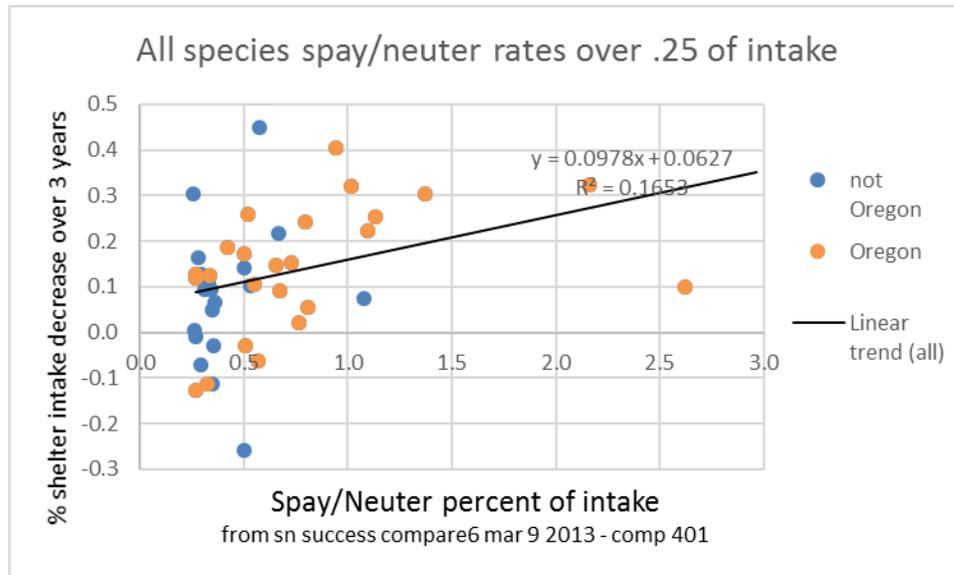


Spay/Neuter Effects on Shelter Intake

By Lisa Wahl

Spay/Neuter levels above 1/4th to 1/2th of the shelter intake or above 10 surgeries per 1000 of human population for the area appears to be needed to result in a significant decrease in shelter intake.



Conventional wisdom among spay/neuter advocates has it that spay/neuter reduces shelter intake and if the availability of low-cost s/n sufficiently saturates an area, the decrease can be dramatic. But do the data support this? And how much does it take to “saturate” a given area?

I’ve been collecting data from Oregon for years and recently searched the internet for data on other areas where shelter data and spay/neuter numbers are available. Counting each year with data available separately and information on cats, dogs and both, I have over 400 data points to analyze.

The data quality outside of the Oregon data is not ideal. None include certainty that all s/n numbers are from the same area as the shelter data, and some do not separate species numbers. Population numbers for the target area are not always exact. Despite these obstacles, the results are amazingly clear. Spay/Neuter reduces shelter intake, when it reaches a high enough level. The higher the level, the greater the reduction and the sooner that reduction is seen.

The highest correlation seen is with the total spay/neuter and total shelter intake, rather than any species specifics. **Spay/Neuter levels above 1/4th to 1/2th of the shelter intake or above 10 surgeries per 1000 of human population for the area appears to be sufficient to expect a measurable result.**

s/n % intake	Average % decrease of shelter intake					
	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years		
s/n = 0	-2.05%	-4.01%	-4.36%	-3.63%	42	data points
0 < s/n < .5	-0.19%	2.49%	6.58%	9.89%	56	data points
.5 < s/n < 1	1.12%	7.37%	12.71%	12.08%	16	data points
s/n > 1	10.51%	20.56%	22.76%	35.83%	7	data points

121

Of the 121 data points that include shelter intake at least 3 years past spay/neuter data, years with no spay/neuter program show an increase in shelter intake of about 2% per year. Spay/neuter greater than the shelter intake averages almost 10% per year decrease in shelter intake, beginning the same year as that spay/neuter level, independent of spay/neuter numbers before or after that year measured.

This analysis includes data from 22 areas in 9 states between 1997-2012 from a variety of sources.

Oregon data are from private sources for the following counties: Crook, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, and Marion/Polk. Portland data from the ASAP coalition was provided by them.

Data for Santa Clara, CA and Transylvania, SC are from published studies.

California shelter data for Santa Clara and Fresno are from www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/LocalRabiesControlActivities.aspx

Shelter data for others primarily from www.asilomaraccords.org/participating_organizations.htm

Clinics in Haywood, SC and Hattiesburg, MS provided shelter and s/n data for their area.

Dane WI, Duval FL, Erie NY, Loudon TN, Madison AL, Maricopa AZ, Monroe TN received Maddie's Fund targeted s/n grants, Utah and New York City received Maddie's Fund Community Grants. Data supplementing Asilomar reports come from grant applications, reports and Maddie's Fund Annual reports. Additional s/n data for Utah comes from the Utah Coalition for Animals, primarily from their tax returns.