his seniority, took her turn. Later, Roadcat would come by and finish whatever was left. But the rhythm faltered. There always was something in the dish at the end of the day. And sometimes he ate nothing after I ladled his custom to come lie near my pillow at night. He would come by and finish what was left, and it was almost always something in the dish at the end of the day. After a few days, we brought him home. He was working at the edge of his strength, it seemed to me, and it seemed strange that he would get up to the chair and place his chin on my shoulder. Though he was always pleasantly affectionate, such a gesture was a little startling. I poured him a little out of the ordinary. He was trying something in the dish at the end of the day. It seemed strangely restless. He would get on his back and looked at me, rolled over on his back and looked at me, and we would talk for a moment while he lay there. It was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me something was amiss, that it was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me that something was amiss, that it was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me that something was amiss, that it was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me that something was amiss, that it was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me that something was amiss, that it was almost as if his mind was trying to tell me that something was amiss. Roadcat didn't just live with us. He was a spiritual part of the affairs of our place. He was kind to us, and we to him. He seemed to me in the evening, lying in the sun and holding his hand on me in autumn grass. So, gathering myself as best I could, I drove slowly through a red light and wait for me to rise and let him out. The routine was invariant, and the morning it was broken I felt an unpleasant twinge in my stomach.

The initial diagnosis was a kidney problem, but I could see he was working at the edge of his strength, that he was working at the edge of his strength, that he was working at the edge of his strength. The next day, a Wednesday, Wayne Endres is a kind and patient man, but I could see he was working at the edge of his technology.

The following day, a Wednesday, Wayne called with his report. If it had only been a stroke, we might have worked our way out of it, even though cats don't recover from such things easily. But clearly, the tumor was large and the scans showed that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible, that no surgery was possible.

Reprinted with permission from Iowa State University Press, Ames, LUCAS DONALD. Cindy forgets that the apartment repairman was coming to fix her sliding glass door that day. She forgot to confirm her seven-month-old kitten in the bed room. When she got home from work, there Kali was, waiting for her out side under a pine tree. "Thank goodness you're okay," she sighed. A week or so later, the kitten is putting on weight. She is pregnant. What a disappointment, Cindy thinks. She had been waiting for Kali to go through one heat cycle before she had her spayed—she'd always heard that was best. But Cindy wasn't worried about finding homes for the kittens. She will just take them into the clothing store where she works and put them in the window.

Cats have surpassed dogs as the most popular pets in the United States, with 306 million households owning cats. As a result of this surge in interest, the number of cats killed by the na­tionally increased. The striped cat was a good cat. Unable to spend the children is no longer kitten-cute, and the pet overpopulation problem. We urge you to pass along this arti­cle to someone who could benefit from it; if you are not we urge you to take heed.
Many of the people seeking to give away litters of puppies and kittens...think the book is closed once the last puppy or kitten leaves with its new owner.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) reports that it has 36 million purebred dogs registered in its studbook. In 1989 alone, the AKC registered more than 1 million dogs and 550,000 litters. Although there is a demand for purebred dogs, purebred pets are not immune to the whims of people who see animals as disposable commodities.

The HSUS estimates that as many as 25 percent of the animals entering shelters each year are purebreds. One look through the classified ads reveals how many free pets are registered or come with papers. Many people believe that breeding their purebred pet would be profitable. After all, they pay hundreds of dollars for their pet. (In truth, the reason “mall pets” cost so much is that a large percentage of the purchase price goes to paying the hefty rent the pet shop pays the mall for its prime location.) In reality, the average “backyard” breeder may sell only half of the litter and end up giving away the rest. If the breeder has problems with temperament, care of all the animals, his or her profit margin is usually slim or nonexistent. There may be a dog or cat, even a purebred, for every home in America, but there is not a home for every available dog and cat.

One day, Susie is walking Bear in a park when they encounter a large male shepherd. Bear lunges, breaking his lead, and attacks the other dog. Susie tries to separate the dogs and is bitten by Bear. The police finally stop the fight. Each dog has cuts and bite wounds but is otherwise okay.

