

Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan

Annual Report

April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021



Animal Protection Services
SASKATCHEWAN



APSS Annual Report 2020-2021

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Chairperson's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors of APSS, I would like to thank Jim Sawatsky, former Chairperson for his years of dedication and service to APSS. He was the guiding light with a vision of what the organization should look like in the future. The present Board is striving to carry on his vision. Thank You Jim.

I would also like to thank the Members of the Board of Directors for their efforts this year dealing with and working through COVID, attending the AGM in person, and attending the regular meetings via Zoom. I would also like to thank those that have stepped up and filled vacant positions to ensure that the Board functions. Thanks again for all your work in making APSS a successful organization.

This year has been different and, in some ways, more difficult than others. Our Animal Protection Officers (APOs) complied with COVID-19 regulations while investigating complaints, and yet were still in close proximity of clients. The APOs have distinguished themselves during investigations, preparing for and testifying in court. This talented team has managed to complete their tasks without incident, the Board thanks them for their dedication and service.

This year APSS successfully put all APOs into uniforms and marked vehicles that are distinctive to the organization. The APOs are being identified to the public who are not calling the police about suspicious persons looking at animals in the area. The identification of APSS as an enforcement agency has aided in providing a greater service to the residents of Saskatchewan.

The standardized training for all APOs has been approved by the province, the next step will be to have them all qualified as Peace Officers. We will continue to educate the APOs on new legal and enforcement issues to ensure they are trained to deal with the changing environment of animal welfare enforcement.

Through social media there have been many misunderstandings about the enforcement of the Animal Protection Act, 2018, when corrective action orders are issued, or when animals are taken into custody and when charges are laid. In the coming year attempts will be made to educate the public on the enforcement, seizure of animals and charging of owners under the Animal Protection Act, 2018.

The staff continues to be guided and trained by the very competent Executive Director, Don Ferguson. Don has been speaking to other groups involved in dealing with animal welfare and has assisted various police departments with Animal Protection Act, 2018 enforcement. APSS duties and responsibilities have expanded during the year, and we continue to provide an excellent service to the people of Saskatchewan.

The Board will be working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to obtain a long-term contract to ensure the stability of APSS.

I believe that Animal Protection Service of Saskatchewan is a strong organization that will meet the increasing demands of investigating animal welfare cases with a view to educating the Saskatchewan public on the proper care of animals.

Dave Hoeft
Chairperson APSS Board of Directors

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Staff & Office

Our staffing has increased over the past year. We welcomed a 7th fulltime Animal Protection Officer in May 2020. We relocated our office space in Saskatoon and opened our office in Moose Jaw to accommodate our increase in size. We have 5 officers dispatched out of our northern region office along with our Operations Assistance and Executive Director located in Saskatoon. The other 2 officers are dispatched out of our southern region office located in Moose Jaw. Despite this increase in staffing, it still only allows for primarily reactive investigations and still little in the way of a proactive approach to Animal Protection Act enforcement. Like the rest of the world our operations were disrupted by COVID-19. On several occasions we were operating short staffed as a result of requirements by Public Health for Animal Protection Officers to self isolate due to exposure and/or potential exposures to COVID-19.

Case work

We opened a total of 666 new cases in 2020-2021. This was a decrease of 65 cases over the previous year and likely resulted from COVID-19 restrictions. During April and May we saw a significant decline in the number of cases compared to the average. Things returned to a normal case load pattern in June and continued throughout the rest of the year. It still appears that the general public are more willing to call about what they perceive to be a welfare problem. Whether there are actually more animal welfare issues or whether Animal Protection Services is just being made aware of it more now will remain to be seen. This year's number is slightly below the average of 673 for the previous 4 years (Table 1). Of those complaints, 384 of those involved dogs (58% of the total), with 122 (18%) horse complaints, 89 (13%) cattle complaints, 95 (14%) cat complaints, 9 (about 1%) sheep/goat complaints, 9 hog complaints, 7 fowl complaints, 8 camelid complaints, 13 (2%) "other" complaints, and 7 bison and 1 cervid complaint. (Table 2, Figure 1). This case distribution by species follows the expected pattern.

