

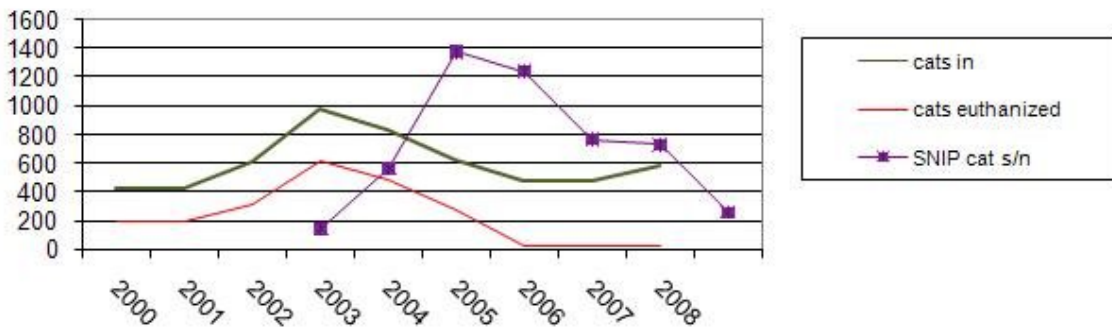
# The effect of a High-Volume Spay/Neuter Clinic on shelter intake and euthanasia in Crook County, Oregon

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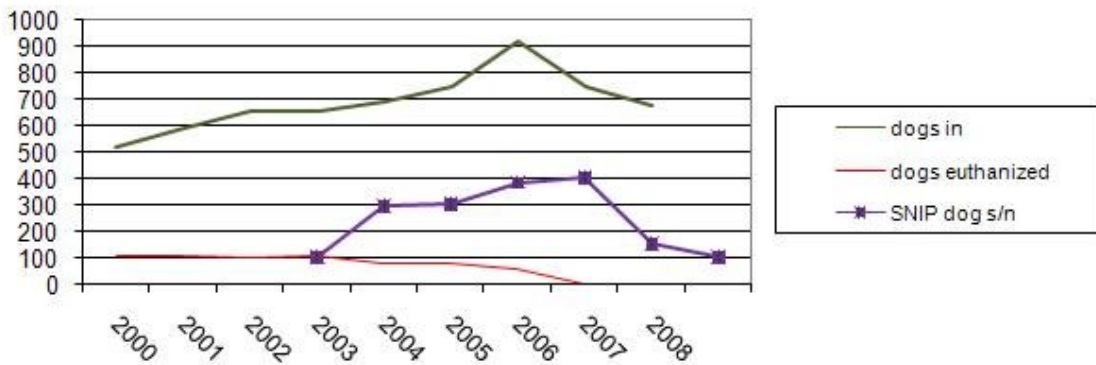
## Abstract

The SNIP House Spay/Neuter Clinic in Prineville, OR ([www.sniphouse.org](http://www.sniphouse.org)) has been able to provide such high-volume service in their small community that it dramatically impacted intake at their local shelter in a very short period of time, allowing it to become a true No Kill shelter, with unlimited intake. For cats the effect is clear and immediate. For dogs it is less clear and probably takes several years to have an effect.

