

Let us help you make the world a better place for animals.  
Contact Paul Seigel at **800-683-MAIL** or visit us online at [www.nonprofit.dmsmails.com](http://www.nonprofit.dmsmails.com)



**DIRECT MAIL SYSTEMS, INC.**  
DIRECT RESPONSE MARKETING

experience

Mail Plans • Copywriting and Design • Data Processing • Personalization • Printing • Lettershop • Analysis

Culture & Animals

Science

Dogs & Cats

Horses & Farmed Animals

Wildlife

Asia/Pacific

Europe

Africa

The Americas

USA

Opinions & Letters

Obits & Memorials

Donate Today

Coming events

## The view from Phuket, Thailand: Jeff Young, DVM is right!

FEBRUARY 8, 2017 BY [MERRITT CLIFTON](#)

*by John Dalley,  
co-founder,  
The Soi Dog  
Foundation*

Unfortunately, owing to health issues, I was unable to attend the International Companion Animal Welfare conference last year to hear Jeff Young, DVM speak, so have never met him. But Young's **ANIMALS 24-7** guest column [We cannot adopt, warehouse or rescue our way out of dog & cat overpopulation!](#) is excellent.



John Dalley. (Beth Clifton collage)

From the perspective of having directed major spay/neuter programs for the Soi Dog Foundation in Phuket and Bangkok, Thailand since 2004, I would agree with 90% of

Young's message as pertaining to the developing world. Pertaining to the U.S. situation, I would imagine Young is 100% correct.



*Jeff Young, DVM*

## **“It is necessary to have a successful business”**

As Jeff points out, it is necessary to have a successful business to be able to carry out the sterilization work he does.

This is also true for animal welfare groups. The sad fact is that capturing, sterilizing, vaccinating, and returning street dogs and feral cats to their habitat have little appeal to the average donor. People will donate thousands of dollars to save “a dog or cat,” but other than an enlightened few, most will not donate to a program that would have prevented that dog or cat being born in the first place.

The main focus of the Soi Dog Foundation is CNVR (catch, neuter, vaccinate, return) and will continue to be so, but if that is all we did, we would still be sterilizing just a few hundred dogs and some cats per year.

## **Treatment program & shelter bring in the funds**

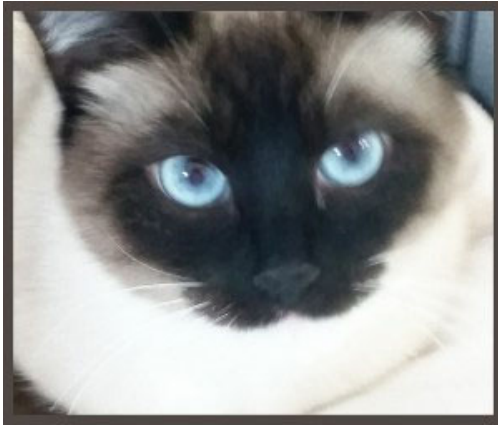
In reality it is our treatment program and shelter that bring in the funds to enable us to do large-scale CNVR.

A problem arises, of course, if the focus shifts to sheltering as opposed to CNVR, because sheltering does nothing to stop the continuing surplus of street dog and feral cat births.

Yet in a country like Thailand it is impossible to run large-scale spay/neuter programs humanely without also having some form of sheltering and rehoming.



*John Dalley, chief executive of the Soi Dog Foundation, with rescued dogs. (SDF photo)*



*(Beth Clifton photo)*

## Limits to ethical neuter/return

To treat a dog or cat who has been the victim of cruelty or abuse, and then after treatment put the dog or cat back into the same situation is not acceptable.

Equally, you can't ethically return a litter of dumped puppies to a rubber plantation with no food source other than the latex after sterilization.

A good adoption program is also needed to keep numbers manageable, of course.

## Euthanasia

Although attitudes are changing and our Thai vets will euthanize dogs and cats who are terminally sick or suffering with no chance of recovery, euthanizing a healthy animal is still unacceptable here, as it is to us and most animal welfare societies.



*Thai street dog & pups.  
(Flickr photo)*

(Yet it is still socially and politically acceptable here to put dogs into pounds to die of starvation and disease, and dogs are still poisoned.)



*(Beth Clifton photo)*

## Moving into Myanmar & Cambodia

In countries like Myanmar and Cambodia, where we are now starting operations, the focus is very much on training local vets on how to sterilize dogs. We are currently working with the Yangon (formerly Rangoon) authorities, who now poison around 30,000 dogs per year, to introduce CNVR there.

At present there are no vets trained who can carry out such procedures, so that has to be the starting point. We will bring some to Phuket and other training will be done on site. Maybe Jeff can find time to help train these vets!

## Can flunk even getting 70% or even 80%

Not mentioned by Young, but a point I feel compelled to mention, is the widely held but erroneous belief that merely sterilizing 70% or 80% of a stray dog population will bring a reduction in numbers.

