

Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.



STRAY ANIMAL CARE UKRAINE

FOUR PAWS' WORK FOR DOGS AND CATS IN 2024

A report covering FOUR PAWS' Stray Animal Care activities
in Ukraine in wartime, from 01.01.2024 – 31.12.2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thanks to more than a decade of in-country experience and connections, and international support, FOUR PAWS successfully continued its efforts for dogs and cats in Ukraine throughout 2024. This was achieved through our dedicated teams on-site and strategic partnerships.

In 2024, we directly helped more than 11,600 dogs and cats by sterilising and vaccinating them, made possible through our mobile clinic activities, our unique Project Kishka, and our collaboration with UVMF. Through our humane and sustainable efforts to reduce stray animal populations, we prevented the birth of tens of thousands of puppies and kittens on war-torn streets. Additionally, more than 820 sick or injured dogs and cats received life-saving medical treatments.

FOUR PAWS also supported the Ukrainian authorities in implementing Dog/Cat Population Management legislation, with a specific focus on Identification and Registration. This was achieved through our membership in the Eurogroup Ukrainian Taskforce Group and by joining forces with Animal ID Ukraine in 'Project A-Chip.'

Our Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) programme, featuring former stray dogs Busia and Alisa, played a vital role in providing comfort to war-affected children and refugees. Alongside their handlers, the duo conducted over 250 sessions, bringing solace and emotional support to more than 1,000 individuals during these challenging times.

By addressing urgent animal welfare needs while building innovative solutions, FOUR PAWS continues to make a significant impact for both animals and people in Ukraine, demonstrating how compassion can drive meaningful change even in the most challenging circumstances.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION: RECAP SINCE 2022	5
2. DIRECT HELP FOR DOGS AND CATS: STERILISATIONS, VACCINATIONS AND TREATMENTS	6
2.1 MOBILE CLINIC	6
2.2 PROJECT KISHKA	8
3. PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR STRAYS AND PETS IN NEED	9
3.1. THE LAUNCH OF CHARITABLE CLINICS	9
3.2. SUPPORT THE UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DCPM LEGISLATION	10
3.2.1. UKRAINE TASKFORCE GROUP	10
3.2.2. PROJECT A-CHIP	10
4. SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND CHILDREN WITH FORMER STRAY DOGS	12

In this report many Ukrainian regions and cities are mentioned for which this overview is helpful.



Note: The Ukrainian provinces - oblasts - are marked, not their capital cities.

1. INTRODUCTION: RECAP SINCE 2022

The date February 24, 2022, is one that no one will forget. On that day, Russia launched a major escalation in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, dominating global headlines throughout 2022. In response, many NGOs, including those focused on animal welfare, mobilised to provide aid. Among them, FOUR PAWS stands out as a global organisation with a long-standing presence in Ukraine. Since 2012, we have been actively involved in the country through our successful Stray Animal Care programme, which later expanded to include Animal Assisted Interventions and Community Engagement initiatives. Additionally, our BEAR SANCTUARY Domazhyr, which by the end of 2024 provided home to 31 bears, is a testament to our enduring commitment.

For FOUR PAWS, delivering a swift emergency response to safeguard the animals in our established programmes was crucial. At the same time, we demonstrated that FOUR PAWS is THE animal welfare organisation that knows no boundaries when it comes to rescuing animals in need. We go above and beyond, never backing down from challenging situations. Since the war began, not only have we maintained our ongoing programmes, but we have also expanded our efforts to support even more animals in need.

An overview of the activities done for companion and stray animals in Ukraine in 2022: see [here](#).

An overview of the activities done for companion and stray animals in Ukraine in 2023: see [here](#).

2. DIRECT HELP FOR DOGS AND CATS: STERILISATIONS, VACCINATIONS AND TREATMENTS

Since 2012, the FOUR PAWS Stray Animal Care team in Ukraine has been active in various parts of the country, sterilising and vaccinating over 54,000 stray dogs and cats through the CNVR method (Catch – Neuter – Vaccinate – Return), a humane and sustainable approach to controlling stray populations. In addition, we have provided medical care to more than 6,650 dogs and cats.

Since the outbreak of the war, we have expanded our efforts to support animals in need. In 2024, we do so through four key initiatives: 1) our Mobile Clinic services, 2) our Project Kishka, 3) our collaboration with UVMF through the establishment of Charitable Clinics (see [chapter 3](#)), and 4) our collaboration with Animal ID to deliver Project A-Chip (see [chapter 3](#)).

