

Helping the Pharaohs' Cats

By EMRO

Isis is a little red kitten found orphaned on an Egyptian street. Both her eyes were closed due to a cold infection, which also affected her sense of smell and appetite. She was wandering the streets, blind, hungry, and alone. Nile is a semi-long haired bronze colored kitten spotted drowning in the river; she is named after where she had been mercilessly thrown to perish. Sylvia and Sa'ad are black cats, brother and sister and the two survivors of a litter of four found as tiny kittens in a plastic bag in a trash dump. Tango was discovered alone, in terrible pain, slowly starving to death, and with a black and swollen injured tongue was unable to drink water or to even clean himself.

The heartbreaking stories of these and other Egyptian street cats are all too familiar to EMRO (The Egyptian Mau Rescue Organization), an officially registered non-profit charity Cairo, which for the last 6 years has been rescuing native Maus from the streets of Egypt's major cities. Mau is the ancient Egyptian word for cat. Set up in 2005 by Canadian Gloria Lauris with its headquarters in Mokkatam, Cairo, EMRO's aim is to give these animals a better life by acting as an adoption agency at a local and international level, and increasing knowledge about these beautiful and intelligent cats.

Native Egyptian Maus are mainly recognized by their spotted and striped coats, and are thought to be the cat domesticated by the early Egyptians, seen in Pharaonic paintings in temples. Today the Egyptian Mau is an official registered breed and is considered by many to be the oldest breed of domestic cat. However in their native country the native Maus are becoming an endangered species and unlike their revered ancestors, are neglected, running feral on the streets facing



death by routine poisoning and endemic feline diseases. In its efforts to help all cats in Egypt, EMRO is also supporting the Nile Valley Egyptian Association (NVEA) in their initiative to create an experimental breed called NVEs covering all native Egyptian cats.

See website www.nilevalleyegyptian.com.

EMRO is not funded by any agency or group, depending solely on donations, sponsorships, and money from adoptions as well as income from its clinic.

Facilities and new Developments

EMRO's shelter and clinic headquarters in Mokattam City cover the ground and first floors of a large modern villa, run by staff devoted to the welfare of their 'guests'. It has a fully-equipped clinic with a team of veterinarians providing comprehensive services including vaccination, spaying and neutering from 10am to 10pm every day, with trained staff available 24/7.

The facility has been upgraded recently to the EMRO Veterinary Clinic & Hospital.

A new X-ray mini-lab has been installed allowing vets to view internal injuries and determine whether surgery is required. And a generous sponsor has donated a portable Intensive Care Unit. This valuable equipment has enabled the clinic's team to offer a complete medical service for cats and dogs, capable of handling emergencies, and also offering new services such as high blood pressure testing etc. at a lower cost than most veterinary clinics. Other services such as certification for pets leaving the country are provided.

Other upgraded facilities include a cat hotel on the first floor, which is fully air conditioned, but at very reasonable boarding rates.

Cats waiting adoption are outside in roomy cages where they can walk and interact freely, and only the youngest or special needs cats are kept inside on the ground floor.

Education and raising public awareness about the Maus are key initiatives, and community programs are proposed for local schools.



How to Help

EMRO's primary aim is adoption and you can visit their website to see current photos of native Maus and NVEs looking for a caring home. If adoption is not viable, there are other ways of helping.

Financial aid can be given through a donation or by sponsoring an individual cat or two.

Sadly, some are not readily adoptable, being feral (wild) while others may have health issues. Caring for these cats is assisted by sponsorship money received each month.

Other ways of support include using the hospital or boarding facility. And a very simple way to help is instead of throwing out old rugs or towels give them to EMRO. Donations of cleaning supplies, blankets for bedding, baskets, cat medicines and treats and toys are always welcomed.

Foster homes are urgently needed to house native Maus when the centre is full or if a cat or kitten is unable to adjust to shelter life. This is a temporary arrangement and ideal if you would like to adopt but can't. You get to experience sharing your life with one of these unique animals.

Pet escorts are sought to take adopted Maus to their new owners. All this involves is carrying a cat on board as excess luggage, and handing them over to their new owners at your destination. No personal preparation or costs, and EMRO are offering incentive fees to willing escorts. For details check the website.

Cat socializers are important. The native Egyptian Mau is an intelligent and sociable creature that likes to play and loves human company, so if you have some spare time to have some fun or a cuddle with them, you will be giving them something most have never had, a little



human warmth and kindness. Check out EMRO's official website for more information about the many different ways you can help or get involved.

Making a Difference

Since 2005 EMRO has saved and found homes for several hundred cats. It might seem like a small drop in a large ocean, but it's a positive start.



EMRO is an example of what can be achieved by determination, dedication and compassion, and deserves our support. Whatever we can do to keep them going, no matter how small is a big help, and a step towards ensuring that sometime in the future no animal will suffer like Isis, Nile, Sylvia, Sa'ad or Tango. By setting an example of how we should be treating other living creatures and by educating the young, EMRO is leading the way forward. Please help and be a part of living, purring history! Contact the shelter at 2507-6946 or check out www.emaurescue.org. Gail Taylor