### Crook County Cats

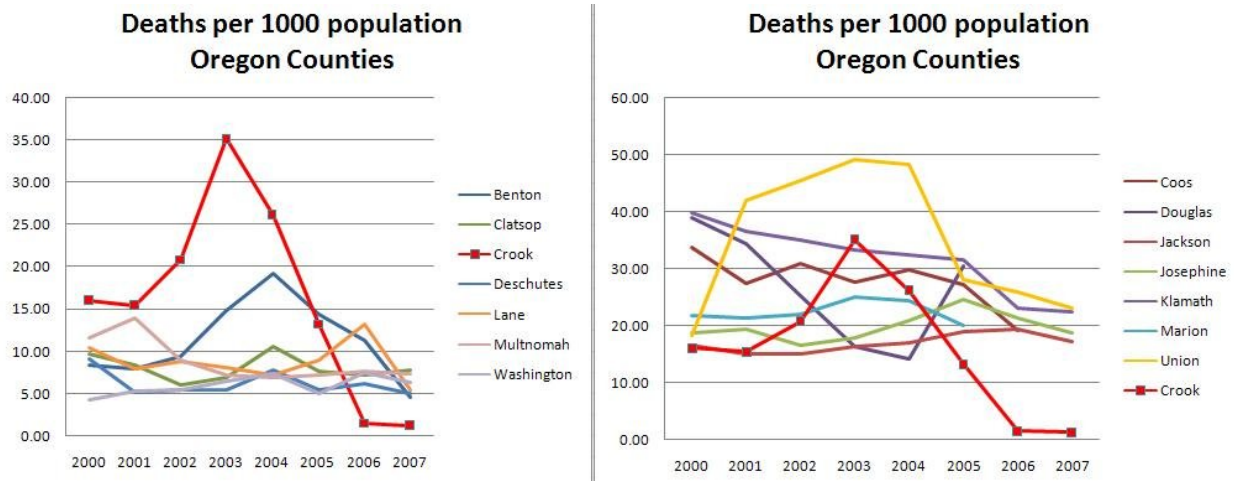


### Crook County Dogs

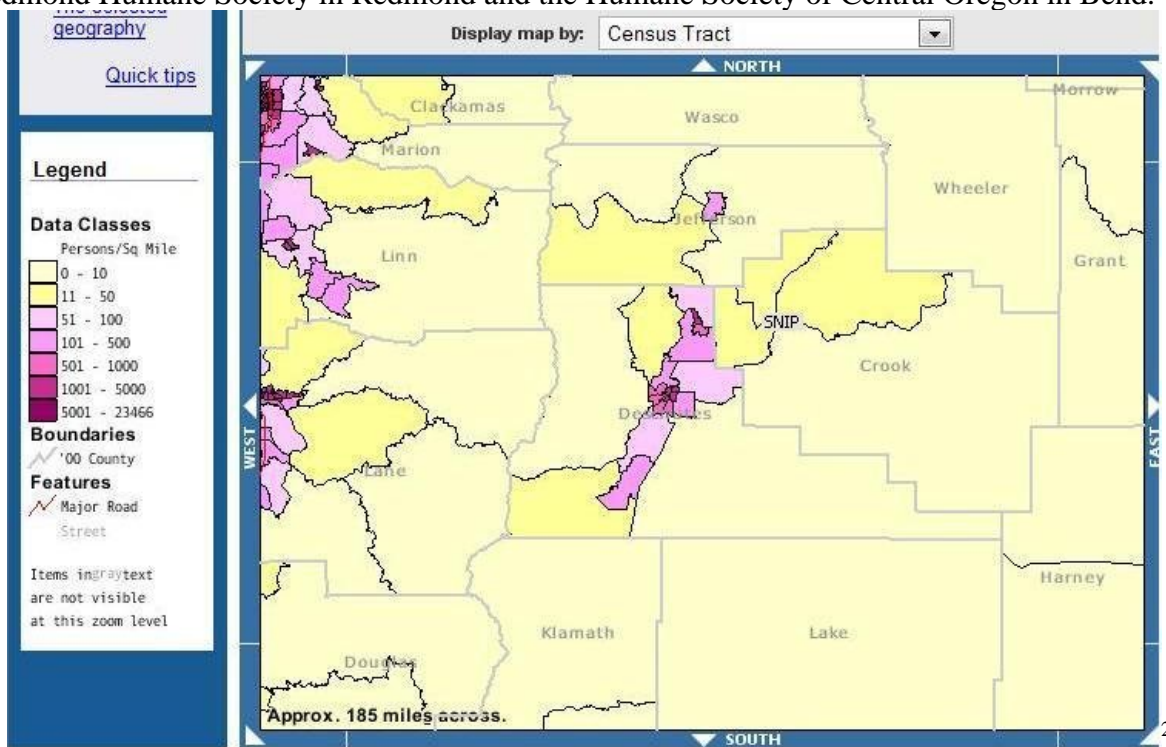


## Background

Crook County in Central Oregon has a population of about 20,000, most in the city of Prineville. It has one animal shelter, the Humane Society of Ochocos, which opened in 1999. By 2003, it had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest deaths per 1000 population of any shelter in Oregon. By 2006, it had the lowest.<sup>1</sup>