Table 1 Number of cases per month for the last five years, including a four-year average

Total # Cases	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	total
2016-2017	48	39	43	61	42	44	37	47	59	47	45	58	570
2017-2018	47	72	57	65	70	48	62	54	36	69	62	51	693
2018-2019	49	45	77	64	66	42	64	56	55	76	53	50	697
2019-2020	57	90	63	68	76	49	53	48	44	78	48	57	731
4 year Avg	50	62	60	65	64	46	54	51	49	68	52	54	673
2020-2021	31	41	61	63	71	67	54	60	47	56	77	38	666

Table 2 Number of complaints by species and month for 2019-2020. Note that the total number of cases is lower than the total per species – this is because many complaints involve more than one species.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	total
Cattle	6	7	8	4	9	11	11	4	7	6	12	4	89
Horses	12	13	10	8	14	14	9	6	3	10	16	7	122
Bison	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Sheep/Goats	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	9

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Hogs	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	9
Cervids	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Camelids	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Fowl	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	7
Dogs	11	18	38	36	42	35	31	39	34	36	42	22	384
Cats	4	3	5	12	11	13	11	10	3	8	8	7	95
Other	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	3	13
Total cases	31	41	61	63	71	67	54	60	47	56	77	38	666

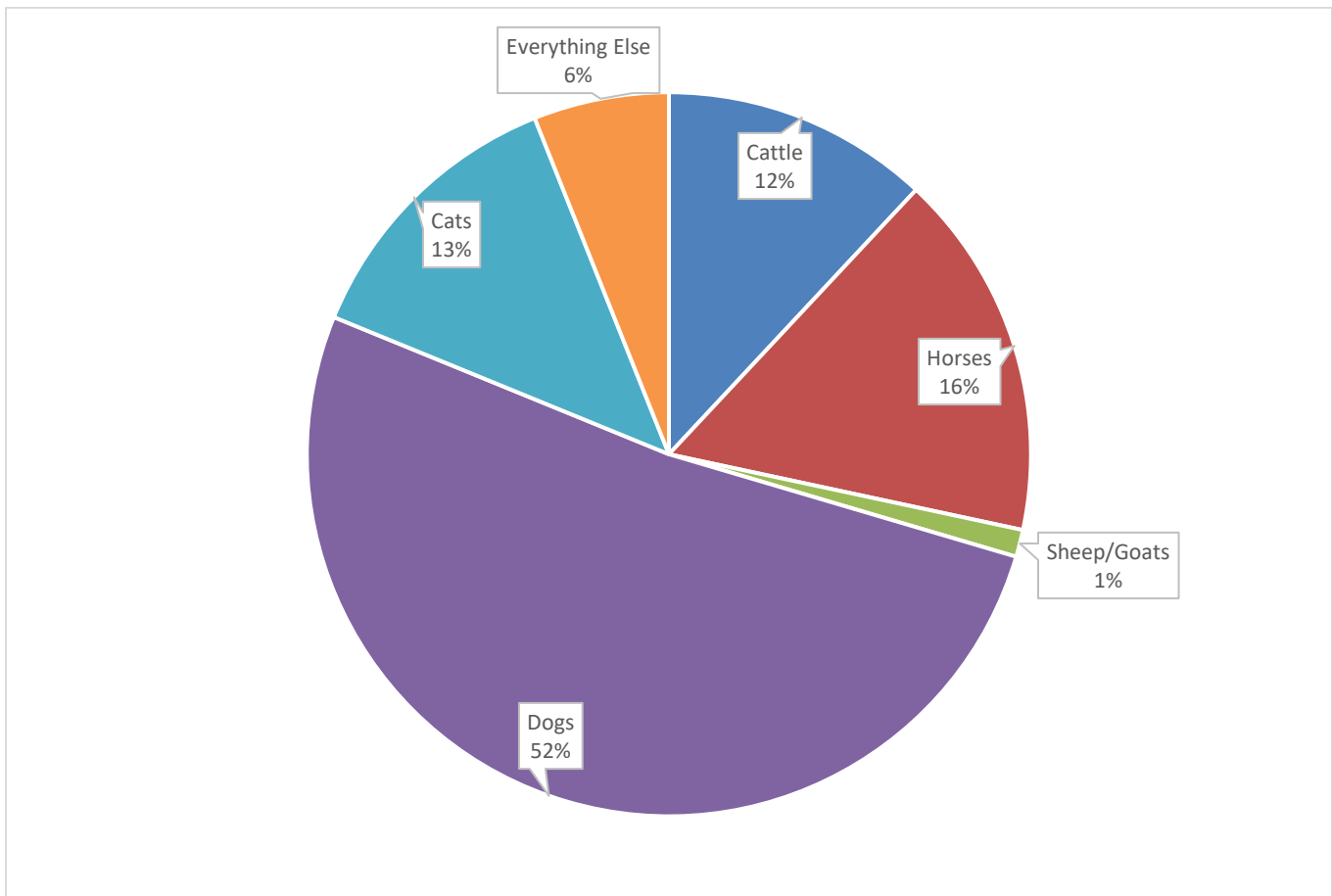


Figure 1 Proportion of cases by species

We classify our cases as either “Founded”, “Unfounded” or “Inconclusive”. Founded cases are those where some action or Animal Protection Officer follow up is required. Unfounded cases are those where there is no concern for the well-being of the animals, and inconclusive cases are those where we are unable to assess the animals, generally because our access on to private property and into dwellings is limited under The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The percentage of founded and unfounded complaints varied considerably between species. (Table 3). Overall, our cases were 57% founded, 30% unfounded, and 10% inconclusive. The unfounded and inconclusive cases are time consuming