Certainly in Phuket province, where we have sterilised more than 80% of stray dogs and a significant percentage of owned dogs, we have seen such a reduction. As I forecast years ago, we are now seeing far more cats, who have moved into some of the habitat no longer occupied by dogs, and in fact are sterilizing more cats than dogs on Phuket. Also, monkeys are now moving into villages where previously dogs would have kept them out.

However, although our main focus is now in other provinces and Bangkok, without an ongoing maintenance program to keep the sterilization rate at 70%+, it is very clear that the dog population in Phuket would rapidly return to previous levels whilst ever a food source exists.



*Two macaques. (Louis Ng photo)*



*(Beth Clifton photo)*

## “Even one breeding pair missed would result in eventual repopulation”

Puppies from puppy farms continue to be sold and owners continue to dump unwanted puppies, despite an active education program, and the few stray dogs we have missed also breed.

In Phuket we have some control, but in other areas, where there are no local vets and we send teams to sterilize as many dogs as possible, even one breeding pair missed would result in an eventual repopulation.

A year ago we sent a team to Thailand's most remote island. Dogs were introduced there around 10 years ago, when building workers brought dogs to the island w

hen constructing a large exclusive resort.

In 2016 there were around 700 stray dogs and some owned by local people. We sterilized virtually every dog on the island, (a few owners

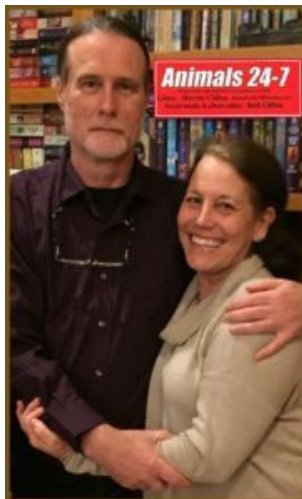
refused to allow their dogs to be done). It will take a few years before we see the results, but it will be interesting to see numbers in the future. My guess is that with no vet there, our clinic will need to be repeated.

## If food is there, animals will eat it

Whilst waste food is available, anywhere, something is going to feed off it and at present dogs are the top of the tree. I remember years ago pointing out that even if we removed every stray dog and cat on Phuket, but the garbage problem remained, then people could expect to see an explosion in rats and mice and snakes that feed on them.



(Facebook photo)



Merritt & Beth Clifton

*Editor's note: The above are the same lessons we have been teaching and preaching for decades. See **Street dogs in the U.S.? Nathan Winograd has gone barking mad**; **Sex, drugs, dogs & monkey business**; and our four-part series **What to call cats & why it matters**. We appreciate John Dalley's affirmation from the field.*

**Please help us continue speaking truth to power:**

<http://www.animals24-7.org/donate/>

### Related Posts



Soi Dog Foundation & Indian Ocean tsunami heroine Gill Dalley, 58



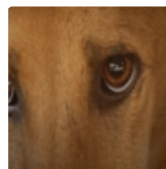
Street dogs in the U.S.? Nathan Winograd has gone barking mad.



Philippine mad dogs claim deadly revenge for being eaten



We cannot adopt, warehouse or rescue our way out of dog & cat overpopulation!

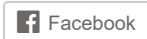


Viet shelter sold dogs for meat; U.S. shelters sold dogs to fighters



From pit bulls to street dogs, irresponsible advocacy inflames "dog menace"

Share this:



### Related

Soi Dog Foundation & Indian Ocean tsunami heroine Gill Dalley, 58

February 28, 2017  
In "Asia/Pacific"

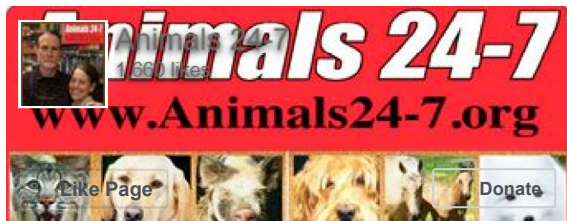
From pit bulls to street dogs, irresponsible advocacy inflames "dog menace"

November 25, 2017  
In "Advocacy"

ASEAN nations move to implement dog meat trafficking ban

March 19, 2014  
In "Asia/Pacific"

FILED UNDER: ANIMAL CONTROL, ANIMAL ORGANIZATIONS, ASIA/PACIFIC, CAMBODIA, CATS, DOGS, DOGS & CATS, FEATURE HOME BOTTOM, FERAL CATS, MYANMAR, OPINION, OPINIONS & LETTERS, POPULATION CONTROL, POPULATION CONTROL, SHELTERS, SOUTHEAST ASIA, STREET DOGS, THAILAND, USA



## Comments



**Jamaka Petzak says**

FEBRUARY 8, 2017 AT 11:32 PM

It is so tragic that people aren't 100% committed to spay/neuter and preventing the millions of kittens worldwide being born for whom there are no loving permanent homes. I am, always have been, and always will be; and though I am unable to support this in a big way financially, I will never stop talking about the need for it whenever, wherever and to whomever I can. Who would not want there to be no suffering and needless death among those they truly love?

Search this website ...