

## Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

May 8, 2024

1:00 pm

Community Support Services, Conference Room A

218 SE 24th Street, Gainesville, FL 32641

Pages

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from 2/14
4. Public Comment
5. Old Business
  - 5.1 Director Announcements
    - 5.1.1 New Shelter
  - 5.2 Committee Announcements
    - 5.2.1 Review of last annual work plan and report of accomplishments 1
6. New Business
  - 6.1 Introduction to New Committee Member
  - 6.2 Facility Updates
    - 6.2.1 Staffing Update
    - 6.2.2 Play Yard Update
  - 6.3 Statewide Shelter Statistics 2  
<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/research/current-studies/florida-animal-sheltering/>
  - 6.4 Impact of Kitten Season
  - 6.5 Adoption Events

6.5.1 Jax Mega

6.5.2 Summer Lovin'

7. Next Meeting

8. Adjournment

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## *Animal Welfare Advisory Committee*

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### Annual Work Plan and Accomplishments Report: 2023

Chair: Brandi Ormerod

Board Liaison: Sarah Gilley

#### *Brief History of Board/Committee*

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee was established by Resolution NO 2022 – 52 on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

#### *Responsibilities and Duties*

1. Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and operate the Committee pursuant to this Resolution.
2. Assist the County in promoting the adoption of shelter pets, the welfare of animals, and the importance of the human-animal bond.
3. Assist the County in promoting positive and greater community awareness of Alachua County's Animal Resources & Care and its mission, programs, and accomplishments.
4. Carry out the responsibilities of a community engagement body in order to work with and support Animal Resources & Care (AR&C).
5. Engage with and receive reports from Animal Resources & Care (AR&C) as well as the various local not-for-profit Animal Welfare Organizations (AWOs) and relevant stakeholders.
6. Assist and advise the County on future animal-related policies and issues.
7. Prepare and update an Annual Work Plan and Report of Accomplishments.

#### *Prior Year Accomplishments*

1. Held meetings on November 22, 2022, February 22, 2023, May 10, 2023 and August 9, 2023.
2. For 2022/2023 year, Brandi Ormerod (Citizen At Large) was elected Chair and Chelsea Bower (Local Not for Profit Animal Welfare Organization Representative) was elected Vice Chair.
3. Reviewed committee resolution and operating under sunshine law with County Legal, and were introduced to ACAS Leadership.
4. Reviewed edits to County Ordinances regarding animal welfare so that they could be presented to the BOCC for consent to move to public hearing.
5. Commented upon/endorsed activities to be held at the Equestrian Center
6. Brainstormed on floor plan for new shelter

#### *Goals for Upcoming Year*

- Brainstorm/advise in planning new shelter
- Brainstorm/advise on updating current shelter play yards/facilities
- Anything else?