2.1 MOBILE CLINIC

The Mobile Clinic team, consisting of two veterinarians, one veterinary technician, two dog catchers, an animal caretaker, and a coordinator, has dedicated the majority of their working hours in 2024 to the Vinnytsia and Chernivtsi regions, but visited also some other areas such as Cherkasy region (teaming up with Project Kishka in the city of Uman) and Khmelnytskyi region. Operating under the difficult and ever-changing conditions of a war-torn country, their work has become increasingly challenging as the conflict drags on, stretching both their physical endurance and emotional resilience. Each day is marked by uncertainty. Yet, despite these hardships, there is a glimmer of hope that fuels their mission. The warm reception they receive from local communities offers a sense of solace and motivation. Citizens, often facing their own struggles amidst the war, have expressed profound gratitude for the Mobile Clinic's efforts, recognising the importance of the team's work in providing vital care to animals who might otherwise be neglected during these turbulent times. This heartfelt appreciation not only strengthens the bond between the team and the communities they serve but also highlights the concern people have for strays, even in the face of adversity. As the war rages on, the team's presence becomes increasingly essential. They continue to provide much-needed medical care and support to animals, many of whom are victims of displacement and abandonment due to the conflict. In doing so, the Mobile Clinic team serves as a beacon of compassion and hope, reminding everyone that even in the darkest times, empathy and care for all living beings persist.



DVM DMITRO CHERNETSKYI performing sterilisation in the mobile clinic in Uman city, Cherkasy region. © FOUR PAWS



Dog catchers Ihor Kovel and Oleksandr Akimov in action.
© FOUR PAWS

expertize in sterilisation, surgical techniques, and humane animal handling through seminars and real-world practice, we contribute to the sustainable development of ethical and efficient practices in managing the stray dog and cat populations. Investing in their education and training is a long-term strategy for ensuring that these veterinarians are not only proficient in high-quality sterilisation methods but also understand the vital role these practices play in controlling stray animal populations and promoting humane treatment. This initiative addresses a critical need in Ukraine, where stray animal population control remains a pressing issue, and helps to secure a future in which animal welfare continues to improve through responsible, compassionate veterinary care.

Output: 2024: 2,198 dogs and cats (1,608 dogs, 590 cats) have been sterilised and vaccinated with the mobile clinic project. Since the start of the war: 6,177 dogs and cats have been sterilised and vaccinated with the mobile clinic project. Additionally, 11 sick or injured dogs received additional, lifesaving treatments this year.

Furthermore, over 30 students (future veterinarians) and faculty members joined the seminar hosted by the Mobile Clinic team.

As part of the CNVR project in Kamianets-Podilskyi city, Khmelnytskyi region, the Mobile Clinic team partnered with the city's veterinary university to host a seminar aimed at fostering capacity building among veterinary students. The seminar, designed to include both theoretical and hands-on practical components, offered invaluable insights into FOUR PAWS' dog-catching techniques and surgical procedures to over 30 students and faculty members. Strengthening the knowledge and skills of veterinary students is crucial to maintaining and advancing high-quality, high-volume sterilisation practices, which are essential for effective population management of stray animals. These students, as the next generation of veterinary professionals, represent the future of animal welfare in Ukraine. By equipping them with the latest



Vet tech Iryna Shevtsova demonstrating during the seminar.
© FOUR PAWS



DVM Inna Karpenko, Project Kishka vet in Poltava region, examining a stray cat with a severe eye injury. © FOUR PAWS

2.2 PROJECT KISHKA

In October 2022, FOUR PAWS launched the groundbreaking 'Project Kishka', a dedicated initiative to help Ukraine's stray cat population (Kishka means 'female cat' in Ukrainian). Despite the ongoing instability and unpredictability in the country, FOUR PAWS remains committed to finding effective solutions to alleviate animal suffering. While efforts to reduce stray dog populations have shown progress, there is a risk that stray cat populations could rise. To prevent countless stray cats from enduring hardship, prompt action is crucial.

Project Kishka is designed as a long-term effort aimed at sterilising, vaccinating, and providing necessary medical care to stray cats. The project is actively operating in several regions, including Chernihiv (Chernihiv region), Sumy (Sumy region), Poltava (Poltava region), Uman (Cherkasy region), and Mykolaiv (Mykolaiv region).

Every day, the dedicated veterinarians working on Project Kishka strive to offer essential medical assistance to as many stray cats as possible. Despite the emphasis on high-volume sterilisation surgeries, the quality and safety of the procedures are never compromised. Each animal undergoes a thorough clinical examination upon arrival, followed by surgery under general anaesthesia, and receives appropriate analgesics to ensure minimal discomfort during recovery.

