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Animals and Animal Care in Egypt

By Gail Taylor

[Egypt and You](#)

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If entering into Egyptian society for the first time many will face a period of adjustment, encountering conditions and situations very different to those of their home country.



It's difficult to know the actual number of stray dogs in Cairo, but the popular belief is that it runs into tens of thousands. The feral cat population appears to be much larger, maybe two million. Night time is when the packs of wild dogs inhabit the streets of Cairo, and they can seem quite intimidating, but what you have to remember is that they are mostly gentle by nature and are far more likely to be afraid of you and will keep their distance. However, Egypt is not a rabies free country so in the unlucky event of being bitten you must seek immediate medical treatment.

Governments have mainly attempted to control animal population in Egypt by routine poisoning and shooting, but after more than 25 years of this method of eradication it is fairly obvious that it isn't working.

This may seem depressing but the good news is that during the first decade of the new millennium Egypt experienced rapid economic development and along with it the animal protection movement. There are now 10 shelters operating in the country and Egyptian-led animal protection organizations now take their place alongside the European and internationally-funded humane societies. And Egypt is regionally leading the way through MENAW (Middle East Network for Animal Welfare) which was founded in 2007 by local lawyer Ahmed El Sherbiny who is President of ESAF (Egyptian Society of Animal Friends).

Most of the Egyptian animal societies advocate TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) and have worked tirelessly to provide spay/neuter services for Cairo's cats and dogs. They are also developing education programs, particularly for children as they believe this is the key to shaping the attitudes of future generations towards animals. They have been trying to get the government to stop the shooting and poisoning and let them get on with implementing TNR throughout Egypt, and there are talks of introducing laws against animal cruelty, but the revolution effectively put things on hold.

This has increased awareness of animals in the country mainly amongst the younger generations and many now own a pet cat or dog. New pet shops and vet services have opened up and you can now see pure breed dogs around Cairo. There is still a long way to go for Cairo's poor street cats and dogs but the future is looking more optimistic.

Expat families may bring their family pet into Egypt with them and others adopt animals from local shelters or rescue one from the street. Poisoning by strychnine-laced meat is still implemented and expat-owned dogs have fallen victim, so it is advisable to be vigilant and prevent pets from eating anything on the street. Register your pet with a good vet, get recommendations from other expats as levels of service do vary, and keep your pets vaccines up to date and protect against rabies.

In an emergency situation EMRO (Egyptian Mau Rescue Organization), located in Mokkatam City, has a modern veterinary clinic & hospital with an X-ray mini-lab and portable intensive care unit offering full life-sustaining medical services for cats and dogs.

Those adopting local cats and dogs can take them home with them when they leave. All the animal charities have cats and dogs waiting for adoption. Previously it was not viable to take rabies-susceptible animals, such as cats and dogs, direct from Egypt to the UK because of the strict six months quarantine period. However on 1st January 2012 the laws were changed bringing procedures into line with the European Union.

For those cat lovers who feel they cannot adopt an animal there is the unique opportunity to temporarily 'foster' an Egyptian cat through EMRO. Threatened by possible extinction the Egyptian Mau cats are the oldest domestic breed dating back as far as the ancient Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza. EMRO is trying to save the species by rescuing young Maus from the streets of Cairo, placing them for adoption internationally. Foster homes are required for those waiting to travel.

And all expats can help by acting as escorts for adopted animals, taking them on flights to new homes in the USA, Canada and Europe. Expenses are covered and it's giving an Egyptian street animal the chance of a decent and better life.

For more information on animal charities in Cairo:

<http://www.esmaegypt.org>

-The Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals (ESMA) was formed in late 2007 in response to a horrific shooting spree of street dogs by the Egyptian government. A small group of Egyptians and expatriates came together to fight this notion of population control and to protect and rescue the animals in immediate danger.

<http://www.facebook.com/esaf.egypt>

-In March 2002, the Egyptian Society of Animal Friends (ESAF) formally registered as a charitable society under the Egyptian law. ESAF was founded to improve the animal welfare around Egypt & bring animal issues to the public awareness.

<http://www.sparelives.org>

Mission:

- To educate the Egyptian public about animal welfare by penetrating all levels of Egyptian society.
- To secure strong animal rights laws, and to introduce them to the Egyptian legislation.
- To instill compassion for all living creatures in Egyptians.

About Gail Taylor

Gail Taylor is a voluntary writer for The Egyptian Mau Rescue Organization (EMRO) and other animal charities in Egypt. For more information about EMRO visit www.emaurescue.org. If you are interested in fostering or adopting an animal please register your interest with EMRO via info@emaurescue.org. The CSA Reception desk also has a signup sheet for those interested in adopting or fostering pets.