*Optional: Feel free to attach photos/backup documents...*

# Florida Shelter Animal Census

## A SNAPSHOT OF STATEWIDE INTAKE AND DISPOSITION

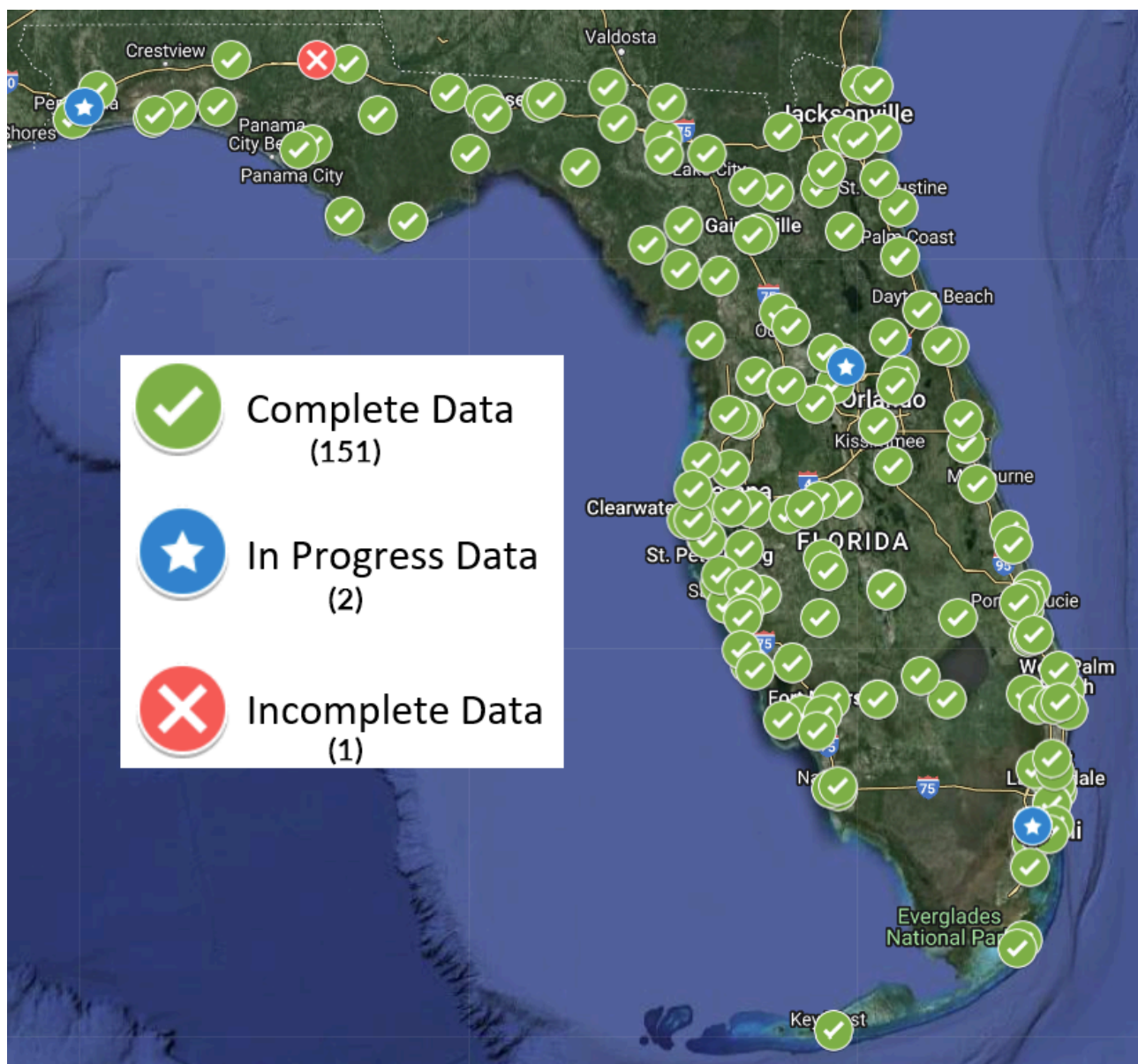
The Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida is frequently asked, “How many cats and dogs are admitted to shelters each year and what happens to them?” To answer this question, the program periodically conducts a statewide census of animals that pass through more than 150 animal shelters across the state.

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## ***Florida Animal Shelters Struggle to Maintain Lifesaving Gains Amid COVID Challenges***

A new study by the University of Florida revealed that the state’s animal shelters struggled to hang on to years of lifesaving progress since the Covid pandemic. Shelter admissions of free-roaming animals and former pets surged by more than 8,000 cats and dogs in 2023 compared to the previous year. Euthanasia of both cats and dogs crept higher, but not to the pre-pandemic levels reported in 2019.

Shelters collectively saved 82% of the 354,301 animals they took in throughout the year, down from 84% the year before. Despite a difficult year, the euthanasia of 14% of animals entering shelters was still markedly reduced from the euthanasia rate of 42% in 2013 when UF first tracked statewide statistics.



