios to determine whether or not they qualify as abandonment (e.g. euthanasia).	All
Q 2.5	Are some ways of abandoning animals more serious than others?	All
Q 2.6	Should an animal entering a shelter be considered as abandonment?	All
3. Characterisation of an abandoned animal		
Q 3.1	What is an abandoned dog?	All
Q 3.2	What is an abandoned cat?	All
Q 3.3	Ways to decide whether an animal that arrives is abandoned or lost	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative



Q 3.4	Ways to distinguish between a stray animal and an animal with an owner	Owner
Q 3.5	Is a stray animal an abandoned animal?	All
4. Managing abandonment		
Q 4.1	Main difficulties in managing abandonment	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 4.2	Difficulties encountered when parting with a pet	Owner
Q 4.3	Opinion on current abandonment regulations	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 4.4	Knowledge of regulations	Owner
Q 4.5	The most complex cases to manage	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
5. What a definition is expected to achieve		
Q 5.1	Ways to improve regulations	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 5.2	The usefulness of defining abandonment	All
Q 5.3	Measures to combat abandonment	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 5.4	What they would have found useful to know before parting with their pet	Owner

3.2.5 Verbatim transcript analysis

During the interviews, interviewees' replies were recorded using a dictaphone, then transcribed verbatim onto paper by a professional. The verbatim transcripts were then classified by theme on a spreadsheet indicating profiles in columns and themes in rows (*Table 33*). In the creation of content summaries and identification of information of relevance to the question under consideration, the profile of the interviewee for each transcript was not taken into consideration. Attention thus focused exclusively on the rows in the table. Interviewees' replies were analysed and presented in summary form based on transcripts considered to be representative of the interviewees' opinions and recommendations.



Table 33. Organisation of verbatim transcript information for analysis

	Topics covered	Interviewee 1	Interviewee no...	Interviewee 16
Theme (1,2,3,4 or 5)	Question 1	Verbatim response transcript [...]	[...]	[...]
	Question 2	Verbatim response transcript [...]	[...]	[...]
	Question ...	Verbatim response transcript [...]	[...]	[...]

Further, although several questions referring to abandonment were asked in the course of the interviews (*Table 32*), not all the answers to interview questions will be discussed in the following sections. Only answers to the questions most directly relevant to the definition of abandonment are shown (*Table 34*).

The other questions on abandonment were asked to assist in structuring the interviews and encourage further discussion.

Table 34. Themes and questions analysed further in order to establish a definition of abandonment

Theme	Topics covered	Relevant profiles
1. Abandonment: general issues		
Q 1.1	What is abandonment?	All
Q 1.3	Risks of abandonment	All
2. Abandonment contexts		
Q 2.1	Abandonment scenarios encountered by interviewees in the course of their work	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 2.3	Why owners choose to abandon the animal this way and not another?	Owner
Q 2.4	Review unmentioned abandonment scenarios to determine whether or not they qualify as abandonment (e.g. euthanasia).	All
Q 2.5	Are some ways of abandoning animals more serious than others?	All
Q 2.6	Should an animal entering a shelter be considered as abandonment?	All
3. Characterisation of an abandoned animal		
Q 3.1	What is an abandoned dog?	All
Q 3.2	What is an abandoned cat?	All
Q 3.3	Ways to decide whether an animal that arrives is abandoned or lost	Pound/shelter employee Police officer Veterinarian Municipal elected representative
Q 3.4	Ways to distinguish between a stray animal and an animal with an owner	Owner
Q 3.5	Is a stray animal an abandoned animal?	All

3.3 Proposed definition of abandonment following analysis of the interviews

3.3.1 Considerations arising from preliminary work for the definition of abandonment

3.3.1.1 Considerations arising from the international benchmarking exercise

Generally speaking, the information gathered through the benchmarking exercise confirmed that the issue of pet abandonment is addressed in countries other than France. The 15 legal systems studied all include legislation on abandonment and impose penalties for pet abandonment that range from fines to prison sentences.

There are also many similarities in the legal measures taken to manage animals found roaming or abandoned on the public highway. Municipalities serve as the responsible authorities for these animals, and public or private pound/kennels and shelters are tasked with managing their subsequent fate.

To meet the particular request to define the abandonment of dogs and cats, the FRCAW looked more closely at those systems where a legal definition of abandonment exists in the legislation, namely, those in Belgium, Germany, Romania and the province of Manitoba in Canada. These definitions all refer to the concept of **an owner's action** in parting with a pet, thereby **failing to meet their responsibilities**. These responsibilities include **ensuring the transfer of ownership** (Belgium) at the time of relinquishment and/or **providing for the animal's needs** (Germany, Romania, Manitoba). For Belgium and Germany, the definition also places emphasis on the concept of voluntary action, suggesting therefore that abandoning an animal is a deliberate and premeditated act by its owner:

- Belgian Walloon definition: *'leaving an animal in any place with the intention of disposing of it and without ensuring the direct transfer of responsibility'* (SPW, 2018)
- German definition : *'abandon or leave an animal kept in the home in order to dispose of it or avoid the obligation of keeper or caretaker'* (Tierschutzgesetz. German Animal Protection Act, Section 2 Detention of Animals, Paragraph 3, n.d.).

Some legal definitions are refined by further information on the circumstances in which animals are deemed to be abandoned. Thus, Romanian law is explicit about the location 'outside the home' in the case of animals abandoned on the public highway:



- *'leaving an animal out of human ownership and custody, on public property, without food, shelter or medical treatment'* (Official Gazette of Romania, 2014, p. 205).

Likewise, the Manitoban Animal Care Act cites three particular cases:

- In this Act, *'abandoned animal'* means an animal that is apparently ownerless and not running at large; is found on rented premises after the expiration or termination of the tenancy agreement; is found on premises after the owner has sold or vacated the premises or; by agreement between the animal's owner and another person, has been left in the care of the other person and has not been retrieved from the other person for more than four days after the agreed-upon retrieval time. ("The Animal Care Act, C.C.S.M. c. A84", 2025)

Last, although Austria does not explicitly include a definition of abandonment in its legislation, it nevertheless authorises (without penalty) the relinquishment of pets if an owner is no longer able to comply with the regulatory obligations laid down by federal law (*Bundesgesetz Über Den Schutz Der Tiere*. Federal Law on the Protection of Animals. Chapter 2. Qualifications of the animal's keeper. Article 12. n.d.). This encourages owners who wish to part with their pets to do so within the law. The intention is to provide better protection against the abuse that animals may suffer if they remain with such owners or are not formally surrendered.

Analysis of the various definitions revealed a number of avenues to explore for the construction of a French definition. Indeed, many different types of abandonment feature in the definitions and **this context-dependent and multifactorial nature of abandonment makes it difficult to arrive at a single definition that would encompass all examples**. In this respect, it is valid to ask whether **a single definition is sufficient to characterise all acts of abandonment**, or whether **several are necessary to take into account the diversity of contexts and motives**.

Additionally, **animals found roaming on the public highway** are central to most of the definitions in use. This raises the question of the distinction between abandoned and stray animals.

Last, the **impact of abandonment on the animal's welfare should also be included in the definition**, since it is the animal that suffers from the act of abandonment. Depending on the type of abandonment (i.e., the manner of abandonment), it would be feasible to apply a scale to the concept of abandonment that would relate to the level of impact on the animal's welfare.



3.3.1.2 Considerations arising from the scientific literature

Abandonment in the scientific literature is often discussed in terms of surrenders to shelters, euthanasia or adoptions, and most articles on the subject do not offer a definition. In a Canadian scoping review published in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* in 2014 on research into pet abandonment (the authors of the study choose ‘relinquishment’ as their umbrella term) (Coe et al., 2014), a total of 192 American and European publications were analysed to map out research gaps, needs and opportunities regarding the issue.

An interesting feature of the above review is the list of ‘key definitions’ used in the study, distinguishing between each term used in the discussion. Of particular interest to the present study are the definitions of *surrender*, *abandonment* and *relinquishment* (a fourth definition, that of *euthanasia*, also appears in relation to ‘relinquishment’). The first two of these definitions are founded on the particular circumstances in which relinquishment occurs, while the third is more general, and is based on the action of the owner of the animal alone (Diesel et al., 2010):

- > The animal is taken to a **shelter or pound** and is surrendered in accordance with current regulations, characterised as ‘*Companion-animal surrender*’.
 - > The animal is **left to fend for itself**, discarded without ensuring that it is cared for in accordance with the regulations, characterised as ‘*companion-animal abandonment*’.
 - > **The owner voluntarily gives up possession or ownership** in order to end their responsibility for the animal, characterised as ‘*Companion-animal relinquishment*’.
- This definition is described as encompassing the first two (along with euthanasia).

Here, by employing a variety of terms and their definitions, the authors are able to define their key term, ‘relinquishment’, more precisely or, at the very least, to cover the different forms that relinquishment can take. This example also demonstrates that the choice and configuration of terms affects the underlying meanings of the definitions themselves. In the definitions proposed by the Canadian review of interest to the current definition exercise, the different sub-types of ‘relinquishment’ can be mapped to how it is framed by legislation. In this instance, i) leaving an animal in the care of a shelter or pound is ‘surrender’, whereas ii) leaving or tying up an animal on the public highway or in an isolated location is ‘abandonment’. The first situation concerns surrender within the law and the second refers to cases punishable by law. The third definition, that of ‘relinquishment’, is more general in nature, based not on the manner in which an animal is separated from its keeper but on an interpretation of the abandonment behaviour of its keeper (giving up the animal).

