

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Mapp Proclaims August 20 International Homeless Animal Day

VIC News / **Published On August 18, 2016 11:07 AM /**

Staff **August 18, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- Homeless animals remain an ongoing concern in the Virgin Islands and Governor Kenneth Mapp has proclaimed Saturday, August 20 as International Homeless Animal Day in order to draw attention to the responsible ownership of dogs and cats in the territory, as well as to promote the adoption of homeless animals, Government House announced late Wednesday.

The overpopulation of the nation's most popular animals, dogs and cats, results in the killing of millions of dogs, cats, kittens and puppies each year in shelters across the United States, according to Government House. The primary reason these healthy, adoptable innocent animal are euthanized is due to the fact there are too many cats and

dogs born and not enough families willing to adopt them.

The dog and cat overpopulation crises can readily be solved, first by having dogs and cats spayed and neutered before their first litter and secondly by adopting a dog or cat from one of our local Virgin Island's animal shelters.

Yet, amidst the governor's proclamation, [there is an ongoing struggle](#) between the Department of Agriculture and the St. Croix Animal Shelter over an expired contract, and the government's failure to provide financial assistance to help keep the shelter continue accepting stray animals and provide other important animal services.

"As the only animal shelter on the island of St. Croix, the SCAWC's activities are critical and reach far beyond the scope of animal welfare. Abundance of stray animals negatively effects tourism, and poses a risk to human health and safety. Furthermore, violence towards animals has been well established as an indicator of future violence towards humans," reads a release the shelter issued last week. "Effective immediately, the SCAWC no longer will pick up stray animals, nor perform most other animal control duties for the island of St. Croix. All requests for assistance in this regard should be directed to the VI Department of Agriculture at 778-0997."

Said Mr. Mapp in his proclamation: "The irresponsible dog and cat custodians who do not have their pets spayed or neutered are the ones accountable to the taxpayers in this country, for the millions of dollars spent each year on killing unwanted animals they are responsible for bringing into this world. As responsible residents and human beings, it is our obligation to provide humane care for these animals throughout their lives."

He also reminded residents that much of the local effort to control the local animal population is supported by grants, donations and volunteers and the value of community participation cannot be underestimated.

"I call upon all residents to accept responsibility for the care of their dogs and cats, including having them spayed or neutered to prevent the birth of animals destined to be homeless, unwanted and killed," he said, reminding all of the responsibility that the entire community has to the pet population.