Jack decides to have Bear neutered. He is astonished at how much better behaved Bear becomes and how much happier the dog is. Unfortunately, Bear manages to father 6 litters of puppies before his surgery. The female dogs Bear impregnated have 34 puppies among them. Some of these puppies inherit their father’s aggressiveness and pose problems to people in the neighborhood. One man, tired of the dogs coming into his yard, manages to shoot one of them. Two more die when they eat rat poison. Four are killed by cars. Animal control officers capture 7 more of these nuisance animals and must euthanize them because they are ill or unadoptable. One of the dog owners recognizes the size and strength of the puppies and sells his 4 to a dogfighter. One pet owner takes his dog’s 4 puppies to the animal shelter and then has his dog spayed. Of the 34 puppies Bear fathers, 22 futher or give birth to 156 more puppies.

Pet overpopulation is not a new issue to most people. Since the 1960s, groups such as The HSUS have worked to inform people of the problem of too many pets and not enough homes and to encourage education, sterilization, and legislation to protect animals and address pet overpopulation. But “pet overpopulation” may seem abstract to the average person who just has one litter on his hands. One—or even a handful—of animals from one person does not seem like an insurmountable problem.

With a human population already saturated with pets and ten or twenty people bringing litters into each animal shelter daily, the picture becomes clearer. Pet overpopulation comes from many sources. It comes from people who breed animals intentionally for profit or hobby. While it is true that there will always be a market for purebred animals, that market should be filled by breeders who are committed to improving their animals’ breed in terms of genetics, behavior, and temperament, as well as desirable color, size, and shape. Pet overpopulation comes from puppy mills, those cruel,_backup-breeding farms of pet-breeder passion and pet-overpopulation problem.

Pet overpopulation comes from the animals abandoned and left to fend for themselves, reproducing litter after litter. Pet overpopulation comes from animal shelters that do not ensure that the pets they offer for adoption are spayed or neutered. These shelters are re-volving doors for pets and their offspring. Pet overpopulation, or at least attitudes that perpetuate the problem, even comes from advertisements for pet products. Happy children romp with puppy food. Companies are very concerned about keeping pets healthy through good nutrition, but they also do their part to fuel pet overpopulation and assure more sales.

Finally, pet-overpopulation comes from pet owners who allow their unaltered pets outside, where they do breed. It comes from people who allow their pets to have “just one litter,” for whatever reason, or from pet owners who realize that “Sam” is really “Samantha” only after she delivers kittens. Many of these people would appear to be model owners. They provide veterinary care for their animals, give them special toys, fancy collars, and gourmet pet food. They spend a lot of money on their pets—sales of pet products are expected to exceed $8 billion this year. When they allow their dogs and cats, even if by accident, they are irresponsible and the root of the pet-overpopulation problem.

There are many causes of pet overpopulation, but there are also many solutions. For more than twenty years, The HSUS has worked to educate pet owners about the pet-overpopulation problem and the ways to prevent the unnecessary suffering it causes. In the last three years, our “Be a P.A.L.—Prevent A Litter” campaign has been implemented by thousands of individuals and groups across the country.

Veterinarians in increasing numbers are educating their clients about the importance and advantages of having their pets spayed or neutered. Cooperative programs by veterinarians, humane groups, and individuals offer reduced-fee surgeries for animals whose owners can’t afford the regular price.

Legislation that protects animals by requiring responsible pet ownership is in place in many parts of the country. Mandatory sterilization of shelter animals, differential licensing, and ordinances regulating the breeding of animals all contribute to responsible pet ownership.

Pet overpopulation is not the millions of surplus animals born each year but one animal or one litter, turned in, given away, and abandoned. Pet overpopulation is not the millions of surplus animals born each year but one animal or one litter, turned in, given away, and abandoned. Pet overpopulation is not the millions of surplus animals born each year but one animal or one litter, turned in, given away, and abandoned. This correlation is rarely understood by the individuals turning in, giving away, selling, or abandoning people—single animals, we can make a difference.

• Fall 1990

Kate Rindy is an associate in The HSUS Companion Animals Division and Rhonda Lucas Donald is editor of Shelter Sense.