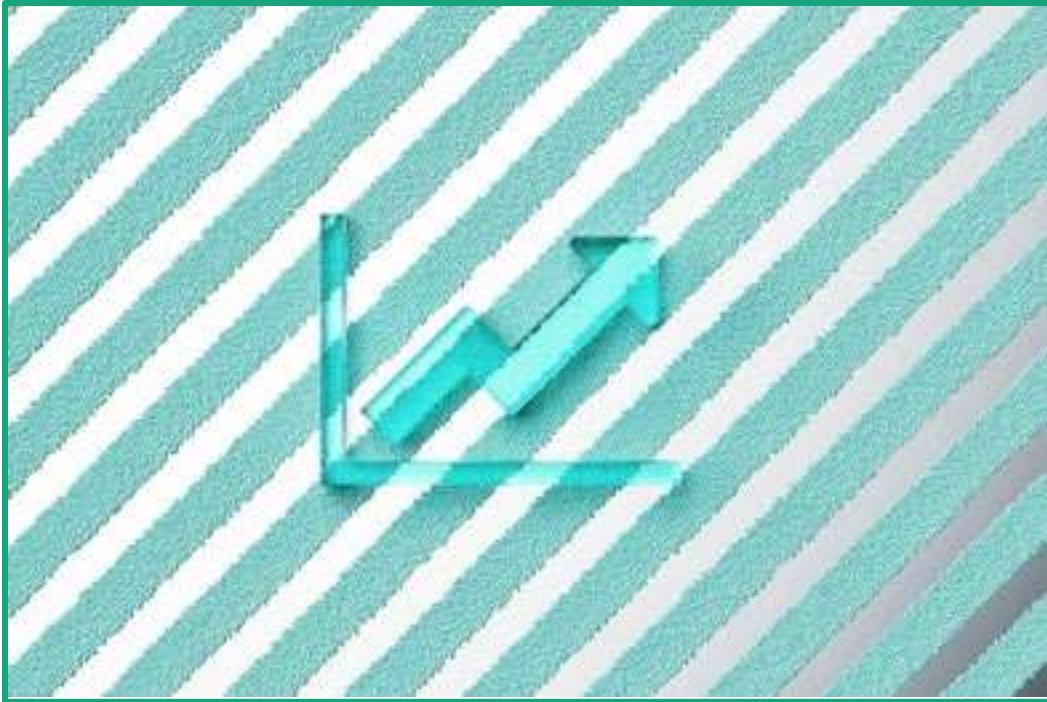




2024 DATA ANALYSIS

Maui Humane Society Data Compared to State and National Shelter Data



By Lisa M. Labrecque, DVM, CEO

Data provided by Kaustuv Ghotane, Data Analyst



INTRODUCTION

This report contains an analysis of Maui Humane Society's 2024 shelter data against that of thousands of shelters and rescue groups across the state and country. Specifically, MHS data for intakes and outcomes, length of stay, and live release rates for cats and dogs was reviewed and compared with that of other shelters to identify trends, gain a deeper understanding of how we are doing compared to other organizations, and identify gaps where we can do better.

The largest collection of shelter animal statistics in the United States is the *Shelter Animals Count* national database. Their 2024 year-end report pooled data from 13,527 animal welfare organizations, including shelters and rescue groups, and identified the following trends compared to 2023:

- a slight decrease (1%) in community intakes
- live outcomes remained about the same
- length of stay for dogs of all sizes increased
- transfers and return-to-home rates declined
- dogs were found to be at a greater risk of euthanasia when space and resources became limited

Some of the notable differences identified in this report between MHS' 2024 shelter data and national averages are as follows:

- MHS took in more than 2.5 times the number of cats than the average shelter
- MHS took in many more stray dogs (by percentage of intakes) than the average shelter
- Owner surrenders of both cats and dogs represented a much lower percentage of intakes at MHS than the average shelter
- MHS returned significantly more cats to the field (RTFs) than other shelters
- MHS did a better job at reuniting lost dogs and cats with their owners than other shelters
- Dogs at MHS enjoyed a significantly higher LRR than the average shelter
- The LRR for cats at MHS was significantly higher than the other Hawaiian island shelters but lower than the national average

To my knowledge, this is the first time an analysis such as this has been conducted for MHS, and I am excited by what it has revealed and the opportunities it presents. My hope is that the entire MHS team, the animals, and the Maui community may benefit from the insights gained through this analysis.