The use of multiple terms to define pet ‘relinquishment’ in the above review suggests that a similar strategy could usefully be adopted in the present work’s definition of acts of abandonment.



3.3.2 Abandonment as discussed by interviewees

During the interviews, several questions on the definition of abandonment were put to the different interviewee profiles. The aim was to find out what the term ‘abandonment’ meant in the minds of those who deal with it directly.

To begin the interviews, the same question was asked of all profiles: ‘What does abandonment mean to you?’ (*Table 34*, Q1.1).

This question on how to define abandonment very often caused participants to pause and reflect before answering. Some even spontaneously expressed the view that the question was difficult: *‘it’s complicated to define abandonment’*. Although some participants had a moderately clear conception of the term, the vast majority did not give a simple definition. For the most part, the answers were very detailed and accompanied by specific examples to support their reasoning.

3.3.2.1 Abandonment as voluntary action

The abandonment of a pet was always perceived and defined from the human point of view by interviewees. It is the human who acts on the animal and wittingly decides its fate: *‘you are responsible for the animal and one day you decide that you aren’t any more’*. **The act of abandoning an animal is very often described as a voluntary act**, *‘a sort of real desire to discard an animal’*, *‘an animal that has been voluntarily put aside’*, a **choice on the part of the keeper to part with the animal for good**, *‘abandoning an animal means cutting it out of your life’*, and to **arrange how** this will be done, leaving the animal *‘with an organisation or on the street’*. Keepers do indeed have a range of options for parting with their pets and, indeed, it was through reference to the immediate circumstances of abandonment that some interviewees chose to explain the practice.

3.3.2.2 Abrogation of liability by the animal’s keeper

The responsibility of the animal’s keeper was very often mentioned in the definitions suggested by interviewees. **Responsibility was often interpreted as a moral duty undertaken when an animal is acquired**: *‘I am the keeper, I assume responsibility for it’*, often linked to the idea of caring for the animal, maintaining a relationship with it *‘taking responsibility for your animal [...] supporting your animal throughout its life’*. These terms are often found in descriptions of the act of abandonment: the keeper **abdicates responsibility**, **fails in their duty to look after the animal**, *‘shirks responsibility’*.

3.3.2.3 The place of the animal in the definition

In the definitions proposed by interviewees, **the animal is subjected to the action**. The abandoned animal is also **described as being viewed as an object rather than a sentient**



being: *'there's this idea of an object as if its status as a living being were being denied'*. The animal's position in relation to its keeper, and the qualifiers and comparisons used to describe it emphasise its status as a **commodity** in the responses, as a means to underline the lack of respect involved: *'to abandon an animal is to throw it away like a tissue'*; *'[it's] like when you leave furniture out in the street'*. The terms employed demonstrate the prevalence of emotive responses and moral judgements among interviewees with regard to abandonment.

3.3.2.4 **Definitions involving the context/circumstances of abandonment**

A number of ways in which an animal can be parted from its keeper were described. For example, abandonment meant (1) an animal being *'without a master, tied up, left alone in certain sorts of places where nobody lives'*, or abandoning one's animal was (2) *'no longer taking responsibility for your dog, leaving it with an organisation and giving it away to someone'*. Two contrasting cases were frequently cited – when animals are **abandoned in the countryside** (tied up or left on the public highway) and when they are **abandoned at a shelter/pound or handed over to an organisation or another person**. Some interviewees even went so far as to divide abandonment into several categories to provide a better definition based on the manner of abandonment. In their definitions of abandonment, all but two interviewees gave examples of specific cases of separation between humans and animals to explain what they meant by the term.

First, the term *'responsible abandonment'* was used by one interviewee to describe the **taking of an animal to a refuge:** *'people no longer take responsibility for the animal but make arrangements for it to be looked after to the end'*. Here, consideration for the animal is expressed through concern for its future. Only in this definition was the impact on the animal's welfare clearly mentioned. In discussing the reasons for abandonment, this scenario was cited by three interviewees in their definitions. People abandon their pets for many reasons, considered by interviewees to have different degrees of legitimacy. A few mentioned **cases of 'force majeure' – 'real reasons'** where there is no possible option other than abandonment, such as a death, incarceration, or the fact that an overwhelmed keeper has tried to find another solution but has been unable to do so: *'At some point you have to make a choice, but after that, it's the way you do it'*. Emphasis is placed on the **manner in which a keeper parts with an animal**, in a process where it is the human's duty to ensure the best life possible for the animal after parting. In other words, the duty to **limit the negative impacts of parting on the animal's welfare**.

One interviewee also used another term, *'passive abandonment'*, which was described as **not trying to find your pet when it has run away or become lost**. The concepts of deliberate choice and of **non-fulfilment of a duty of care** for one's animal feature in the interviewee's remarks: *'people make no attempt to find their animal'*, implying that they should be doing so but do not.



Last, one interviewee used two terms to distinguish between two types of abandonment. The first, *'half-civilized abandonment'*, is described as leaving an animal close to a shelter or dwelling to give it a better chance of being looked after. The second, *'abandonment in the wild'* or *'strategic abandonment'*, as it is termed by another interviewee, is described as leaving one's animal in a place far from human habitation with the intention that it will not be found, i.e., *'dogs that are not recovered'*.

However, for other interviewees, the **manner in which the animal is abandoned has no effect on the definition of abandonment**: *'After that, the context, it doesn't count for anything, parting with your animal is abandonment. It doesn't matter what the reasons are.'* The separation between owner and pet happens, whether the animal is abandoned in the countryside, in a shelter, tied up in the woods, whether the keeper cares about what will happen to it or not: *'Leaving it in a shelter, you think that it's going to be re-adopted, that it's going to have a life again, but in fact you don't know anything about it, you don't know what's going to happen to it'*. The argument that people abandon their animals in shelters to control what happens to the animals (and reduce the impacts on their welfare) is not accepted by all interviewees.

3.3.2.5 Risks to the animal

The impact of abandonment on an animal's welfare was rarely directly expressed in the definitions suggested by interviewees. Although some did refer to the animal's future in their definitions of abandonment, the more detailed descriptions from participants of the risks to the animal were provided in responses to the question: 'what risks do abandoned animals incur?' (Table 34, Q1.3).

Participants always referred here to **the negative impact of abandonment on the welfare of the animal** in their answers. Two risks were frequently mentioned: **physical harm** and **psychological harm**, whose seriousness depended on the type of abandonment and the individual animal (differences in temperament, state of health, education and training, etc.) *'Being taken by their owner to an animal rescue organisation or being tied up to a tree will have different impacts. After that, it all depends on the animal's character'*. Animals abandoned on the **public highway face the risk of serious accidents** involving cars, infectious diseases, lack of water, food, shelter, etc., and may even risk death. *'It all depends on whether they are out on the roads or in our homes. Out on the public highway: a car, starvation if they can't fend for themselves, etc.'* Once animals are in the care of a facility or organisation, some interviewees described **behavioural problems linked to the change in environment or having to be alone or with other animals**: *'We get depression, dogs and cats who no longer eat, who are dejected. There's also aggression because they find themselves in an unfamiliar place with animals next to them who aren't necessarily friendly'; 'it makes dogs run around in circles in their kennels until their tails are bleeding [...]. It's just that these are dogs that are not in their own space'*. Communal life in shelters can also lead to a **deterioration in physical health**: *'When they're abandoned, they live with*



other animals, which means they run the risk of contracting diseases. They are in environments that have nothing to do with their homes, their gardens, their families’. These risks were cited more often in the case of cats.

The risk of **euthanasia** for rescued animals in shelters was very rarely mentioned by interviewees and was linked to an animal’s age or behaviour. *‘There is always a risk. But the greatest risk of euthanasia is for old dogs and aggressive dogs’.*

Last, one participant mentioned that abandonment and isolation in a facility can, in certain individuals, encourage the development of particular behaviours that make the placement of such animals more complex: *‘The risk otherwise is that animals can develop behavioural problems because they are kept in individual enclosures for long periods, without being let out, without attention to their needs, without care, if they end up with the wrong shelter. When that happens, these animals are no longer fit for adoption’.* Another interviewee did, however, explain that the **impact on an animal can be positive if it is abandoned in the right conditions and if it has previously been abused**: *‘Someone who can’t manage their dog at all, in a shelter, the dog will find itself in a setting where people understand animals. They will [...], help it to feel better [...]. That’s good’.*

In conclusion, the definition of abandonment was constructed around the following principle: abandonment means **ceasing to take care of (parting with) an animal to which the keeper is bound by the interest he/she/they take(s) in it, by the moral commitment made to it** when it was adopted, and which includes two essential points: first, **to ensure its welfare**, and second, **to assume responsibility for it**. The definition of abandonment could contain concrete examples of abandonment, as some have suggested.

3.3.3 Differences for dogs and cats

3.3.3.1 Concerning the definition of abandonment

During the interviews, participants were asked the following question: ‘In your opinion, what is an abandoned dog? and ‘In your opinion, what is an abandoned cat? (*Table 34*, Q3.1 and Q3.2).