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for our Animal Protection Officers, however they must initially be treated in the same manner as the founded cases until the nature of the complaint can be determined.

Table 3 Number and percentage of founded, unfounded, and inconclusive cases by species for 2020-2021

Table 3

	Total	founded		unfounded		Inconclusive	
Cattle	89	45	51%	30	34%	14	16%
Horses	122	70	57%	37	30%	15	12%
Bison	7	2	29%	5	71%	0	0%
Sheep/Goats	9	7	78%	2	22%	0	0%
Hogs	9	6	67%	2	22%	1	11%
Cervids	1	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Camelids	8	7	88%	1	13%	0	0%
Fowl	7	5	71%	2	29%	0	0%
Dogs	384	187	49%	114	30%	83	22%
Cats	95	55	58%	21	22%	19	20%
Other	13	6	46%	5	38%	2	15%

Animal Protection Officers seized animals on 26 separate cases, this was less than the number of cases from the previous year of 30 (Table 4). In total, 1227 animals were seized, comprised of 92 cats, 474 cattle, 26 dogs, 44 horses, 371 chickens, 219 sheep/goats, and 1 duck. Livestock seizures can be particularly demanding in terms of time, specialized equipment and people required to capture and transport the animals, and usually require significant amounts of pre-planning. A further 252 cats, 31 dogs, and 1 chicken were voluntarily surrendered. Animals were placed with SPCAs/Humane Societies, with veterinarians, with private caretakers, sold at auction, or euthanized. We rely heavily on the services of SPCAs/Humane Societies around the Province, and there are usually limitations on the number and type of animals that the facilities can house. Arranging for caretaking of seized animals for the 5-business day hold period continues to be a challenge.

