

Talking dogs

News. Chat. Interviews. Pictures. Competitions.



HELP FOR PETS CAUGHT UP IN UKRAINE DAM EXPLOSION

Thanks to a charitable organisation, more than 1,500 dogs and cats were rescued in one week following the Kakhovka Dam explosion and flooding in Ukraine's Kherson region. U-Hearts' Save Pets of Ukraine initiative supported 13 volunteer groups and non-governmental organisations by donating pet food, transportation cages, medications, and metal saws for cutting chains and locks.

Cross-breed Druxhok and Newfoundland Buddy are just two of the lucky dogs plucked to safety.

Although Druxhok's owner, Lyubov, was able to save her cat, she couldn't reach her beloved dog. "I was in my robe and slippers, that's all," explained the heartbroken 73-year-old, who lives alone. "Now the water in my house is almost reaching the ceiling. But I don't care about the furniture or my belongings; I'm only worried that I couldn't save Druxhok."

"Animals gave me movement and energy. It was for them that I woke in the morning, and spent more time outdoors, and I took shelter with them during the shelling."

By sheer chance, Lyubov saw a news clip of a volunteer rescuing Druxhok, and U-Hearts was able to

trace him to the Babenets Animal Shelter in Kyiv. As soon as Lyubov is able to restore her home, the pair will be reunited.

Meanwhile, spooked by the explosion, Buddy escaped through a gap in the fence and ran off. Despite his distraught owners searching tirelessly, there was no sign of him.

Thankfully, the stressed Newfoundland was found and taken to the shelter by volunteers, and it's hoped he'll be able to return to his home soon.

● **Three veterinary clinics in Ukraine have won special prizes as part of the prestigious 2023 International Canine Health Awards.**

The clinics, in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhzhia will each receive \$20,000 plus a further £10,000 donation from The Kennel Club



Charitable Trust's Ukraine Appeal, in recognition of the life-saving work their vets undertake every day, despite constant shelling, erratic or no electricity and water, and limited medical supplies.



FRUSTRATION OVER WITHDRAWAL OF ANIMAL WELFARE BILL

Campaigners have accused ministers of betrayal after the long-awaited Kept Animals Bill has been scrapped. RSPCA head of public affairs David Bowles said: "We are disappointed that MPs have voted against reviving the bill. We want to see animal welfare legislation back on track and we know that the public do too."

Dogs Trust veterinary director Paula Boyden added:

"When is the Government going to put the needs of animals before political point-scoring?" Environment Minister Mark Spencer said measures in the bill — including those designed to tackle puppy smuggling, pet theft, and the importation of dogs with cropped ears — would now be implemented individually before the next election, rather than in one piece of legislation.

SAD DECLINE FOR SCOTTISH BREED

The Cairn Terrier, which rose to fame as Dorothy's dog, Toto, in the classic Hollywood film 'The Wizard of Oz', is facing an uncertain future following a 42 per cent drop in popularity.

According to new Kennel Club statistics, this historic British breed is at risk of disappearing, after numbers have halved over the past decade. Annual puppy registrations fell from 1,085 in 2013 to just 492 in 2022.

In the 1930s, the Cairn Terrier became one of the country's five most popular breeds, and then enjoyed a 658 per cent increase from 481 puppies born in 1940 to 3,645 in 1947, before peaking at over 4,000 in 1989.

However, this small Scottish breed, along with Airedale Terriers (down by 49 per cent), Irish Setters (down by 48 per cent), and Pointers (down by 42 per cent), has fallen out of favour, and if its current rate of decline continues, it will be put on the Kennel Club's Vulnerable Native Breeds list.



Right: Cairn Terriers have fallen out of favour.

Image: The Kennel Club and Heidi Hudson.

DOG DATA
The Jack Russell Terrier is the UK's most affordable dog breed to own, while British Bulldogs are the least, according to a survey by the Insurance Emporium.

BOWIE'S BARBIE BLUNDER

An Aberdeen woman is urging owners to be on their guard in public spaces after her dog ate a foot-long chicken skewer from a barbecue in a city park.

Anne McIntosh initially thought Bowie had stolen some meat off the grill, lit by students in Seaton Park. But when they told her he'd not only swallowed chicken, peppers, and onions but the skewer too, she rushed her Border Collie X Kelpie to the Vets Now clinic in Skene Road.

There, vets sedated Bowie and carefully removed the wooden spike, which luckily was still in his oesophagus.

"I thought the skewer could pierce his internal organs," explained Anne, who was relieved her two-year-old dog didn't have to undergo a full operation.

"I now put Bowie on the lead any time I see or smell a barbecue and I'd warn every owner to watch out as it can happen in an instant."

According to Vets Now, skewer cases more than double in the spring/summer season, with a 131 per cent increase compared to autumn/winter.

Vets are urging people to carefully dispose of barbecue waste, particularly skewers, bones, corn on the cob, and spicy or heavily seasoned food.



Right: Bowie swallowed a foot-long skewer.

News Hound-up

NEW PET ADOPTION
WEBSITE LAUNCHED TO FIND RESCUE PETS

A team of Cambridgeshire animal lovers has launched a new central database to simplify the process of finding the right rescue pets.

According to the Relovable Pets website more than 800,000 monthly online searches are made by potential adopters, yet over 100,000 dogs and cats remain in shelters for several months or even years.

The website aims to bring all pets available for rehoming under one roof and connect animal lovers with shelters all over the country.