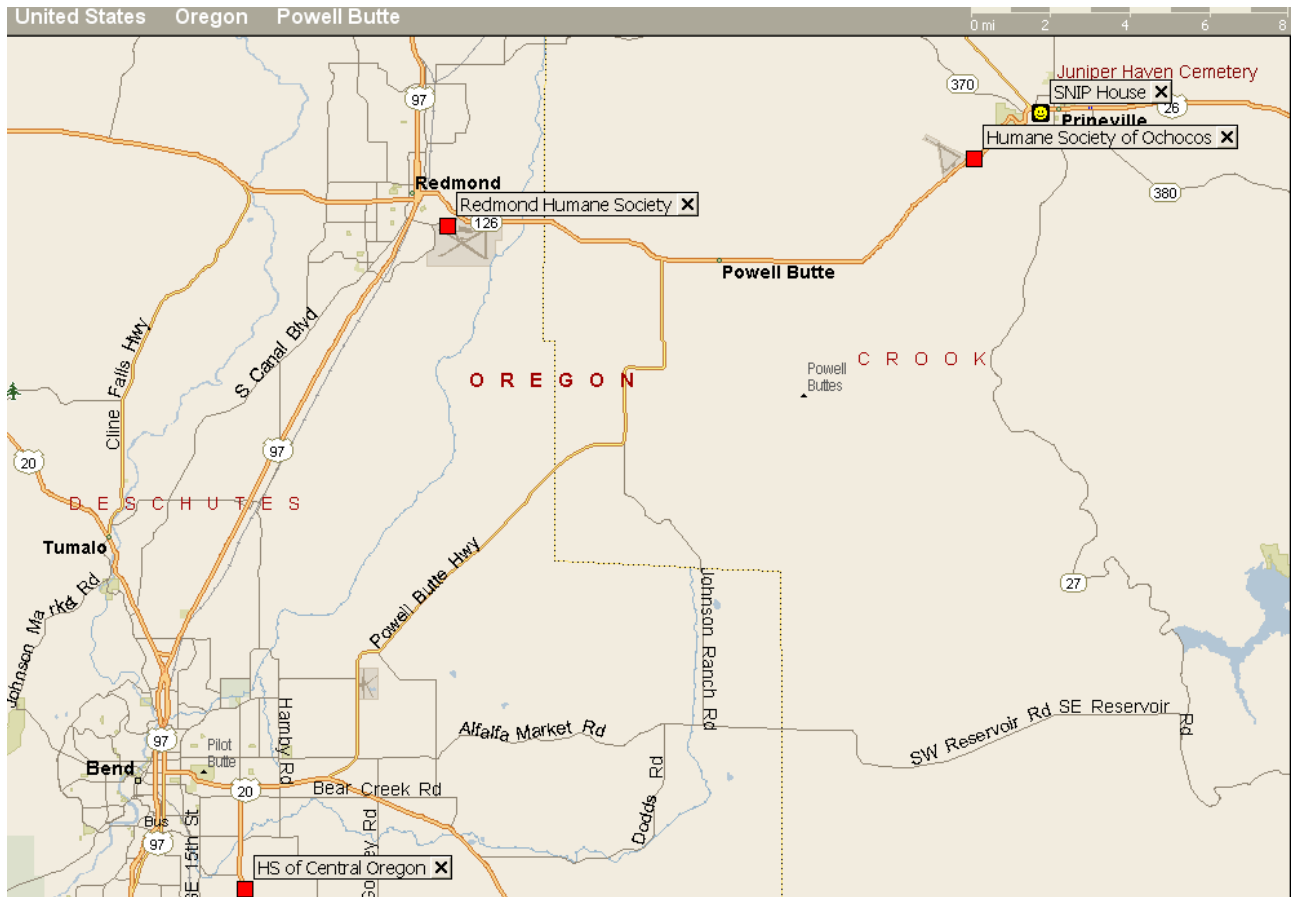


Crook County abuts Deschutes County, a much more populous area, with two shelters, the Redmond Humane Society in Redmond and the Humane Society of Central Oregon in Bend.



<sup>1</sup> from US Census estimates of population by county each year with shelter data from the Oregon Humane Society

<sup>2</sup> Map generated through <http://factfinder.census.gov>



From November 2003-January 2004, SNIP Hosted the Oregon Neutermobile. In June of 2004, SNIP House opened. They operated 2 or 3 days per week, although were closed off and on due to vet unavailability. They acquired a mobile unit and when to Redmond weekly for a brief time, before deciding to concentrate on the fixed clinic.

## Data

Data from SNIP House comes from a comprehensive database of all surgeries, allowing for breakdowns by species, gender and county. Data from the Neutermobile is not as detailed, so the assumption was made that the proportions would be the same as for SNIP House in 2004. In the charts and tables, only surgeries done for animals from Crook County are included. In 2004, slightly over half of the surgeries done came from outside Crook County, although this dropped and was less than 20% in 2008, probably because of the Bend SNP clinic that opened in 2005.

Crook County

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
population	19,344	19,951	20,218	20,666	21,424	22,067	22,710	22,867	23,023
cats in	433	430	619	982	842	631	487	482	583
cats euthanized	198	198	314	616	479	274	19	24	19
deaths/1000	10.24	9.92	15.53	29.81	22.36	12.42	0.84	1.05	0.83
SNIP cat s/n				144	565	1378	1240	767	730
s/n / 1000				7.44	28.31	68.16	60.00	35.80	33.08
total euthanized	308	308	420	724	559	359	80	29	25
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