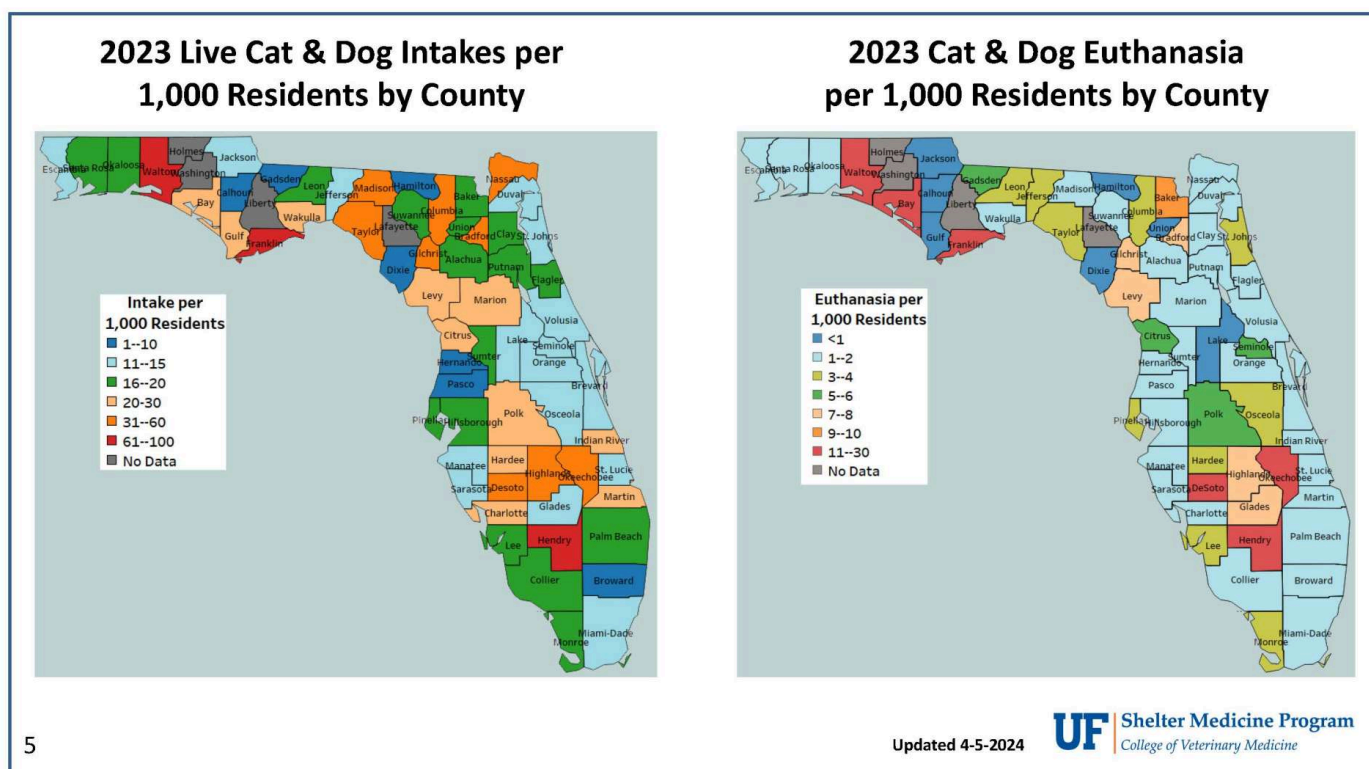
*“The challenges faced by Florida shelters during the pandemic reflect those of shelters across most of the country, including pressure to take in more animals, insufficient local adoptions, and decreased transports to regions of the country with more adoption capacity. As a result, animals are staying in shelters longer, leading to crowding, stressful conditions, more risk of disease, and higher euthanasia.”*

— Dr. Julie Levy, Fran Marino Professor of Shelter Medicine Education and lead researcher.

As a state, Florida’s shelter trends have **long tracked with the rest of the South**, with higher animal intake per capita and higher euthanasia rates than other parts of the country. Warm climate, high poverty rates, large rural communities, and veterinary care deserts all contribute to a pet overpopulation problem that overwhelms the capacity of many shelters. However, in recent years, aggressive spay/neuter campaigns, community engagement, and state-wide collaboration among shelters and rescue groups have brought down shelter intake and euthanasia rates. In 2023, shelter

animal intake was 15.7 animals per 1,000 residents in Florida. Florida shelter euthanasia was 2.1 animals per 1,000 residents.

However, even within the state, there is marked regional variation. Rural shelters tended to have lower per capita funding, while also experiencing higher per capita animal intake than shelters located in more populous areas. Rural areas can also be impacted by more severe veterinary shortages. As a result, the highest euthanasia rates were found in the state's rural counties. Increasingly, rural shelters are partnering with their urban counterparts to move homeless pets into shelters where there is more demand for adoptable pets and to provide more essential veterinary services to rural residents. These partnerships help to eliminate regional lifesaving disparities and support a statewide safety net for pets and families in crisis.