In August 2024, during a special collaboration, the Mobile Clinic team partnered with the Kishka project veterinarian in Uman, DVM Tetiana Yushchak. While Project Kishka continued its vital work with stray cats, the Mobile Clinic team focused primarily on stray dogs. Together, they made a significant impact in Uman city, treating 116 dogs and 132 cats in ten working days, ensuring that as many animals as possible received the care they desperately needed.

Output: 2024: 8,183 cats have been sterilised and vaccinated with Project Kishka. Additionally, 30 sick and injured animals (27 cats, 3 dogs) received additional lifesaving treatments in 2024 through Project Kishka. Since the start of the project: 16,378 cats have been sterilised and vaccinated.



DVM Tetiana Yushchak, Project Kishka vet in Uman, Cherkasy region, checking on a stray cat that is undergoing treatment. © FOUR PAWS

3. PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR STRAYS AND PETS IN NEED

FOUR PAWS is dedicated to make an impact for animals in need around the world, and while being active in Ukraine for over twelve years for both companion animals and wild animals, it is without a doubt that the damage caused by the war is greater than anyone could have ever foreseen. This requires a greater approach, and therefore FOUR PAWS also joined forces with other organisations to help as many dogs and cats in need as possible.

3.1. THE LAUNCH OF CHARITABLE CLINICS



Treatment of a cat in the Charitable Clinic in Irpin.
© FOUR PAWS

In 2024, FOUR PAWS launched an innovative partnership with the newly established Ukrainian Veterinary Medicine Foundation (UVMF), an initiative created by the Ukrainian Small Animal Veterinary Association (USAVA), with whom FOUR PAWS had previously collaborated in 2023. This new collaboration aims to address the pressing need for accessible veterinary care across Ukraine by establishing unique charitable veterinary clinics.

The project has a twofold mission: First, to provide much-needed veterinary care to stray animals, as well as to the pets of local residents, and pets belonging to internally displaced people (IDPs). Many IDPs, forced to flee their homes due to the war, have been unable to bring personal belongings but have managed to bring their pets, further underscoring the importance of accessible veterinary services. Second, to strengthen Ukraine's veterinary capacity by creating work opportunities for Ukrainian veterinarians and veterinary students.

To do so, FOUR PAWS and UVMF started this new service in August 2024 in an existing veterinary clinic in Zaporizhzhia region – an area on the front lines of the ongoing conflict. In September 2024, FOUR PAWS supported UVMF with the opening of a new clinic in Irpin, Kyiv region, a city that was previously occupied by Russian forces.

Through this collaboration, local veterinarians offer free sterilisation, rabies vaccinations, microchipping (only for owned pets), and anti-parasite treatments to dogs and cats. Additionally, the clinics provide several other essential services at no cost, including up to three general veterinary check-ups, X-rays, blood and urine tests, ultrasounds, cat urethrostomies, tumour removals, eye enucleations, paw amputations, and paw treatments. This comprehensive care ensures that both strays and owned animals receive the critical support they need, even amid the challenging circumstances of war.

Output: 2024: 1,242 animals (239 dogs, 1,003 cats) have been sterilised and vaccinated in the Charitable Clinics in Zaporizhzhia and Irpin in 2024. Additionally, 783 animals (248 dogs, 535 cats) received lifesaving treatments in 2024.

3.2. SUPPORT THE UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DCPM LEGISLATION

FOUR PAWS supports the Ukrainian authorities with the implementation of Dog/Cat Population Management legislation, with a specific focus on Identification & Registration. Firstly, this is done via our membership of the Ukrainian Taskforce Group (3.2.1). Secondly, in collaboration with Animal ID Ukraine, we launched Project A-Chip (3.2.2).

3.2.1. UKRAINE TASKFORCE GROUP

FOUR PAWS being a member of the Eurogroup For Animals, also committed itself to the Ukraine Taskforce Group which was set up by Eurogroup For Animals. The purpose of this Taskforce Group is to identify needs, coordinate efforts and share information regarding companion animals, abandoned animals and animal shelter affected by the war in Ukraine. More specifically it helps FOUR PAWS to facilitate the exchange of information between members, gather and share information about sterilisation projects, partner clinics and which regions are covered, liaise with WOAH colleagues and the Ukrainian Chief Veterinary Officers, share information on the delivery of pet food, and create a network within Ukrainian authorities and investigate lobbying opportunities for better animal welfare in the country.

In 2024, a key focus was advocating for the Ministry of Agriculture to mandate identification and registration (I&R) nationwide. Eurogroup For Animals prepared a briefing that highlighted the importance of mandatory I&R in Ukraine, aligning it with the recent EU proposal on the subject. Achieving this milestone would represent a significant step forward in Ukraine's integration process with the European Union. Another major focus in 2024 was advancing the Ukraine Rabies Elimination Strategy. Both initiatives remain priorities and will continue into 2025.