Lisa M. Labrecque, DVM
Chief Executive Officer

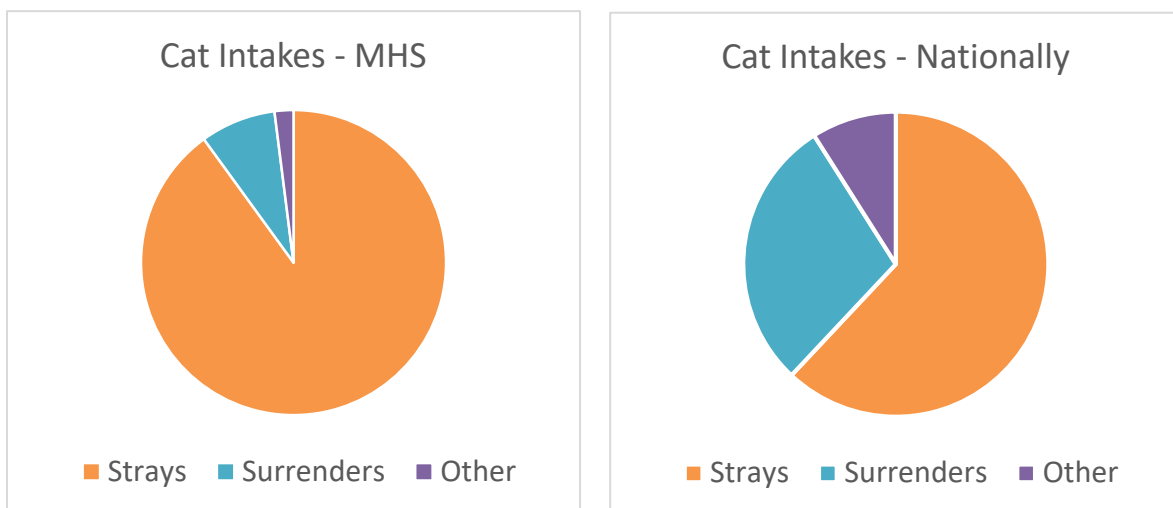
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RESULTS

In this first section, the percentage of cat and dog intakes and outcomes at MHS is compared with national averages. (“Other” intakes include animals transferred in, born in care, or seized. “Other” outcomes include animals who escaped or were otherwise lost while in care.)