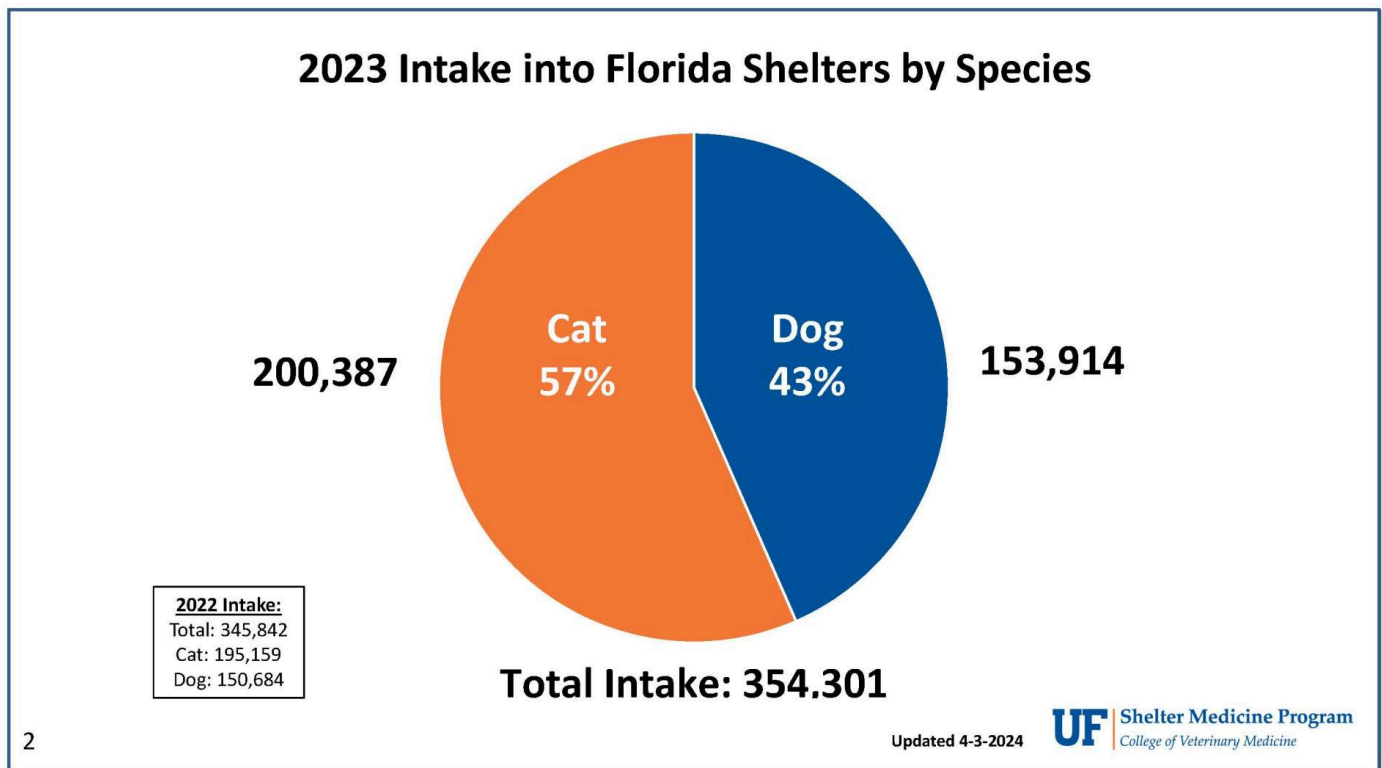
Some of the positive changes can be attributed to the work of the Shelter Medicine Program, which provides pro bono consultation services to Florida shelters and community cat management programs throughout the year. Expert faculty and veterinary students visit shelters to provide a fresh set of eyes on operations and to assist in the implementation of best practices and innovative programs emerging at shelters across the country. The shelter consultations are part of an intensive training program for veterinary students who plan for futures as shelter veterinarians and animal welfare leaders. Shelters can request consultations through UF's [Maddie's Million Pet Challenge](#) program.

The researchers defined a shelter as a continuously occupied "brick and mortar" physical facility that houses cats and dogs temporarily for the purposes of animal control and protection. Common examples include shelters operated by municipalities, humane societies, and SPCAs, but can also

include private businesses. Foster-based animal rescue organizations and sanctuaries with a permanent population were not included in the Florida Shelter Animal Census.

