

# International Animal Rescue Goa

Emily Fowler finds out about a charity in India with the goal of reducing suffering of animals wherever and whenever possible



Goa, India's smallest state, has a lot to offer the tourists that visit from all over the world – not least the magnificent coastline and idyllic beaches. One thing you can't help but notice when you visit is the sheer volume of street animals, and it's charities like International Animal Rescue Goa that really make a difference in these animals' lives.

The team at IAR Goa work tirelessly for animals in need and though they mainly deal with dogs and cats, the animals they help regularly include cows, snakes and even monkeys. The charity was established in 1998 with the aim of reducing the suffering of animals in Goa and they do a fantastic job under often difficult circumstances.

## The rescue centre

The centre is located in Assagao in North Goa and is big enough to house 100 dogs, 50 cats, 50 puppies, 50 kittens and 30 cows/bulls, as well as having a well-equipped veterinary surgery, making

it one of the best equipped rescue centres in India. They have the facilities to perform X-rays, ultrasounds, and advanced surgeries, and there are four ambulances that collect animals in need of rescue and/or treatment, from snakes rescued from snake charmers to street cats injured in RTAs. The ambulance staff, like the rest of the staff at the centre, are all trained to handle animals in ways that minimise stress and fear.

## Sterilisation and vaccination programmes

Sterilisation is such a huge part of IAR Goa's work, because as they say, 'it is only by humanely reducing the stray animal population that the suffering can be decreased'. The charity aims to sterilise at least 200 street dogs and 100 street cats a month, figures that give you some idea of the sheer volume of animals in need and the problems they're facing. They don't solely neuter strays and street animals but performing the procedure on owned animals isn't always



easy, as the benefits of neutering aren't as widely known as they are here in the UK. In order to encourage responsible pet ownership, they offer to sterilise cats and dogs at a much reduced rate than that of a private vet and if an owner can't afford to make a donation to the charity, the vets will perform the operation for free.

Rabies is a serious problem in India, where over a third of the world's rabies deaths happen, so vaccinating against it is another high priority for IAR Goa. As well as vaccinating every animal that gets sterilised by their vets, they try to re-

WITH YOUR SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL RESCUE GOA HELPS LOCAL STREET ANIMALS EVERY DAY - IN 2013 WE:			
<b>Treated</b>	<b>Sterilised</b>	<b>Vaccinated</b>	<b>Vaccinated</b>
5449 Dogs / Puppies	2307 Dogs	901 Dogs / Puppies	3977 Dogs / Puppies
1239 Cats / Kittens	1024 Cats	80 Cats / Kittens	1201 Cats / Kittens
248 Cows / Calves			
89 Other Animals			
<b>Rescued (Special)</b>	<b>Agreed the Adoption of</b>	<b>Performed "Special" Surgeries on</b>	<b>"Thank You" for your Continued Support</b>
19 Dogs / Puppies	514 Dogs / Puppies	128 Animals	
7 Cats / Kittens	2100 Cats / Kittens		
15 Cows / Calves	480 Cows / Calves		
1 Other Animals	1718 Other Animals		







vaccinate as many animals as possible on an annual basis.

### What else does the charity do?

The centre is staffed with a team of highly skilled vets and veterinary nurses, and they offer an entire year's veterinary treatment for free to owners of animals adopted from the centre. They also provide free treatment for pet owners who would otherwise be unable to afford it.

Attending reports of animals injured on the road is sadly very common, whether it's a cat, dog, monkey, cow, or any other animal; but as roads aren't always named it can be very frustrating trying to find the injured animal in the first place, particularly as the ambulance staff know there's an animal in pain and distress out there.

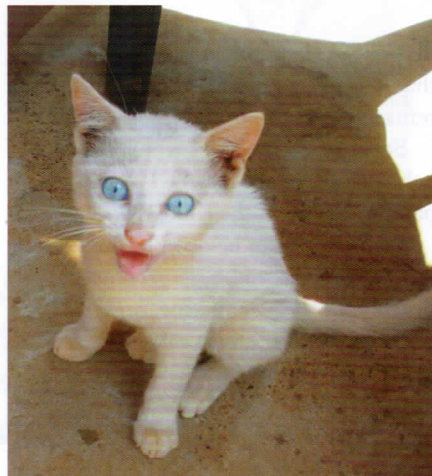
As well as the amazing work they do on a practical basis, IAR Goa believes strongly that education is one of the most important aspects of their work. They educate everyone they come into contact with - staff, volunteers, visitors, and the general public - on the internationally recognised Five Freedoms for animals, on which all their policies are based.

- Freedom from hunger and thirst: Ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

- Freedom from discomfort: Providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from pain, injury, and disease: Prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to express natural behaviour: Providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress: Ensuring conditions and treatments which avoid mental suffering.

### Amazing achievements

The team at IAR Goa perform miracles and save the lives of animals on a daily basis. To date they've sterilised over 30,000 dogs and 11,000 cats, as well as vaccinating over 60,000 dogs against rabies (protecting both animals and humans). Not only that, but in 1998 the charity (along with People for Animals in Goa) took legal action that resulted in an Indian High Court decision that made the shooting of stray dogs illegal; an incredible victory.



### Volunteering includes:

#### (With up-to-date rabies vaccinations)

- Playing with and socialising healthy cats and kittens.
- Dog walking.
- Playing with puppies.
- Bathing and de-ticking.
- Veterinary help (for qualified veterinary surgeons and nurses).

#### (Without up-to-date rabies vaccinations)

- Helping with jobs around the centre.
- Animal photography or videography.
- Raising funds for the rescue.

### How you can help International Animal Rescue Goa

The team at IAR Goa do an amazing job under stressful and often frustrating circumstances, with constant demands on their time and resources, and every rupee really does count when it comes to continuing the work they do. Donations are welcomed via their website [www.internationalanimalrescuegoa.org.in/](http://www.internationalanimalrescuegoa.org.in/) Online-Donation, and if you're visiting Goa in person, why not take a day or two out of your holiday to visit the centre and volunteer there? Just a few hours of your time makes a massive difference but it's important to note that anyone wanting to work directly with animals must have up-to-date rabies vaccinations. In the UK rabies vaccinations come in three doses, with the third either 21 or 28 days after the first, so make sure you give yourself enough time to get them! 🐾