Animal Protection Officers obtained Search Warrants 18 separate times in 2020-2021, six of these files required multiple warrants. We had charges laid in 12 cases compared with 18 cases last year. Founded files also resulted in 41 Corrective Action Orders being issued. These orders compel an owner to rectify conditions that are or may lead to an animal's distress. In 15 cases formal written warnings were issued that should a similar incident occur in the future charges may be laid. Finally, the remaining 338 files were dealt with by way of education for and compliance by the owner. In all cases the animal's distress was relieved either by the owner or by the animals being seized and taken into protective custody by APSS.

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Table 4 Listing of seized and surrendered animals in the 2020-2021 year (PDS indicates animal remains that were sent for testing)

File Number	Date	Warrant ?	Column1	location	delivered to	number of animals	type of animal
S007AP20-F	15-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	caregiver	3	cattle
	15-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	PDS	1	cattle
	15-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	PDS	5	cattle
	15-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	Artistique Acres MJ	19	cat
	30-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	Heartland Livestock	131	cattle
	30-Apr-20	y	seized	Osage	Artistique Acres MJ	8	cat
	01-May-20	y	seized	Osage	Artistique Acres MJ	2	cat
S086JN20-F	26-Jun-20	y	seized	Hubbard	Heartland Livestock	125	cattle
	26-Jun-20	y	seized	Hubbard	vet	11	cattle
	26-Jun-20	y	seized	Hubbard	PDS	3	cattle
S177JL20-O	17-Sep-20	y	seized	Paradise Hill	vet	2	cat
	17-Sep-20	y	seized	Paradise Hill	vet	4	cat
S206AU20-O	07-Aug-20	n	seized	Moose Jaw	vet	1	dog
S215AU20-F	10-Aug-20	n	seized	Moose Jaw	Artistique Acres MJ	1	dog
S248AU20-O	10-Sep-20	n	seized	Dundurn	Saskatoon SPCA	3	cat
S257AU20-O	24-Aug-10	n	seized	Moose Jaw	vet	1	cat
S304SE20-O	18-Sep-20	n	seized	Moose Jaw	Moose Jaw Humane Society	1	dog
S313SE20-F	22-Jan-21	n	seized	Standing Buffalo FN	Paws and Claws	1	dog
S318SE20-O	30-Oct-20	n	seized	Bradwell	Buena Vista	4	cat
	30-Oct-20	n	seized	Bradwell	PDS	1	cat
S335OC20-F	01-Oct-20	n	seized	Grandora	PDS	2	dog
S376OC20-F	23-Oct-20	n	seized	Pike Lake	vet	2	chicken
S383OC20-F	30-Oct-20	y	seized	White Cap	vet	16	cat
S445NV20-F	01-Dec-20	n	seized	Baldwinton	Battleford Humane Society	3	dog
	02-Dec-20	n	seized	Baldwinton	vet	5	chicken
S472DE20-F	05-Feb-21	y	seized	Keeseekoose FN	North East SPCA	6	dog
SR471DE20	16-Dec-20	n	seized	Hoosier	Artistique Acres MJ	3	dog
	16-Dec-20	n	seized	Hoosier	Artistique Acres MJ	4	cat
S499NV19-O	26-Oct-20	y	seized	Hyas	vet	5	cat
S509JA21-F	21-Jan-21	y	seized	Southey	vet	1	dog
	21-Jan-21	y	seized	Southey	Paws and Claws	7	dog
	21-Jan-21	y	seized	Southey	Paws and Claws	1	cat
S514DE19-F	02-Apr-20	Y	seized	Love	Kelvington auction	43	cattle
	02-Apr-20	Y	seized	Love	Kelvington auction	37	cattle
	02-Apr-20	Y	seized	Love	Kelvington auction	27	cattle
	03-Apr-20	Y	seized	Love	PDS	6	cattle
S550JA21-F	10-Mar-21	y	seized	Biggar	Heartland Livestock	41	cattle
S556FE21-O	11-Feb-21	n	seized	Prince Albert	Prince Albert SPCA	1	dog
S598FE21-F	17-Feb-21	n	seized	Morse	PDS	1	cattle
S606FE21-O	19-Feb-21	n	seized	Lampman	Artistique Acres MJ	1	dog
S608JA20-F	14-May-20	y	seized	Buchanan	PDS	7	cattle