In the vast majority of cases, the definition of an abandoned dog or cat was linked to its keeper. Thus, an **abandoned dog** was very frequently defined as an animal deprived of all familiar reference points, left to fend for itself, **separated from its owner**: *‘An abandoned dog is a dog that finds itself alone on the streets without contact with the human it knows best’.* An abandoned **cat** was defined in the same way, as an animal for **which the owner no longer takes responsibility** *‘a cat that belonged to someone who took responsibility for this animal and who decided to stop being responsible for it, to the extent of physically parting with it’.* The matter of responsibility was explained by one interviewee in terms of the transfer of dog ownership: *‘an abandoned dog is a transferral of ownership, but without the other person being present’.* Here, ‘the other person’ refers to an authority or



organisation or to a new keeper. The definitions suggested by interviewees very often referred to the abandonment of an animal outside a shelter and stress the fact that the **dog or cat has been parted from its owner** – the animal once had an owner but now no longer has one.

Distinctions were nevertheless made between dogs and cats. Looking first at the syntax of the answers, when discussing dogs, most interviewees gave immediate, precise and concise definitions, whereas for cats, the answers could take longer, suggesting that the **definition of an abandoned cat was not as easy for all interviewees to specify as that involving a dog.**

Second, for dogs, three answers were more pragmatic in character, being based on the French regulations and the law concerning dogs found roaming: *'a dog not claimed, not sought by its owner'*; *'which wanders far from the property'*. Being **found roaming** was also encountered in the responses for **cats**, but more as a means to point out the difficulty in determining whether a cat has an owner when it is found on the public highway, especially as cats are often not identified and chipped: *'Let's say that seeing a cat alone in the countryside tells us nothing about whether it lives with a family because a cat can travel enormous distances. But if a dog is on its own, it's either running away or has been abandoned.'* Cats are often **strays** and, according to a few of the interviewees, this should not be considered as abandonment: *'Then there are the stray animals that have never been abandoned, because they have never belonged to anyone. To be abandoned, you have to belong to someone.'*

Ultimately, **the fact that an animal belongs to an owner is central to the definition of an abandoned animal.** An abandoned animal, whether a dog or a cat, is one that no longer belongs to anyone and is **physically parted from its keeper.**

3.3.3.2 Risks to the animal

During the sessions, interviewees were asked whether, in their opinion, the risks for abandoned dogs were the same as for abandoned cats.

For cats, a large proportion of interviewees felt that the risks involved were less significant than for dogs. This distinction was based on the view that the relationship between cats and their owners is weaker: *'Dogs are more attached to their masters than cats'*, and that they are better able to live on their own outdoors and fend for themselves: *'They are more capable of survival. In the first instance, cats were domesticated far later than dogs. So there are vestigial instincts that are stronger. So it's not entirely the same, except for pedigree cats – I'm not sure they manage so well.'*

The remaining interviewees felt that the **risks were similar for both species, although they varied according to the individual**, in the event of abandonment both on the public highway and in a shelter. *'The popular view is that cats will be able to fend for themselves. But that's not true - a cat that has always lived in an apartment won't know how to keep*



itself fed.' The risks are the same for animals that are familiarised with humans: *'If the animal is friendly, once outside, the risks are the same'; 'It's more important for dogs because dogs are social animals and need these bonds. So there's more behavioural harm than for cats. Although depending on the individual, there may be some harm to cats.'*

Last, interviewees were more insistent on the risks to **cats** of developing physical and psychological illnesses as the result of turning into strays: *'As far as cats are concerned, there can be diseases in feral cat populations and cats can be treated badly because of the nuisance they cause'*, or as a consequence of having to live alongside other animals: *'in cats, stress leads to a lot of conditions. A cat kept alone in an enclosure that is then moved to a cattery can develop a condition because of the stress of entering the cattery'*.

In conclusion, interviewees agreed that the risks resulting from abandonment depend on the context and the individual, and that, for dogs and cats alike, abandonment can damage both physical and mental health. The assessments made by individual interviewees of the impact of abandonment on an animal's welfare will also have depended on that individual's sensitivity towards each of these species.

In the light of this analysis of the interviews, it does not appear relevant to distinguish between dogs and cats when drawing up the definition of abandonment.

3.3.4 Discussion and conclusion concerning the definition of abandonment

Etymologically, the English word 'abandonment' derives from the French phrase *mettre à bandon*, 'to place at the disposal of', *bandon* meaning 'power, authority' in Old French (<https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A9A0012>). Etymologically, abandonment is thus the act of knowingly entrusting something to someone else, handing it over to someone else's control. In the context of abandoning a pet, abandonment means **relinquishing the animal and entrusting it to an authority, an organisation or another person**. It is a deliberate act carried out by a human on an animal; the latter is subjected to this act of abandonment. This situation is clearly reflected in the exploratory work described above and the definitions given by interviewees.

On the other hand, no clear distinction was made between the terms 'owner' and 'keeper' in the interviewees' comments. Nor is such a distinction to be found in the French regulations. The keeping of a pet falls within the legal framework of the CRPM, which refers to the obligations of owners. This requires owners to keep their animals *'in conditions compatible with the biological requirements of their species'* (CRPM Article L214-1), identifying them and registering their details on the French national identification database for domestic carnivores (CRPM Article L212-10). However, the term 'keeper' is also used in conjunction with the term 'owner' in several articles of French law (e.g., CRPM Article L.211-20; French Penal Code Article 521-1). The keeper of an animal is thus not



necessarily its owner, but is still responsible for it, as stated in Article 1243 of the French Civil Code: *'The owner of an animal, or a person who uses it while it is at his disposal, is liable for the harm which the animal has caused, whether the animal was in his custody or whether it had gone astray or escaped'*.

The act of abandonment therefore concerns both the owners and keepers of animals and their responsibility to look after the animals in their keeping in accordance with legal and moral requirements.

Negative impact on an animal's welfare is a fundamental element of abandonment that should be included in the latter's definition, given the animal's lack of agency with regard to the act of abandonment: it has no control over the manner in which it will be abandoned, nor can it prepare for the consequences of this act. Furthermore, as mentioned in the interviewees' responses and in the first FRCAW report for the OCAD, the physical and mental effects on an animal may vary in their seriousness depending on the circumstances of the abandonment. Most of these consequences are negative, even though abandonment can also have positive consequences for the animal, thereby improving its welfare (e.g. in cases of abuse). The impact of abandonment on the animal's welfare also depends on the individual animal.

In this context, and drawing on the various elements provided by its analysis of the interviews, the FRCAW proposes the following definition:

'Abandonment is the deliberate act of disburdening oneself of ownership or keepership and of abrogating one's responsibility of care for an animal, with a probable negative impact on the animal's mental and physical health.'

NB : this definition of abandonment is based exclusively on the sociological analysis carried out by the FRCAW. The purpose of this definition is to **characterise the act of abandonment**. It concerns cases where an owner/keeper deliberately parts with an animal for which moral and civil responsibilities were incurred by the owner/keeper at the time of the animal's adoption. It thus goes without saying that professions or organisations whose purposes include parting with the animals in their care (breeders who sell to private individuals, shelters that give animals up for adoption) are excluded from this definition.

The proposed definition distinguishes the act from its consequences and encompasses the different contexts for abandonment. The FRCAW has chosen not to include examples of specific abandonment contexts in its definition, although other countries may do so. The consequences of this parting are assessed from the animal's point of view.



The terms ‘disburdening’ and ‘abrogating’ refer to the rejection of the commitment made to the animal when it was adopted. The relationship with the animal is severed because the human decides to stop looking after the animal in person.

The term ‘ownership’ encompasses the legal obligations of pet owners. Here, abandonment means relinquishing ownership of an animal by transferring ownership to another person.

The term ‘responsibility of care’ emphasises the breach of the moral and legal commitment (CRPM Article L214-1) made to the animal, which is incumbent on every keeper of an animal, whether or not they are the owner.

The term ‘care’ includes the maintenance of the animal's physical and mental health through the establishment and maintenance of an emotional relationship.

By using the phrase ‘probable negative impact’, the FRCAW wished to take into account the individual nature of harm to animal welfare. Depending on the individual and the context, the impact on the animal's physical and mental health varies. In addition, animal welfare in the definition is expressed as physical and mental health in order to refer to the definition of animal welfare given by the ANSES: ‘The welfare of an animal is the positive mental and physical state associated with the satisfaction of its physiological and behavioural needs and its expectations. This state varies according to the animal's perception of the situation’ (ANSES, 2018).



Recommendation 6

The proposed definition of abandonment drawn up by the FRCAW is the outcome of expert work based on the views and suggestions of stakeholders interviewed in the context of a sociological survey. The FRCAW recommends that this definition be used as the basis for the OCAD's future work on abandonment, subject to its approval by the OCAD. It may be further refined in consultation with OCAD members depending on its intended use.

3.4 Proposed typology of abandonment: a concept with several definitions

3.4.1 Characterisation of the circumstances of abandonment

There are many different ways in which people come to part with their pets. The definitions of abandonment provided by the interviewees show that, in certain contexts, the concept of abandonment needs to be qualified, taking into account the different

possible motives for parting with an animal. Interviewees thus took the view that not all separation scenarios could be viewed as constituting abandonment: *'We've called everything abandonment so much that it's getting confused'*.

