

GULF TIMES

QAWS joins world body

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By Peter Townson /Staff Reporter

The Qatar Animal Welfare Society (QAWS) has been appointed a member society by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), granting them access to expertise and knowledge that officials hope will help to further develop animal welfare in Qatar.

QAWS chairperson Janet Berry explained that the new relationship between the organisations should assist volunteers and provide information to contribute towards the growth of animal welfare in Qatar.

“WSPA will help us to source equipment and train our members to use it,” she said, adding: “We have no dog catching equipment in Qatar at all, and at the moment that is our top priority.”

“To be accepted by WSPA is a huge pat on the back to us - it shows we are doing something right!” she said, adding that “they have seen all our processes, policies, rules and regulations and they have handed us this member status.”

WSPA’s programme director for the Middle East, Trevor Wheeler, said: “WSPA is happy and pleased to welcome QAWS into the global network of animal welfare organisations.”

“The appointment of QAWS as a WSPA member society has doubled our representation in Qatar and strengthened the animal welfare movement in the Middle East,” he said, adding: “We look forward to working with QAWS and the government of Qatar.”

Still rebuilding following a fire last year, QAWS have recently constructed a new facility to house 40 kennels. But the high demand at this time of year means that there are currently more than 60 adult dogs in those kennels.

As well as the dogs, the group is holding 26 puppies in a portacabin, whilst two other sections house 40 kittens and cats.

Berry explained that the summer is the most difficult time of year for the shelter, due to many people leaving the country and abandoning their pets, and the lowest annual rates of adoption.

She stressed that introducing the pet passport scheme in Qatar would help to reduce the number of animals abandoned here, as expatriates would be easily able to take their pets with them when they leave.

However, this remains under consideration by the authorities.

Although QAWS is full past capacity, people continue to dump their animals at the farm or in other places.

Berry described one of the newest additions to QAWS, ‘Trolley’, a Japanese Spitz Mix found in a trolley in the carpark at Landmark Mall, suffering from extreme heat exhaustion.

“He was left with a bottle of water in the trolley, but unfortunately he didn’t know how to open it!” joked Berry.

She added that since rescuing the dog, they have discovered that the canine is severely visually impaired, which may be the reason why the dog was dumped.

QAWS is now looking for a new home for Trolley, and hopes to see him re-homed in the near future to an owner who can offer him the care he needs.

Another case of animals being abandoned was a group of kittens which was dumped at the shelter with a note saying that they were found with their mother in a garden.

However, the 12 kittens were left motherless after the adult cat panicked and ran away, leaving the kittens to fend for themselves in the heat.

And despite not having the room, QAWS could not refuse the kittens.

Soaring temperatures are more than simply an annoyance or discomfort to animals in Qatar - they represent a serious health risk, and Berry noted two cases of dogs dying having been left outside by their owners in recent weeks.

She said that the pets were found dead after only a couple of hours outside.

Berry said owners must keep their animals indoors at this time of the year.

“They simply cannot cope in this heat - especially if they are used to being kept indoors with air-conditioning,” she said, adding that dogs should be walked in either the early mornings, or late in the evenings.

“Dogs’ feet can burn on the pavement at this time of the year,” she explained, urging people to do their utmost to keep their pets safe and healthy this summer.



Trolley, named after the trolley he was found in, in the middle of Landmark car park

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