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	14-May-20	y	seized	Buchanan	PDS	2	chicken
	02-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	caregiver	364	chicken
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	caregiver	1	duck
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	Heartland Livestock	219	sheep/goats
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	Heartland Livestock	56	cattle
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	Heartland Livestock	44	horses
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	caregiver	20	cat
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	PDS	1	lamb
	03-Jun-20	y	seized	Buchanan	PDS	1	cattle
S624FE21-F	04-Mar-21	n	seized	Indian Head	PDS	2	cattle
	04-Mar-21	n	seized	Indian Head	PDS	1	horses
	04-Mar-21	n	seized	Indian Head	PDS	1	horses
	04-Mar-21	n	seized	Indian Head	PDS	4	cattle
	04-Mar-21	n	seized	Indian Head	PDS	6	samples
S650MR21-O	18-Mar-21	n	seized	Nipawin	North East SPCA	3	cat

File Number	Date	Warrant ?		location	delivered to	number of animals	type of animal
S017AP20-O	23-Feb-21	n	surrendered	Bulyea	Buena Vista	7	cat
SR073JN20	03-Sep-20	n	surrendered	Wynyard	vet	1	chicken
S107JN20-O	17-Jun-20	n	surrendered	North Battleford	Battleford Humane Society	4	dog
S111JN20-F	19-Jun-20	n	surrendered	Macrorie	vet	1	cat
S117JN20-O	25-Jun-20	n	surrendered	Hepburn	Saskatoon SPCA	1	dog
S136JL20-O	02-Sep-20	n	surrendered	Maryfield	Artistique Acres MJ	5	cat
S151JL20-O	15-Jul-20	n	surrendered	Moose Jaw	Weyburn Humane Society	1	dog
S155JL20-F	24-Jul-20	n	surrendered	White Bear	Weyburn Humane Society	1	dog
S160JL20-O	23-Nov-20	n	surrendered	Regina Beach	vet	5	cat
	28-Jan-21	n	surrendered	Regina Beach	Artistique Acres MJ	8	cat
S170JL20-O	22-Jul-20	y	surrendered	Fort Qu'appelle	Artistique Acres MJ	2	dog
	22-Jul-20	y	surrendered	Fort Qu'appelle	Artistique Acres MJ	1	cat
S190JL20-O	30-Jul-20	n	surrendered	Wakaw	vet	1	dog
S197AU20-F	05-Aug-20	n	surrendered	White Bear	vet	1	dog
S208AU20-O	01-Sep-20	n	surrendered	Ituna	Melfort SPCA	2	dog
S230AU20-O	11-Sep-20	n	surrendered	Kayville	Moose Jaw Humane Society	1	dog
S264AU20-O	30-Sep-20	n	surrendered	Midale	Artistique Acres MJ	1	dog
S303SE20-F	21-Sep-20	y	surrendered	Biggar	Battleford Humane Society	2	cat
S306SE20-O	23-Feb-21	n	surrendered	Craven	Buena Vista	47	cat
S334SE20-F	01-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Regina	Moose Jaw Humane Society	8	cat
	16-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Regina	caregiver	8	cat
S348OC20-O	13-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Middle Lake	Battleford Humane Society	5	cat
	13-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Middle Lake	North East SPCA	2	cat
	13-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Middle Lake	Lloydminster SPCA	4	cat
S349OC20-F	11-Mar-21	n	surrendered	Sakimay FN	Regina Humane Society	2	dog
S380OC20-O	26-Oct-20	n	surrendered	Hanley	Buena Vista	2	cat
S411NV20-F	27-Nov-20	n	surrendered	White Bear	Moose Jaw Humane Society	2	dog
	30-Nov-20	n	surrendered	White Bear	Moose Jaw Humane Society	2	dog
S422NV20-F	18-Nov-20	n	surrendered	Beardy's	Prince Albert SPCA	1	dog

