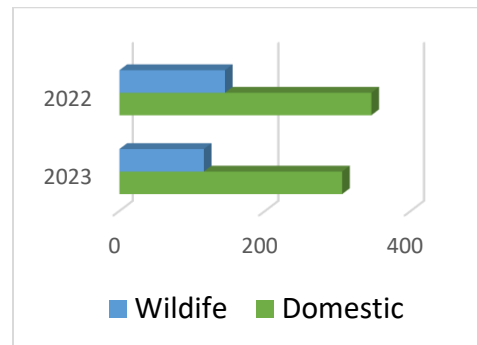
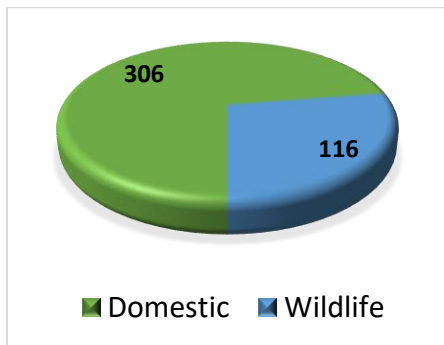


ANIMAL CONTROL

Animal Control receives the majority of its calls through dispatch. Some calls and information come through email, social media, and radio. Each call gets logged in dispatch as well as through Animal Control records for statistical and logistical purposes. This ensures all calls get recorded, responded to, followed up on, and resolved or referred to other agencies. This also allows for easier identification of repetitive incidents and habitual offenders, which can then be the focus of further outreach to aid in compliance. Actions that ACOs may take to enforce compliance with Massachusetts General Laws and Sterling Town Bylaws include written warnings, citations, hearings, criminal complaints and warrants.

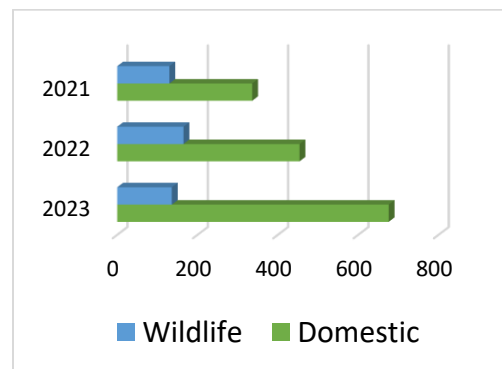
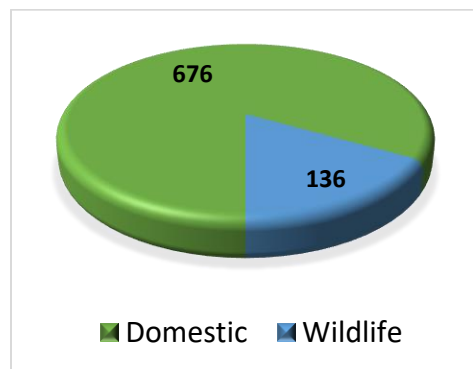
Call Volume

In 2023, Animal Control received 422 calls involving 812 animals. Each call is categorized by the animal type: Domestic Animal or Wildlife Animal. A domestic animal is any animal that is owned, including pets, service animals, farm animals, and working animals. Wildlife animals are any animal that is wild. Of the 422 animal control calls, 306 were domestic animal calls and 116 were wildlife animal calls.



