

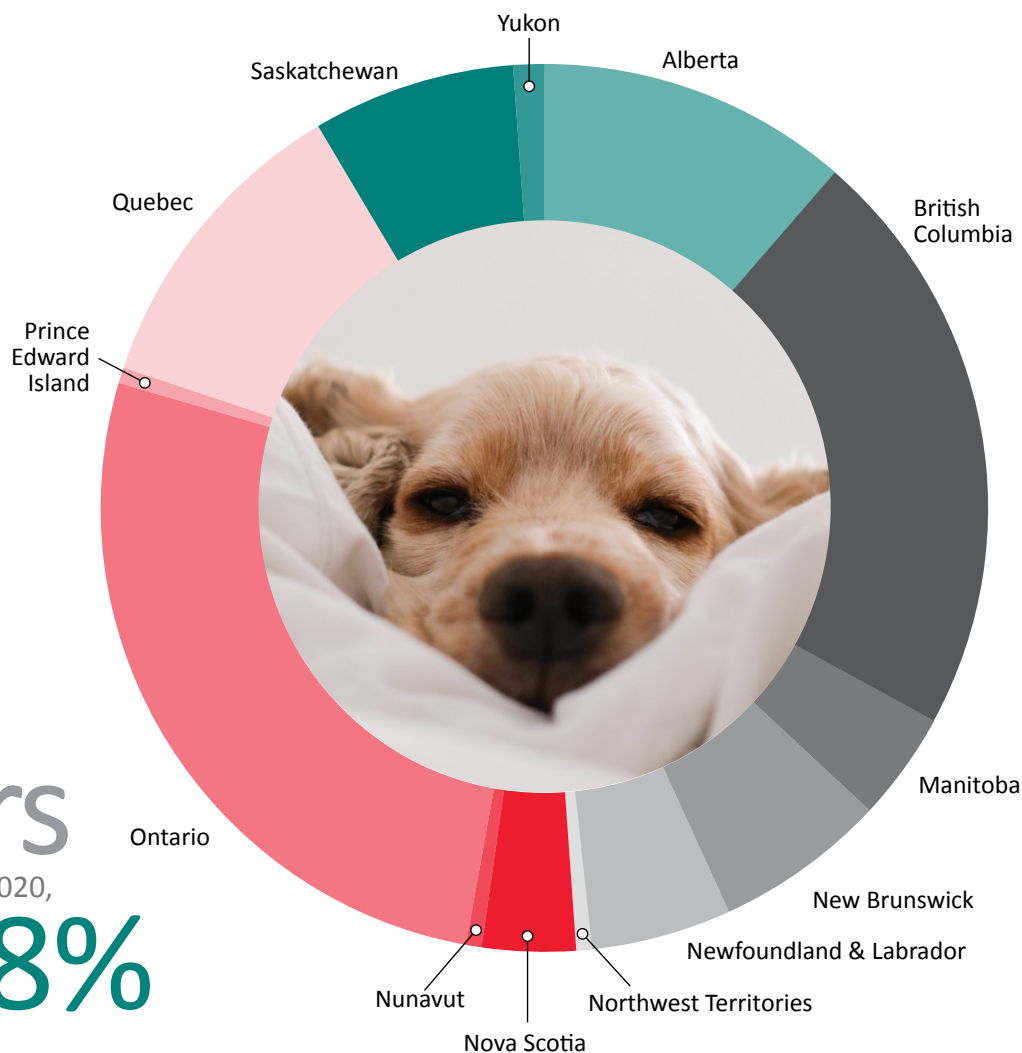
# 2020 ANIMAL SHELTER STATISTICS



## HUMANE SOCIETY AND SPCA RESPONDENTS

Distribution  
by province  
of 174 shelters  
operated  
by humane  
societies and  
SPCAs in Canada

**83**  
shelters  
completed the survey for 2020,  
for a response rate of **48%**





## 2020 AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the emergence of a highly infectious human virus that resulted in the global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, society at large was shuttered in an unprecedented way. This included animal shelters, that had to close their doors to the public and find new ways to support their communities, including the animals in care. Reducing human to human contact meant organizations shifted their services, for example by increasing the use of foster homes to keep animals out of a central shelter facility, empowering community members to directly reunite stray animals with their families, and supporting pet owners to find solutions to care for and prevent relinquishment of their companion animals.