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SR471DE20	16-Dec-20	n	surrendered	Hoosier	Artistique Acres MJ	1	dog
S478DE20-F	06-Jan-21	n	surrendered	Pelly	Paws and Claws	2	dog
S484DE20-O	18-Dec-20	n	surrendered	Quill Lake	Melfort SPCA	3	cat
	18-Dec-20	n	surrendered	Quill Lake	Saskatoon SPCA	3	cat
S499NV19-O	15-Sep-20	y	surrendered	Hyas	vet	19	cat
	26-Oct-20	y	surrendered	Hyas	caregiver	36	cat
S515JA21-O	13-Jan-21	n	surrendered	Weyburn	Artistique Acres MJ	1	dog
S526JA21-F	22-Jan-21	n	surrendered	Bells Point FN	Prince Albert SPCA	2	dog
S604FE21-F	02-Mar-21	n	surrendered	La Loche	caregiver	2	dog
S607FE21-O	23-Mar-21	n	surrendered	Colonsay	various	20	cat
S630MR21-O	02-Mar-21	n	surrendered	La Loche	Prince Albert SPCA	1	dog
S644MR21-O	12-Mar-21	n	surrendered	Gravelbourg	vet	1	cat
S658MR21-F	26-Mar-21	n	surrendered	Fairy Hill	Yorkton SPCA	23	cat
S714MR20-F	07-Aug-20	n	surrendered	Muskowekwan FN	Moose Jaw Humane Society	6	cat
	17-Sep-20	y	surrendered	Muskowekwan FN	vet	20	cat
	17-Sep-20	y	surrendered	Muskowekwan FN	various	16	cat

Managing the investigative case load and associated paperwork within the bounds of a normal 40-hour work week for the Animal Protection Officers has improved with the increase to staffing. Overtime is banked, and the Animal Protection Officers take time off in lieu as they can, however our staff still occasionally have significant amount of time in lieu accrued. We have transitioned our time period for accounting for vacation and time in lieu to be the time period from September to August rather than follow the fiscal year. This has allowed for time in lieu and vacation time to be used at a traditionally slower call volume time rather than take it during what is typically our busiest time of year.

Public expectations regarding complaints continue to increase. Some complainants are dismayed to learn that there are only 7 Animal Protection Officers employed by Animal Protection Services to investigate for the entire province. Their belief is that a response to their complaint will be immediate and similar to a 911 emergency call.

We classify complaints as either Priority 1 or 2, depending on their apparent severity and the urgency of the required response. In 2020-2021, we classified 48 complaints as Priority 1, with a target response time of less than three business days; our APOs were able to respond within the targeted window in 96% of the Priority 1 cases which is a significant increase compared to 88% last year.

Our time to respond to new complaints has improved over last year, but it still remains slower than we would like. The target response time of 3 to 4 business days but not to exceed 14 calendar days for priority 2 complaints is used; in 417 cases, or 62% of the time, an Animal Protection Officer attended in less than 5 days, however in 152 cases or about 22% of the time response took between 6 and 10 days, with a further 91 (13%) of cases taking between 11 and 30 days for a first response (Figure 2). 95% of our complaints were actioned within the 14-calendar day response time. This response time has improved significantly with having hired 2 additional Animal Protection Officers in 2020 -2021 to better meet the public's expectations.