Output: as described.

3.2.2. PROJECT A-CHIP

The fear of losing a beloved pet and never reuniting with them is a constant concern for many pet owners. In times of war, this risk becomes even more severe, as the chaos and displacement make it harder for families to find their pets when they went missing in unforeseen circumstances. To address this growing concern, the Ukrainian Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Digital Transformation have taken a crucial step by launching a national registry: a comprehensive database that allows for the registration of dogs and cats via microchipping.



FOUR PAWS veterinarian Valentyna Danyliv using the A-Chip Reader. © FOUR PAWS | IRS

Although this process is not yet mandatory in the country, it represents a major leap forward in protecting our pets and bringing peace of mind to owners across the country.

In a strong show of support for this initiative, FOUR PAWS and Animal ID Ukraine have come together to make pet identification and management more efficient and accessible. Animal ID Ukraine has developed an innovative A-Chip Reader, designed to transform the way pets are tracked and reunited with their owners. The A-Chip Reader serves two important functions:

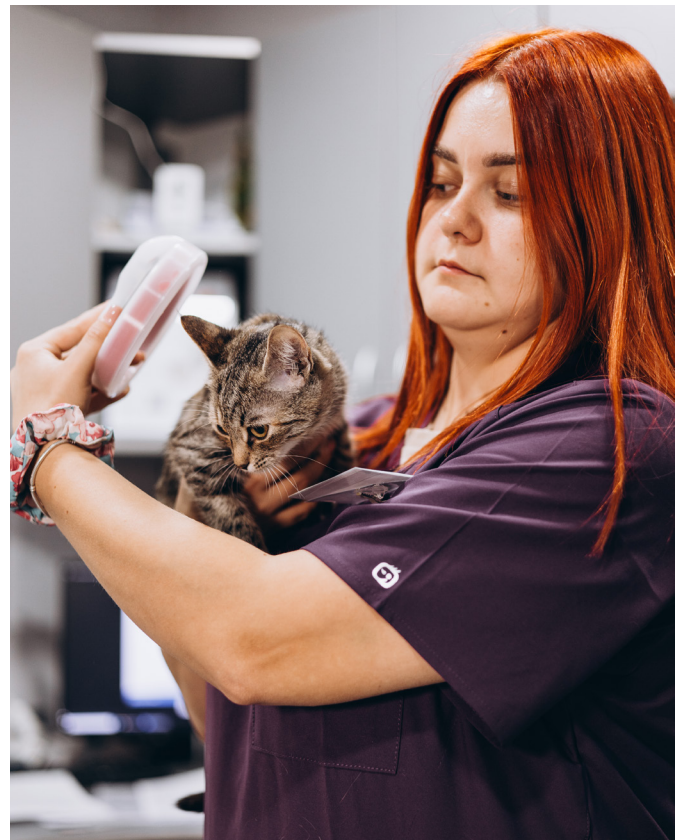
1. **Simplified Registration:** With just two clicks, pets can be registered in the system, eliminating the current problem of many microchipped pets remaining unregistered due to the lengthy process.
2. **Instant Scanning and Profile Access:** Once a pet is scanned, its entire profile, including relevant information such as its current body temperature, is displayed immediately. Additionally, the pet owner receives an instant push notification on their phone.

One of the key advantages of this system is Animal ID's access to international databases, allowing even pets from abroad to be identified and tracked, ensuring no pet is left behind, no matter where they come from.

FOUR PAWS has committed to this project until 31 December 2024, by purchasing 250 of these advanced A-Chip Readers, which (until Q1 2025) will be distributed to shelters, Communal Enterprises, state veterinary clinics, and private veterinary practices. To receive an A-Chip Reader, veterinarians must agree to register all pets under their care in the national database. This marks the beginning of a significant change in how pets are tracked and reunited in Ukraine.

We call on all relevant stakeholders to embrace this technology, register pets, and make full use of the A-Chip Readers. This collaborative effort could mean the difference between families being reunited with their beloved animals or losing them forever. FOUR PAWS' active role in this initiative will continue through December 2024, and together, we can help more pets find their way back home.

Output: 250 A-Chip Readers purchased and distributed amongst shelters, Communal Enterprises, state veterinary clinics, and private veterinary practices. In 2024, 2,837 animals were scanned and registered in the database via this project.



