

GET INVOLVED

# VOLUNTEERING FOR **ANIMAL WELFARE**

by Walt K. Moon



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# AT A GLANCE

- People can volunteer for animal welfare by helping at animal shelters, at wildlife centers, as citizen scientists, and at zoos.
- Animal shelters take care of stray and lost pets, helping them find homes. Volunteers may feed animals, do laundry, and socialize animals. They may also use their skills in social media, writing, or photography to help the shelter.
- Wildlife centers care for wild animals that are injured, sick, or orphaned. Volunteers take care of animals, do laundry, and support the veterinary staff at the center. They may get the chance to release the healed animals back into the wild.
- Citizen science is when everyday people get involved in collecting data for scientific projects. Volunteers in citizen science projects can help observe local wildlife, such as birds, frogs, and other species. This work can help scientists with conservation efforts.

# HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER?

**A**nimal shelters are places that care for animals and work to find homes for them. People may drop off a pet at a shelter if they are unable to care for it. The shelter may take in stray or lost animals. It may also take in animals that have been





***Animal shelters take in unwanted, mistreated, or stray animals.***

mistreated. Shelters most commonly care for dogs and cats. But some take in other kinds of animals too, such as rabbits, snakes, or birds.

Shelters vary widely. Some are made up of one or two rooms and a handful

of **kennels**. Others are large, fancy facilities.

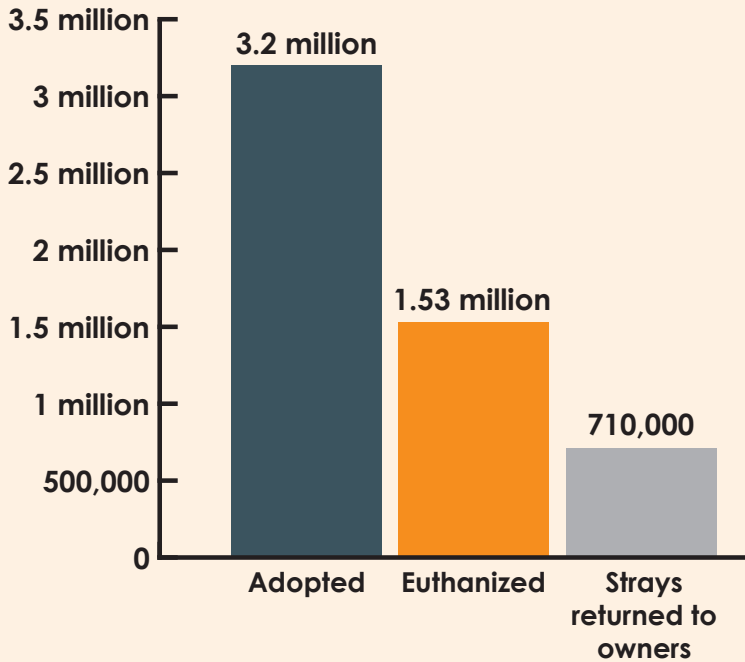
They may play calming music to reduce stress for both animals and people. They may have features like fountains and pet supply shops to attract visitors.

Different shelters vary in how they are run. Some are run by local governments.

### **SHELTER OR RESCUE?**

Animal shelters and animal rescues have similar missions. But they work differently. Animal shelters usually have their own buildings. A lot of people take care of the homeless pets and find people to adopt the animals. Animal rescues are usually based in one or more homes. The animals live with foster families. Rescues search for people who are a good fit to adopt the animals.

## SHELTER ANIMAL STATISTICS



Source: "Pet Statistics," ASPCA, 2021. [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org).

*A lot of dogs and cats end up in animal shelters each year. This graph shows the yearly estimates of various outcomes for those dogs and cats from 2015 to 2018.*

They usually take in all the animals that come to them. Some of these shelters must **euthanize** animals to make room for others. Other shelters are nonprofit



# GLOSSARY

**birders**

people whose hobby is observing birds in the wild

**conservationists**

people who protect the environment and the plants and animals in it

**controversial**

causing opposing views

**ecosystems**

specific areas and the living things found in them

**euthanize**

to kill a sick or injured animal in a way that minimizes pain

**kennels**

containers that hold animals

**species**

specific types of living things

# SOURCE NOTES

## CHAPTER ONE: HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER?

1. Quoted in “Volunteer Spotlight Interview: Chloe and Nona,” *Butte Humane Society*, 2021. <https://buttehumane.org>.

## CHAPTER TWO: HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER AT A WILDLIFE CENTER?

2. Quoted in Korrie Edwards, “Interview with Amanda Margraves: Head Wildlife Rehabilitator,” *Green Mind Initiative* (blog), *WordPress*, June 5, 2015. <https://thegreenmindinitiative.wordpress.com>.

3. Quoted in Edwards, “Interview with Amanda Margraves: Head Wildlife Rehabilitator.”

## CHAPTER THREE: HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER AS A CITIZEN SCIENTIST?

4. Quoted in “BioBlitz 2016 Introduction,” *National Geographic Education*, *YouTube*, April 18, 2016. [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

## CHAPTER FOUR: HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER AT A ZOO?

5. Quoted in “Volunteer: Ambassadors,” *Saint Louis Zoo*, 2021. [www.stlzoo.org](http://www.stlzoo.org).

6. Quoted in “About Volunteering,” *Maryland Zoo*, 2021. [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

# FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

## BOOKS

John Hamilton, *Raptor Rescue*. Minneapolis, MN: Abdo, 2018.

Kathryn Hulick, *Citizen Science: How Anyone Can Contribute to Scientific Discovery*. San Diego, CA: ReferencePoint Press, 2020.

## INTERNET SOURCES

“Citizen Science Projects,” *National Geographic*, 2021.  
[www.nationalgeographic.org](http://www.nationalgeographic.org).

“Volunteering,” *Seattle Humane*, 2021. [www.seattlehumane.org](http://www.seattlehumane.org).

## WEBSITES

**American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)**  
[www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org)

The AZA is a national organization of zoos and aquariums in the United States. It ensures its members have high standards of animal welfare and helps with conservation and research.

**CitizenScience.gov**  
[www.citizenscience.gov](http://www.citizenscience.gov)

This US government website features information about citizen science projects with federal agencies. Many of these projects involve animals and the environment.

# RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

## **American Humane**

1400 16th St. NW, Suite 360

Washington, DC 20036

[info@americanhumane.org](mailto:info@americanhumane.org)

[www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)

American Humane is a major animal welfare organization in the United States. It helps rescue animals in danger, ensures animals are safe on movie sets, and works for humane treatment of farm animals. American Humane does not operate local shelters, though shelters often use the word *humane* in their names. People should contact local shelters about volunteer opportunities near them.

## **Smithsonian's National Zoo**

3001 Connecticut Ave. NW

Washington, DC 20008

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu>

The Smithsonian's National Zoo is located in the US capital, Washington, DC. Its website includes information about the many volunteer opportunities there. Zoos around the nation have their own volunteer programs. Each has its own opportunities and set of requirements. People interested in volunteering should contact their local zoo to learn about the opportunities available.

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