Colorado 2016 PACFA statistics
and
No Kill Colorado Methods

Table of Contents

Introduction

PACFA releases statistics every year for rescue and shelter activity. They are usually released by mid-year. 2017 statistics will not be available until the middle of 2018.

With over 250 organizations (shelters and rescues) reporting, PACFA statistics has given us a clear view of the state of homeless pet outcomes in the state for 2016. Although PACFA also tracks other species, this document will only address cats and dogs for 2016 in the graphical analysis of throughout. The term shelter system refers to all organizations both rescues and physical shelters as together they provide the states combined effort on saving homeless pets.

PACFA statistics in Colorado are best measurement of shelter and rescue lifesaving performance from an annual view as well from an overall state view.

They are not perfect. Shelters and rescues have some difficulty getting to the precise numbers of animals entering and leaving the shelter. Although these statistics are generally accurate statewide, accuracy of individual organizations vary. But the statewide statistics have an estimated +/-1% variance on accuracy. For individual organizations, it can be higher. Most organizations have good to perfect accuracy.

Also, there are multiple ways to crunch these numbers and methods vary on how to do so. By default, we use what we call the RAW method. Counting each animal in and each animal out. The most standard method is more forgiving. This is called the Asilomar Accords. You can see the details of these Accords here:

http://www.shelteranimalscount.org/docs/default-source/DataResources/2004aaccords5.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Although the accords provided some useful consistency to shelter statistics, it left out or did not anticipate the dramatic changes that have occurred in the past decade. For instance, cats and dogs that "are under the age of eight weeks and are not likely to become 'healthy' or 'treatable,'" are considered "untreatable" which has been proved in many facilities to not be true. Also, they disregard Owner Requested Euthanasia (ORE) in their Live Release Rate(LRR) which can be abused statistically.

We will use both for some comparison reasons to clarify the numbers and LRR. But RAW is the default if not named.

Raw:

When using Raw, we look at all outcomes as the total number of animals handled by the organization.

In 2017, there were 173,415 total outcomes (positive and Negative). Of these 89.323% of ALL dogs and cats entering the shelters system had positive outcomes. 90.61% of dogs were saved statewide in Colorado, 87.08% of cats were saved. Moreover, Colorado shows 103,842 dog and cat adoptions.

Asilomar:

Because of the practice of not counting OREs will show 92.34% of ALL dogs and cats entering the shelters system had positive outcomes. 94.09% of dogs were saved statewide in Colorado, 87.08% of cats were saved.

Shelter Statistics and Data

Everyone needs to understand the statistics of the shelter they are holding accountable to fully prepare for any resistance to our request they save EVERY healthy treatable pet.

This is how we come by these numbers. We want you to understand how we get to them even if you do not do this yourself.

PACFA tracks Dogs (Juvenile and Adult), Cats (Juvenile and Adult), Small Mammals, Reptiles, **Rabbits, Birds and "Other".**

For this document we just analyze Dogs and Cats. These are more than 99% of the volume of animals PACFA publishes.

The Data

For each type of animal, PACFA publishes the following:

1. Intake
   a. Beginning Count
   b. Beginning Foster Count
   c. Stray
   d. Owner Relinquished
   e. Owner Requested Euthanasia upon intake
   f. Transfer in from another Colorado organization
   g. Transfer in from Out of State organization
   h. Other: TNR / Protective Custody / Returns / Disaster Relief
2. Outcomes
   a. Adoption
   b. Returned To Owner (RTO)
   c. Transfer or Rescue out to another Colorado organization
   d. Transfer or Rescue out to an Out of State organization
   e. Other live outcomes (ie: tnr/snr)
   f. Died
   g. Missing / Stolen
   h. Shelter Euthanasia
   i. Owner Requested Euthanasia
   j. Ending Count
   k. Foster Count
3. Length of Stay
   a. AVG LOS

Data Integrity

Intake and outcome numbers should match. But they don't necessarily do that. For every animal that enters the shelter, whether they leave alive or not (or are still in the care of the shelter), they should be recorded. To many shelters' and rescues' credit, - numbers match. But not all.