INTAKES BY % - CATS

CAT INTAKES	MHS	NATIONALLY
Stray/Lost	90%	62%
Surrenders	8%	29%
Other	2%	9%

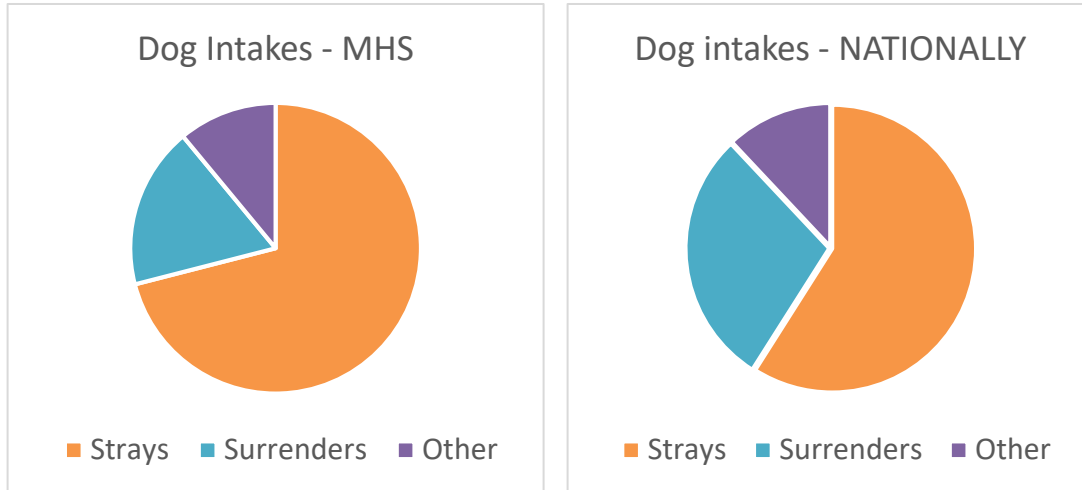


In 2024, 90% of the cats taken in at MHS were strays, compared to an average of 62% nationally. Conversely, 8% of all MHS cat intakes were owner surrenders, compared to an average of 29% nationwide. The high number of stray intakes can be partly explained by the significant number of free roaming cats on Maui. Cats are seasonal breeders and can have up to six litters per year in Hawaii due to the year around warm climate, whereas in colder areas they typically breed twice a year. There are also no natural predators of cats in Hawaii, so they are more likely to live longer. Additionally, with Hawaii being a popular tourist destination, there are many resorts, golf courses, vacation rentals, restaurants, condo complexes and other venues that attract cats because of a steady food supply and sympathetic guests. In fact, the 2022 Maui Cat Count reported that these are the sites where the highest numbers of free roaming cats were located.

The low percentage of cat surrenders at MHS can in part be attributed to the hard work of our Pet Retention team, who successfully deferred 354 cats from surrender in 2024, representing a 51% increase over 2023.

INTAKES BY % - DOGS

DOG INTAKES	MHS	NATIONALLY
Stray/Lost	71%	59%
Surrenders	18%	29%
Other	11%	12%



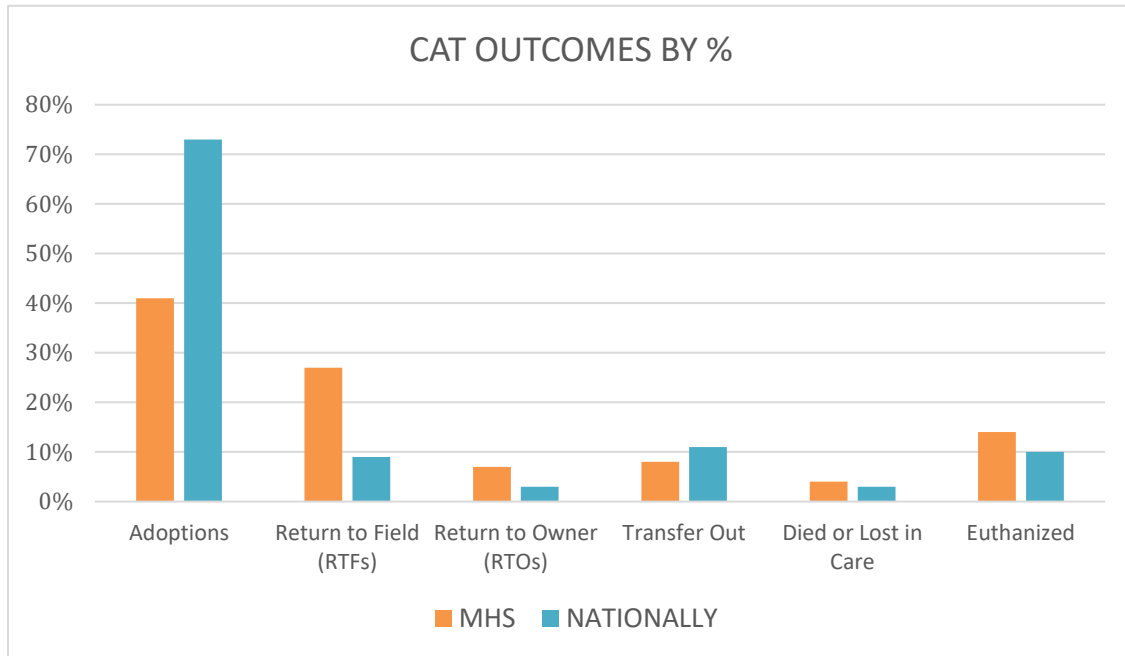
The percentage of dog intakes in 2024 followed a similar pattern as cats but by much less of a margin. 71% of dogs that entered MHS in 2024 came in as stray, compared to 59% nationally. This may be in part due to the island being more rural than metropolitan. By contrast, 18% of MHS dog intakes were owner surrenders, compared to an average of 29% nationwide, thanks in part to our successful Pet Retention program. Deferral of dog surrenders was up 32% in 2024 compared to 2023.