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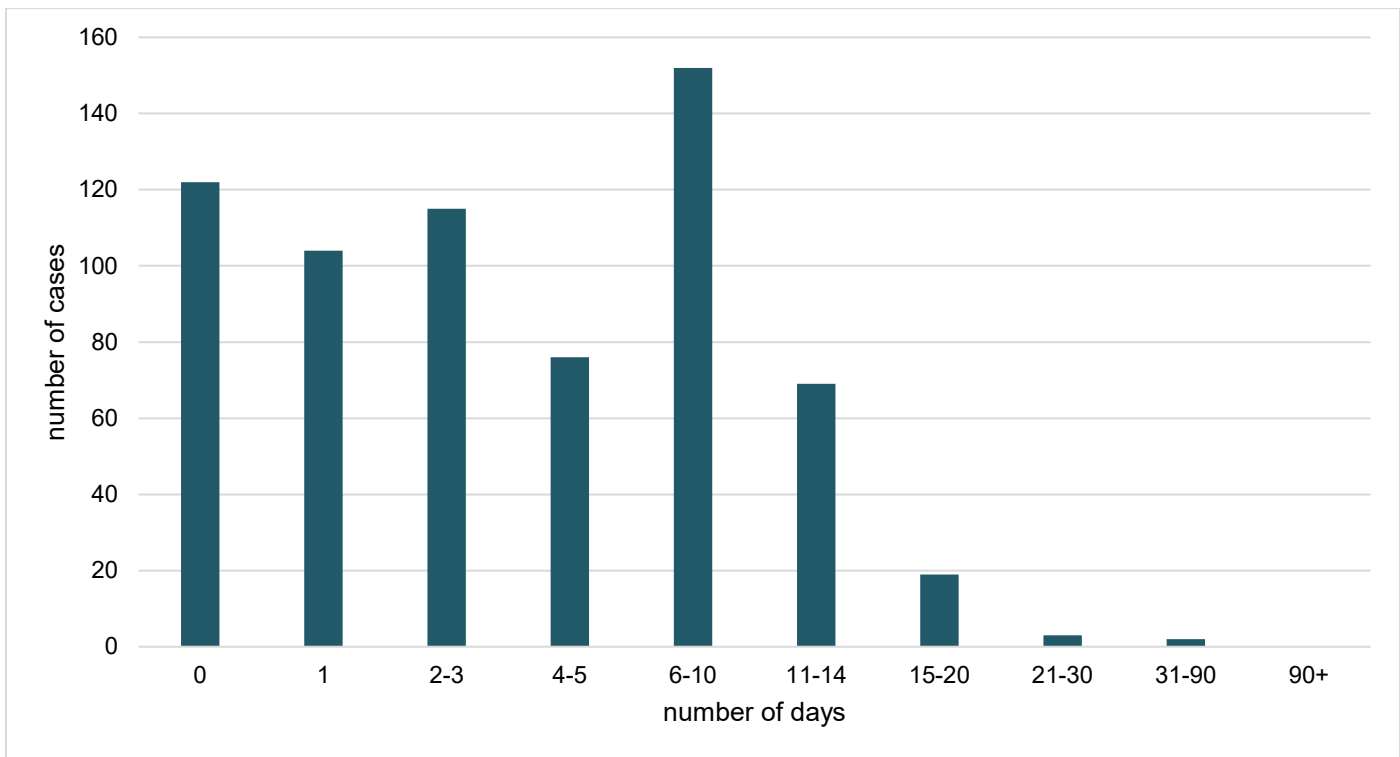


Figure 2 Response times for cases opened between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, showing number of days from the complaint until an APO attended.

Finances

The firm Baker Tilly has audited the 2020-2021 financials and found APSS is complying with standard accounting practices.

We were over budget in some expenditures, those being primarily with the costs associated with services for animal seizures and surrenders. Animal shelter and care costs, like all of the seizure related expenses, are unpredictable and highly variable, and are therefore difficult to budget accurately. This budget overage was also as a result of the additional staff members requiring training and equipment. Overage for APO supplies also included uniforms and officer safety equipment. There was also a budget overage in the area of legal costs. A number of claims were brought against APSS by individuals who had their animals taken into protective custody. The addition of another APO did reduce APO travel costs during the year. We have obtained vehicles for APOs from the Central Vehicle Agency. This has addressed APO safety and agency liability but came with a slightly increased cost. While we attempt to estimate APO expenses as accurately as possible, this is another area that is highly variable depending on the case load and seriousness of incoming cases, therefore prediction and budgeting are difficult.

