



WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR A STRAY TODAY?

1 Do you know what it's like to be a stray animal on the streets of Greece?

It's a tough life. Many don't live long. Some lucky ones live in neighborhoods where the locals feed, neuter, vaccinate and protect them. But the majority of stray cats and dogs struggle to survive.

They are abused, beaten, starved, refused medical attention when they need it, and many of them die in agony from some kind of poison given them by humans. They deserve better.

2 Are you feeding strays now, secretly, late at night, all alone?

If the answer is yes, there are probably people in your area who are critical of what you are doing, perhaps even your own family members.

Feeding strays is vital to their survival and we would never discourage this practice. But it is not enough.

Breeding must be controlled and the number of strays decreased.

If you would like to take the next step and begin helping these animals in other ways, read on.

3 Would you like a pet but are afraid to take in a stray?

Contact your local animal welfare group and find out how to go about adopting a stray.

If there is a particular stray animal in your area that you are fond of, consider adopting it. SPAZ (or any other group) can advise you on where to take it for an overall health check-up, how to de-worm it, vaccinate it and get it neutered.

Strays adapt amazingly well to moving in with humans. The truth is that most of them are dying for a home.

4 Do a stray animal a favor; DO NOT buy an animal from a pet shop or puppy farm.

If you do, you are encouraging breeding practices that create thousands of unwanted animals. If you insist on having a full-bred pet, contact the Kennel Club of Greece (010 814 5165) for information on responsible breeders. And please, neuter your pet and do not add to the stray population by abandoning it. If you have any doubts about the wisdom of neutering, let us reassure you that the operation is painless as the animal is under general anesthesia and recovery is quick. Your pet does not have a sexual identity comparable to humans so that they do NOT have an emotional crisis when neutered.

Your neutered pet will have fewer medical problems, fewer behavioral problems and be less likely to spray, roam or fight. Behaviors that are NOT affected by the neutering surgery are: watchdog barking, hunting, playfulness, activity level, seeking of affection and basic character.

5 No matter what your circumstances, there is something you can do to help a stray.

If you cannot take an animal in, or feed neighborhood strays, or help neuter animals, or offer a safe place for a few days for an animal recuperating from surgery, you can help fund-raise or work at bazaars, or translate documents, or use your computer skills, or write newsletters, or donate money.

There are many jobs for animal welfare volunteers.

6 If you have some time to give, here is how to start. Join the thousands of dedicated volunteers working to improve the lot of stray animals in Greece.

When you join an animal welfare society, you have access to a network of resources, people who can help you deal with an animal crisis. This support system is a powerful tool for education, lobbying, political protests and will sustain you in times of despair. We cannot stress enough how much better it is to work with others rather than alone. It will change your life.

Phone the animal welfare group in your area. For English-speaking people, Athens News has a list. If you live in the southern suburbs, phone any of the SPAZ contact numbers listed in this brochure.

7 Can one person really make a difference?

YES...YES....YES.

One kind, humane act towards a stray can make the difference between life and death for that animal. One should never hesitate to carry out an act of kindness.

8 Are you a visitor to Greece who would like to do something while you are here?

If you've come to Greece and are dismayed by the hungry strays, you're not alone. Many people come here for pleasure and met strays in need. You can help these animals in a number of ways.

1. Feed them. In restaurants where the staff allow animals to be fed, tell them you approve. If they are mean to the strays, tell them you don't approve. Feed the animals away from this place and don't go back. And clean up after feeding them.
2. If you see an injured animal, try to help. There are many animal welfare societies; in Athens phone HAWS 644 4473 for advice, or their 24-hour animal emergency clinic 994 1243. On the islands, ask at your hotel or a local vet's office if there is a group in the area.
3. If you see collection boxes for strays, donate what you can.
4. If you have fallen in love with a cat or dog and want to take it home, ask a local group for advice; call any of the SPAZ contact numbers.
5. If you see a cruelty case, report it to the hotel, the police, the mayor. Be pleasant but firm. Point out that cruelty to animals is against the law and suggest that you intend to write the local papers and will mention the cooperation of the hotel/police/mayor (or lack of it). Phone the local animal welfare group and tell them what you did.
6. When you get home, write to Greek newspapers, Athens News, the local Greek mayor, to your own local animal welfare group, to your tour operator. And please e-mail any stories to SPAZ - elizkou@hotmail.com

9 And how can you join us?

SPAZ has no office, no clinic, no employees and no animal shelter. We are a group of volunteers (about 500) whose main aim is to neuter; we also vaccinate and home as many strays as we can. As all SPAZ members are volunteers, we cannot promise to drop everything to take on a problem you may have but we will try to help you solve the problem and offer help whenever possible.

We concentrate on neutering because until we neuter more than 50% of strays in Greece, we will not see a decrease in their numbers. We use vets in the southern suburbs; members pay a reduced fee for each operation. Animals are kept by members while they are recuperating from surgery. We also have an education program, print brochures on a number of relevant animal welfare concerns, run campaigns (anti-poison for instance) and lobby for government action.

*We need people who care about the strays of Greece.
We need dynamic, caring people.
We need you.
Call us.*