The Florida legislature passed a [transparency statute in 2013](#) requiring shelters to provide data about their animal intake and outcomes upon request, and most have complied with UF's data collection since then. A total of 155 animal shelters were known to be operating in Florida in 2023. Of these, 150 submitted data for the Florida Shelter Animal Census. This represents an estimated 97% of all shelters, 98% of all sheltered animals in the state, and 63 of Florida's 67 counties. Five shelters did not submit statutorily required data, either because they transferred records of animals cared for, or because they did not respond to public records requests yet. This format of data collection has limitations. Self-reported data is subject to errors or differences in data definitions. Not all shelters use shelter software to tally animal intakes and outcomes, and some keep no records at all. Transfers between shelters can result in double-counting some animals, whereas transfers to foster-based rescue groups obscure the ultimate outcomes.

## 2023 Florida Shelter Census Highlights

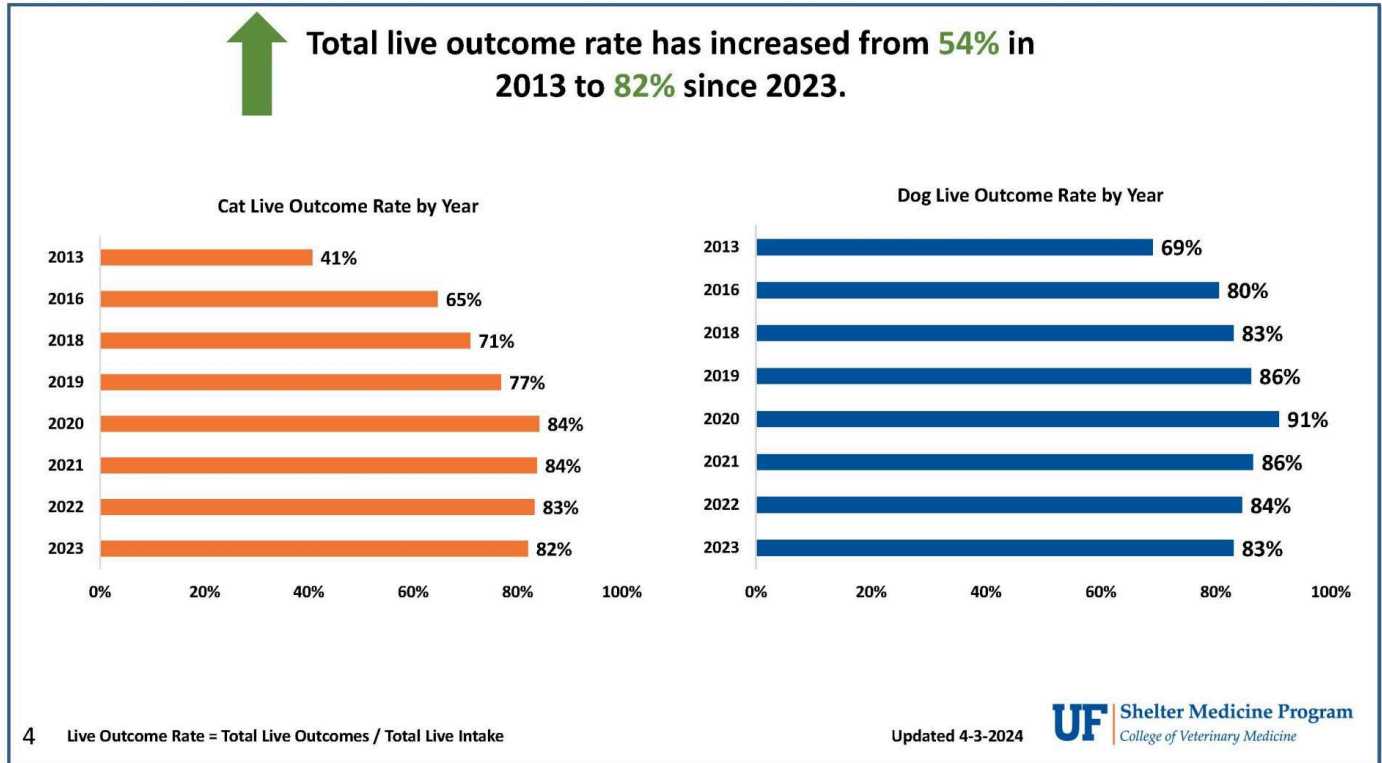


A total of 354,301 cats and dogs were admitted to Florida shelters in 2023, up 8,459 since 2022.

