



IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST RABIES



Why a world without rabies is not a world without dogs:
WSPA's campaign for the mass vaccination of dogs and
the end of brutal mass killing.



The ongoing battle to control rabies has created another victim: **dogs**

Rabies is a global problem

More than 55,000 people die from rabies every year, a deadly but wholly preventable disease. The full picture may be even more devastating. The true human death toll is unknown, as many cases go unreported.

The ongoing battle to control rabies has created another victim: dogs.

Twenty million dogs are brutally killed every year. That's 38 every minute. One excuse given is that culling will stop rabies. It doesn't.

More than 99 per cent of all human rabies deaths are caused by a bite from an infected dog, so governments, both national and local, organise mass dog culls in an attempt to eliminate the disease.

Rabies-driven culls cause the needless deaths of millions of dogs. They are killed in horrific ways, including gassing, electrocution, shooting, poisoning and beating. None of these methods result in an immediate or pain-free death: the dogs spend minutes, or even hours, in agony before they die.

Not only does every animal suffer intense pain, but their deaths are tragically unnecessary. The mass killing of dogs **does not** effectively control rabies.

All leading organisations committed to controlling this disease, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) agree that killing dogs does not control canine rabies and therefore has no impact on reducing the incidence of rabies in humans.

Mass vaccination is the only effective solution

The only solution proven to control rabies, in both dogs and humans, is the humane choice:

mass dog vaccination.

Vaccinating 70 per cent of a dog population creates a barrier of healthy immune dogs, which prevents the disease from spreading. Unable to spread between dogs, the number of canine rabies cases decreases; and when rabies in dogs is eliminated, the threat to humans is also eliminated.

During the programmes, a collar is given to every vaccinated dog. This acts as a symbol – it shows that the dog, and therefore the community, is protected against this deadly disease.

How does dog vaccination work?

Mass dog vaccination is the only way to effectively protect dogs and humans from rabies.

To carry out a mass vaccination programme, local teams are trained to humanely catch and vaccinate dogs. They then visit communities and work to vaccinate 70 per cent of the dog population. This is achieved by vaccinating both dogs brought to the team by their owners and by catching and vaccinating free roaming dogs. As part of this process, any dog showing visible symptoms of rabies will be humanely euthanised.

Vaccinated dogs are fitted with a red collar to show the community that they are protected from rabies.

Once the vaccination team has finished, a survey team visits the community to confirm that at least 70 per cent of the dogs in the area have been vaccinated, creating a proven barrier to the spread of rabies. This barrier needs to be maintained through regular vaccination until rabies is eliminated from the region.





WSPA's campaign:
Collars not cruelty
in the fight against rabies

WSPA demands an end to the needless and cruel killing of dogs in response to rabies. Mass dog vaccination is the **only** effective solution – we want **all** governments to fight rabies with collars, not cruelty.

The campaign name is inspired by the red collars used in Bali, which became an island-wide symbol of vaccination and protection, as well as other rabies vaccination projects.

A world without rabies is **not** a world without dogs. By 2016, we want a world where no dog is needlessly killed in response to rabies and in which all countries affected by rabies are running mass dog vaccination programmes.

We know that the vast majority of culls take place throughout Asia and Africa, where rabies deaths are most common. To help show the world's governments that mass dog vaccination is the most effective as well as the most compassionate response, WSPA has supported the Balinese and Sri Lankan governments to run dog vaccination programmes which are halting the spread of rabies.

Inspired by the success of the programmes, these governments have committed their own resources to continuing mass dog vaccination, ensuring rabies will be eliminated.

Compassion works in Bali: saving dogs, stopping rabies

Rabies had not touched the idyllic tourist destination of Bali for 20 years, until November 2008, when the island was shocked by a human rabies death.



It is thought that the disease was introduced by a fisherman's dog arriving from the neighbouring island of Flores, where the government has killed hundreds of thousands of dogs in a failed attempt to control rabies.

Bali's government had never had to respond to a rabies outbreak before, and their initial response was to kill thousands of dogs – they thought a dog-free island would be a rabies-free island.

Over 130,000 dogs were killed using strychnine poisoning. The dogs suffered acute pain, in some horrific cases for over an hour, while the poison paralysed and killed.

But the killing didn't work. By March 2011, the number of rabies cases had risen: nearly 60 cases in people and approximately 200 cases in dogs were confirmed by laboratory analysis.

In response to this vast and tragically unnecessary killing of dogs, WSPA and the Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA) worked together to convince Bali's government to let us prove what science already shows: vaccination works.

