

43rd

Annual Report

For the year ended March 31, 2007

BLUE CROSS OF INDIA

(Recognised by Animal Welfare Board, Govt. of India)

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Phone: 044-24341778

Hospital & Shelters : Blue Cross Avenue
Velachery Road, Guindy, Chennai – 600 032
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Kunnam Village, Sunkuvarchatram
Kanchipuram Dist.

Toducadu Village, Sriperumbudur-Tiruvellore Road
Tiruvellore District

ABC Centre : Lloyds Colony, Lloyds Road, Chennai – 600 005

Mount – Poonamallee Road, St. Thomas Mount
Chennai 600 016

Founder : (Late) Captain V. Sundaram

Co-founder : Mrs. Usha Sundaram

Chairman : Dr. S. Chinny Krishna

Honorary Secretary : Mr. M. Parthasarathi

Honorary Joint Secretary : Mrs. S. Haksan

Honorary Treasurer : Mr. T. Shantilal

Members

Mrs. Seetha Muthiah
Mr. Suresh Sundaram
Mr. V. Ravishankar
Mr. L. Nemichand Singhvi
Mrs. Marion Courtine
Mrs. Vasanthi Rajiv *

Ms. Viji Sundaram
Mr. N. Sugal Chand Jain
Dr. Nanditha Krishna
Mr. Shantilal Pandya
Mr. S. Raghavan*
Representative of the AWBI

*Resigned during the year

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April 1 , 2006 to March 31, 2007

Forty eight years ago, a group of concerned people started a small advocacy group which was registered in 1964 as the Blue Cross of India. Established to alleviate the suffering of animals, it has grown from small beginnings to become one of India's largest animal welfare organisations, running active animal welfare, animal rights and humane education programmes.

At the time of its founding, there were only two kinds of animal welfare organizations in India – the majority were goshalas for cattle and the rest were SPCAs started by the British. Most of the latter only prosecuted cases of overloading of animal-drawn vehicles or for using sick and unfit animals to draw these carts.

The vast majority of animals that were subjected to cruelty at the hands of man – in slaughter houses, laboratories, circuses, movies, during transport or capture and for other forms of entertainment, science and food were largely unprotected. Hunting of animals by the rich – when the poor did it, it was called poaching – was legal in much of the country and the indiscriminate decimation of frogs by hacking of their rear legs for export, leaving the frog on the beach to die after hours and days of suffering was accepted by the Government.

The Blue Cross of India was the first of a new genre that considered that all animals under all circumstances had the right to be protected from cruelty at the hands of man and that the claims and interests of sport, entertainment, science and the production of food did not override the moral responsibility to prevent the pain and suffering of animals.

During the last forty two years, the Blue Cross India has been primarily volunteer driven and much of the work is done by dedicated individuals who donate their time and expertise and continue to do so on a purely honorary basis. This ensures that most of the money received by the Society is used for animal welfare activities and go directly into projects to help animals.

ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL

In 1964, appalled by the way street dogs were being caught, held for three days without food and water in filthy, overcrowded rooms, and killed by electrocution with the most primitive equipment, the Blue Cross began to look at the situation afresh. It was learnt that the official dog-killing programme of the Chennai Corporation started with the Municipal Act of 1919 though dogs had been sporadically killed for decades earlier by clubbing and, occasionally, shooting.

The study showed that each year from 1919, the number of dogs killed at the dog pound at Basin Bridge had been increasing and over 16,000 dogs were killed in the year 1964, up from about 100 dogs in 1919. The number of human deaths from rabies, too, had been

steadily increasing. In spite of 50 dogs being killed each day in 1964, the number of dogs on the street seemed to be increasing.

While the initial reaction was to lessen the barbarity of the holding, handling and killing, it soon became apparent that catch-and-kill was not the answer to the street dog issue. The Blue Cross proposed a system of catch-neuter-vaccinate-and-release in its place. It decided to call its proposal the Animal Birth Control (or ABC) programme to show the municipal authorities and the public that control of the street dog population was as simple as ABC!

Dr. H. E. Bywater, the Chief Veterinarian of the RSPCA was the first to reject the project. The local civic authorities did likewise.

Undeterred, the Blue Cross put up its first free spaying center at Bazlullah Road. This was inaugurated on August 15, 1966 by Dr. F. D. Wilson, Chief of Surgery of the Government Veterinary Hospital. Dr. Wilson and his staff spayed or neutered every animal rescued by the Blue Cross before they were released back from where they had been rescued or before they were given out in adoption. Any one who wanted their animal sterilized could bring it to the center to have it done free of cost.