"We understand the challenges of searching and registering with the many shelters to find the right pet, and our goal is to make it easier for everyone," said founder Elaine Scott, whose organisation has launched a crowdfunding appeal to raise £25,000 to help cover initial connectivity costs.

View the website at www.relovablepets.co.uk

SHARED SLEEPING HABITS

Researchers at America's North Carolina State University have found that dogs and humans with dementia share strikingly similar sleeping habits.

The new study, published in 'Frontiers in Veterinary Science', showed dogs may have the same disruptive sleep patterns as people when suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia.

Twenty-five pure- and mixed-breed dogs, aged 10 – 16, underwent a series of tests measuring attention, memory, control, cognitive flexibility, brainwaves, and muscle, heart, and eye movements.

Results revealed that dogs with dementia took longer to fall asleep and slept less — just like their human counterparts.

CALL FOR FREE ANNUAL
CANINE HEALTH CHECKS

Dog food brand Years.com is calling on politicians to adopt a vote-winning policy of providing publicly funded health tests for middle-aged dogs before the next general election.

The company says NHS-style canine health checks, funded by taxpayers to the tune of £200m a year, would help increase the lifespan of dogs once they reach seven

— roughly the equivalent of 50 in human years.

Years.com estimates there are around four million dogs in the UK who would benefit from a free annual vet check.

For more info, visit www.years.com/pages/nhsfordogs

MIND THE GAP!

Researchers from Hungary and Sweden have discovered that dogs' brains are getting bigger the further they evolve genetically away from wolves — possibly due to their interaction with humans.

Published in the journal 'Evolution', the study used CT images to compare the brains of more than 850 dogs across 159 breeds with 48 wolf specimens.

The data found that modern dog breeds have bigger brains than those of ancient canines, and while domesticated animals tend to have smaller brains than their wild counterparts, modern dogs are closing that gap.

STAY ALERT FOR TICK-BORNE DISEASES

The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) is advising vets and owners to be vigilant after research revealed UK dogs are being infected by non-endemic tick-borne diseases, despite never travelling abroad.

According to the study of 76 dogs with tick-borne diseases, more than half were diagnosed with ehrlichiosis or babesiosis — neither of which are endemic in the UK — while five had no history of travel. Other diseases included Lyme borreliosis and anaplasmosis.

EVENT BOOSTS CANINE
CAUSES ACROSS CONTINENT

More than £50,000 has been raised for European dog rescue charities from the 2023 Agria Dog Walk.

More than 30,000 dogs took part in events across the UK, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, and Sweden.

In a new three-year partnership with English Heritage, the UK walks at Dover Castle, Witley Court and Gardens, Pendennis Castle, Wrest Park, and Birdoswald Roman Fort, raised just over £18,500 for Retired Greyhounds Canterbury, Help4Hounds Rescue, Daybreaks Trust, Spaniel Aid UK, and Dogs First Animal Rescue.

1 What's on
in September?

September 2 and 3: From 9.30am: The North East Dog Festival, Northumberland College Kirkley Hall Campus, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 0AQ.

This weekend-long canine extravaganza, which has partnered with Scentventure for 2023, is expected to attract 10,000 dog lovers. Highlights include main ring attractions, have-a-go activities, more than 80 exhibitors, food, a wellness tipi with seminars, two charity dog shows, and a breed hang-out area.

Cost: From £10.

More info: www.northeastdogfestival.com

CRITICALLY ILL CANINE
HERO RECEIVES A BOOST

A charity has launched an emergency appeal to help a brave police dog who needed multiple life-saving operations after falling seriously ill with sepsis peritonitis.

Eight-year-old German Shepherd Finn suffered severe complications after swallowing part of a toy, which caused blockages in his stomach and small intestines. The retired general purpose police

dog, who served with Sussex Police alongside handler Sue West, before retiring in 2021 due to hip dysplasia, spent eight weeks receiving round-the-clock care at a specialist vet clinic in Surrey. Now retired police dog charity the Thin Blue Paw Foundation is asking for donations to help cover the cost of Finn's treatment. Already half the £22,800 target has been reached.

Visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/rpdfinn

Right: Retired police dog Finn.

Below: Finn was seriously ill with sepsis peritonitis.



DOG DATA

Research by Rover.com has revealed 71 per cent of owners would rather invite their dog to their wedding than family and friends, with 37 per cent planning to involve their canine companion in their celebrations.

World Pupdates

AUSTRALIA: Lucy the Labrador has become Australia's first full-time court facility dog as part of a pilot project to provide comfort to people, especially children, victims of domestic violence, and those with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, who need support during the various stages of the judicial process.

The five-year-old dog visits hearings, legal interviews, and mediations in Melbourne's family court, helping to relieve stress while people navigate the justice system. If feedback from court attenders and staff continues to prove positive, it's hoped the programme will be made permanent.

PORTUGAL: Officially recognised as the world's oldest dog by Guinness World Records (see 'Talking Dogs', April 2023 issue), Bobi has celebrated his 31st birthday in style. A dance troupe and 100 guests were invited to a party in honour of the pure-bred Rafeiro do Alentejo, a Portuguese breed trained to guard livestock, owned by Leonel Costa of Conqueiros, near Leiria.



Above: The new website aims to make it easier to find the right rescue pet.



Above: Dogs and humans with dementia may have the same disruptive sleep patterns.



Above: Should health tests for middle-aged dogs be available free of charge?



You can enjoy displays by Scentventure, a lifestyle approach to dog training and behaviour.