dogs in	521	596	659	660	695	750	921	753	676
dogs euthanized	110	110	106	108	80	85	61	5	6
deaths/1000	5.69	5.51	5.24	5.23	3.73	3.85	2.69	0.22	0.26
SNIP dog s/n				107	298	304	385	404	153
s/n / 1000				5.54	14.93	15.04	18.63	18.86	6.93

Financial

With the Neutermobile, and when SNIP first opened, they offered a flat rate of \$30 per surgery, both genders, both cats and dogs, with no means testing, and this rate was often reduced or credit extended. They did ferals and pit bulls for free and kittens free when brought in with mother. They made various adjustments, limiting the number of dogs per day, eventually raising prices. However, looking at their financials, they average amount they were collecting was very low.

After their first vet moved out of state, SNIP House went through several periods of closing and taking on vets who were not able to do high-volume, which is why their numbers are so variable. Many expenses may have been donated off the books, especially in the first years, and a great deal of volunteer time was donated, so the expense per surgery is probably unrealistically low.

In later years, they also added facilities for treating shelter animals prior to adoption and purchased a mobile s/n unit, all raising the expense/surgery average.

SNIP fiscal year is 10/1-9/30 - year is year end date

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Total Income	\$144,999	\$134,966	\$253,588	\$230,448	\$167,346
Program Income	\$41,191	\$75,242	\$36,224	\$58,043	\$23,273
Total Expenses	\$77,852	\$125,082	\$144,752	\$254,399	\$173,203
Program Expenses	\$74,952	\$118,368	\$135,950	\$243,992	\$163,258
s/n FY	1732	3454	2666	3018	740
\$ income/surgery	\$23.78	\$21.78	\$13.59	\$19.23	\$31.45
\$ expense/surgery	\$43.27	\$34.27	\$50.99	\$80.85	\$220.62