OUTCOMES BY % - CATS

CAT OUTCOMES	MHS	NATIONALLY
Adoptions	41%	73%
Return to Field (RTFs)	27%	9%
Return to Owner (RTOs)	7%	3%
Transfer Out	8%	11%
Died or Lost in Care	4%	3%
Euthanized	14%	10%



In 2024, 41% of the cats who came into MHS left via an adoption pathway, compared to an average of 73% nationally. 27% of MHS cat intakes were returned to the field (RTF) compared to 9% nationally, and 7% were returned to their owner (RTO) whereas only 3% of cats were reunited with their owners nationally. MHS transfers out were slightly lower than the national average at 8% vs. 11%. These differences between cat outcomes at MHS vs. nationally highlight a number of key findings.



First, MHS launched a robust Return to Field (RTF) and Trap Neuter Return (TNR) program in 2017, and since then tens of thousands of free-roaming cats have been spayed or neutered then released. This program has resulted in a dramatic improvement over time in our live release rate for cats, which was less than 40% before the program was launched and now hovers between 83% to 90% with a seasonal variance. As evidence of the success of this program, 45% of stray cat intakes at MHS in 2024 were found to be already spayed and neutered. The national average varies from 2-25%, depending on local TNR efforts.

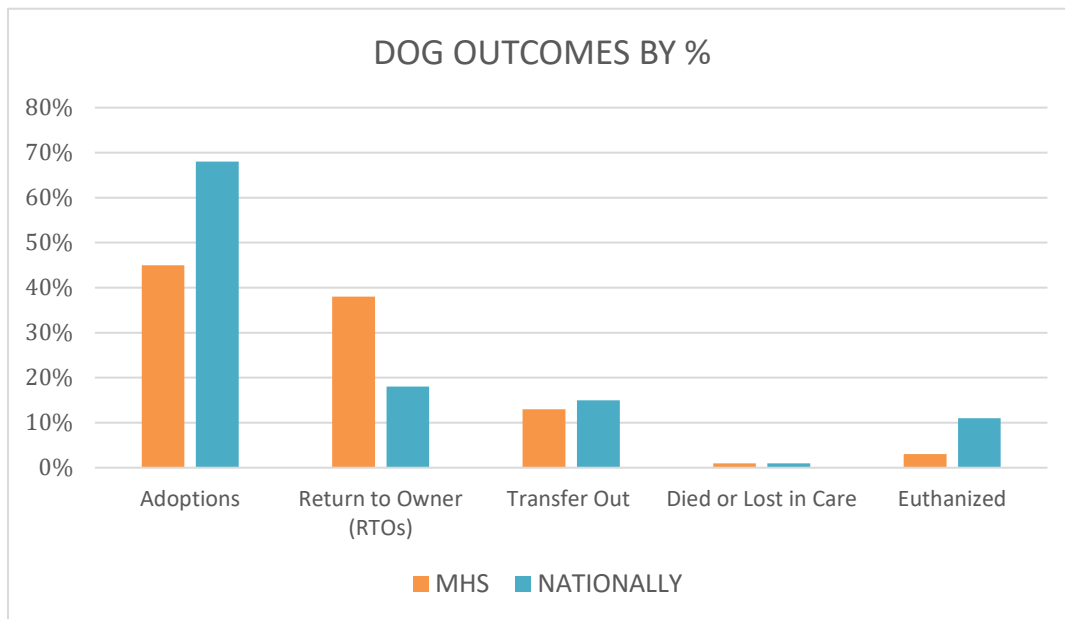
Second, studies have shown that cats have a very low rate of return to owner if they do not have a microchip – only 2-5% of cats without a microchip ever find their way home, compared to 38% that are microchipped. The fact that MHS had more than twice the percentage of RTO cats in 2024 compared to the national average is likely due to the success of our RTF/TNR and spay/neuter programs, which provide free microchips to all animals who come in for surgery through our public spay/neuter clinic. An additional factor that may be at play is that MHS is the only animal shelter on Maui, so owners only have one place to look for a lost pet. In other states and jurisdictions where there are multiple animal shelters, owners may not know which shelter to go to when their pet is lost.

Finally, the lower percentage of live outcomes in cats at MHS and the higher percentage of euthanasia and died/lost in care compared to national averages can be attributed to the high population of cats on island (more on this in the next section). Cats tend to have a higher mortality rate than dogs in shelters because of the number of underage and neonatal kittens, which make up the most significant population of cats who died in care or were euthanized.

