

# Northern Dogs Project

**5,500+**

number of dogs spayed and neutered since 2001.

**15,000+**

number of animals vaccinated.

▶ A couple of free roaming dogs from the community. Free roaming dogs are those who are not contained in houses or yards and are not tied up, but they are owned.



IFAW began working with First Nations communities in Canada in 2001 after being invited by the communities who sought help in solving their dog problems.

Rooted in building partnerships with communities in need, the Northern Dogs Project uses multiple tools and approaches to provide resources and support to owners so they can better care for their dogs. The Project also assists local governance in implementing programs that further support dog owners through legislation and community education. When dog owners and governance have a plan and the tools to implement it, dog health and welfare, and human health and safety, improve.

IFAW's work respects the larger context of First Nations issues in Canada. The reality on the ground includes the human context within which dogs fit, reflecting their dependence on their owners to provide for them. In situations where human needs are not met, the reality is that dogs' needs will not be met either.

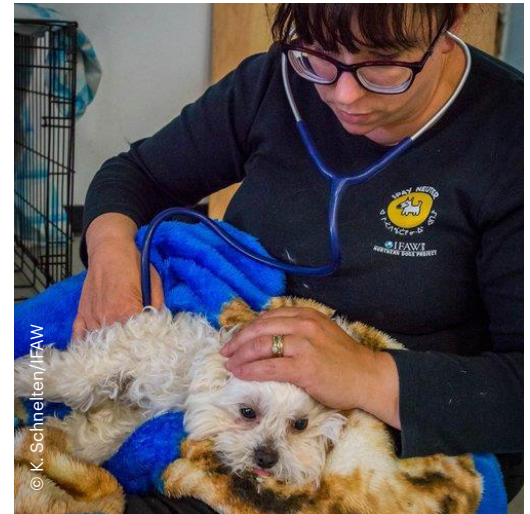
Many First Nations communities across the country continue to face challenges in meeting their basic daily needs. This is reflected in inadequate housing, insufficient health care, inadequately funded education, unemployment, and the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma. This is the broader context within which people, and therefore their dogs, live in Indigenous communities across Canada.

These dogs are amazing. Incredibly stable and well-adjusted because of how they live. We don't want to change the dogs. We just want to help people care for them and feel safe living with them.

**Jan Hannah, IFAW**



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**10,000**

number of kids engaging in culturally relevant dog care and safety education

**2,000+**

number of puppies and dogs rehomed.

▶ Two patients arrive at IFAW's Northern Dogs annual vet clinic for vaccines.

▶ Pre surgery health check prior to being neutered.

**A dog's role in the past**

Traditional relationships with dogs were based on partnership. First Nations dogs were valued workmates and family members, helping their people by hunting, hauling sleds, carrying packs and being sentinels around camp. As people were moved off their traditional lands and settled into new communities, cultures were deeply disrupted. Dogs also lost their way, and today, they have accompanied their people through radical changes that have left them without their more traditional purpose.

**The role of the dog today**

While a dog's role has changed, they are still very much a part of life in Indigenous communities. Many dogs are free-roaming, which means they are not contained in houses or yards or tied up. Free-roaming dogs can meet their basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, water) if not provided for by humans, but these dogs are not stray. They know where they live and who their people are. Free-roaming dogs may also take part in nuisance behaviours such as ganging up on females in heat, chasing cars, or eating garbage. These unwanted behaviours are often at the root of dog problems in communities.

**IFAW's Approach**

The Northern Dogs Project works with communities to build humane and lasting dog management programs that fit the unique context and challenges of each partner community. IFAW uses a

comprehensive approach that supports both dogs and people to live safe and healthy lives in their shared community. IFAW has provided annual veterinary clinics to spay, neuter and vaccinate hundreds of dogs each year. We have also run animal care and control workshops to train staff on humane dog handling and proper implementation of dog bylaws. IFAW has surveyed community members to understand what they both want and need to live safely with dogs, and developing culturally responsive educational materials for students. IFAW also works to rehome dogs and puppies when owners are no longer able to care for them, and staff is always available to answer medical or dog-related questions that the community may have.

**What you can do**

- ▶ Adopt your next family member. Don't buy.
- ▶ If you adopt a dog from an Indigenous community, honor their prior life and people.
- ▶ Use IFAW's education pack *Living in a Good Way with Dogs: Our Stories*. Developed by First Nations for First Nations.
- ▶ Research Indigenous issues in your country.
- ▶ Do your best to engage in personal reconciliation.
- ▶ Watch for IFAW's workshop - *Managing Dogs in First Nations* - on how to work effectively dog issues in Indigenous communities.

▶ see how at [ifaw.org](http://ifaw.org)



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