

Should Someone Rescue That Dog?

by Shelley Ronnfeldt

One of the big culture shocks awaiting people moving to Mexico from Canada and the United States is the number of dogs on the streets. Loose dogs “back home” are an anomaly, in Mexico it is the norm. Many people want to “rescue” every loose dog they see, but before doing that, we’d like you to consider the following definitions.

What is a street dog? – For the purposes of this article, we define a “street dog” (as opposed to a “dog in crisis” explained below) as a dog who has likely lived and thrived to a certain degree on the street for a long time. They may have an owner, but they spend most of their time on the loose. They may be thin, but are not emaciated. They may have a limp and scars, but they’re from old injuries and they are not currently in acute pain. They may need grooming, but are not debilitated from their condition. They are “street smart”. They have a pack they spend time with, they have a territory they frequent, they have places they go to eat (nice people who put out kibble, garbage collection sites, stores, restaurants, etc). They are fairly savvy about crossing streets. They may or may not be spayed or neutered, most often they are not. Usually, these dogs are better assisted where they are by supplementing their food and water than by scooping them up and “rescuing” them.



What is a dog in crisis? – A dog in crisis is everything a street dog is not. They are not in their home territory, and likely haven’t learned to thrive on the street. They probably do not have an owner that is in the area. They do not belong to the neighborhood pack, and may be targeted by other dogs. They dart nervously in and out of traffic, and don’t know where to eat. They may be emaciated (so thin that ribs and backbone are showing). They may be acutely injured. They

may have skin sores and lesions, limp and are clearly in pain. They may show signs of disease, such as wheezing, infected eyes, etc. They may be so badly matted that it impedes their ability to move, see, and go potty. A very young puppy alone, or a mama with tiny puppies may also be dogs in crisis.

And if I do rescue a dog in crisis? – Remember, the dog is not truly “rescued” until they have a permanent home. One cannot assume that Lucky Dog or one of the other shelters will take them, unless you have made an arrangement from the beginning. Shelters are often full to overflowing. Lucky Dog is open Monday - Sunday 9 -1 for the summer and 9:30 - 2 pm in the fall.

Our phone number is 331-300-7144. The volunteers on duty that day can tell you whether or not we have room. If you do choose to intervene with the dog, be cautious. Even very friendly dogs will bite when frightened and in pain. If you take them to a vet, you are assuming the cost of their care and cannot expect the vet to keep the animal for you.

There is no such thing as Animal Control in Mexico – There are some anti-cruelty and anti-abuse laws on the books, but sadly they are hard to enforce. If you suspect cruelty and abuse, the agency to contact is Ecologica. They are located in Chapala on the second floor of the Presidencia Municipal, between the Beer Garden on the malecon and Bancomer. Their phone number is 765-8025. Their email address is ecologica-municipal1215@hotmail.com. Lucky Dog is staffed entirely by volunteers, and is not equipped to do field rescues.