During the interviews, a list of circumstances in which an animal might be taken in by a facility or organisation was put to the interviewees, and they were asked to say whether or not they considered each situation on the list to be one of abandonment (see above, *Table 34*, Q2.1; Q2.3; Q2.4). *Table 35* provides the arguments made by interviewees 'for' and 'against' the classification of each suggested situation as abandonment.

Table 35. Summary of arguments 'for' and 'against' the linking of a scenario to abandonment

Situation	Arguments <u>in favour of</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment	Arguments <u>against</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment
<p>Animal found roaming on the public highway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While some owners may not deliberately leave their pets to roam the public highway, they do not necessarily make the effort to search for their pets or come to the pound to collect them. <p>In these cases, an animal that runs away or has been lost becomes an abandoned animal, since it enters the care of an authority or organisation and is never collected.</p> <p><i>'We tell them we have their dog and they block us.'</i></p> <p><i>'The owners don't come to collect them because they don't want to pay the fee [...] In short, it's a loss that ends up as abandonment because that suits them.'</i></p> <p><i>'Nobody takes three months to notice that their pet is missing.'</i></p> <p><i>'I've seen people who aren't looking for their pet.'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For one person, some owners deliberately let their animal roam the streets and absolve themselves of responsibility when the animal is taken in. <p><i>'There are people who deliberately let their dogs roam around'</i> (Discussion on dogs, not cats).</p> <p><i>'They can't find a solution and don't want to be bothered. They open the door.'</i> (Discussion on cats, not dogs.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For some interviewees, the fact that an animal is roaming the public highway may be beyond the owner's control. The animal may have escaped from its home, for example. <p><i>'No because it can happen to anyone.'</i></p> <p>If the animal is also unidentified, it makes it harder for the owner to find it, but also for the pound, which has to resort to social media to look for the owner. According to some interviewees, even if the 8-day time limit has passed, especially for cats, there is no guarantee that the animal has been abandoned – someone may still be looking for it.</p> <p><i>'And for cats, people often wait two weeks to do anything, and that's too late because the deadline is 8 days.'</i></p> <p><i>'The cat goes out and people worry about its disappearance a week or two later. As it isn't identified, they description they give of their cat is vague.'</i></p>

Situation	Arguments <u>in favour of</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment	Arguments <u>against</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment
<p>Private donation of the animal to a known person</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although donation between private individuals is considered more acceptable than other ways of parting with one's animal, some interviewees consider the term 'abandonment' to apply because the animal is taken away from its home. <p><i>'It's all the same thing, you may do things properly, you don't leave it in the street and it may not ultimately end up in a shelter, but it's still abandonment. The moment you part with your pet, it's abandonment.'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater proportion of interviewees felt that this situation should not be regarded as abandonment. Where an owner is looking for a solution to re-home the pet with a household they know, this is characterised more often as surrender. <p><i>'As long as the next adopter is serious it's fine, but often that's not the case.'</i></p> <p><i>'I was lucky enough to be able to place my dog with a friend.'</i></p>
<p>Private donation of the animal to a stranger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some interviewees consider donations between individuals via social media to unknown persons to be different from donations between family members or close friends. In their view, owners have no guarantee that their pets will be well-treated well and no way of intervening if necessary. <p><i>'For me, this is [to be considered as abandonment]. Because you give it to someone else, you don't look after it anymore, you get rid of it. And most of the time, they don't know who they've given it to. They're prepared to trust anyone so they can have a clear conscience.'</i></p> <p><i>'It all depends on who you give it to. When it goes to your family, there is a connection and you know what becomes of the animal. When you give it to a stranger after swapping three text messages, that's a different story.'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For some people, giving one's animal to an unknown private individual is a surrender of ownership. In their view, this is a step in the right direction for the animal's welfare. <p><i>'I wouldn't call it abandonment. I wouldn't call it abandonment because, for me, abandonment means either taking the animal to a rescue centre or tying it up to a tree in the woods. In this case, there's still a search to find someone who will try to look after it. It's a much nicer process for the animal.'</i></p> <p><i>'I believe that, as soon as someone is taking over [responsibility], it's not abandonment. If there's no one, then yes, it's abandonment and punishable under the penal code.'</i></p> <p>However, a minority of interviewees stressed the importance of carrying out these transfers correctly. In other words, the transfer of ownership should be recorded in the national identification database for domestic carnivores, which, according to the interviewees, is all too often not the case. Pounds bring in animals whose identification details are still in the name of the previous owner, who is unable to give the name and contact details of the new owner.</p> <p><i>'We have a lot of animals in the pound that are identified and, when we call the owner, they tell us they gave their animal away 10 years ago.'</i></p>

Situation	Arguments <u>in favour of</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment	Arguments <u>against</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment
<p>Abandoned in a shelter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the great majority of interviewees, parting with an animal by taking it to a shelter is considered to be abandonment. Two people put themselves in the animal's place to justify this choice. <i>'For the animal, it's abandonment. It ends up in a pen.'</i> Other interviewees stressed that, while it should still be called abandonment, it is important to stress that people who make the effort to take an animal to a shelter are more concerned about what happens to their animal than others who don't. <i>'For me, it's the same word, but it doesn't have the same impact on animals or society.'</i> <i>'Ethical abandonment. In the sense that sometimes life makes it complicated to hang on to an animal.'</i> Last, in connection with a feeling of concern for the animal's future, some interviewees additionally referred to the fact that owners are frequently made to feel guilty when they abandon animals at shelters. In their view, the term 'abandonment' should be retained, but they suggest that in certain cases the term 'surrender' should be used to encourage people to abandon their animals in a refuge rather than in the open, and to relieve the guilt felt by owners who are emotionally upset by this act. <i>'But perhaps if we changed what we call it, more people would take the shelter route for abandonment.'</i> <p>One interviewee felt this idea would be counter-productive, since it would make it easier for people to abandon their animals and, for some people who were already emotionally detached from the situation, it could strengthen their failure to feel a sense of responsibility and awareness. <i>'There are people who will say to you: no, I only want to hand it over [sub-text: rather than abandon it]'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A smaller proportion of interviewees suggested that the term abandonment should be systematically replaced by surrender, in the first instance to make it easier to abandon animals in shelters, but also to reduce feelings of guilt in people who abandon animals for reasons they consider legitimate. <i>'If it helps people to feel less guilty. When somebody thinks things through, can't find a solution and comes to me as a last resort, I don't mind if we call it 'surrender.'</i> <i>'It's not an abandonment when all's said and done. You surrender the animal [and] it's a difficult and rather stigmatising process.'</i> <p>Last, one interviewee suggested using the term 'transfer of ownership'. In her view, when a person bothers to find someone to 'take over' responsibility, there is no question of abandonment. Transfers of ownership are permitted and that's what shelters are there for. While the person is certainly not honouring their commitment to the animal, they are acting within the rules. <i>'You can make a transfer. Nobody said: you are taking on an animal for life. They said: when you take on an animal you have to respect certain rules. If at some point in your life, for whatever reason, you can no longer look after it, there are organisations in France who will arrange a second chance [for the animal].'</i></p>



Situation	Arguments <u>in favour of</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment	Arguments <u>against</u> characterising the situation as one of abandonment
<p>Euthanasia for the sake of convenience (Euthanasia for the sake of convenience is a medical procedure carried out by a vet to end the life of an animal in perfectly good physical and mental health.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia for the sake of convenience was considered by a minority of interviewees to be abandonment because a person wishes to part with their pet permanently for a reason of convenience. <p><i>‘These are technical terms. But yes, you could call it abandonment because you abandon an animal to its fate. Especially if there are no valid reasons for it and it’s just to go on holiday.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Some people are not troubled by it. Some even prefer euthanasia to leaving a pet at a shelter.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia for convenience was, for the majority of interviewees, not to be associated with abandonment because they considered it to be a more radical act. <p>For one interviewee, it should not be seen as abandonment because it was a form of convenience.</p> <p><i>‘I therefore think that euthanasia is sometimes a matter of convenience. In such a case, I blame the vet more, because he’s the professional. You can’t euthanise a dog because it shows signs of aggressiveness. There are too many other solutions. Except, of course, if a dog was 5 years old, was a repeat offender, had bitten 25 people. I can understand that.’</i></p> <p>For others, it could be justified when all possibilities have been considered but the animal is a danger to others or is in too much pain.</p> <p><i>‘There is always talk of euthanasia for the sake of convenience, but there are hardly any cases because vets are responsible people and don’t do just anything.’</i></p>
<p>Killing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those asked about this issue always provided evidence to illustrate their points. The killing of pets by their owners does occur and represents, for some, an alternative to abandonment in a shelter. <p><i>‘I think we can put it at the same level as abandonment ‘in the wild’, where the animal has little chance of survival. When you tie up a dog in the middle of a forest, it’s because you want the animal to die.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unanimously, killing one’s pet (not having it euthanised) was viewed as an act of cruelty that should be severely punished. <p>A large number of those interviewed did not associate it with abandonment, considering it to be an act that should be prosecuted as a crime in all cases (Article 521-1 of the French Criminal Code penalises acts of cruelty).</p>
<p>Animal is returned by the adoptive household</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One interviewee considered this to constitute a fresh abandonment for the animal, all the more so when the trial adoption period has passed. <p><i>‘For the animal, it’s abandonment. After 8 days, the animal has been given a holiday, after several months it adds another layer.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two interviewees disagreed with the idea that the return of an adopted animal should be considered to be abandonment, even when the trial period was over. <p><i>‘We share the responsibility when there is a poor match between the animal and the home we have chosen for it.’</i></p>

3.4.2 The particular case of 'stray' animals

The various statements from interviewees are often tinged with uncertainty when it comes to distinguishing whether an animal is a 'stray' or has been 'abandoned' (Table 34, Q3.4; Q3.5). The participants had no clear-cut opinion on straying, since, for them, it simply tells you something about an animal at a given moment: it is roaming, there is no owner or keeper to look after it, and it may seem to be in either good or poor condition.