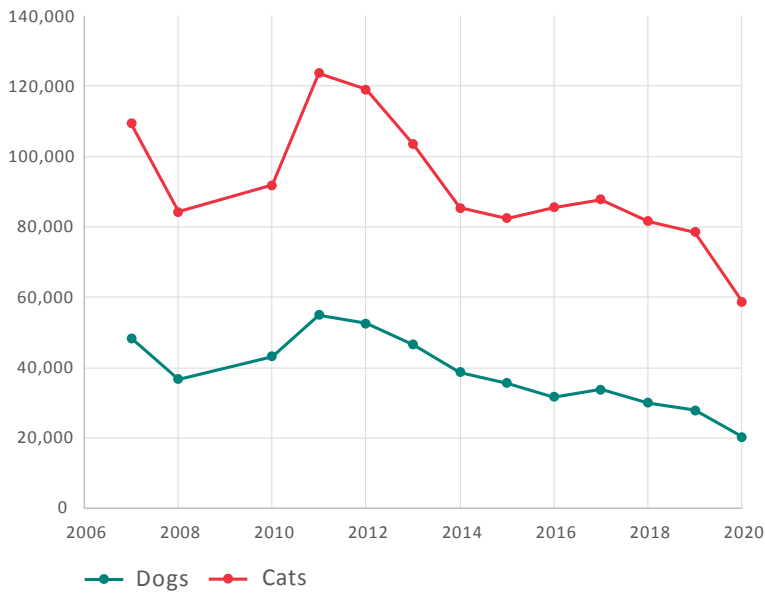
The positive results of this shift are evident in the 2020 statistics, with historically low shelter intake and increased live outcome rates, particularly for cats. This is likely because the reduced intake and lower in-shelter population during the pandemic meant organizations were closer to their Capacity for Care, enabling them to optimize outcomes for animals in care.

The result has prompted an evolution in the model of animal services toward a more community-centred approach. This new model has the potential to radically improve outcomes and more holistically support humans and animals in potentially vulnerable situations. Please see Humane Canada's [\*\*Community-Supported Animal Sheltering Policy Platform\*\*](#) to learn more.



