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Canine census on island dogs

Esther Honey Foundation (EHF) clinic director Gregg Young says volunteers are again out in the community conducting a census, counting the number of island dogs.

EHF has de-sexed more than 5595 dogs since establishing the clinic in 1995 and the purpose of the census is to confirm that the percentage of Rarotonga dogs sterilised remains at, or is greater than, 70 per cent of the entire canine population.

According to animal population management experts, this number is critical for stabilising dog populations and ensuring that the number of unwanted dogs will continue to decrease as long as EHF continues to provide spay and neuter services to new animals that are born of the dogs not yet sterilised.

Please watch for foundation volunteers who will be wearing EHF T-shirts or veterinary scrubs and are donating their time to improve the quality of life and health for dogs and the community.

They will be counting all the dogs that they see in designated sections of the island, determining the sex of the animal and whether it has been spayed or neutered (de-sexed).

Volunteers may also ask residents how many dogs live on that street.

Please be assured that they are only interested in the welfare of the dogs - they are not concerned whether someone has too many dogs or even who owns the dogs.

The foundation and our volunteers want to get the count right, so please be as helpful as you can to make certain that the census is accurate.

Everyone benefits from the success of this census and sterilisation programme — dogs, their families, communities, tourism and even the economy.

“EHF routinely receives letters from tourists comparing Rarotonga favourably to other regional destinations that have not introduced similar veterinary and humane management programmes,” says EHF president and chief executive, Cathy Sue Ragan-Anunsen.

For any questions about the census, please contact Gregg Young at the Nikao clinic on 22336 or the Esther Honey Foundation at www.estherhoney.org - EHF