'Just because an animal has been on the street for x amount of time, it's not necessarily abandoned. It's an animal that is wandering the streets whose owner is unknown to us, but who may have one.'

Aside from the issue of abandonment, the distinction between straying and roaming was not clear in all the discussions either. In most cases, it seems that the behaviour of a stray was associated with a lack of familiarity with humans. So very often a dog is not a stray, it has first been lost or found and then, if no one claims it, it is abandoned.

'There are no stray dogs, at worst there are dogs that have been lost for a few days [...] there is always an owner.'

On the other hand, in the French DOMTOM, there is a significant presence of feral dogs, i.e. dogs that live free in the wild, without food or shelter directly provided by humans.

'We have areas, essentially dumping grounds, where there is a population of dogs, the majority of whom have never had any contact with humans.'

In the case of cats, a lack of identification often makes it difficult to find out whether animals have owners and to track the latter down. *'Yes, I'd say that half of the unidentified cats that arrive in a shelter are still friendly and, in principle, have had owners'*. The terms 'feral' and 'independent' were also sometimes used by interviewees to refer to these animals.

Additionally, according to most of those interviewed, a very large number of cats live and are born in the wild. These are fed by members of the public in places that are not official feeding areas set up as part of 'free' cat projects. *'We have real populations, cats that have become 'feral'. They're complete outsiders. They're not even abandoned because they're born in the wild'; 'There are the ones that don't belong to anyone but get fed'.*

Cats are therefore both strays and animals found roaming who have an owner.

Last, for two interviewees, the presence of stray cats is the result of past abandonment. Indeed, they assume that a cat born on the street has at least one ancestor who has had an owner. *'So it was the abandonment of a first animal that led to the existence of the other animals.'*



Ultimately, it is very hard to tell whether an animal found on the public highway has had an owner or not if the animal is not identified. It is ownership that distinguishes a stray animal from a roaming animal. A stray animal has never had an owner – it was born and lives on the street – whereas a roaming animal belongs to someone who is either looking for it (if it has run away, been lost or stolen) or has abandoned it. **According to the interviewees, a stray animal is not necessarily an abandoned animal.**

3.4.3 The particular case of abuse

Abuse is encountered in many cases of abandonment and can lead to the seizure of the animal by the competent authorities. During the interviews, several cases of abuse linked to abandonment were mentioned (*Table 34*, Q2.4), particularly cases of **neglect** – interviewees described their experiences when faced with this.

Interviewees nevertheless viewed abuse as being distinct from abandonment, or worse, even. Abandonment involves acknowledging one's inability to meet the animal's needs and finding a solution to the problem. This act of self-questioning by the owner is not present in cases of abuse, according to some interviewees. *'For me, it's even worse than abandonment. Because abandonment involves simply accepting at some point that I'm not fit to look after an animal. So that makes it a deliberate act, being prepared to ask questions about yourself'*. What is more, the **deliberate nature of the act of abandonment does not necessarily feature in cases of abuse**. Interviewees spoke of the **unintentional neglect** of their animals by owners. Animals may run away and become lost because their needs are not being met, eventually ending up in a shelter. *'Because for people who abuse or neglect animals, there's this denial of what's going on'*. Owners who do not give up an animal voluntarily also feature in replies by interviewees when characterising cases where the animal is removed by the authorities for reasons of abuse. The keeper is deemed to be irresponsible, but still owns the animal. In this sense, these cases cannot involve abandonment, unless the owner voluntarily decides to part with the animal. *'For me, abandonment means that there is still a deliberate course of action. When an animal is seized because it has been badly treated, the action is not an act of choice made by the owner. If it's been badly treated, that's one thing, and has to be punished, but I wouldn't call it abandonment. Because people often don't want to part with them.'*

Two interviewees did, however, qualify their replies. **Abuse by failing to care for an animal for various reasons is characterised by a failure to assume one's responsibility and moral duty towards the animal.** To some extent, this also characterises abandonment: *'I think there's a fine line between neglect/abuse and abandonment. They're not as distinct as all that, because abandoning an animal entails a deterioration in its condition and an impact on its physical and mental health'*. Furthermore, as mentioned above, **abuse is strongly embedded in certain abandonment scenarios**, where an animal is tied to a stake in a

remote place, left to stray, etc. However, the impact on the animal of this sort of abuse should not be placed on a par with abandonment at a pound or rescue centre, for example: *'I would say that [abuse] is a third form [of abandonment]: it is 'uncontrolled' abandonment, which is a criminal offence'*.

In conclusion, the distinction between abuse and abandonment is difficult to determine, since **some abandonment scenarios are considered to be acts of abuse**. Therefore, the presence of **abuse in a case of abandonment should be treated as an aggravating factor that increases the negative impact of abandonment on an animal's welfare and as being representative of the low degree of consideration displayed by the keeper towards the animal**. In fact, depending on the context, abuse can take different forms (failure to provide care, physical or mental abuse) and offers a useful way to grade different abandonment scenarios given the impact it has on an animal's welfare.

The seizure of animals for reasons of abuse should therefore not be considered to fall within the definition of abandonment. Nevertheless, neglecting to care for an animal, as a particular case of abuse, is akin to failing to show a sense of responsibility or consideration for the animal. To fail to show consideration for an animal is effectively to regard it as an object rather than a sentient being.

3.4.4 Ranking the seriousness of abandonment scenarios

All the scenarios listed in *Table 35* that could be considered to constitute abandonment within the terms established by the FRCAW (see Section 3.3.4), were in need of further refinement through reference to **several different criteria**. Interviewees were therefore asked to rank the various abandonment situations in order of **seriousness, so that** the criteria they applied in the exercise could be identified. They were asked the following question: *'Are some ways of abandoning animals more serious than others?'* (*Table 34, Q2.5*).

Most interviewees ranked abandonment scenarios according to the following criteria: **the impact of the situation on an animal's health, the consideration shown towards an animal by its owner and, to a lesser extent, the acceptability of the reason for abandonment**. By using these different criteria to assess the seriousness of the scenario, interviewees explained why certain types of abandonment should be viewed more severely from a moral point of view and should be punished from a criminal point of view. *'Now, someone who abandons, mistreats or leaves an animal to die should be severely punished'*.

Acts of abandonment that can cause death or have a severe impact on the animal's health were always cited by interviewees as the most serious scenarios for parting with an animal. These included:



- **Euthanasia for reasons of convenience.** Interviewees who discussed this possibility recognised that, in certain situations, euthanasia of an animal is an option that can be considered in consultation with a vet in order to help an animal at the end of its life, but it should not be an easy way out. Two interviewees drew attention to complicated situations relating to euthanasia, where owners who were determined to have their animals euthanised had no hesitation in making the other party feel uncomfortable in order to achieve their ends, particularly by threatening to kill the animal themselves (if the vet refused, if the shelter refused to take the animal into its charge, etc.).

‘He had been brought a dog to euthanise for reasons of convenience, which he refused to do. The owner left, telling him he was going to take care of it himself with a bullet through the dog’s head.’

- **‘Killings’, i.e. cases where animals are killed by their owners (shot, drowned, etc.), tied up in the forest, far from human habitation or locked up with no way of escaping,** are the most serious scenarios for parting with an animal, given their very significant impact on the animal's welfare. Almost all interviewees considered these particular actions to be more serious than abandonment (*Table 35*). The FRCAW has chosen to group them together under the heading of ‘killing’. In effect, these scenarios are the result of an owner's/ keeper's decision to part with an animal by condemning it to death rather than entrusting it to a shelter or a reliable person, for example.

‘Some people abandon animals in the sorts of area where they will inevitably die if they are not found. When they are abandoned in a forest or in the middle of fields 5 km from any houses [...] that’s like killing them. There’s very little chance of them surviving, and even when they’re picked up by a pound, they’re so traumatised that they don’t stand a chance.’

‘Yes, we found the body of a dog in a flat. The person had left without telling anyone, leaving the dog in the flat. We found a mummified dog with claw marks on the doors, excrement everywhere, the dog had drunk from the toilet.’

- The vast majority of **animals left roaming on the public highway** are also considered to have been placed in serious danger.

‘When they are left on the streets, they are at risk of being run over and falling into the hands of ill-intentioned people who will harm them.’

The owner also fails to demonstrate responsible behaviour, by avoiding having to answer to organisations and the municipality while taking no steps to ensure the best possible care for the animal.

'Some dogs have run away and their owners are happy because they didn't want them anymore.'