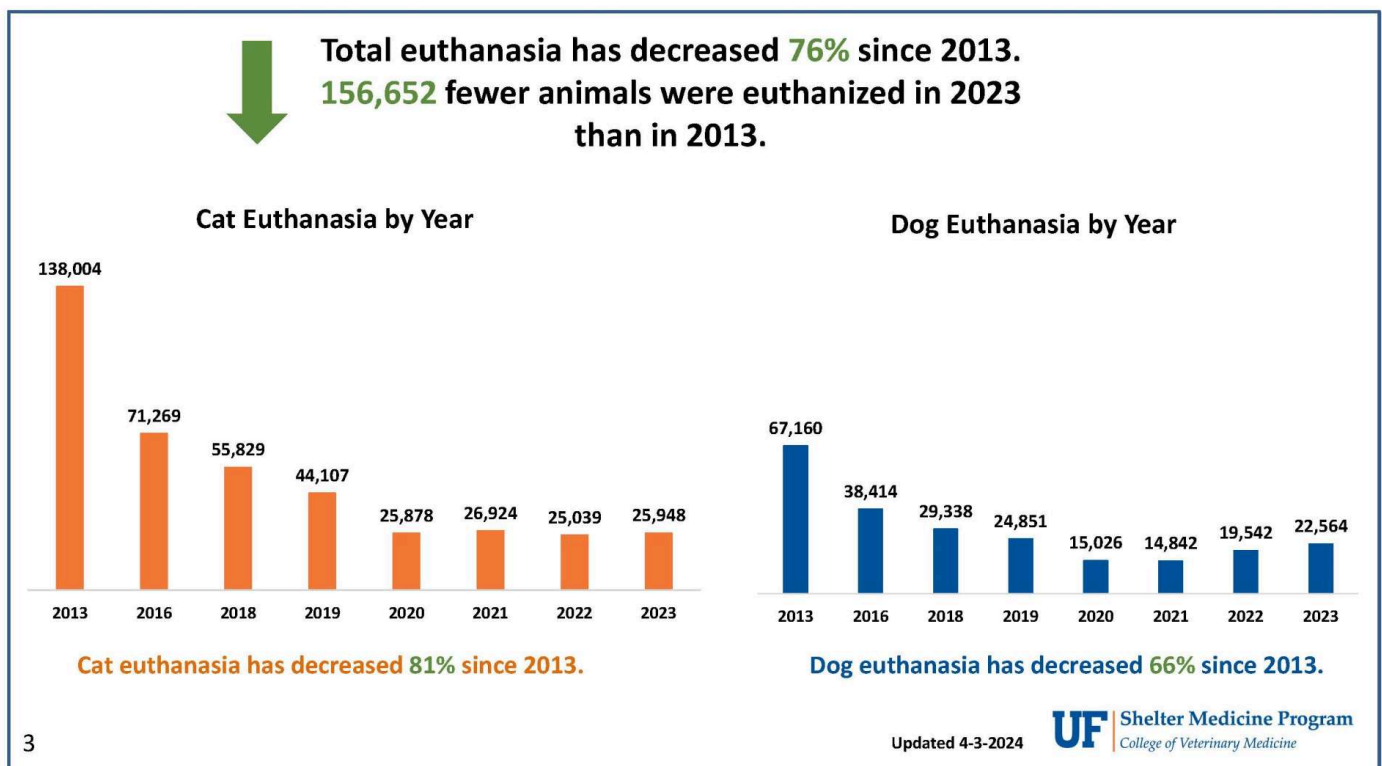
Live outcome rates have steadily decreased since the peak in 2020, the year shelters implemented pandemic shutdown-related reductions in nonemergent animal intakes. Shelters across the country recorded peak numbers of adoptions and foster placements that year, resulting in record increases in live outcome rates.



In 2023, shelter intake of cats remains stubbornly high compared to dog intake. The live outcome rate for cats (82%) is now similar to that for dogs (83%), largely due to the falling live outcome rate for dogs. Live outcome rate is calculated as total live outcomes divided by total live intakes.