The first change we make to using the PACFA statistics is to ignore Intake and instead look at total outcomes. This gives us a one to one relationship on positive and negative outcomes. On an annual basis, this is an accurate measure and beginning and end counts work out on a year to year basis.

Calculating Save Rates

There are multiple methods for calculating save rates. Here we will show you the first two slightly different ways to calculate save rates.

This chart is a comparison between Asilomar statistics (the standard Live Release Rate used in most shelters) and the (RAW) method for basic analysis which includes OREs (Owner Requested **Euthanasia) numbers as well as lost, stolen, missing and "Other" negative ou**tcomes (Asilomar lets shelters ignore OREs).

(RAW) Method

Save Rate:

We calculated this by a subset of ALL the data mentioned above of PACFA Statistics as follows:

1. Total Outcomes
   a. Positive Outcome
   b. Negative Outcomes
2. POSTIVE Outcomes
   a. Adoption
   b. Returned To Owner (RTO)
   c. Transfer or Rescue out to another Colorado organization
   d. Transfer or Rescue out to an Out of State organization
   e. Other live outcomes (ie: tnr/snr)
3. NEGATIVE Outcomes
   a. Died
   b. Missing / Stolen
   c. Shelter Euthanasia
   d. Owner Requested Euthanasia

Asimolar Method

Save Rate:

Asilomar can be more complicated. Although we use the single most important factor (Eliminating OREs) We still work of the total outcome model as our base for analysis.

1. Total Outcomes
   a. Positive Outcome
   b. Negative Outcomes

1. POSTIVE Outcomes
   a. Adoption
   b. Returned To Owner (RTO)
   c. Transfer or Rescue out to another Colorado organization
   d. Transfer or Rescue out to an Out of State organization
   e. Other live outcomes (ie: tnr/snr)
2. NEGATIVE Outcomes
   a. Died
   b. Missing / Stolen
   c. Shelter Euthanasia
   d. ~~Owner Requested Euthanasia~~

RAW Outcomes

For RAW outcomes , we look at all outcomes, positive and negative to get a baseline for save rate numbers. RAW statistics include ORE (Owner Requested Euthanasia).

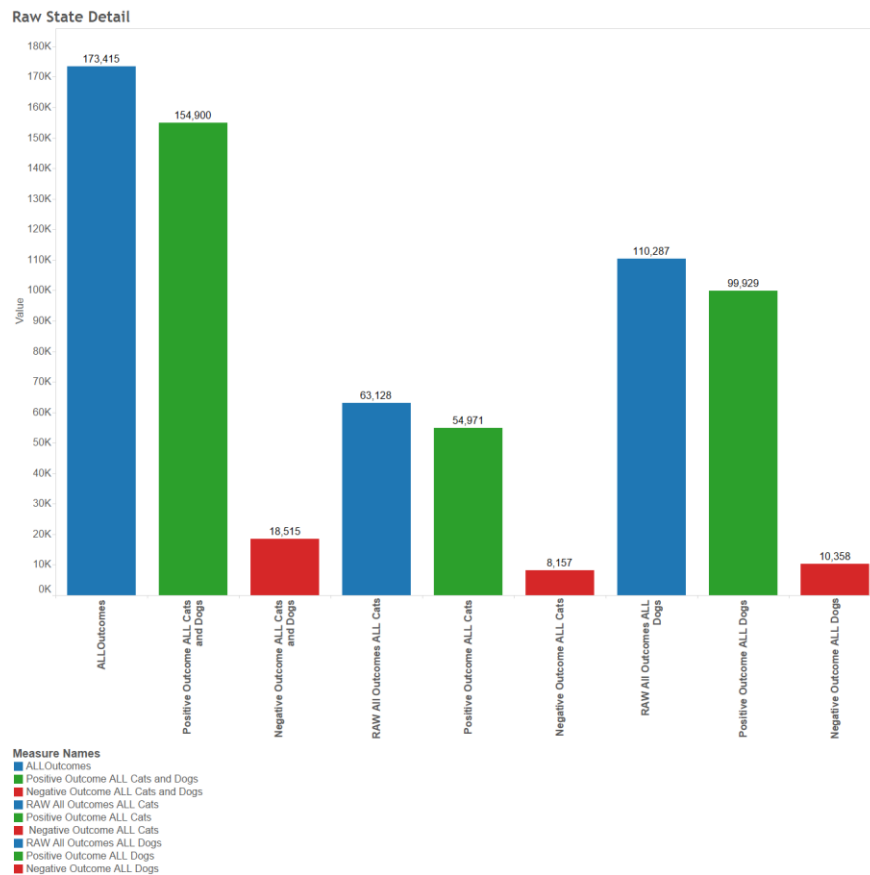Total Outcomes of cats and dogs in Colorado for 2016 was 173,415.