Dogs were more likely to be used as examples in the latter case. Cats were viewed as being more easily left to roam or left behind in their previous homes after a move. Some interviewees considered these circumstances to be harmful to the animal (lack of food, water, care, etc.), while others took the view that the cat could simply be passed on privately to the new occupants.

In the view of the interviewees, the above scenarios are the most harmful to an animal's physical and mental health. No responsibility is exercised by the owner/keeper, which suggests that consideration for the animal is equally non-existent. The responses of some interviewees allowed a scale to be proposed as follows: killing > euthanasia > left to roam.

'Euthanasia is worse, in the sense that there is still the possibility that an animal on the street will find someone to take it in.'

Conversely, cases where the animal is left in a safe place by its owner/keeper were considered to be less problematic and the owners were considered to display greater responsibility. It was nevertheless important to qualify the 'less problematic' nature of these circumstances, taking into account the reasons for abandonment, the physical and mental impact on the animal, and the manner in which the owner sets about abandoning the animal:

'That's where you have to make a distinction from the responsible guy who takes his dog to an organisation or the authorities, who pays, to make sure that another home can be found for his dog. As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing wrong with that.'

There are many different circumstances under which an animal comes to be abandoned in a shelter and management of the situation can sometimes be complex – when an animal is left outside a shelter or is unidentified and unvaccinated, or when untruths are told about an animal's ownership etc. These different cases of abandonment at a shelter **vary in their impacts on the animal's future and in the degree of responsibility shown by owners**. In fact, it would seem natural to assume that the degrees of care and responsibility shown towards an animal should be ranked differently for owners and keepers who take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge it, as opposed to those who evade the responsibility of looking after their animal up until the moment they part with it:

'There are those who abandon [their animal] but act responsibly, who pay their share of the abandonment costs, who will do what needs to be done for their animal until they hand it over to us. You can tell with some people that there is so much human suffering going on that they are at the point where they can't cope themselves. So they do the best they



can for the animal. And there are some people who don't give a damn, they don't abandon animals in an uncontrolled way, but they don't give a damn.'

Generally speaking, though, interviewees took the view that **abandoning an animal in a shelter has less impact on the animal's welfare if it is carried out in accordance with the regulations**, i.e., by taking an **identified animal to a shelter, signing an abandonment certificate, and paying the costs involved**.

'Someone who goes to a shelter to abandon an animal, who does things by the book and follows legal procedures, is obviously doing a better job than someone who abandons an animal in a cardboard box'. The animal is taken to a safe place, the owner takes responsibility for his or her actions and faces up to them. This approach was described as very important by a good number of the interviewees and, in their view, reflected the consideration that some people have for their animals, especially those who abandon them for **reasons judged to be compelling**. Nevertheless, while some interviewees considered the abandonment of an animal in a shelter to be a thoughtful and responsible act that promotes the animal's welfare, they felt it should not be treated as minor.

'It's still moral abandonment to take your pet to a shelter. It's not just a transfer. It's responsible to take your animal to the shelter, but it's not responsible to have taken on an animal without having thought about it beforehand. It's the best they can do, but it's not ideal.'

Meanwhile, although a small number of interviewees ranked it on the same level as abandonment in a shelter, the form of separation that was most often described as the 'least problematic' of all was **surrender to a known person** (close to the owner). This scenario should not even be considered as abandonment in the view of some interviewees, who felt it to be a somewhat commendable process based on a relationship of trust. The criterion used to rank this type of abandonment was almost always an owner's commitment to parting with an animal under the best possible conditions.

'But if you sort it out with your neighbour and your neighbour makes your dog happy, I'd rather see that than a neglected animal. On the other hand, I don't understand how you can go and get a dog, bring it into your home and treat it badly.'

One interviewee emphasised the differences and even spoke of **transfer of ownership rather than surrender or abandonment**, given the degree of the owner's involvement in ensuring a future for the animal, compared with other scenarios where the owner takes what the interviewee considered to be the easy path.

'It's not a surrender. There are two levels. These are transfers of ownership. The transfer takes place between two willing parties, there is informed consent, they know who they are giving it to, and both parties know the animal and each other. Whereas when you give [an animal] to the SPA or 30 Millions d'Amis, you hand it over to the organisation and



expect it to get on with it. But it's the same thing. There is a greater commitment on the part of an owner who finds another owner to transfer the animal to, than from an owner who leaves it with a large organisation. The result is the same, but the commitment is different.'

The levels of abandonment that could thus be proposed for abandonment at a shelter compared with abandonment between individuals could be ranked as follows: shelter > donation of the animal between known individuals. **Shelters were viewed less favourably to some extent by the pet owners interviewed, given the conditions in which animals are housed, which are drastically different from those in a household** (provided there is no abuse in the latter): *'The animal has had a nice home, a house, masters. Now it finds itself in a pen with lots of other barking dogs and strangers who come to feed it and take it out for 10 minutes a day. For me, a transfer is what happens between two private individuals. As far as I'm concerned, you can't call abandoning a dog to an SPA a transfer'. 'After that, my approach was to make sure she was properly placed. Some part of me didn't trust the organisation. I didn't want her to go back into a pen. I saw that as yet another trauma, compared to getting her straight back into a family'.*

On one hand, **some interviewees believed that the reason given for abandonment could serve as an indicator of the degree of responsibility shown by the owner towards the animal – even the owner had followed the correct procedure, it might be for the wrong reasons.** Or, in less neutral terms, those who used 'nonsensical' justifications were displaying a lack of consideration for the animal and their actions were morally damaging.

'It's true that, morally, you've committed yourself to having an animal, so you have to look after it and keep it for the rest of its life. But it's always the same question. Why are you surrendering it? If you surrender it because you're fed up with taking it out for a pee every morning, that's morally reprehensible. If you surrender it because your wife is ill and having chemotherapy and you can no longer look after your dog, that's perfectly understandable from a moral point of view. I'd rather give it to my sister or my friend because I know them well and I know they'll look after it well. In that case, I don't think it's wrong at all. In each case it's a transfer. In other cases, the reason for the transfer may be morally reprehensible.'

For other interviewees, though, **it is not appropriate to take motives into account in the proper assessment of the different types of abandonment,** because it is not easy to know whether a person is being honest in the first place and because the decision has in any case already been taken; **regardless of the reason, the animal has been abandoned.**

'Then, people who have taken good care of their animals, but who abandon them because they have a health problem, will often not go to a shelter, but will instead try to give the animal to someone they trust, within the family, etc. For us, the dogs who come here are generally left by people who are already emotionally detached.'



The reasons were not important, provided that people did things properly and in the best interests of their animals: *'It's almost a moral issue because, even if it's for a crazy reason, the person is making the effort to go to a shelter, to surrender their animal and to be lectured. It's very unpleasant to be lectured. I don't think we should stigmatise people too much, otherwise they won't do it anymore and may end up abandoning their pets in the wild'*.

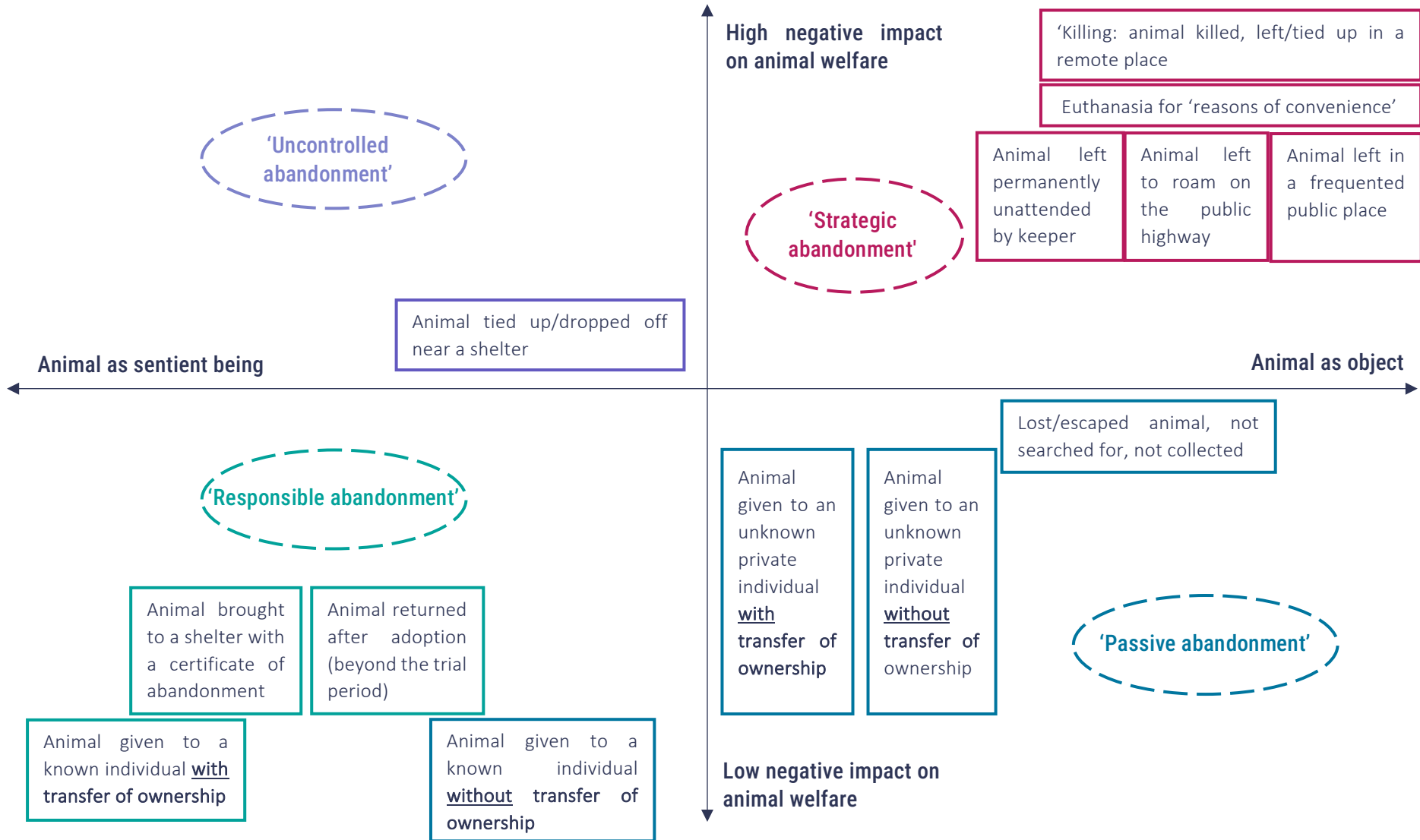
Last, two main criteria were used to classify the different types of abandonment: **the negative impact on the animal's physical and mental health** (or even its survival) and the **degree of responsibility shown by the owner**, which could be manifested in a number of ways – consideration for the animal, compliance with legislation, reasons for abandonment.