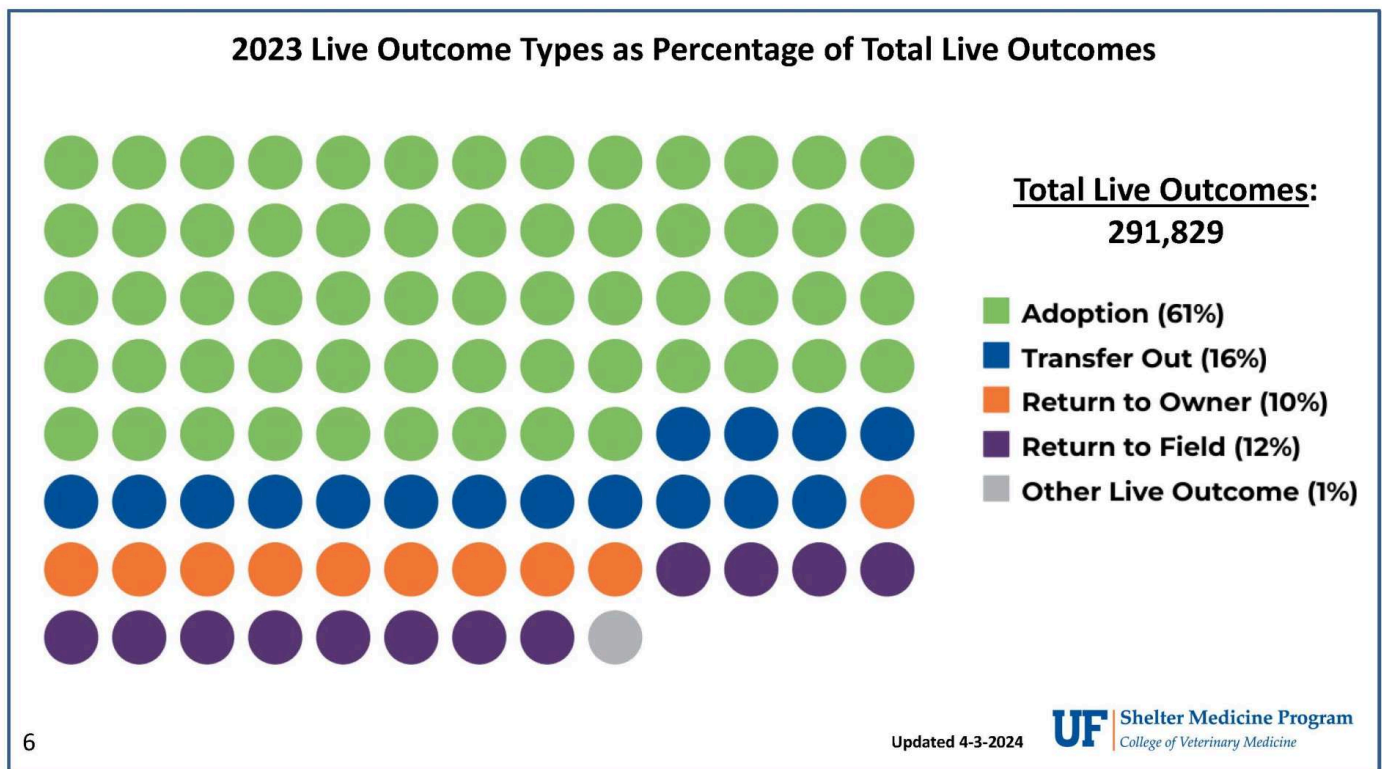
Live outcomes were achieved for 82% of animals brought into Florida shelters, down 2% from 2022.





Dog euthanasia has decreased 66% and cat euthanasia has decreased 81% since 2013. Despite similar live outcome rates as a percentage of intake, 3,384 more cats were euthanized than dogs in 2023.

Adoptions still topped the list of live outcome pathways (61%). Transfers of animals between organizations within Florida and to other regions with more adoption opportunities was the second most common live outcome type (16%), but this lifesaving activity decreased compared to previous years as shelters across the country filled up and adoptions lagged. The practice of spaying and neutering cats and returning them to their neighborhoods in Return to Field Programs was the third most common pathway to live outcomes (12%), followed by returning animals to their owners (10%).



[SHELTERS: SUBMIT YOUR 2022-2023 SHELTER DATA](#)

[SEE 2023 SHELTER LEVEL DATA](#)

Click on the links below to review historical data aggregated by county.

[2021 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)

[2020 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)

[2019 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)

[2018 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)

[2016 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)

## [2013 Florida Shelter Animal Census Summary](#)