- 63,128 Cats
- 110,287 Dogs

For cats

- 54,971 Positive Outcomes
- 8,157 Negative Outcomes

For Dogs

- 99,929 Positive Outcomes
- 10,358 Negative Outcomes

Asilomar Outcomes

For Asilomar outcomes , we look at all outcomes, positive and negative BUT REMOVE OREs (Owner Requested Euthanasia) save rate numbers. Asilomar statistics DO NOT include OREs (Owner Requested Euthanasia).

Total Asilomar Outcomes of cats and dogs in Colorado for 2016 was 167,755.
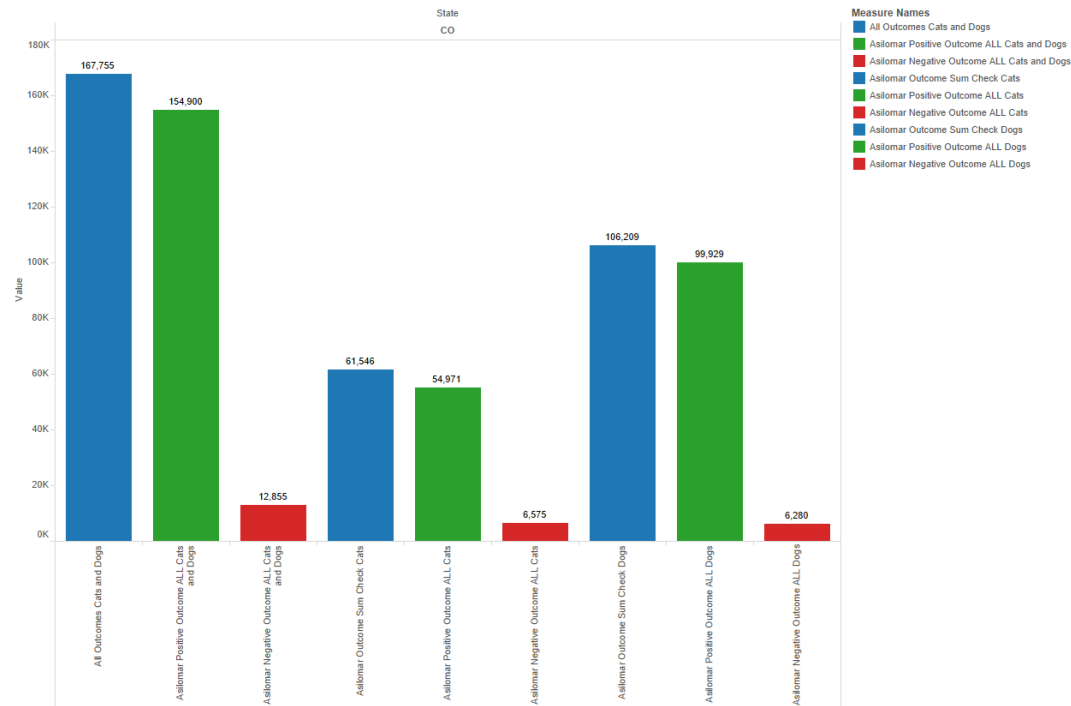
- 61,546 Cats
- 106,209 Dogs

For cats

- 54,971 Positive Outcomes
- 6,575 Negative Outcomes

For Dogs

- 99,929 Positive Outcomes
- 6.280 Negative Outcomes

Asilomar State Detail

All Outcomes Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Outcome Sum Check Cats, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Cats, Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Cats, Asilomar Outcome Sum Check Dogs, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Dogs and Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Dogs for each State. Color shows details about All Outcomes Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Cats and Dogs, Asilomar Outcome Sum Check Cats, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Cats, Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Cats, Asilomar Outcome Sum Check Dogs, Asilomar Positive Outcome ALL Dogs and Asilomar Negative Outcome ALL Dogs. The data is filtered on Org Type, which keeps Rescue and Shelter.