The A-Chip Reader in use in the Charitable Clinic in Irpin.
© FOUR PAWS | IRS

4. SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND CHILDREN WITH FORMER STRAY DOGS

FOUR PAWS' Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) programme in Ukraine has been actively supporting refugees, children, and individuals with special needs through various initiatives in Ukraine. Also in 2024, the programme continued to bring hope and healing, thanks to the tireless efforts of its dedicated team and the stars of the project: former stray dogs Busia and Alisa.

Busia, a six-year-old rescue dog, played a key role in numerous therapeutic and educational activities, together with her handler Nataliia and practical psychologist Viktoriia. In Vinnytsia, they participated in workshops for psychology students aimed at fostering a compassionate understanding of animals in therapy. Over 125 students attended sessions exploring the partnership between psychologists and canine therapists, where they learned to interpret canine body language and appreciate the humane treatment of dogs. These efforts are shaping a new generation of psychologists who view animals as valuable therapeutic partners.

Busia also worked closely with ex-servicemen, providing emotional support that helped them open up during group therapy. Her presence fostered trust and enabled participants to process emotions more effectively, speeding up their recovery and reintegration into society. For children with Down Syndrome, Busia participated in individual and group sessions where she helped build trust, encouraged emotional expression, and supported their progress in overcoming challenges.



From left to right: dog Busia, handler Nataliia, practical psychologist Viktoriia, handler Antonina, dog Alisa.

© FOUR PAWS



Dog Busia and Nataliia working with refugees in Vinnytsia.

© FOUR PAWS

Three-year-old Alisa, another remarkable AAI dog, captivated children with her resilience and warmth. After recovering from a life-threatening accident, she now inspires young learners through engaging activities. In Chernivtsi, Alisa participated in library sessions where children read stories, learned about pet care, and developed confidence by interacting with her. At a World Animal Day art picnic, nearly 120 participants, including children and university students, explored responsible pet care and animal protection. The event combined fun activities with hands-on lessons about animal welfare, with Alisa at the heart of the experience.

In addition to her work with children, Alisa contributed to professional engagements and rehabilitation efforts. She supported a sensory integration session for internally displaced children, where participants learned safety rules and practiced developmental tasks through interaction with her. In private school workshops, Alisa helped teach 60 students about dog behaviour and the importance of treating animals with care. Her involvement extended to social workshops for adults with disabilities, where she provided emotional support and demonstrated the therapeutic role dogs can play in rehabilitation.

The year also featured significant professional milestones for the programme. Alisa's handler, Antonina, organised an international conference attended by 417 participants to share best practices in animal-assisted therapy. Antonina and Alisa also presented at a family psychotherapy event, offering insights into how dogs can support individuals across various settings.

Through all these efforts, the AAI programme in Ukraine, with Busia and Alisa at its core, has continued to demonstrate the profound impact of animal-assisted therapy. By fostering emotional connections, promoting learning, and advocating for the humane treatment of animals, the program has touched the lives of countless individuals and strengthened its mission to build a more compassionate world.

Output: 1,010 people (145 adults, 865 children) were reached during 253 Animal Assisted Interventions sessions, either with dog Busia or dog Alisa.

“On behalf of the Ukrainian team for stray animals, I want to say thank you for your incredible support. Your help during these difficult times means so much to us. Despite the challenges in Ukraine, we have continued our work and achieved great results.

This year we sterilised, vaccinated, and rescued thousands of dogs and cats across the country. We learned, taught, took risks and stayed committed to saving lives of animals.

Living under constant alarms and missile threats has been very hard, both physically and emotionally. But we made it through. We stayed strong and hopeful. Our team is full of energy and ready to keep making the world a better place with you by our side.

Your continued support gives us the confidence to move forward.

Thank you for your trust, help, and dedication.”

Alesya Lischyshyna

Head of Stray Animal Care Ukraine



© FOUR PAWS | Maksym Havrylov

About FOUR PAWS

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, which reveals suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them. Founded in 1988 in Vienna by Heli Dungler and friends, the organisation advocates for a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding. The sustainable campaigns and projects of FOUR PAWS focus on companion animals including stray dogs and cats, farm animals and wild animals – such as bears, big cats and orangutans – kept in inappropriate conditions as well as in disaster and conflict zones. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, the UK, the USA and Vietnam as well as sanctuaries for rescued animals in eleven countries, FOUR PAWS provides rapid help and long-term solutions.



FOUR PAWS International
**VIER PFOTEN International –
gemeinnützige Privatstiftung**

Linke Wienzeile 236

1150 Vienna | Austria

Phone: +43-1-545 50 20-0

office@four-paws.org



four-paws.org



four-paws.org/linkedin



four-paws.org/instagram



four-paws.org/facebook



four-paws.org/x



four-paws.org/youtube