# INTAKE

Total intake of cats and dogs to shelters



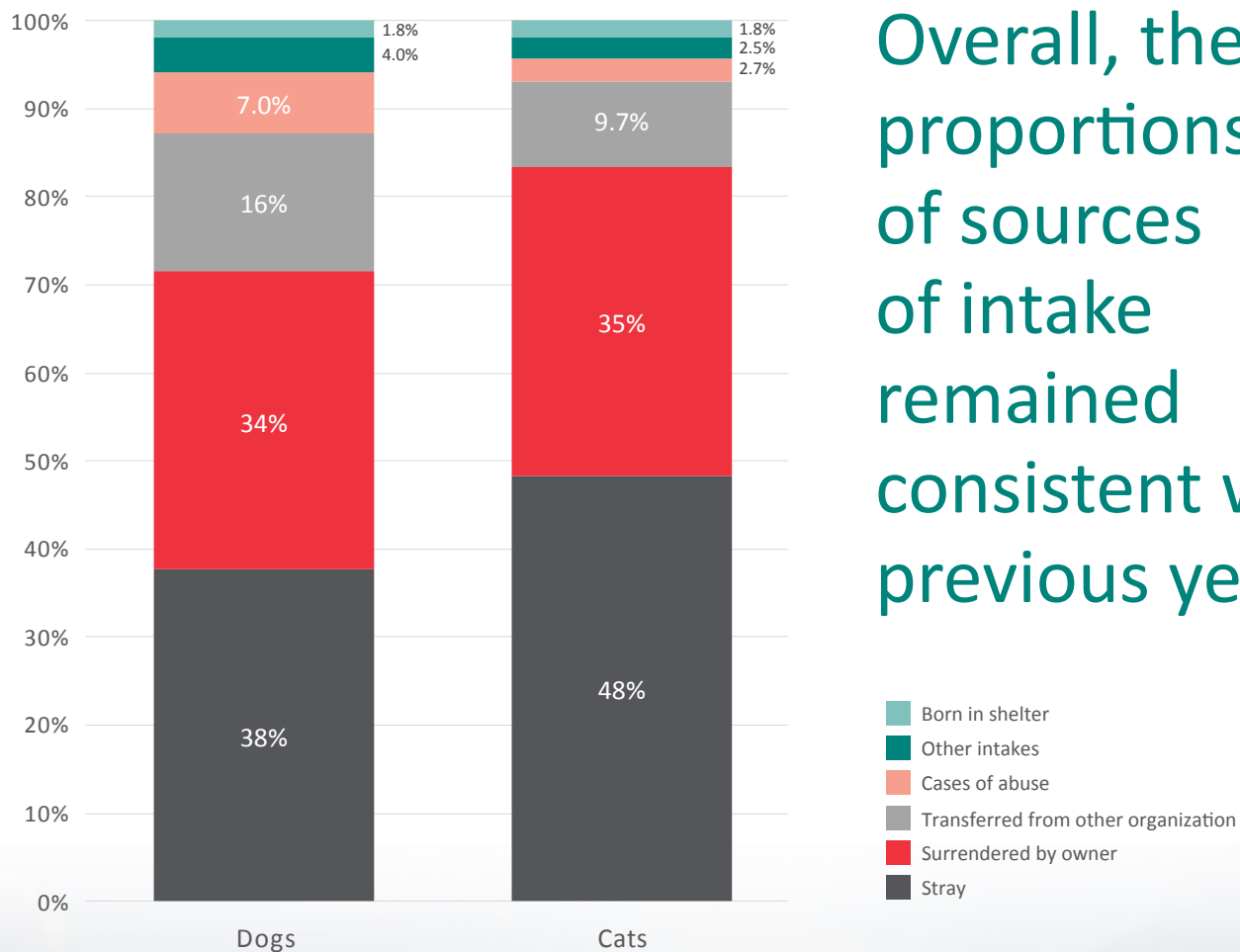
In 2020, there was a

**28%**  
decrease in  
dog intake

**25%**  
decrease in  
cat intake  
compared to the previous year



Sources of intake of cats and dogs in 2020



Overall, the proportions of sources of intake remained consistent with previous years.