OUTCOMES BY % - DOGS

DOG OUTCOMES	MHS	NATIONALLY
Adoptions	45%	68%
Return to Owner (RTOs)	38%	18%
Transfer Out	13%	15%
Live Outcomes	96%	88%
Died or Lost in Care	1%	1%
Euthanized	3%	11%

A similar pattern was seen with dog adoptions – 45% of dogs who entered MHS during 2024 were adopted out, compared to a national average of 68%. However, our RTO rate of 38% is substantially higher than the national average of 18%. Some credit for this goes to our dedicated Pet Reunification Specialist, who works tirelessly to match lost and found animals with their owners. Also, with MHS being the only animal shelter on Maui, it is fairly straightforward to find a lost dog compared to jurisdictions where there may be multiple shelters, causing confusion as to where to look for a lost pet.



Similar to cats, MHS transfers were slightly lower (13%) than the national average of 15%. This reflects the many challenges of transferring animals across the ocean to rescue partners on the continent, especially for dogs.

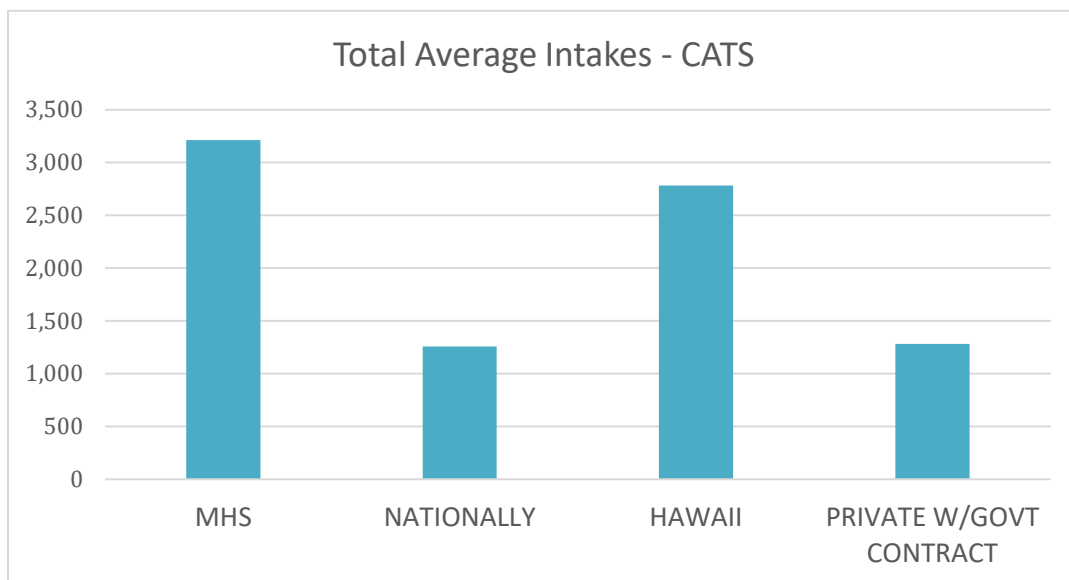
Comparing dog live outcomes and euthanasia, MHS is way ahead of the national averages, with 96% of dogs achieving live outcomes, compared to an average of 88% nationally, and only 3% of dogs were euthanized at MHS in 2024, compared to a national average of 11%. Our team can be very proud of this.

Section two compares the number of cat and dog intakes and outcomes at MHS with national averages, the state of Hawaii, and with other private 501(c3) shelters that have government or municipal contracts (similar to MHS).