3.4.5 A typology of abandonment

These 'seriousness' rankings for an act of abandonment and our exploration of the different contexts in which the definition of abandonment can apply enabled us to establish a four quadrant chart providing a visual typology using two axes (*Figure 16*). The different abandonment scenarios discussed during the interviews are plotted on the matrix through reference to the following two axes:

- > The y-axis shows **the degree of negative impact of abandonment on an animal's welfare**. Where negative impact on the animal's welfare is high, this corresponds particularly to abuse and neglect.
- > The x-axis shows the **degree of consideration shown towards an animal**, i.e., the degree to which the animal is treated either as an 'object' or a 'sentient being'. At one end of the scale (animal as object), keepers fail to fulfil their responsibilities towards the animal, act without regard for the current regulations and abruptly sever all ties with the animal. At the other end (animal as sentient being), they respect the legal and moral responsibility incumbent on them and end the relationship with the animal in a more thoughtful and less abrupt way, possibly experiencing feelings of guilt.

Figure 16. Typology of the different abandonment scenarios to emerge from the semi-structured interviews



The various abandonment scenarios and circumstances taken into consideration by the general definition proposed above can be mapped according to the typology shown in *Figure 16*.

The FRCAW associates five situations with the term **‘Strategic abandonment’** (term suggested by an interviewee). This category of abandonment characterises situations where the animal's welfare is very strongly impacted (even leading to the animal's death) and where the levels of responsibility and consideration shown by the keeper for the animal are very low. The animal is regarded as an object to be disposed of without following the legal steps incumbent on an owner wishing to part with an animal.

These abandonment scenarios are considered to be ‘strategic’ because they set out to make it more difficult to take charge of the animal and find its owner. The FRCAW distinguishes the following situations:

- > **Animals ‘put to death’ (killing)**. This refers to animals killed directly by private individuals without medical assistance (and is not to be confused with euthanasia). Killing also includes cases where animals are abandoned or tied up in an isolated place with few or no passers-by, in the expectation that they will not be found.
- > **Euthanasia for reasons of convenience**. As mentioned by interviewees, euthanasia is sometimes necessary and should not be considered an act of abandonment. Nevertheless, some interviewees considered there to be a scale of acceptability for the choice of euthanasia, depending on the reasons given by keepers to justify it. Euthanasia could thus be justified by an ‘acceptable’ reason that legitimised the decision to end the animal's life (incurable illness, suffering of the animal, etc.), or it could be justified by an ‘unacceptable’ reason that reflected the keeper/owner's lack of responsibility and consideration towards the animal (e.g. going on holiday, animal behaviour considered problematic by the owner but not the vet). Euthanasia for ‘unacceptable’ reasons is therefore considered here to constitute abandonment.
- > **Animals left in a frequented public place**. The FRCAW has chosen this description to characterise, for example, cases of abandonment at motorway service areas, and in other locations where the animal can potentially be taken care of. The keeper/owner intentionally leaves the animal in a public place so that there is a chance that it will be looked after. The negative impact on the animal's welfare is the same as for animals left unattended in a keeper's home or left roaming on the public highway, in terms of the dangers for the stray animal.
- > **Animals left roaming on the public highway**. Although it is difficult to determine whether the animal is a stray (i.e., has never had an owner) or has been abandoned, some keepers/owners deliberately leave their animals to roam so that they can ultimately be accommodated by a public authority or organisation. This scenario resembles the cases of ‘passive abandonment’ dealt with below. The

negative impact on animal welfare is significant given the dangers faced by animals that roam free.

- > **Animals left without care while still in the owner's keeping.** This situation involves the abandonment, or abrogation, of caregiving. The keeper renounces both moral and legal obligations towards the animal. It can also involve animals left behind after the keeper has permanently moved away or has left on a long holiday. The negative impact on the animal's welfare is characterised by mental and physical harm, associated in particular with the lack of food, water or care, and prolonged isolation.

The FRCAW associates three situations with the term '**Passive abandonment**' (term suggested by an interviewee). This category of abandonment is characteristic of owners who generally have little regard for their animals since they give them away to strangers, or do not take the necessary steps to search for their animals or collect them from a pound if they have run away. The negative impact on animal welfare is generally less significant than in cases of 'strategic abandonment' since the animal is usually taken into the care of a private individual or an organisation.

- > **Animals given to an unknown private individual with/without transfer of ownership.** These are donations between private individuals, for example via social media, with or without a transfer of ownership (i.e., the animal's details on I-CAD are changed to those of the new owner, now a compulsory procedure for all transfers of animal ownership, see *Glossa*).

The FRCAW classifies donation of an animal to an unknown individual as abandonment, given that it severs the relationship between the animal and its keeper. Further, because the new owner is unknown, this can preclude evaluation of the animal's future living conditions, risking a greater impact on its welfare than if it were given to a known person or to a registered shelter. These two scenarios are thus positioned at the same level in terms of their negative impact on an animal's welfare and the boxes extend along the y-axis to characterise the uncertainty as to the level of negative impact on the animal's welfare in such scenarios (blue boxes, *Figure 16*). The FRCAW takes the view that donation of an animal without formal transfer of ownership nevertheless reflects a lesser sense of responsibility on the part of the owner and shows less consideration for the animal as a sentient being.

- > **Lost or escaped animals, not searched for, not collected.** This refers to animals that are found and admitted by pounds and shelters but whose owners have not tried to find them and/or not collected them, despite requests from the pound. The negative impact on the animal's welfare takes the form of a change of environment (e.g. isolation in a kennel or pen) and is expressed through a state of stress and fear, which varies according to the length of time the animal has been kept in the accommodation and to the individual. It can be assumed that, in the environment

provided by a pound or shelter, those who look after the animals are trained professionals who can act to mitigate negative impacts on the animal's physical and mental health. For this reason, this scenario is located lower down the y axis than donation to an unknown person.

- > **Animals tied up/dropped off near a shelter.** Keepers abrogate their responsibility towards the animals and renege on their legal obligations, even if the animal is in the vicinity of a shelter. An animal's welfare can be affected negatively by it being unable to move freely and being deprived of food and water, with high stress and fear levels due to the change of environment. All these factors can vary with the duration of the situation and the individual.

Last, the FRCAW associates three situations with the term '**Responsible abandonment**' (term suggested by an interviewee). Some cases of abandonment are legal within the terms of the law, which considers them to be forms of 'surrender' (donations between individuals with no transfer of ownership are not legally permitted and it is compulsory to transfer ownership prior to the surrender of an animal, see *Glossa*). Thus, analysis of the interviewees' comments suggests that '**donation to a known private individual with transfer of ownership**' and '**abandonment at a shelter**' could be described as 'surrenders' of ownership, as a way to reduce a sense of guilt and encourage owners to abandon their animals in accordance with the established rules.

- > **Animal donated to a known private individual with/without transfer of ownership.** These are donations to family members or close friends. The FRCAW considers a donation to a known individual to be an abandonment in this typology on the grounds that the keeper severs the relationship with the animal. Keepers are considered to show less responsibility when there is no transfer of ownership, since their legal and moral obligations towards the animal are not fulfilled (a change of ownership is legally required for all transfers of an animal, see *Glossa*). Greater control can be exercised over the impact on the animal's welfare in this context, as the previous owner knows the new owner and is therefore familiar with the environment in which the pet will live. Additionally, the animal is placed in an environment of a similar type to its previous living environment, i.e., a household, rather than a kennel, for example.
The act of abandonment is more carefully thought through and organised to limit the impact on the animal's welfare.
- > **Animal brought to a shelter with a certificate of abandonment.** This scenario follows a legal route for the abandonment of a pet (Article L.214-6 of the CRPM). The animal is handed over to an organisation that includes at least one person trained to look after pets and the animal's background is known, which will facilitate its future adoption. Nevertheless, as the interviewees remark, the change of environment is likely to have a negative effect on the animal, accounting for the positioning of this scenario above donations between known private individuals on

the y axis. In the view of some interviewees, and depending on the reason for abandonment, this scenario could be described as ‘surrender’ rather than abandonment.