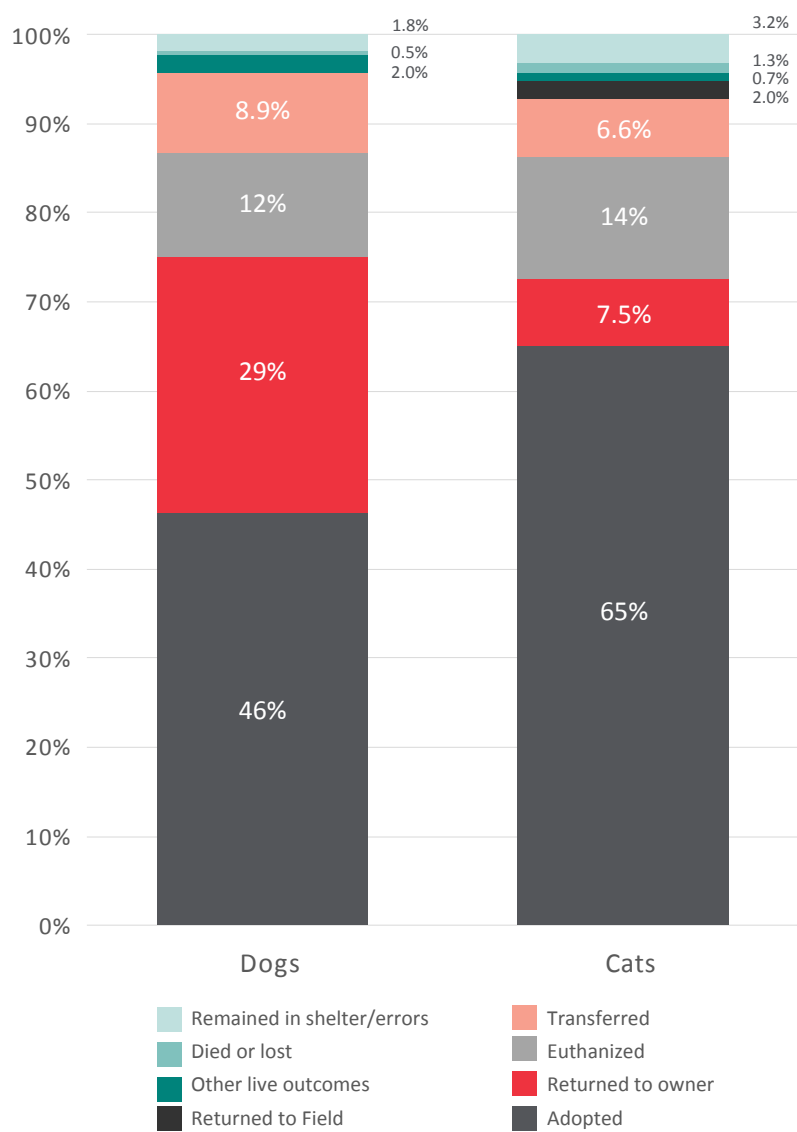


# OUTCOMES

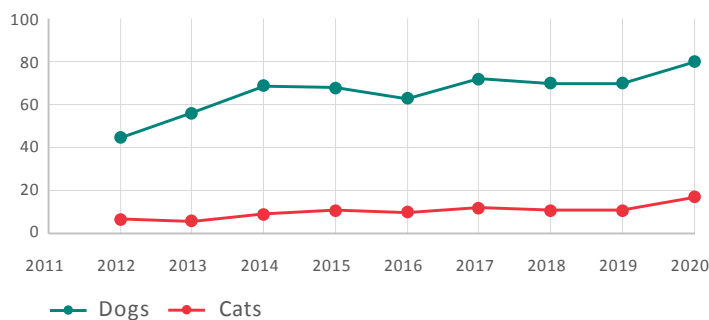
In 2020  
there were  
historically  
high rates  
of stray  
animals  
returned to  
their owners:

80%  
dogs  
17%  
cats

Outcomes of cats and dogs in 2020



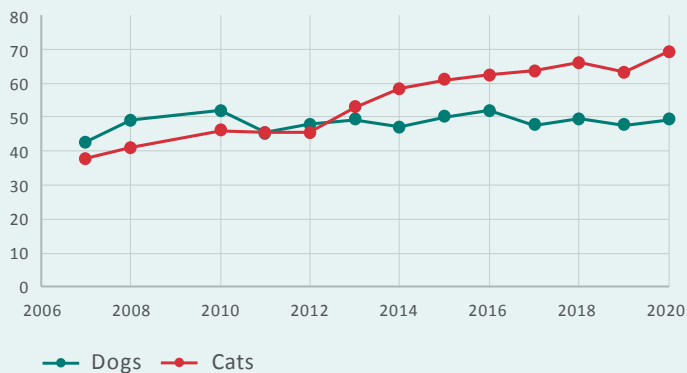
Percent stray dogs and cats reclaimed by owner



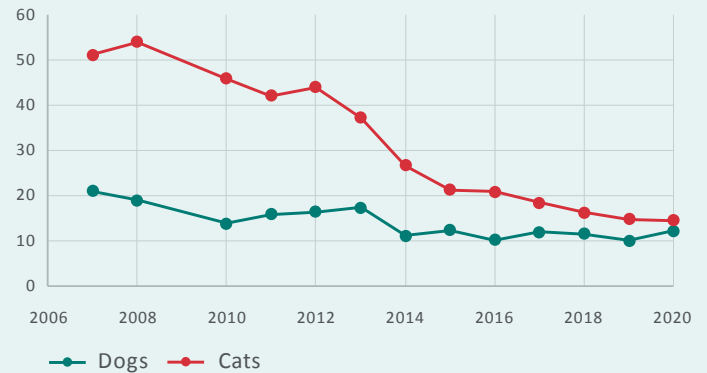
## Historically high levels of adoption and low rates of euthanasia for cats.

This may be because fewer animals were in care and shelters could remain at their capacity for care, optimizing outcomes and moving animals to new homes more quickly.

Percent dogs and cats adopted



Percent dogs and cats euthanized



# 37%

median shelter capacity in use in 2020  
compared to **70%** in 2019

“Shelter capacity in use was abnormally low due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We increased our foster program so that a large portion of animals were housed outside of the shelter.”

“Due to COVID-19, in March 2020, the majority of animals went into foster care and were adopted from there.”

“Once the pandemic began other groups were taking in animals, particularly dogs.”

## cats: 12 days    dogs: 9 days

median length of stay at a historic low in 2020  
compared to **15** for cats and **12** for dogs in 2019.

“These numbers are atypical due to the large number of animals placed in foster care throughout 2020.”



## ABOUT HUMANE CANADA

Humane Canada is the federation of Humane Societies and SPCAs. As Canada's voice for animal welfare, we drive positive progressive change to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals. Humane Canada convenes and represents the largest animal welfare community in the country. Together with our Members and Associates in every province and two territories, we advance the welfare of animals with a strong national voice, promoting animal welfare interests and concerns to government, policymakers, industry, and the public.

[humanecanada.ca](http://humanecanada.ca)  
[info@humanecanada.ca](mailto:info@humanecanada.ca)  
613-224-8072

*Connect with us on social media!*