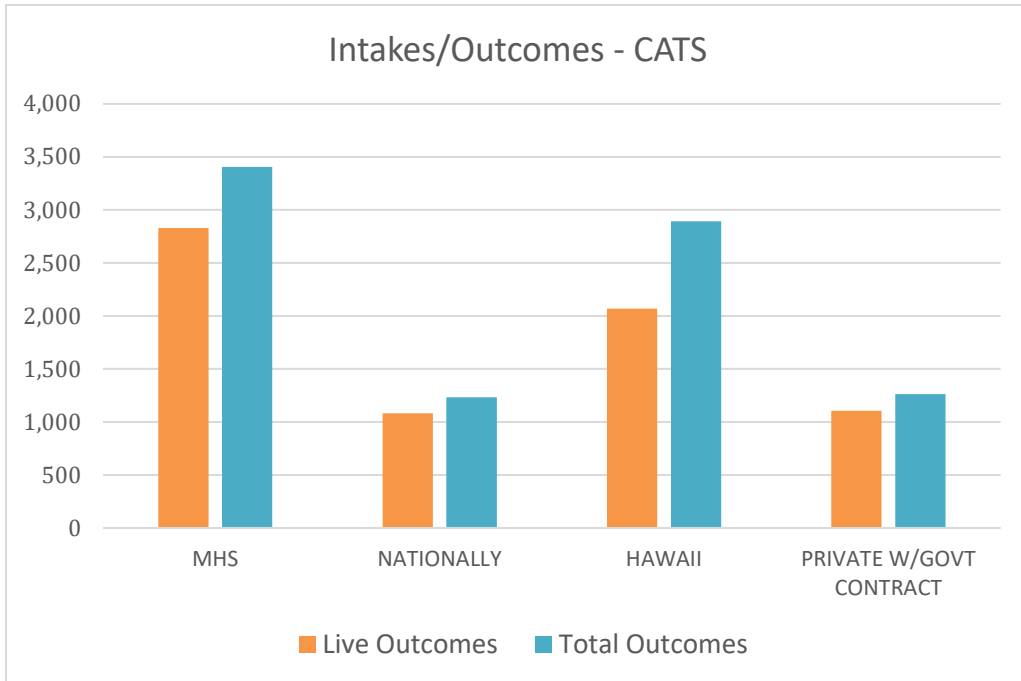
INTAKE/OUTCOME COUNTS - CATS

CAT INTAKES/OUTCOMES	MHS	NATIONALLY	HAWAII	PRIVATE W/GOVT CONTRACT
Total Intakes	3,212	1,258	2,782	1,283
Live Outcomes	2,828	1,083	2,068	1,107
Non-Live Outcomes	603	149	826	155
Total Outcomes	3,407	1,232	2,894	1,262
Live Release Rate	83%	88%	71%	88%

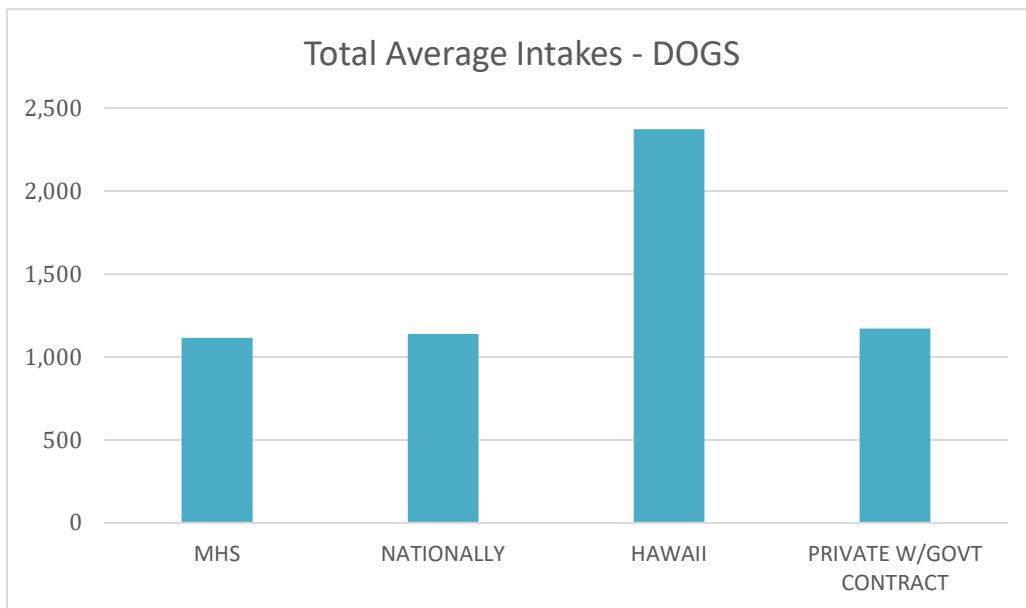
MHS took in more than 2.5 times the number of cats than the average shelter in the U.S. during 2024. Our cat intake numbers are much closer to those of the other Hawaiian island shelters, reinforcing the theory proposed earlier – that there are more cats in Hawaii due our geographic location, climate, lack of natural predators, and factors related to tourism.



But the raw data only tells part of the story. While MHS had four times more non-live outcomes than the national average, these represent 18% of total outcomes compared to 12% nationally – a difference of only 6%. But where MHS really stands out is in comparison to the other Hawaiian shelters, which have an average live release rate (LRR) of 71% for cats compared to MHS's 83%. (LRR = # live outcomes / # total outcomes x 100).