Strays

Strays make up a large portion of animals entering the shelter. The redemption of stray animals to their family is, or should be, a primary goal of all shelters.

59,791 stray cats and dogs entered shelters in 2014 in the state of Colorado.
- 24,197 Cats
- 35,594 Dogs

Returns to owner are a good indication of a shelter's commitment to the community. If for no other reason, there will always be a need for shelters because of lost animals. The return rate is an important metric to judge a shelter's productivity in serving the community. As a state, Colorado is performing well by comparative analysis.
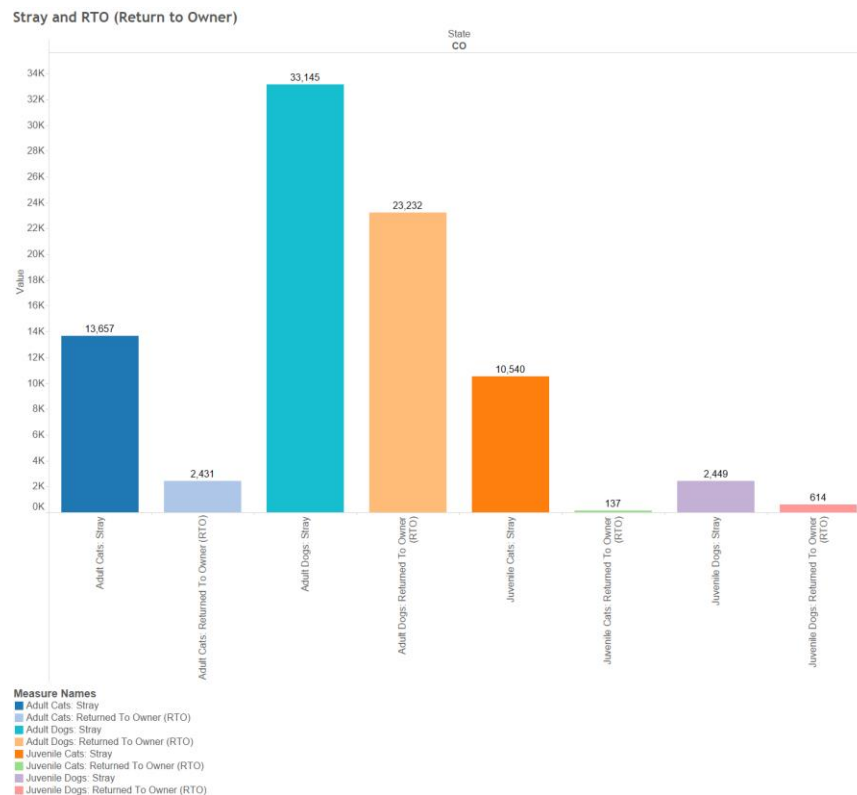
As we can see from the chart a small percentage of cats (10%) are returned to owners. A dog's chance of being returned is about 67%. It should be noted both these numbers are higher than the national average.

26,414 stray cats and dogs were returned to owners in 2014 in the state of Colorado.
- 2,568 Cats
- 23,846 Dogs
-

44.18% of stray cats and dogs were returned to owners in 2014 in the state of Colorado.
- 10.61% of Cats
- 67% Dogs

Transfers

Transfers from out of state to Colorado dwarf transfers from Colorado to other states.

The transfer of animals is a useful lifesaving tool. Transferring within the state has proven useful to give people an opportunity in one part of the state to get a pet they want from another. Shelters and rescues do this daily across the state. Considering Colorado has capacity to house and adopt out pets greater than the intake of the shelter system, we should help neighboring states in lifesaving activities like transfer in state from out of state. At the same time, transferring over 34,000 homeless pets into Colorado tells us we should save every healthy or treatable pet in our state shelter system.