- > **Animal returned after adoption.** After the trial period set by shelters and animal rescue associations without shelter accommodation has ended, some animals are returned to the rescue organisation by their new owners. The FRCAW classes this scenario as abandonment in this typology, since it fits with the definition established above. The negative impact on the animal's welfare is considered to be similar to that of abandonment at a shelter, for the same reasons.

3.4.6 Conclusions concerning the typology of abandonment

The typology drawn up by the FRCAW (*Figure 16*) is intended to represent the diversity of circumstances and outcomes that can be included under the common heading of ‘abandonment’. The different scenarios it shows fit the definition of abandonment given above (see 3.3.4) but should be viewed and managed differently in terms of their outcomes for the animals and the degree of consideration shown to the latter. This typology thus offers a basis on which to identify the management measures that are suited to each abandonment scenario.

Some cases of abandonment associated with ‘responsible abandonment’ and ‘passive abandonment’ are authorised in the regulations and therefore not punishable by law. Such cases can nevertheless be seen as morally questionable in terms of the reasons for which the abandonment occurs. There are many reasons why pet owners/keepers decide to part with their animals. It is the view of the FRCAW that not all these reasons are acceptable, given the commitment made by owners to ensure the physical and mental welfare of their animals when they acquire them.



Recommendation 7

The typology drawn up by the FRCAW is intended to demonstrate the diversity of abandonment scenarios and their consequences. The FRCAW recommends that this typology be used to help establish a scale of seriousness for abandonment scenarios, where different management methods are appropriate to different scenarios.

4 Summary of recommendations made by the FRCAW

The recommendations made by the FRCAW in this report are summarised in *Table 36* below.

Table 36. Summary of FRCAW recommendations

		Recommendations of the FRCAW (Second Report for the OCAD)	Partners
Mapping	1	Further characterise reception facilities at regional and departmental levels in order to map their distribution and specify how they are organised.	Ingénium Animalis - provision of data from the BNO Body/bodies delegated by the DGAL - inventory and identification of gaps based on data provided
	2	Use the proposed lists of reasons for entry and exit to populate entry and exit data files for reception facilities listed in the ICAD/BNO.	Members of the OCAD Steering Committee - validation of the lists proposed by the FRCAW French Ministry of Agriculture, Ingénium Animalis - implementation in the ICA/BNO
List of entry and exit reasons	3	Enter known sub-reasons each time an animal enters or leaves. Update lists as new reasons or sub-reasons are identified (dynamic document). Set up an <i>ad hoc</i> working group to help update these lists. Set up a tree structure in the form of a drop-down menu listing sub-reasons for euthanasia, deaths, transfers between facilities, seizure and capture of animals.	French Ministry of Agriculture, Ingénium Animalis - implementation in the BNO Members of the OCAD Steering committee - add new sub-reasons if necessary and participate in the working group
	4	Specify the behaviours considered to be problematic or even dangerous that lead to euthanasia for behavioural reasons.	Veterinarians, shelters, pounds, municipalities
	5	Introduce a list of reasons for entering or leaving the charge of private individuals via acquisition or surrender.	FRCAW - proposed list Veterinarians - provide information to I-CAD
	6	Use the proposed definition of abandonment as a basis for future OCAD work on abandonment if the definition is approved by OCAD.	Members of the OCAD Steering Committee
	7	Use the proposed typology to establish a scale of seriousness for abandonment scenarios.	Members of the OCAD Steering Committee





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Acknowledgements

The FRCAW extends its thanks to all who contributed to this report, in particular:

- + those who agreed to be interviewed on the theme of abandonment,
- + all those working for facilities and organisations who took the time to respond to the on-line questionnaire,
- + those experts who participated in the discussions leading to the formulation of the definition of abandonment and the associated typology.



Appendix

Appendix 1. List of reasons for dogs and cats entering and leaving the care of the four types of facility or organisation proposed in the closed questionnaire and reasons for these proposals

The following tables show the reasons for entry and exit **presented to respondents as options in the questionnaire** distributed by the FRCAW (*Table 37; Table 38*).

The options proposed in the questionnaire to the various responding organisations were based on the relevant regulations and on discussions among OCAD members. As a consequence, some reasons actually encountered by certain facilities on the ground do not appear in the tables below. Analysis of the results has enabled these omissions to be remedied in the final proposed lists.

Table 37. Reasons proposed in the closed questionnaire for dogs and cats to enter the care of the four types of facility/organisation, with explanations for their inclusion

Reason for entry	Explanation	Relevant facilities/organisations
Animal found roaming captured by the authorities and taken to the pound	The competent authorities (municipalities, urban and rural police forces) are responsible for recovering animals found roaming and taking them to the pound connected to their municipality.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal found roaming captured by your pound	Animals that stray onto the public highway can be captured directly by the pound.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal found roaming captured/recovered by your organisation following a report from a private individual	Private individuals can report the presence of an animal that is roaming to a shelter or town hall.	Pound Pound-shelter AWS
Animal placed in the care of your organisation following a court order	Cats and dogs can be legally confiscated from the owner and brought to the facility following a judge's ruling, where a custodial sentence has been handed down or in abuse cases, for example.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal placed in the care of your organisation by order of the local authority	Both dogs and cats can be formally removed by the Prefect (or Mayor) and taken to a facility or organisation. This action is taken in cases of dogs that bite or cats that scratch, for example.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal placed in the care of your organisation as part of an animal abuse investigation	During investigations of abuse, animals may be formally removed and placed in the care of a facility or organisation for the duration of the investigation.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal left (tied up or loose) in front of your premises	Private individuals deposit their animals directly outside the facility.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter

Reason for entry	Explanation	Relevant facilities/organisations
Animals placed in the care of your organisation by owners themselves	Keepers of animals hand them over directly to a facility or organisation in order to abandon them.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal brought in by a vet	Veterinary practitioners may take in pets abandoned directly by their clients or animals found roaming that are brought to them. They then hand these animals over to facilities or organisations.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal brought to your facility/organisation by a third party	Private individuals bring animals found roaming directly to a facility, but are not themselves the owners or keepers of the animals.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter
Animal captured by your organisation as part of a sterilisation campaign	Mayors can order that unidentified, ownerless or keeperless cats living in groups in public places in the municipality should be captured and then released again at the place of capture following identification and sterilisation (L211-27 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code). ► <i>This reason was proposed only for cats in the questionnaire.</i>	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal transferred from a pound	After 8 working days, if no one has collected an animal, it becomes the property of the pound, which decides what happens to it. Pounds can thus transfer an animal to another pound as part of the animal's care. Transfers to shelters and AWSs occur once the 8-day period has passed.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal transferred from a shelter	Animals may be transferred between shelters, or between shelters and AWSs, particularly to facilitate adoptions or ensure that animals receive the appropriate care.	Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal returned to your facility/organisation after adoption	After an animal is adopted, shelters generally allow a trial period during which the new owner can return it. The deadline is set by the individual shelter. Following this period, ownership is transferred to the new owner. Adopted animals returned after the trial period has ended are treated as new admissions to the shelter.	Pound-shelter Shelter

Table 38. Reasons proposed in the closed questionnaire for dogs and cats to leave the care of the four types of facility/organisation, with explanations for their inclusion.

Reason for exit	Explanation	Relevant facility/organisation
Animal collected by its owner	Owners retrieve their animals from the care the facility or organisation. In the case of pounds, the law allows 8 working days for owners to come forward or be contacted by the pound.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal transferred to a shelter for adoption	After spending 8 working days in the pound, animals can be transferred to a shelter or an AWS if they have not been claimed.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal is adopted	The animal adopted by a private individual having been cared for by a facility or organisation. Ownership is then transferred to the new owner.	Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal transferred to another pound	Animals can be transferred from one pound to another.	Pound Pound-shelter
Animal transferred to an AWS	As with the previous reason, once the legal period for holding an animal has elapsed, it can be transferred to an AWS. Alternatively, the animal may be transferred between a shelter and an AWS.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter
Animal euthanised for reasons of very poor health	This involves the euthanasia of an animal where its general condition judged by the managers and vets of the facilities to be too serious and painful.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal euthanised because no other alternatives found	Euthanasia may be carried out for lack of space or resources, for example. Euthanasia then appears to be the only option available.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal euthanised by official order	An animal may be euthanised by order of a judge or mayor if it is deemed dangerous, for example (Article 131-21-1 paragraph 6 of the French Penal Code).	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal euthanised for public health reasons	Euthanasia is performed because the animal has a disease.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal euthanised for behavioural reasons	Euthanasia is performed because the animal has behavioural problems.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal euthanised for another reason	Euthanasia is carried out for a reason other than those given in this list. Respondents could make suggestions.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal dies following injury	Animals dying without medical intervention because their injuries are too severe.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal dies for no known reason	Animals dying without medical intervention and without it being possible to determine the reasons.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS
Animal dies of old age	Animals dying without medical intervention, due to age rather than any particular illness.	Pound Pound-shelter Shelter AWS



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