Dog intake counts tell a different story. The total number of dog intakes at MHS for 2024 was more closely aligned with the national average, and was just half that of the other Hawaii shelters. The reasons for this are not clear, but may be in part due to our strong commitment to spay/neuter over the past decade. Other possible explanations include higher human populations on other islands (Oahu and Big Island), leading to larger numbers of stray dogs, a higher incidence of breeding on other islands, or a combination of factors.

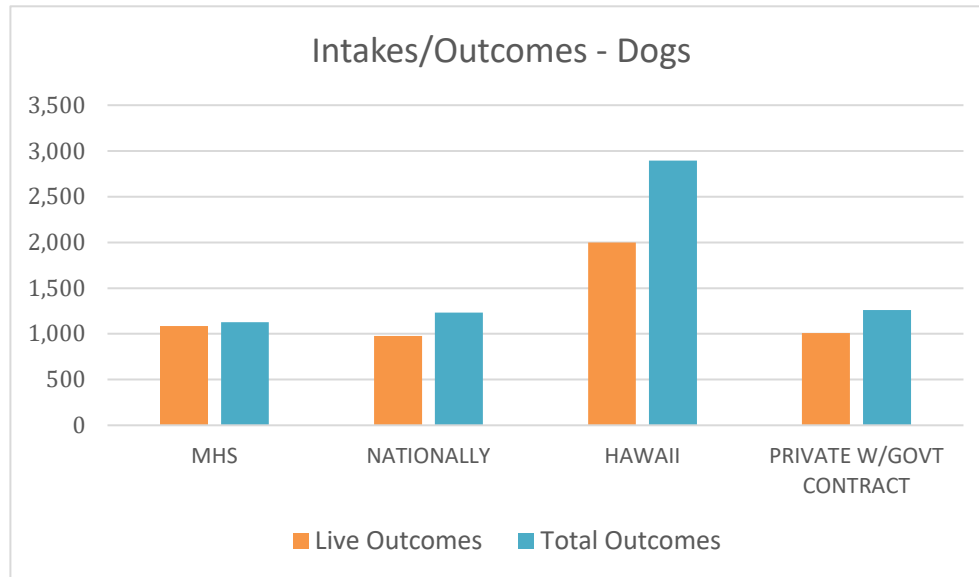




MHS' percentage of non-live outcomes for dogs in 2024 (4% of total outcomes) was low compared to the national average (12%), Hawaii (19%), and other private shelters with government contracts (12%).

INTAKE/OUTCOME COUNTS - DOGS

DOG INTAKES/OUTCOMES	MHS	NATIONALLY	HAWAII	PRIVATE W/GOVT CONTRACT
Total Intakes	1,116	1,138	2,372	1,171
Live Outcomes	1,084	978	2,000	1,009
Non-Live Outcomes	45	137	479	140
Total Outcomes	1,129	1,115	2,479	1,149
Live Release Rates	96%	88%	81%	88%



MHS can be very proud of achieving a 96% LRR for dogs in 2024, compared to the national average (88%), Hawaii (81%), and private shelters with government contracts (80%), thanks to our excellent foster and transfer programs, enrichment and behavior support, and other lifesaving programs.