It took the Blue Cross another 29 years to get the Corporation of Chennai to stop the killing in South Chennai and the Blue Cross took up an ABC programme in 1995. The next year, the programme was extended to the whole of Chennai. The dog pound at Basin Bridge was converted to an ABC center and PfA took up the spaying for north Chennai.

In 1999 the centre at Kunnam Village, Sriperumbudur Taluk in Kanchipuram District, was made operational. Cattle and dogs are presently being kept there with considerable freedom to move around. This centre also houses primates and equines rescued from laboratories and being rehabilitated after being used in biologicals production and research. This also serves as the ABC-AR center for Kanchipuram District, a programme made possible by a generous grant from the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust.

The animal birth control (ABC) centre at Lloyds Colony, Lloyds Road, Chennai given by the Corporation of Chennai on a three-year basis to the Blue Cross, was inaugurated by Smt. Jayachandra Vadhana, Deputy Mayor of Chennai, on February 29, 2000 and started ABC operations on April 15, 2001. Approximately 200 animals per month can be spayed/neutered at this centre every month. It has cut down the travel time for animals caught in central Chennai area which were formerly taken to either Guindy or Basin Bridge for the ABC operation. It has also reduced the enormous load at Guindy. We are thankful to the Corporation of Chennai and to its Commissioner, Health Officer and Veterinary Officer for all their help and cooperation in our efforts to make Chennai rabies-free. In seven years, the number of deaths from human rabies has plummeted from 120 in 1996, when the ABC-AR programme was adopted on a city-wide basis, to 16 in 2002. This is in spite of the city limits having spread outwards and the population of Chennai having gone up steeply in the same period.

Yet another ABC centre has been established in Chennai at St. Thomas Mount with the help of the Cantonment Board, St. Thomas Mount where dogs in the Cantonment area are sterilised and vaccinated.

The sterilisation of dogs in Tiruvellore District was started during the year 2002 with the inauguration of the ABC centre at Toducadu village. It may be remembered that on January 26, 2001, over 1000 dogs were brutally slaughtered by the Tiruvellore Municipality. The land promised by the Ambattur Municipality was getting unduly delayed and we felt it was imperative that the ABC programme in Tiruvellore District be taken up as quickly as possible before another massacre took place. We, therefore, purchased a one acre plot of land for this programme.

Since 1987 Blue Cross has not been charging even pet owners for the ABC operation. However, the bulk of animals operated by us are the street dogs of Chennai. 7474 dogs have been sterilized in the last one year at the Guindy, Lloyds Road and St. Thomas Mount centres. 323 Dogs were spayed and vaccinated at the Tiruvellore centre. Over 2000 dogs have been sterilized at Kunnam. The Blue Cross consistently carries out over 1000 spay/neuters a month, the largest number by any group in India.

The Blue Cross of India is one of the very few organisations in India which regularly sterilises cats. Feral cats are also trapped, spayed, ear-tipped and released in the same area. We are most happy that The Cattitude Trust is now working in this field.

The Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme, started by the Blue Cross in 1964, was the first in the world to propose spay/neuter and release as a viable alternate to the mass killing of street dogs. It is today accepted that catch and kill has never worked and spay-and-return is the only answer to the street dog issue.

It is gratifying to note that this programme has been gaining ground world wide and is being propagated by the WHO and animal welfare groups as the only viable long-term solution to the street dog issue. Active ABC programmes are being implemented in India in Pune, Mumbai, Jaipur, Delhi, Calcutta, Vishakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Bangalore. In several other places, ABC programmes have been taken up but the number of animals sterilised by the local groups are not yet sufficient to make an impact on the street dog population in those areas. Unless at least 70% of the animals of reproductive age are sterilised, the reduction in the number of street dogs is very slow. It is also important to note that the animals are vaccinated against rabies at the time of operation, thus reducing the incidence of rabies in the dog population. This reduction has been borne out dramatically in Jaipur where the number of dog bites have plummeted and reported cases of rabies in humans has been zero for three consecutive years. In Chennai, the number of cases of rabies in humans has dropped by over 95% in the last eight years. Please visit our website www.bluecross.org.in or www.bluecrossofindia.org for more details on the effectiveness of the ABC/AR programme.