The government, desperate to free their island of rabies and convinced by our arguments, allowed us to run a mass dog

vaccination programme in Gianyar, one of Bali's nine regencies.

The local vaccination programme was a success, with results compelling enough to move the Balinese government to agree to WSPA, BAWA and other partners vaccinating dogs across the whole island.

The island-wide results were amazing – in less than six months, we vaccinated 210,000 dogs, and saw a huge 48 per cent decrease in the number of human rabies cases and a 45 per cent decrease in the number of dog rabies cases.

The compassionate approach is also the most effective: these results were not and could not be achieved by culling. The government of Bali recognises this and has committed to continue the vaccination campaign to prevent the lethal threat of rabies returning.





Why is mass dog vaccination the solution to rabies?

It is humane

Millions of dogs are saved from needless slaughter.

It is effective

More than this, it is the **only** effective solution. No other approach is proven to control rabies.

It stops rabies spreading between dogs

By annually vaccinating 70 per cent of a dog population, a barrier of immune dogs is created, preventing the disease from spreading. A disease that can't spread dies out.

It stops rabies spreading to humans

99 per cent of human rabies deaths are caused by a bite from an infected dog. By tackling the disease at its source – the dogs – it cannot be passed on to people.

It is cheaper than mass culling

While mass vaccination programmes are initially expensive, they are proven to save governments money in the long term. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) estimate that just 10 per cent of the money spent on treating people after a dog bite would be enough to eradicate rabies in animals and stop virtually all human cases.

Vaccination: Backed by science, backed by world experts

Mass dog vaccination is the only method of rabies control supported by all leading organisations in the fight to control this preventable disease.

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable disease. The most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in people is by eliminating rabies in dogs through vaccination ...

Preventing human rabies through control of domestic dog rabies is a realistic goal for large parts of Africa and Asia, and is justified financially by the future savings of discontinuing post-exposure prophylaxis for people.¹

World Health Organization (WHO)

Past experience has clearly demonstrated that human infection can be substantially reduced through eliminating rabies in the dog population through dog vaccination and the promotion of responsible dog-ownership.²

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The control and elimination of rabies in dogs through vaccination remains the only cost-effective way to sustainably protect humans from contracting the disease.³

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

Vaccinating dogs against rabies is the key to stopping this terrifying disease. It protects the dogs from rabies and creates a barrier between the disease and people.⁴

Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)

Massive culling of dog populations or wildlife, as isolated interim or emergency control measures, is neither sustainable nor scientifically supported for efficiently controlling or eliminating dog-mediated rabies.³

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

Why is mass culling not the answer to rabies?

It is cruel

Millions of dogs suffer horrendously painful deaths, lasting minutes or even hours.

It does not stop rabies spreading between dogs

With no protective barrier of vaccinated dogs, the disease can spread freely between animals. A cull does not stop this: once the killing ends, more food is available for remaining dogs, leading to a growth in the dog population that allows rabies to spread between unvaccinated dogs.

It does not stop rabies spreading to people

Many governments kill dogs in response to rabies. In one example – the island of Flores, Indonesia – nearly 300,000 dogs were killed between 1998 and 2001 in an attempt to halt an outbreak of rabies. Yet despite all this suffering, rabies remains endemic in Flores to this day.

It does not stop rabies spreading from place to place

Culls do not stop rabies-infected dogs travelling between villages and cities. Often families that have lost dogs in a round of mass killings will buy or adopt new, unvaccinated, dogs. These dogs can bring rabies into a village where a cull has taken place, spreading it through the existing dog population.

It is opposed by local communities

While communities affected by rabies want to see it tackled, many people do not want the local dogs to be killed – many of which are community pets.

It drives away tourists

Visitors do not like to see dogs killed, or even hear that dogs are being killed. Knowledge of such widespread cruelty can prevent tourists from travelling to the area, reducing the income generated by this key industry.



Compassion works in Colombo: ending cruelty, combating rabies

In the 1990s, rabies was endemic in Colombo, Sri Lanka's largest city. Dogs and people were dying.

The city authorities responded by ordering a mass cull, in which up to 4,000 dogs were rounded up and killed every year, for 15 years. They were gassed – a horrific and painful death.

