

## Over 150 community dogs sterilised in Coimbatore

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Volunteer Veterinary surgeons from Worldwide Veterinary Service India performing a birth control procedure on a community dog at Ukkadam in the city. Photo: K. Ananthan

*Civic body to target at least 500 dogs in the next few days*

Dust gets kicked up as two vehicles – one behind the other – move in at the Coimbatore Corporation's newly constructed animal birth control centre at Ukkadam.

Behind the smokescreen of dust are caged community dogs in the vehicles that will join those that are at the centre to be operated upon under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme.

As the vehicles come to a halt, workers get ready to move the dogs from the vehicles to bigger cages – enclosures where the dogs will spend the next two days.

Also getting ready is a team of veterinarians from the Worldwide Veterinary Service that will perform the operations.

The vehicles, one by one, are positioned in such a way that the dogs exit the vehicles straight into the enclosures. The volunteers ensure that the dogs do not escape and also that the dogs from the same area are put in the same enclosures so that when they return after sterilisation, they return to the neighbourhood they are used to, says Nigel Otter of the Worldwide Veterinary Service.

As the dogs settle down, the volunteers administer medicine to sedate the dogs. Veterinarian Aswin S.S. supervises the sedation procedure.

The sedated ones reach the veterinarians table after their mouth and legs are tied. There are three tables, manned by veterinarians Johanna Reilin, Miia Rosengvist-Salo and Risto Nojd, who have come from Finland to volunteer their services for the Worldwide Veterinary Service.

In the next 30 minutes, the dogs are operated upon and taken back to the caged enclosures, where they will spend one more day to recuperate.

Mr. Otter says that the surgical instruments are autoclaved and the team uses one set of instruments for only one dog.

This is to prevent the spread of infection to the community dogs, most of which are otherwise healthy.

The team uses disposable needles wherever possible, he adds.

According to sources in the Coimbatore Corporation, the team has operated upon more than 150 dogs that have come from wards 38, 39, 40, 41 and 47. The target is to reach sterilise at least 500 dogs in the next few days, before the Worldwide Veterinary Service team packs its bags.

While catching and releasing the dogs, the volunteers take the help of the councillor concerned who vouches for the number of dogs caught and released.

They use only nets that are not harsh on the animals.

**Corporation support**

Once the team leaves, the Humane Animal Society will carry on the sterilisation programme with the team of veterinarians and helpers it has. The Corporation will support the Society's activities.

The Corporation spent nearly Rs. 25 lakh to construct the animal birth control centre.