The Blue Cross has also been assisting in whatever way possible the ABC programmes at Pondicherry, Auroville, Kanchipuram, Bangalore, Tirupathy, Delhi, Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and other places. In many instances, such as at Kanchipuram, Pondicherry, Tirupathy and Auroville, the veterinary surgeons have been trained by our Chief Veterinarian, Dr. T. P. Sekar. In Tirupathi, Bangalore and Ahmedabad, Andaman and Nicobar and Ootacamund, local dog-catchers have been trained in methods of humane capture of street dogs. Several hundred animal graspers have been given to organisations around the country. Eleven large cages have been donated to Animal Care Land at Tirupathy to enable them to keep more animals at any time after ABC surgery. Several humane cat and dog traps have been donated to PfA and other groups all over India.

Like all our activities, this programme has been made possible because of the active involvement of our volunteers and the help received from many individuals and organizations. The programme at the Andaman & Nicobar Islands was supported by Ms. Linda Fong and her group, International Animal Rights Fund. With the delays in receiving funds from the Central Government even for the special schemes like the ABC programme, there would have been a marked reduction in our work on this important project but for the timely sanction of two major grants from the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust which covered the ABC-AR programme for Chennai city and Kanchipuram. We gratefully acknowledge their generous assistance.

We would like to make a special mention here of the most generous help we have been receiving from the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust for the past several years by way of grants totaling over Rs.6 million to support the ABC programmes at Kanchipuram District and Chennai. Almost the entire costs of the Kanchipuram ABC programme has been covered by the Marchig grants. Working with the recently started Blue Cross of Kanchipuram, who have been managing the ABC programme for Kanchi District, the Blue Cross of India has been able to fund most of the costs incurred for the ABC

programme with funds provided by the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust. Considering that the AWBI and Government funding for new projects will not be given till the NGO has completed three years of operation, there would have been no way by which the Blue Cross of Kanchipuram could have undertaken such a massive programme nor could the Blue Cross of India have been able to divert so much for the Kanchipuram project in view of the funds required to keep the Chennai ABC programme going. The AWBI grants for the Chennai ABC programme cover only a fraction of our total expenses and the Marchig grants for Chennai was able to cover part of this shortfall.

Special mention must also be made here of the regular grant we have been receiving each year since the late eighties from the Alice Morgan Wright – Edith Goode Fund of the HSUS. At a time when we received no grant from any body else, the HSUS began to send us this annual grant each year, unasked. Their money has been always earmarked for the ABC programme.

WORKSHOP ON ADVANCED SURGICAL TECHNIQUES FOR ABC

The Blue Cross, at the request of the Animal Welfare Board of India, was actively involved in the “Rabies-Free India” campaign and continued to train the Veterinary Surgeons of many States in surgical techniques.

Our Chief Veterinarian visited the Vishaka SPCA, IPAN in the Nilgiris, Kerala and other places to train surgeons. He also participated in the Animal Welfare Workshop conducted by the PfA, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

As a follow-up to the April 2005, when over 40 vets from different organizations all over India attending and trained in the technique used by the Bali Street Dog Foundation in their dog-control programme were trained, many organizations in India requested and received our assistance in not only surgery training, but also for dog catching.

HOSPITALS

The Hospital at Guindy worked on all 365 days last year and treated 20,866 animals. Like all other our activities, the Hospital services are totally free of charge. Only guardians who bring their pets for vaccination are requested to pay the cost of the vaccine. Even this is not insisted upon if the guardian expresses any difficulty in paying.

SHELTERS

11,802 rescued animals were brought in by our ambulances to our shelters during the year. Cattle were brought in by the Chennai Corporation and other municipalities and temples. Due to severe constraints of money and space, it is impossible for the Blue Cross to pick up and take in healthy stray animals. Only those dogs caught at places like

the airport and in hospitals are not returned to their original locations after spaying and vaccinating and are either rehomed or kept at our Kunnam and Toducadu centers. All stray cattle caught by the Corporation of Chennai are now handed over to us. These cattle were formerly auctioned by the Corporation and ended up in the slaughter house. They are now relocated to pinjrapoles (home for old animals) in Mysore, Bangalore, Vellore and other places at substantial expense to the Blue Cross. Similarly, cattle retired from service at Rajapalayam and Alandur municipalities are now being sent to us. During the year, over 100 cattle were rehomed by us. In addition, cattle from temples under the Hindu Religious & Cultural Endowments Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu are handed over to us.

Most adult dogs are impossible to rehome and stay on with us for the rest of their lives. 56 of these animals are presently housed in Kunnam, 65 in Toducadu and about 70 at Guindy.

932 animals were present in our Guindy shelter on 31st March 2006; 117 dogs were present at Lloyds Road ABC center; 168 dogs, 75 cattle and 20 monkeys were in Kunnam and 65 dogs were in Toducadu on that date.

