CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL REGULATION
111 EAST FIRST STREET

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Supervising animal activity in Los Angeles, with accent on facets pertaining to animal welfare and control, adds up to the biggest humane patrol in the country for the Los Angeles City Department of Animal Regulation.

Los Angeles dogs, cats, exotic pets, and other wild and domestic animals, all, are part of a municipal animal system with a balanced economy involving more than a million dollars annually.

Net City Animal Regulation Department receipts for the fiscal year, 1969-70 amounted to $1,118,175.64 as compared to an operating expense of $1,459,415.00.

The debit and credit monies involved reflect a balanced economic keel where the tax payer gets a fair shake for his money. He pays about ten cents a year for the control and welfare of the teeming animal population in the City.

Local traffic in animals is immense.

On an ordinary weekday, the department impounds stray animals; picks up unwanted animals; quarantines biting animals; sells or auctions unclaimed healthy animals; issues dog licenses; investigates reported cases

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of cruelty; issues citations to violators of animal-oriented municipal codes; prosecutes these violators in court; and issues permits for dog and cat kennels, pet shops, pet wild animals, animal shows, riding academies and pigeon lofts.

The department operates a Spay and Neuter Clinic for cats and dogs, the first of its kind (City-owned) in the country. The facility is located at 215 West Ann Street. Service appointments can be made by calling 222-2669.

The department also supervises public low cost anti-rabies clinics. Last year, 21,058 dogs received vaccinations at these public clinics. With this year's expanded program, scheduled for the first time on a quarterly basis, the number will approximate 25,000 dogs.

In addition to these functions, the department provides veterinary service for sick or injured animals. The department employs three licensed veterinarians.

Sick or injured impounded animals are treated immediately. If one of the department veterinarians is not available in an emergency, the animal is taken by the impounding Animal Control Officer to a private veterinarian where medical treatment is administered. The animal then is taken to one of the City's Animal Shelters for further treatment later if necessary.

Animal victims of traffic accidents, generally dogs, are treated as quickly as possible by either the department veterinarian or a private practitioner. If the services of a private veterinarian are needed, the doctor bills the department. If the dog is redeemed by its owner, the owner is apprised of the bill. He is now legally bound to pay the medical expense as provided for under a state law made effective November 23, 1970.

Sick and injured animals are under constant surveillance by the

department veterinarians. All City Animal Shelters are equipped with observation rooms where the sick and disabled animals are removed from the healthy.

Humans still rule the roost in Los Angeles, but animals, through a permissive society, are becoming, more and more, an integral part of a sophisticated late 20th Century existence.

The City Department of Animal Regulation reports that during the 1969-70 fiscal year, 133,040 animals were handled at the City's five Animal Shelters. (There are six Shelters, now, with the opening of a new West Valley facility.) The figure represents a handle increase of 14,958 animals over the previous fiscal year.

In a breakdown of the '69-'70 handle, 72,533 dogs and 52,746 cats were processed. Other animals included a wide variety of domestic species and wildlife.

Robert I. Rush, General Manager of the Animal Regulation Department, said, in his opinion, the animal increase in the City reflected an expanded human desire for mute companionship, empathy and creature comfort which a pet can generate.

"There is an indefinable rapport that exists between a human and a devoted animal," Rush said, "a bond that seems to transcend the emotional unpredictable relationship between one human and another. A good pet seldom fails its master. Its devotion, affection and loyalty remains steadfast, unaffected by the imponderables that are part of human behavior.

"People are securing more pets simply out of wants for guaranteed camaraderie and calculated protection."

Pet ownership responsibility is increasing with the escalation of pet sales, according to Rush. The Animal Regulation Department issued

250,871 dog licenses and applications in the 1969-70 fiscal year, compared with 227,660 in the previous fiscal year.

Aside from the fact that there are more dogs, Rush said more new dog owners are now conscientiously licensing their pets than was the case ten years ago. Licenses are available at any of the six City Animal Shelters where visitors are welcome every weekday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Voluntary rising attendance at public low-cost anti-rabies clinics also was cited as evidence of pet ownership responsibility.

Until 1969, anti-rabies clinics were held only in August. The service has been rapidly increased because of public demand and need to protect the public health.

"Some people think so much of their pets, they seek licenses and anti-rabies inoculations for their dogs before they are eligible at the age of four months," Rush said.

A recent survey shows there is one dog for every 13 people in the City. There is one dog to every 4.6 occupied City dwelling units. There are approximately 350,000 dogs in the City, and an even larger number of cats. There has been a 40 percent increase in the City dog population during the past ten years.

Domestic animals, however, aren't the only source of concern for the City Department of Animal Regulation. Wildlife in the City attracts special attention.

In the interest of wildlife conservation, Department Manager Rush conceived a plan through which wildlife, trapped in the City by humane methods, would not be destroyed, but rather relocated in a natural habitat removed from human population.

The plan, placed in operation September, 1969, is called Animal

Airlift. Each week, small wild animals, opossum, raccoons, foxes, non-poisonous snakes, predatory birds are flown by helicopter to Angeles National Forest where they are released in areas suitable for survival. In the past 18 months, 775 wildlife specimens have been relocated from urban areas of Los Angeles to the forested retreat 35 miles away.

The Animal Airlift is the mainspring of the department's wildlife conservation program, and is unique in man's relation with the animal world.

There's no doubt. The animal kingdom in Los Angeles is alive, fascinating and flourishing.

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