Transfers of animals from Colorado organizations to other Colorado organizations

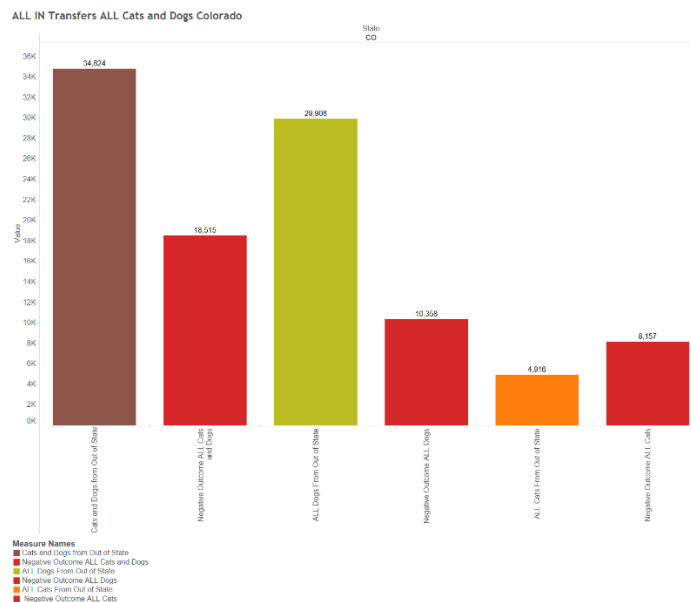*Total Transfer of cats and dogs in to Colorado from other states for 2016 was* **34,824.**

- 4,916 Cats
- 29,908 Dogs

Total Transfer of cats and dogs to another state from Colorado for 2016 was **334.**

- 24 Cats
- 310 Dogs

We have a net transfer of over 34,000 taken in compared to transferred out.

The difference between transfers FROM Colorado compare to TO Colorado from other states is dramatic and shows we need to show our neighbors what we are doing right that they need to implement in order to reach our save rates.

Animals Euthanized/Killed in Shelter

There were over 18,000 cats and dogs killed in the Colorado shelter system in 2016. The number of euthanasia vs. the killing of healthy treatable pets is difficult to determine.

We should adhere to a dictionary definition: "the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy."   Unfortunately, that is not the way they are recorded.

Of over 18,000, we are certain many were healthy or treatable homeless pets, so euthanasia can be used to define all of these homeless pets. More than one two pets are killed every hour every day on average. More than 50 on average 365 days a year.

Although 5,678 were owner requested, there is no reason for a shelter to kill a healthy treatable pet in Colorado even if an owner requests it. Assessment of pets considered for euthanasia should be determined irremediably suffering for medical or behavior issues before euthanasia is an option.

In addition, the numbers of pets entering our shelter system as strays and owner surrenders is not greater than our capacity to save them.

Of the pets brought into the shelter, more than 1 in 10 (10.68%) homeless cats and dogs entering shelters in Colorado do not leave alive. Communities (but no other states from available statistics) across the United States are saving over 90%, some as many as 99% of all animals entering the shelter system. Colorado is poised to lead the nation as a state that saves every healthy treatable homeless pet.

It's Not Really About the number

10.68% of all cats and dogs entering a shelter did not leave alive.

But that's not the point. The point is we should never kill a healthy or treatable pet.

But we are. And that's where the numbers help us figure that out.

Looking at large scale successes like Austin Texas, we know 90% is the low watermark.

So even though No Kill is saving every healthy or treatable pet, regardless of the number, we know that number on an annual basis should never fall below 90%.