KUNNAM CENTRE

Our Veterinary Surgeon gives free treatment to all the cattle and other animals brought by the villagers in and around Kunnam on all days of the week. All cattle at both Kunnam and Guindy centres have been vaccinated against foot and mouth disease. The village cattle in Kunnam village have also been vaccinated free of charge.

To more efficiently carry out the ABC programme for Kanchipuram District, an Agreement of Licence was entered into with the Blue Cross of Kanchipuram in 2004. Under this agreement, the Blue Cross of Kanchi will use our facilities to do the spay-vaccinate- and-release programme for dogs in Kanchi district. All assistance for carrying out the programme will be provided by the Blue Cross of India including providing the medicines, surgical equipment, vaccines and drugs required. Fortunately, the Blue Cross of Kanchipuram does now get a grant from the Animal Welfare Board of India for the ABC programme and so our financial burden has been reduced to that extent.

CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER NGOs AND CORPORATION OF CHENNAI

The Corporation of Chennai with whom we work very closely in implementing the ABC-AR programme had, last year, extended the term of the Lloyds Road ABC centre by another three years up to February 2009. Our grateful thanks to the officials of the Corporation.

The Surgeons of the Blue Cross, especially Dr.T.P. Sekar, spent a great deal of time and effort in training surgeons working for other non governmental organisations in spaying/neutering.

ADOPTIONS AND REHOMING

Only 975 small animals were given in adoption during the year. Of these, 773 were puppies; 156 kittens and only 46 were adult dogs. Approximately 200 cattle were given to goshalas where they will live out their lives. Over 7,000 of the rescued dogs and cats were treated and, after being sterilized and vaccinated, left back where they were picked up from. This is in addition to the dogs given to us by the Corporation of Chennai for the ABC operations and other dogs caught by us for spaying and vaccination.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Four large Swaraj Mazda Ambulances, two Tempo Excels and one Maruthi are available round the clock. Over 13,000 calls from the public were responded to and 11,802 animals were rescued by the Ambulances during 2006-2007. In addition, all the street dogs were released after the ABC operation using these vehicles.

The Maruthi ambulance so kindly made available to us by the **Marudhar Kesari Jain Gowshala, Kushalapura** was of tremendous help in transporting small animals and especially in taking dogs to the Govt. Veterinary Hospital for X rays and specialised surgical procedures.

MEDIA COVERAGE

During the year, we received unprecedented TV coverage of many of our programmes, especially the Well Dog Show for non-pedigree dogs and the Dr. Dog programme. Both national and regional TV stations carried several reports. The newspapers also gave extensive coverage of the work of the Blue Cross.

RUKMINI DEVI ARUNDALE TRUST

Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale was born on February 29, 1904. She was the founder of Kalakshetra and the architect of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960. She was the first Chairperson of the Animal Welfare Board of India, a position she held for almost twenty years.

After her passing away in 1986, two trusts were started to propagate her ideals – the Rukmini Devi Foundation and the Rukmini Devi Arundale Trust (RDAT). While the former is very active in work on various facets of Indian culture, the RDAT works on projects concerning Smt. Rukmini Devi's other passion – animals. She was one of the first people in India who worked with the Blue Cross in popularising spay/neuter to check the street dog population even though she initially felt that we should concentrate on male dogs only.

In 1996, the RDAT purchased an air conditioned bus specially outfitted as a mobile spay/neuter surgery. This mobile surgery is used to conduct sterilization programmes outside the city such as Tambaram and Avadi. However, since we are constantly having a shortage of vehicles for returning the sterilized dogs to areas from where they were picked up, the mobile surgery is being increasingly used for this purpose.

The Tempo Excel ambulance so generously handed over to us on February 29, 2004 by Sri La Sri Nachiappa Swamigal, Kovilor Adheenam and Chairman of the RDAT to replace one of our eight-year old ambulances which was becoming extremely expensive to maintain has been of great help. Our heartfelt thanks to Sri La Sri Nachiappa Swamigal for his continued support for our ABC programme.

The Rukmini Devi Arundale Trust's support for our activities has been of tremendous help.

ANIMALS ASIA FOUNDATION – DR. DOG

The help received from Animals Asia Foundation, Hong Kong and its founder, Mrs. Jill Robinson, MBE resulted in the full fledged launching of the Dr. Dog programme in Chennai in June 2002.