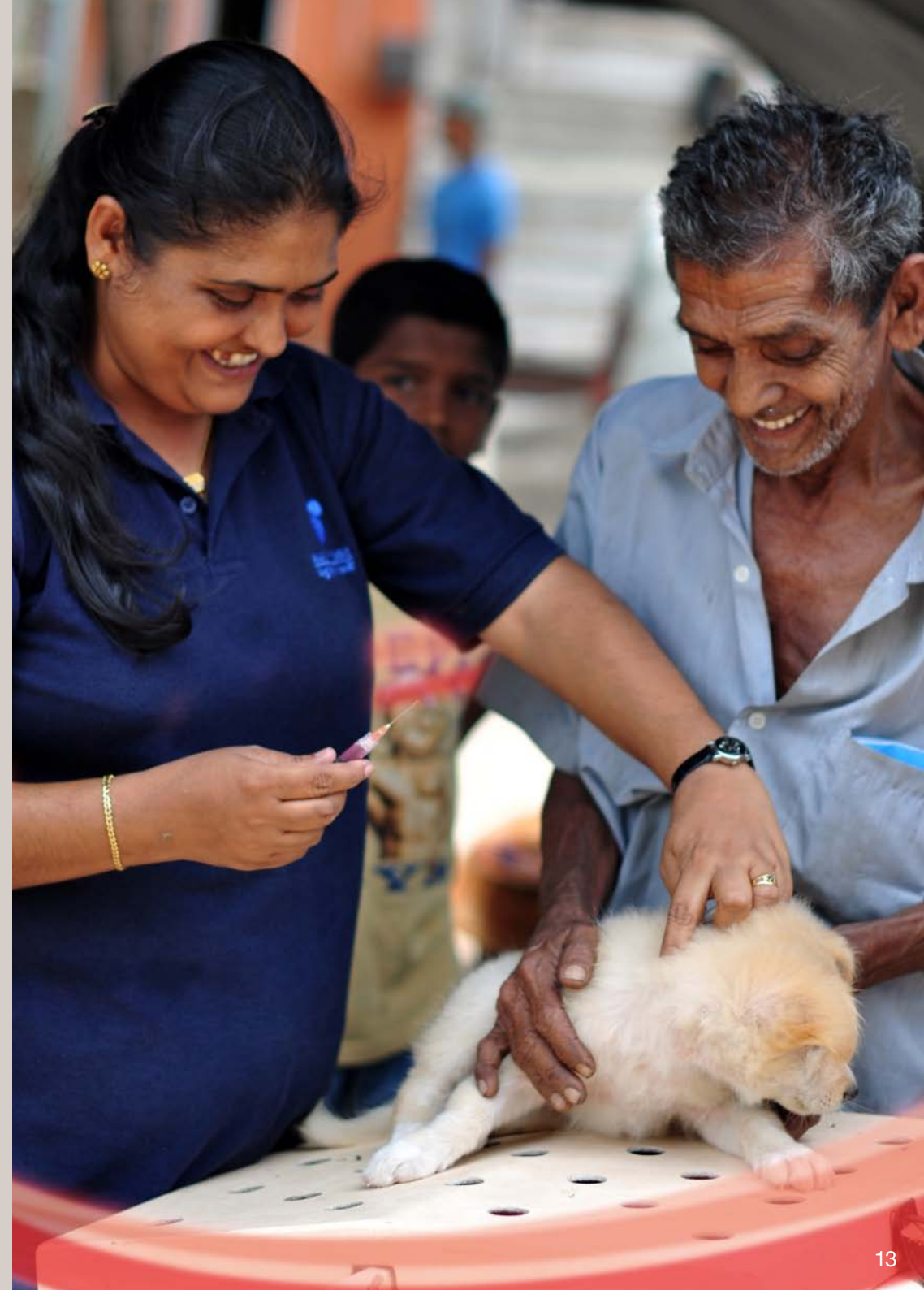
A third of the city's dogs disappeared from the streets. Rabies didn't. At its peak, 70 dog rabies cases and numerous human rabies deaths were reported in Colombo, even as the cull was carried out.

In 2007, WSPA and Sri Lankan animal welfare organisation The Blue Paw Trust worked together to convince authorities to stop their cruel, costly and failing approach. We presented the humane solution and the authorities agreed to partner with us on a mass dog vaccination, dog population management and public education programme in the city to effectively combat rabies.

That year, we vaccinated nearly 90 per cent of dogs in an area where rabies was rife. Each vaccinated dog received a collar – a symbol of protection that showed this rabies-free animal could be welcomed back into the community.

The results were impressive: by 2008, dog rabies cases had halved. They have continued to fall year on year as the vaccination programme has grown. At the end of 2010 there were just 10 cases of canine rabies in the entire city.

