

Amazon C.A.R.E.S.

By ***Molly Mednikow***

10/07/2006

Update on Amazon C.A.R.E.S.

Amazon Community Animal Rescue, Education & Safety (Amazon C.A.R.E.S.) is conducting an aggressive campaign to permanently reduce the number of homeless and unwanted dogs and cats forced to survive on the streets of Iquitos. The campaign began in April of 2006, spearheaded by WVS member and Australian veterinarian Dr. Beth McGennissen, who is volunteering her time and expertise to this important public health issue.

The latest campaign, often referred to as an “Animal Birth Control” or “ABC Campaign”, involves the catch/neuter/vaccinate and release of stray animals. In countries that have large populations of street dogs, it has been found that killing street animals provides only a temporary decrease in numbers. The only humane and sustainable method of population reduction is through animal birth control programmes, and educating people on the importance of animal welfare.

Dr. McGennissen brings with her a wealth of experience and Amazon C.A.R.E.S. is extremely grateful for her contribution to the animals and people of Loreto. She has managed similar campaigns in India and Bhutan.

During the first five weeks of the programme more than 130 stray or abandoned dogs and cats have been captured, vaccinated for rabies and neutered! This programme not only prevents the birth of countless litters of unwanted



puppies and kittens, but it also improves public health conditions and the spread of zoonotic diseases.

These animals can be identified temporarily with a red plastic collar around their neck. A more permanent identifier is a notch in the right ear. The dedicated staff and many passionate volunteers are working to make this programme a success. In addition to being surgically sterilised, most animals undergo treatment for mange, a very uncomfortable skin condition that causes animals to scratch their skins and lose their hair. Others are receiving chemotherapy for transmissible venereal tumours, which are sexually transmitted.

Amazon C.A.R.E.S. maintains an office and modern Veterinary Clinic at Pevas 184, just two blocks from the Plaza de Armas. Visitors are always welcome! At least once per week the Amazon C.A.R.E.S. team operates a mobile neuter clinic in Belen. Incredibly the mobile clinic is held on the 2nd floor of the Casona above the meat market. During the final week of May, veterinarians Dr Esther Pena, Dr Miguel Sebastian and Dr Beth McGennisken were assisted by 7 volunteer Canadian veterinary students – Amy Jewiss, Liz Sinclair, Janet Sunstrum and Maria Pienkowski (Ontario Veterinary College) and Genevieve Marceau, Jacinthe Messier and Valerie Lalonde (University of Montreal). The hard working students were a fantastic help and 15 stray dogs were neutered/identified and vaccinated for rabies.

Amazon C.A.R.E.S. was founded by North American Molly Mednikow in July 2004 under the name Don Perrito Animal Rescue. Since then many hundreds of animals have been neutered, treated for various ailments, and re-homed to loving families.

Amazon C.A.R.E.S. is very grateful for any assistance that visitors can provide: donations, old towels/newspapers and many medicines can be used to help the abandoned animals of Iquitos. Visitors may also memorialise or pay tribute to a loved friend or pet with a donation. All donors receive

recognition on our website at www.amazoncares.org.

Read more about Dr Beth's adventures in Peru at http://journals.worldnomads.com/nomad_vet/ and support Amazon C.A.R.E.S. through **WVS** who are supplying the charity with large volumes of Advantix (courtesy of Bayer) and sending a team over in September this year. If you would like to be a part of that team please contact the office.