Twenty dogs are now officially certified Dr. Dogs who spend time regularly, along with their human guardians in orphanages, schools for special children, homes for the aged and in the YRG Aids Centre at the Voluntary Health Services.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Besides the regular programmes carried out by volunteers of the Blue Cross in schools, colleges, institutions and clubs such as the Lions and Rotary, the Blue Cross carried out a programme on "Environmental Orientation to School Education" under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

DONORS

The work of the Blue Cross has been made possible to large extent by donations received from the Public. We have been fortunate that several donors have been making regular contributions. These include the estate of the late Mrs. Janaki Viswanathan, Mr. Kanti Lal Chandak, M/s. Bhatnagar Memorial (Charitable) Trust, Sri Abubabaji Charitable Mission Trust, M/s. K.M. Pandia Charitable Trust, M/s. P.S.K. Moorthy Memorial Trust, Dr. T. Sivakami, Ms. Malini Parthasarathy, Mrs. Shanthi Shankar, Mrs. Jagannathan, Ms. Mangeny Isidore Kichuwaraju, Mr. Praspan Janagiraman, Ms. Rashmi J Bhandarkar, Ms. Saraswathi Schenkel, Mr. K.P.S. Menon, Ms. C.R. Sumana, Mr. I.S. Anand, Mr. K.

Narayan, Mr. V. Venkateswaran, Mr. S. Subramaniam, Ms. N. Ananthie, Mrs. K. Chandra, Mr. Yennarkay R. Chiranjeevirathnam, Ms. S. Sadhana, Mrs. Lalitha Ramamurthy, Mr. Hari Rao, Mr. M.C. Lakshmi pathy, Ms. D. Poongodhai, Mr. M. Sundarajan, Ms. T. Padmavathi, Mr. G. Srinivasan, Miss Yammini, Mr. & Mrs. Courtine, Mr. & Mrs. T. Ravindar, Mr. S. Ramesh Kumar, Mr. P.A. Subramaniam, Mr. L. Vasudev, Dr. Babu John, Mr. S. Muthuswamy, Mr. Balasubrayan, Ms. Devasena, Prof. V.S.R.K. Mouly and his family, Ms. Deva, Mrs. Lakshmi Mahadevan and Mr. Arun Bewoor. A large number of supporters regularly have been donating a substantial amount of material in kind. This includes Ms. Sudarsena, Mrs. Shanthi Shankar, and the families of Mr. Nemichand Singhi and the late Mrs. Janaki Viswanathan. This year, too, we received a large donation from Mr. Philip Wollen of the Winsome Constance Kindness Trust.

The monthly grant from the **Tripura Foundation** is specially appreciated.

M/s G. J. Multi Clave (India) Pvt. Ltd. have been collecting all our bio-medical waste since 2004 without any charge and we are deeply grateful to them for this service.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The Blue Cross has been fortunate in having the support of the Animal Welfare Board of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests for a part of the ABC programme. The AWBI, with its various schemes to help NGOs implement their programmes, has transformed the entire animal welfare scene in India by making funds available for over one hundred Shelter houses and a like number of Ambulances for animals all over India.

C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR FOUNDATION

Since 1987, the C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation has been generously housing our Registered Office at their premises. Their staff members have been of immense help in our programmes and regular activities. Our thanks to the CPRAF, its Honorary Director, Dr. Nanditha Krishna and other staff members, especially Mrs.Kala, Mr. Manikandan, Mrs. Shantha, Mr. Sekar and Mr. Selvapandian..

TAMILNADU GOVERNMENT GRANT

The annual grant from the Government of Tamilnadu is greatly appreciated as is the sales tax exemption given to us in all purchases of medicines and hospital supplies. The ambulances of the Blue Cross have also been allowed a special 75% rebate in road tax.

ASIA FOR ANIMALS CONFERENCE

The fourth Asia for Animals Conference was organized at Chennai from Jan 10-12, 2007. Over 300 delegates from 28 countries participated. See www.asiaforanimals.org for details.

CONCLUSION

The work of the Blue Cross has increased tremendously in the last few years. Thousands of animals injured in rail or road accidents or young puppies and kittens separated from their mothers are rescued by us each year. Almost ten thousand ABC/AR operations on dogs and several hundred on cats are carried out. Hundreds of injured and sick animals are in our shelters at any time. All our services with the exception of requesting the cost of vaccines from pets with guardians are totally free of charge. In spite of so much of our work being done by volunteers, the running of so massive an operation needs a lot of money. It is, therefore, with many thanks that we acknowledge the generous help of our supporters without whose help the above work would not have been possible.

M.Parthasarathi
Honorary Secretary