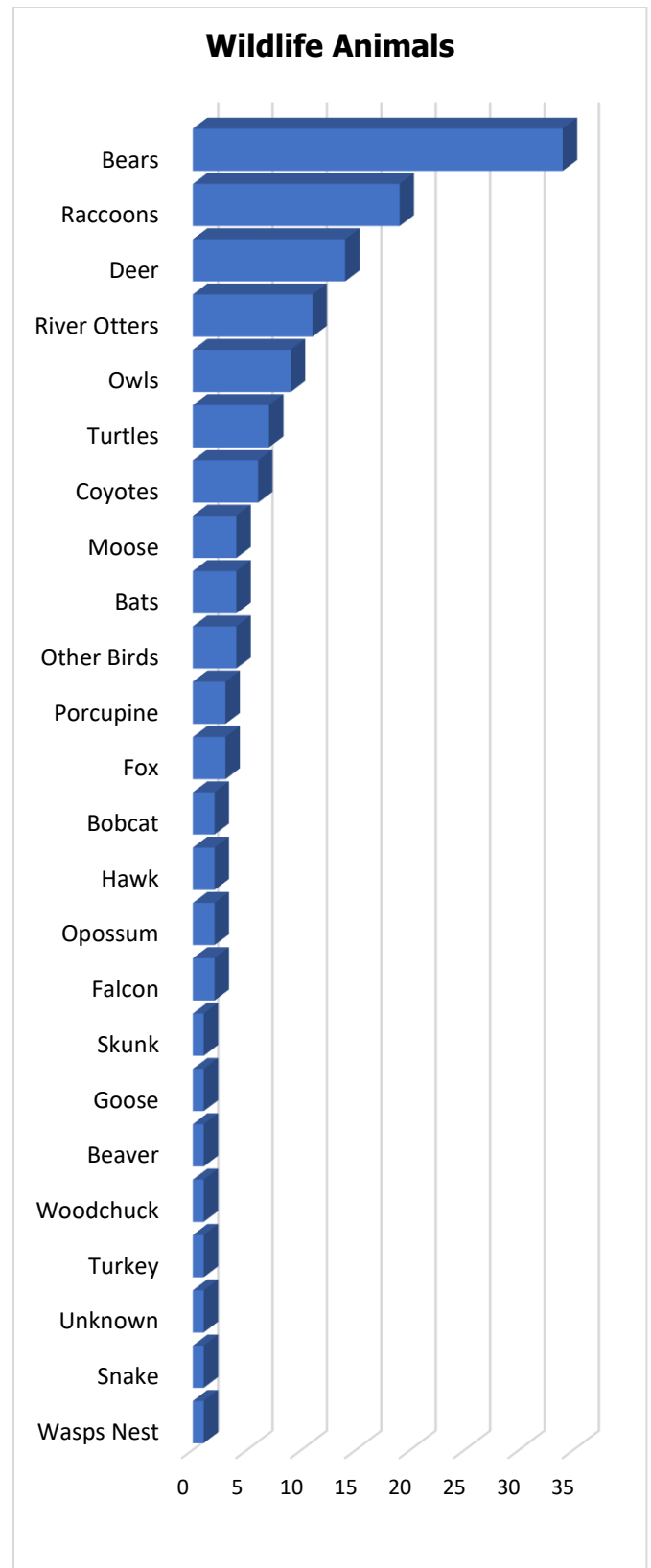
Animals

Of the 812 animals involved in calls this year, 676 were domestic and 136 were wildlife.