This WSPA-funded project has added to the increasing body of evidence that the mass, random killing of dogs does not stop rabies. In contrast, mass dog vaccination offers a global solution, proving that a world without rabies does not mean a world without dogs.



Mass dog vaccination: the only global solution to rabies

Humane mass dog vaccination programmes control rabies regardless of geography, climate or politics.

If 70 per cent of dogs in a region are vaccinated, cases of rabies will drop. If the vaccination programme continues over a number of years, dog rabies will be eliminated – saving dogs from horrific suffering and offering protection and peace of mind to human communities.

Evidence: Latin America

In 1983, Latin America committed to mass dog vaccination to eliminate cases of human rabies transmitted by dogs. Adopting this humane approach has paid off: dog rabies cases in the region declined from a peak of 25,000 in 1977 to just 196 in 2011 – a **decrease of over 99 per cent**. Similarly, human rabies cases fell by 96 per cent to only 15 across the whole continent.

The effectiveness of vaccination is clear: dog rabies cases were reduced to **zero** from close to 5,000 per year in Buenos Aires, 1,000 in Lima, and 1,200 in Sao Paulo.

Evidence: South Africa

In 2007 a mass dog vaccination project was launched with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the Kwazulu Natal province of South Africa – an area that had experienced as many as 30 human rabies cases in a single year. Prior to the project, rabies had been a problem for local people and dogs for decades; as of September 2011, however, it had been **14 months since the last human case**.

Evidence: Tanzania

From 1996 to 2001, two mass dog vaccination campaigns were carried out in villages in the Serengeti region. The first led to a 70 per cent decrease in dog rabies cases, while the second achieved an amazing **97 per cent decrease**. However, dog rabies cases underwent no such decline in villages where vaccinations did not take place. As a result, a regular dog vaccination programme was established, which – as of 2001 – has **eliminated rabies** from pastoral communities and the Serengeti National Park.

Evidence: India

In 1994, the authorities in Jaipur trialled a mass dog vaccination programme in part of the city affected by rabies, using guidelines created by WSPA and the World Health Organization (WHO). This four kilometre square area had experienced as many as 10 human rabies cases per year, but thanks to the vaccination programme, this had **reduced to zero** by 2001. Sadly, during the same period the number of dog rabies cases in unvaccinated areas of the city increased. Since then, a local animal welfare group, Help in Suffering, has continued to humanely vaccinate an average of 70 dogs a week across Jaipur. As a result, there have been **zero reported human rabies cases** in the city since 2002.



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WSPA calls on all governments to end the mass killing of dogs in response to rabies by 2016.

To achieve this:

All governments must advocate collars not cruelty as the only solution to rabies

We want all governments currently killing dogs in an attempt to eliminate rabies to stop, and to implement mass vaccination programmes instead.

Where rabies does not exist, we want governments to join our campaign and advocate collars not cruelty as the only effective solution to rabies.

WSPA will lobby governments through our Collars not Cruelty campaign to stop the killing. We will advise those governments that agree to move to a humane solution on how best to implement effective mass vaccination programmes, and work directly with selected governments to create replicable rabies control models.

Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) must promote, facilitate and fund effective and humane solutions to rabies

IGOs must protect dogs and prevent rabies by promoting, facilitating and funding mass dog vaccination programmes as the only effective global solution to rabies.

WSPA will lobby global and regional organisations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to adopt the position that mass vaccination is the only solution to rabies. We will call on key funding bodies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), to fund only humane and effective programmes based on mass dog vaccination as a form of rabies control.

Communities and individuals must show their support

We need your support to do this. By joining our campaign you will help WSPA show governments that killing dogs in response to rabies is no longer tolerated. Add your voice: demand collars not cruelty.

You can join us by spreading the word, donating to WSPA, and backing our dog-saving actions and activities.



Visit www.wspa-international.org/redcollar to find out how you can help.



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1. World Health Organization *Rabies Fact sheet No.99*, updated Sept 2010 www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/
2. Food and Agriculture Organization (2008) *AGA in Action: World Rabies Day* www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/news_archive/AGA_in_action/world_rabies_day.html
3. World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) *Resolution*, Global Conference on Rabies Control: Towards sustainable prevention at source, 7-9 September 2011 www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Conferences_Events/docs/pdf/recommendations/Resolution_Global_Rabies_Conference_Seoul_final.pdf
4. Global Alliance for Rabies Control *People and animals* www.rabiescontrol.net/what-we-do/save-lives.html

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