10.68% of all cats and dogs entering the Colorado shelter system did not leave alive.
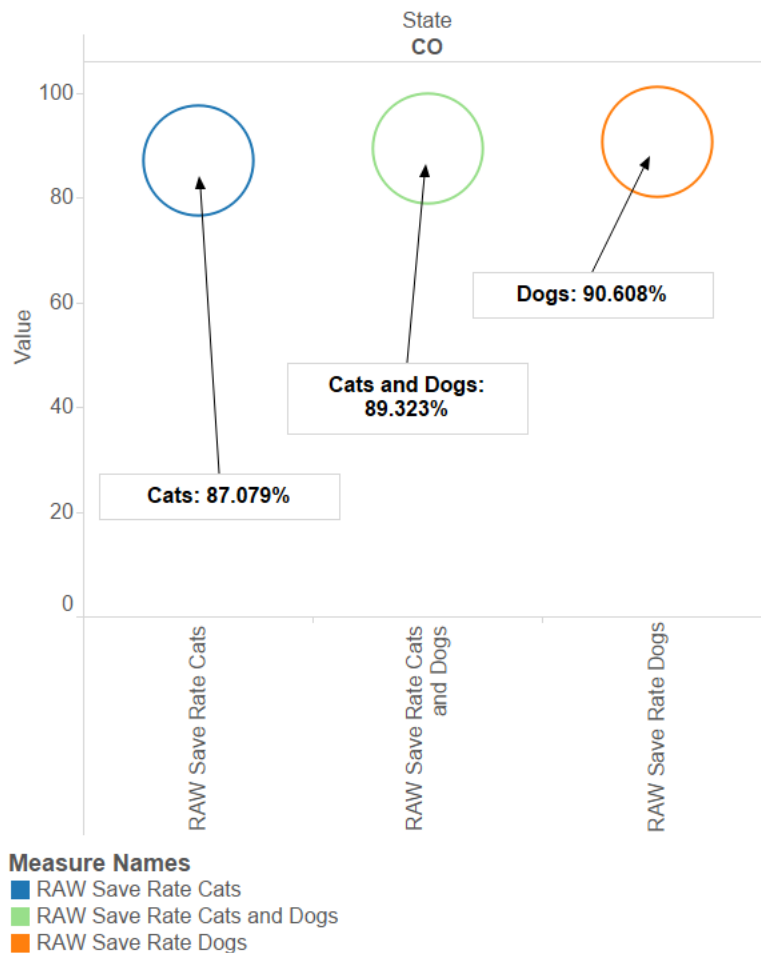
Cats vs. Dogs Save Rate

Dogs fare better in Colorado shelters. Looking at the save rate solely from two simple numbers (number of total outcomes from the shelter system to number of animals leaving alive) dogs will leave the shelter 86.55% of the time. Cats will leave the shelter 80.76% of the time.

It should be noted that while cats enter the shelter in much smaller numbers 63,128 cats vs. 110,287 dogs, dogs fare better than cats.

Cats are not as fortunate as dogs and adult cats have the lowest percentage of finding a home and are more likely to die in a shelter.