LIVE RELEASE RATE

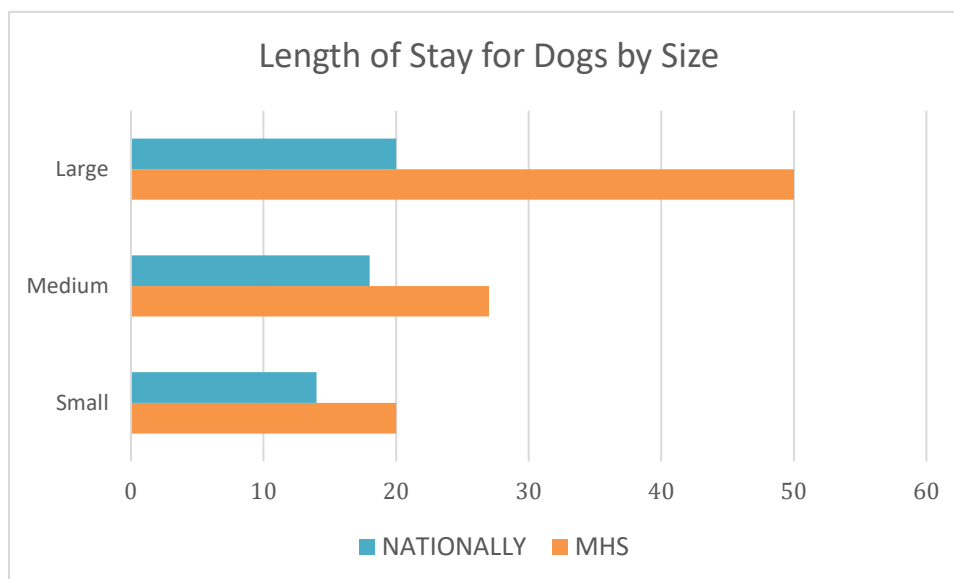
	MHS	NATIONALLY	HAWAII	PRIVATE W/GOVT CONTRACT
CATS	83%	88%	71%	88%
DOGS	96%	88%	81%	80%

In this section we look at how long dogs are staying in shelters by measuring their median length of stay (LOS). The LOS for dogs of all sizes increased nationwide in 2024 compared to 2023:

MEDIAN LENGTH OF STAY

SIZE OF DOG	MHS	NATIONALLY
Small	20 days	14 days
Medium	27 days	18 days
Large	50 days	20 days

The LOS for dogs at MHS was significantly longer than the national average in 2024 – for small dogs the LOS was 20 days or 43% longer than the national average; for medium-sized dogs it was 27 days or 50% longer than other shelters, and for large dogs, a whopping 50 days or 150% longer. No wonder our team is feeling the stress! Not only are we operating beyond capacity or close to it on most days, dogs are staying in our care longer than ever before.



The longer LOS for all sized dogs at MHS can be attributed to a number of factors – a lack of housing since the 2023 fires, especially housing that allows pets, a limited population on island for adoptions, geographical location/isolation leading to challenges with transfer opportunities, the closing of HARF in 2024, and the loss of transfer partners on the West coast due to the fires in Los Angeles in early 2025.



CONCLUSION

This analysis served as a valuable opportunity to examine our data alongside that of shelters statewide, nationwide, and by type of shelter. It provided a fresh perspective on our programs — highlighting both areas of success and opportunities for improvement. These are the key takeaways:

Successes

CATS

- Fewer cats were surrendered to MHS by percentage of intakes as well as raw numbers compared to the national average in 2024:
 - **8%** of cat intakes or **290 cats** were surrendered to MHS in 2024
 - **29%** or an average of **365 cats** were surrendered per shelter nationally
- MHS' live release rate for cats was significantly higher than the other Hawaiian shelters:
 - MHS LRR for cats – **83%**
 - HI average LRR for cats – **71%**
- MHS successfully returned **27%** of cats to the field in 2024, compared to a national average of only **9%**.
- MHS was able to return **7%** of cats to their owners in 2024 compared to a national average of only **3%**.

DOGS

- Fewer dogs were surrendered to MHS by percentage of intakes as well as raw numbers compared to the national average in 2024:
 - **18%** of dog intakes or **200 dogs** were surrendered to MHS in 2024
 - **29%** or an average of **330 dogs** were surrendered per shelter nationally
- MHS' live release rate for dogs was significantly higher than the national average and that of the other Hawaiian shelters:
 - MHS LRR for dogs – **96%**
 - National average LRR for dogs – **88%**
 - HI average LRR for dogs – **81%**
- MHS was able to reunite **38%** of dogs with their owners in 2024 compared to the national average of **18%**.
- MHS only euthanized **3%** of the dogs taken into the shelter in 2024, compared to a national average of **11%**.

Opportunities

CATS

- MHS euthanized **15%** of the cats taken in during 2024, compared to a national average of **10%**. Our LRR for cats was **83%** compared to a national average of **88%**. We know we can do better, and it is an ongoing goal to improve upon these numbers.
- **90%** of our cat intakes (nearly 2,900 cats) in 2024 were strays, pointing to the need for more accessible spay/neuter.

DOGS

- **71%** of our dog intakes (nearly 800 dogs) in 2024 came in as strays.
- The LOS for dogs of all sizes is considerably longer at MHS than it is nationwide, pointing to a need for more outcome pathways, spay/neuter services for the public, and more enforcement.