## Theoretical Progression

Central Oregon is rapidly growing in population and pet ownership figures are usually based on human population. Taking the estimates in PetSmart's new application, owned cats = pop/3.3, dogs = pop/4, feral cats = pop/6 and the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey figures that seventy-five percent of owned dogs are spayed or neutered and eighty-seven percent of owned cats are spayed or neutered. Plus a guess that only 5% of feral cats are fixed. Assume that the lifespan of owned pets is 10 years, and feral cats 5 and the proportion of those that die that are fixed is the same as those that live. Assume the the replacements of these are unfixed, but of the new pets that come with the increase in population, half are already fixed.

cats	start	% fixed	# unfixed	Snip fixed	#unfixed died	# fixed died	# unfixed replaced	# fixed moved in
2003	6262	87.0%	814	154	81	545	741	115
2004	6492	87.0%	844	428	84	565	747	97
2005	6687	83.9%	1078	1148	108	561	766	97
2006	6882	91.4%	589	901	59	629	712	24
2007	6929	95.1%	341	572	34	659	717	24
2008	6977	93.5%	451	558	45	653	721	24

feral cats	start	% fixed	# unfixed	Snip fixed	#unfixed died	# fixed died	# unfixed replaced
2004	3571	5.0%	3392	141	678	36	464
2005	3321	8.5%	3037	230	607	57	439
2006	3096	14.8%	2639	339	528	91	336
2007	2812	25.1%	2108	195	422	141	307
2008	2557	29.7%	1798	172	360	152	282

dogs	start	% fixed	# unfixed	Snip fixed	#unfixed died	# fixed died	# unfixed replaced	# fixed moved in
2004	5356	75.0%	1339	233	134	402	616	80
2005	5517	71.2%	1588	304	159	393	632	80
2006	5678	69.0%	1757	385	176	392	587	20
2007	5717	68.8%	1784	404	178	393	591	20
2008	5756	68.9%	1793	153	179	396	595	20

This also assumes only SNIP fixes Crook County pets, obviously not true, but probably a small factor, certainly in feral cats. But, hopefully, from these numbers, the dogs especially are going elsewhere.

I started in 2003 with owned cats, but given the lack of detail of ON data and the trouble it was to include it, I left it out of the feral cat and dog charts.

SNIP's number are quite high for s/ns per 1000 population, higher than any other area I've seen numbers for. Yet, given how many "replacement" animals need to be fixed each year, even its progress doesn't seem as impressive as one might expect. Note, however, that combining the feral and owned cat numbers, in 2007, Crook went over the threshold of more than 70% fixed and in 2008 were up to 76.4%.

## Conclusion

SNIP House s/n clinic produced a remarkable reduction in animal intake in a short period of time. However, this was possible only because the human, and therefore pet also, population is very low compared to most areas with s/n clinics, and required considerable financial and convenience incentives to bring in so many animals, which took a great deal of financial investment and volunteer time.

Even with recent s/n numbers for cats still above those of the shelter's intake, the cat intake has started increasing again. Considering the progression numbers, it seems that massive s/n efforts are not something that can be done for a few years only. Even if 100% of the animals in an area could be altered, about 10% would die each year and people would still find unaltered animals to adopt from outside of the area, including people unable or unwilling to afford to spay and neuter.

Since the dog s/n numbers are so low, and the effect on shelter intake uncertain, let's speculate only about the cat results. Also, although relatively few dog s/ns were done at SNIP, the initial flat fee of \$30 each, raised only slightly until recently, means that they required a relatively large cost in subsidy. Therefore, I'm estimating the cats were done with a subsidy of about \$15 per surgery. For SNIP's it appears to take a s/n rate of more than 40 cats per 1000 population each year to sustain a suppressed shelter intake. At a subsidy of about \$15 per surgery that's about 60 cents per year per person. Lane County Animal Services currently spends about \$5.74 per county resident.