

The anti-rabies brigade

• [SRIYA NARAYANAN](#)

pet pals



Ten Indian cities. 30 days. Vaccinations for 50,000 dogs — Mission Rabies is an ambitious one. The team that comprises the international NGO 'Dog Trust', the Animal Welfare Board of India and NGOs such as Blue Cross of India is looking to vaccinate two million dogs in the country over the next three years and also provide training for animal birth control and bring down the population of homeless animals. A press release issued by the Mission Rabies group states that mass vaccination of these dogs in 'rabies hotspots' is necessary to protect the interests of both humans and these animals, and the target is to vaccinate at least 70 percent of the canine population in these areas against the disease. The conclusion of the vaccination drive will coincide annually with World Rabies Day that falls on September 28.

Their website (www.missionrabies.in) allows the public to track their mobile veterinary clinic and keep up with the journey it makes through these cities. The volunteer vets will also educate people on the importance of dog population control and vaccination. Says Abhishek Bhowmick of Mission Rabies, "There are a lot of regional NGOs that are working with the Animal Welfare Board of India that people can volunteer with." These NGOs are also listed on the website (click on the city of your choice for details). The first such drive was held in Coimbatore in association with a local animal NGO Humane Animal Society (HAS). Says Dr. Mini Vasudevan, Managing Trustee of HAS, "This is an initiative that covers a large number of dogs in a short span of time. Four rotary clubs in the city helped raise Rs 1.5 lakh towards this cause." She urges members of the public to invite the Mission Rabies team to their cities to conduct these drives.

Antony Rubin, Logistics Support Officer, Mission Rabies finds that some owners fail to vaccinate their pet dogs regularly and this is also a grave risk. "Rabies is preventable," he says. "The first step is to be aware of the importance of anti-rabies vaccinations for your own dog on a priority basis." He suggests visiting the official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MissionRabies>) for details on how you can volunteer (if you are a veterinarian) or contribute to the mission through a donation that will go towards transport, accommodation and vaccines. Just 12 days into the project, the team has already reached 50 per cent of their goal, and is hoping that this is just the beginning of a mass movement that will change millions of lives, both human and canine, for the better. (For feedback, email to metropetpassion@gmail.com with your city and number)

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