Save Rate Percent

State
CO

Value

Dogs: 90.608%

Cats and Dogs:
89.323%

Cats: 87.079%

RAW Save Rate Cats

RAW Save Rate Cats
and Dogs

RAW Save Rate Dogs

Measure Names
- RAW Save Rate Cats
- RAW Save Rate Cats and Dogs
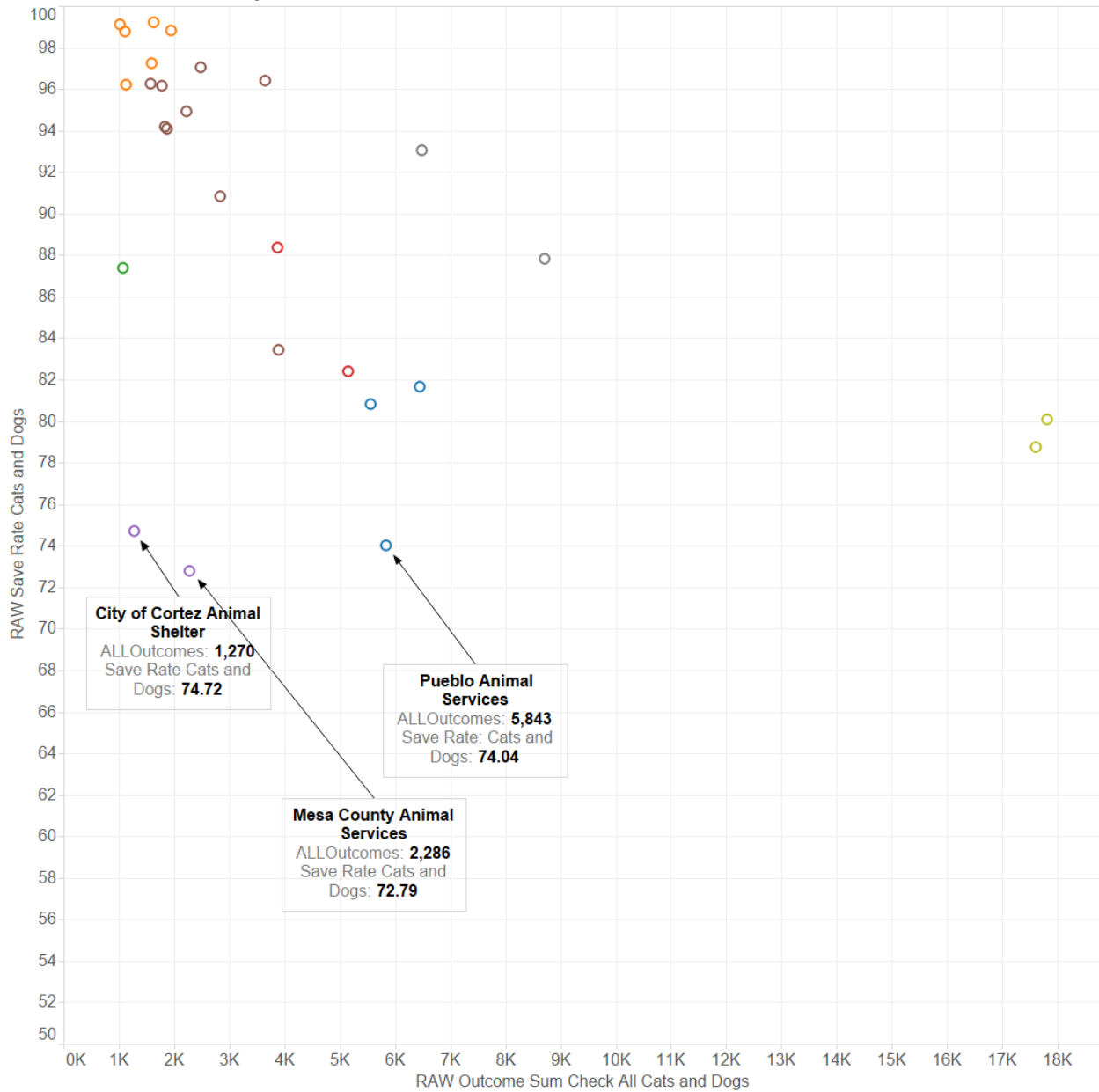- RAW Save Rate Dogs

The Shelters to improve

There are 136 organizations licensed as shelters by PACFA in Colorado. Many are open admission municipal shelters, but we also have private shelters and sanctuaries. Although we are doing well by a statistical standard state wide, we must look at the shelters that are not performing in line with the rest of the state and improve them.

This chart looks at all shelters taking in more than 1000 animals and the save rate percentage. The lowest three are called out.

ScatterRawSaveRatebyVolume

Conclusion:

So comparing these two methods we find Asilomar will generally show a higher save rate than RAW. But the ranking of organizations will generally remain the same.

Even with the more forgiving Asilomar method, you can see the top and poor performing organizations.

Why do Asilomar and the RAW method differ?

Because Asilomar ignores OREs and RAW includes them in intake and negative outcomes.

Why does the RAW include Owner Requested Euthanasia numbers?

Shelters should not be in the killing business. They should never kill a pet unless that pet has a poor or grave prognosis and is irremediably suffering.

If a person, brings a pet to the shelter to, a shelter medical professional should assess the condition of the animal. If the animal is not irremediably suffering, the person should be bel to surrender the pet to the shelter and the shelter treat it as any other homeless pet (Assess/vet/adopt out).

If the pet is truly a candidate for euthanasia (definition: "the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy.") the shelter could help this animal and pet owner. But it should still be counted. Good shelters will euthanize an irremediably suffering homeless pet, and never a healthy or treatable pet.