

Canine welfare needs in Shorobe, Botswana

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An interview-based questionnaire was undertaken on behalf of Worldwide Veterinary Services and Maun Animal Welfare Society in a low-income rural community in northern Botswana in order to estimate the frequency of dog ownership, perceived advantages and disadvantages of dog ownership and the owners' willingness to neuter their dog(s). Data was gathered by means of a structured interview with a local translator. Of the 112 households interviewed, dogs were owned by 62 respondents. The dog to human ratio was found to be 1:6.4. Males were preferred by 83.9% of respondents because puppies were not wanted. Dogs were owned for protection purposes by 85.9% of respondents. However, the overall dog population in the community was perceived as problematic by 82.1% of respondents primarily due to stealing of food and livestock by dogs. General knowledge of dog healthcare and of neutering was low in the community. However, the community seemed receptive to a neutering program, as 89.3% of respondents would be willing to neuter their male dogs and 92.9% would be willing to neuter the females. Funding of such a program will be an issue, as 39.8% of respondents were not prepared to pay anything for such a service.

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