

More than 150 thousand pets were lost or abandoned in 2008

An annual report by the Fundación Affinity, released today, shows that the abandonment of pets is still at an unacceptable high in Spain. In 2008, local councils and animal welfare associations recovered over 118.000 dogs and 38.700 cats from the streets of Spain, which were either lost or had been abandoned by their owners.

Of the 118.000 dogs listed, only 17.000 (14%) had been lost and the remainder, 101.000, had been abandoned. Regarding cats, the figure was a lot lower, whereas of the 38.700 cats found, only 2.000 (5%) had been lost, the remaining 36.700 abandoned.

According to the survey, 14% of dogs picked up were returned to their owners, nearly 30% were adopted and 15% destroyed, mostly for health reasons. In the case of cats, 30% remain in the shelter, almost 20% were adopted and 23% were destroyed.

In presenting the study, director of the Fundación Affinity, Mary Azcargorta, explained that contrary to what you think, pets are abandoned throughout the year, with a slight upturn in summer (32% of animals found were collected in the first part of the year, 34% in the second and 33% in the third).

There was a variety of reasons why animals were left at shelters. 16% did so because their owners had observed changes in animal behavior, 12% because of moving to a smaller home, 11% due to the end of hunting season, 10% due to the arrival of a child, 9% due to loss of interest in the animal and 3% due to hospitalization or death of the owner.

The autonomous communities in which most dogs were abandoned were Andalusia (18.000), Catalonia (17.000), Valencia (14.000) and the Balearic Islands (12.000), but in proportion to the number of inhabitants, more dogs were abandoned in the Balearic Islands, Navarre and Rioja.