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Making a Difference

In 2020-2021, APOs removed 1227 animals from cruel and abusive situations. From large animal hoarding cases and substandard breeding operations to starving and neglected farm animals, APOs were there to protect and relieve the suffering and distress of at-risk animals and to ensure their abusers were held accountable through our justice system.

This is just one of those animal's stories. APSS was contacted by a rural RCMP detachment after a check on welfare had been conducted on an isolated, older adult at their residence. RCMP were concerned not only for the human welfare but the animal welfare as well. An APO attended the location along with RCMP. They met with the owner who was living in significant at-risk conditions. The conditions inside the residence were extremely cluttered, a large number of possessions were inside the home making moving within the home difficult for the resident. There was no running water on the premises and the owner was melting snow as a water source for both themselves and the animals. The owner was given a brief period of time to rectify the conditions for the dogs, cat, and cattle on the property. In the meantime, the APO along with RCMP attempted to make contact with next of kin as well as other human services to assist the owner with their living situation.

APOs along with RCMP followed up with the owner and observed that no significant improvements had been made to the living conditions inside the residence. As a result, all the dogs and cat were removed and taken into protective custody. A caretaker was put in place for the cattle. The intervention by RCMP and APSS was the catalyst for next of kin to become involved in the situation. Family members were able to convince the owner to relocate and move in with them so that the older adult could receive the care that they needed. Next of kin were able to sell the cattle and the owner is now in a new location receiving care in a safer living environment. Sadly, one of the dogs had to be euthanized as a result of its condition. The other animals including the cat were delivered to Humane Societies or SPCAs and placed up for adoption after receiving care.

Before:



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After:



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Before:



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After:



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Executive Director's Report

2020-2021 was an unusual but rewarding year for Animal Protection Services for many reasons. As expected APSS was designated a Critical Public Service and operations were not curtailed as a result of COVID-19. I am so immensely proud of how quickly the staff adapted to the “new normal” and executed their duties safely and enthusiastically. In addition to supervising the day-to-day operations of the organization, I had the opportunity to facilitate training for Animal Protection Officers. Officers participated in webinars involving the exotic animal issues in Canada pertaining to the trade, regulation, seizure and sheltering of exotic animals kept as pets and the associated animal welfare, public health and safety and environmental risks. This training was essential in keeping our officers current and knowledgeable in the latest animal welfare issues in the province and Canada.

2020-2021 was further spent helping educate other agencies, stakeholders, and interested groups on the enforcement of the Animal Protection Act by Animal Protection Services. I was able to provide presentations remotely to the following groups:

- Western College of Veterinary Medicine 1st year students and interns
- Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association
- Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Stakeholder's
- Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists
- Registered Veterinary Technology students at Saskatchewan Polytechnic

I was able to work with other communities to train their Community Safety Officers to be able to enforce the *Animal Protection Act*. All together 8 Community Safety Officers from 4 different municipalities or rural municipalities now have the authority to enforce the Animal Protection Act within their communities.

2020-2021 also saw my continued participation on a number of working groups. My role is to provide input to the respective groups regarding how the *Animal Protection Act* is enforced and how it may impact their objectives. I was able to continue to work with the following groups:

- Interagency Human and Animal Welfare Task Team
- Animal Welfare Engagement Working Group
- Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Committee

We continue to move forward with the planning and training for our Animal Protection Officers to become Peace Officers. This transition will improve the quality of enforcement of the *Animal Protection Act* throughout the province. *The Animal Protection Act* was implemented to enforce society's belief that all animals must receive adequate care and to protect animals. Animal Protection Officers continue on a daily basis to protect those that cannot protect themselves. I want to thank everyone involved for doing this work throughout the province for their professionalism and for the incredibly challenging work that they do. Each and everyone of them makes a difference with their service to the animals and citizens of Saskatchewan.

Kind regards,

Don Ferguson CD, RVT
Executive Director