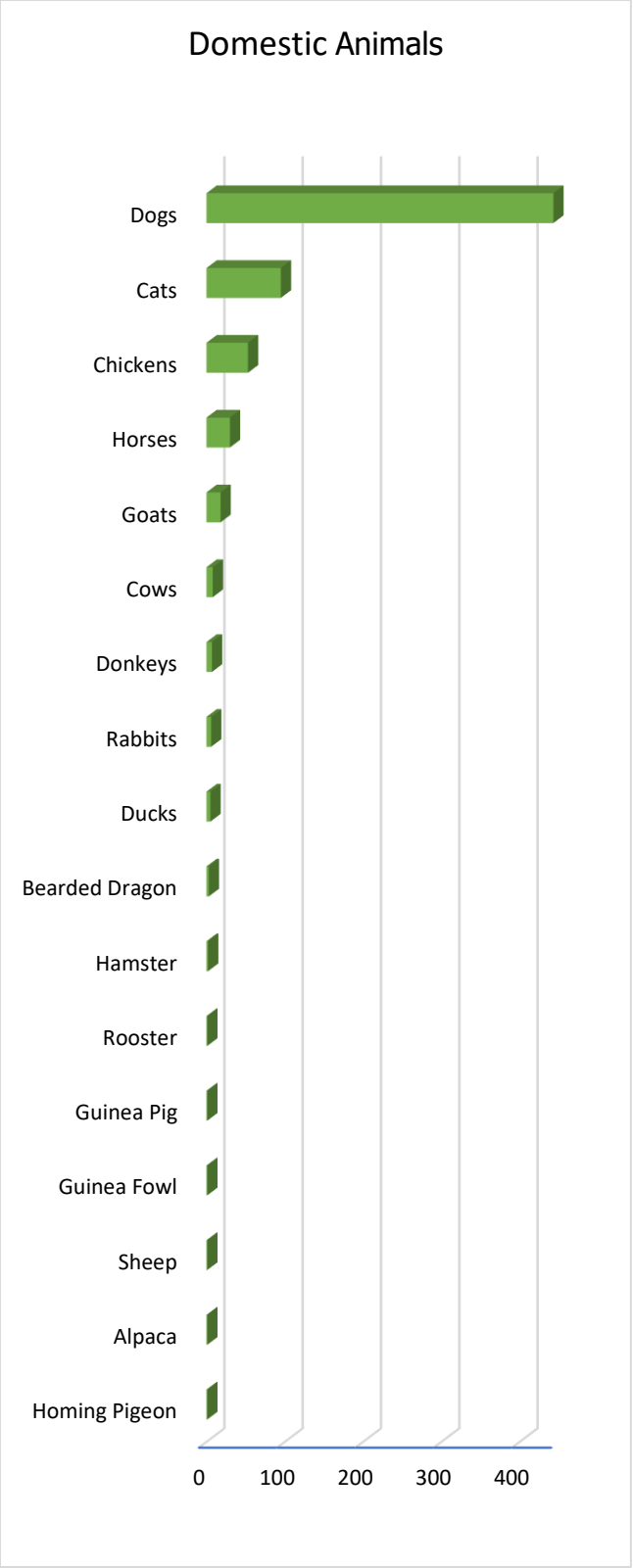


A break down of the animals is as follows:

#	Wildlife Animal
34	Bears
19	Raccoons
14	Deer
11	River Otters
9	Owls
7	Turtles
6	Coyotes
4	Moose
4	Bats
4	Other Birds
3	Porcupine
3	Fox
2	Bobcat
2	Hawk
2	Opossum
2	Falcon
1	Skunk
1	Goose
1	Beaver
1	Woodchuck
1	Turkey
1	Unknown
1	Snake
1	Wasps Nest



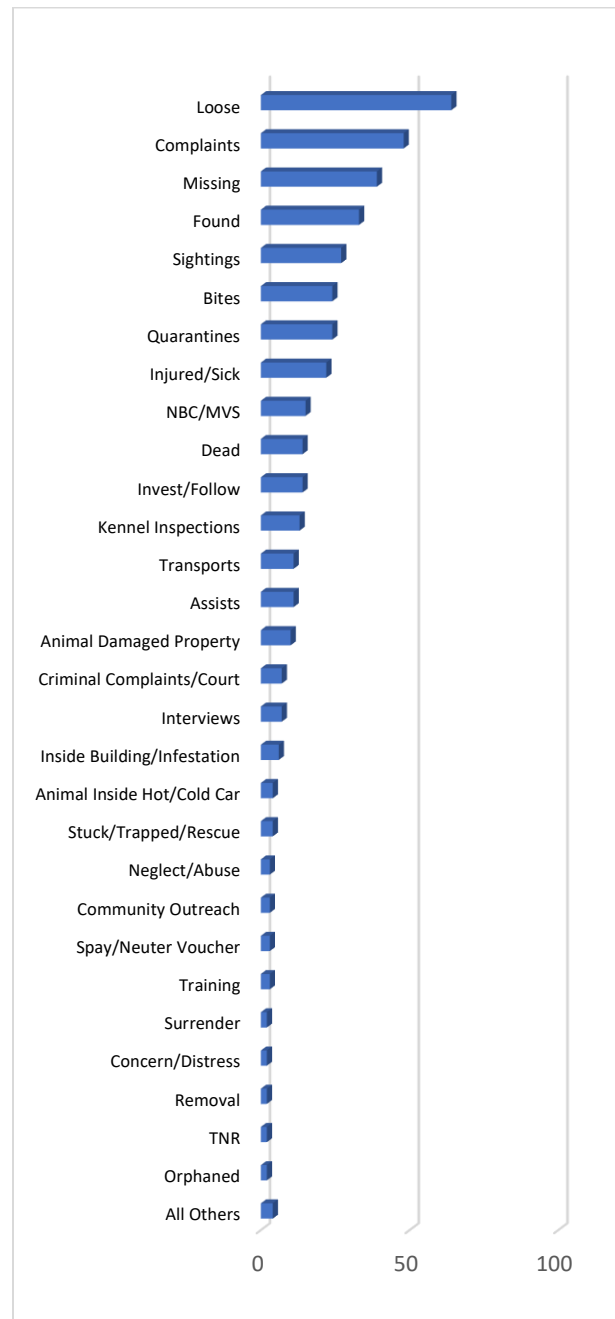
#	Domestic Animal
443	Dogs
95	Cats
53	Chickens
30	Horses
18	Goats
8	Cows
7	Donkeys
6	Rabbits
5	Ducks
3	Bearded Dragons
2	Hamster
1	Rooster
1	Guinea Pig
1	Guinea Fowl
1	Sheep
1	Alpaca
1	Homing Pigeon



Call Reasons

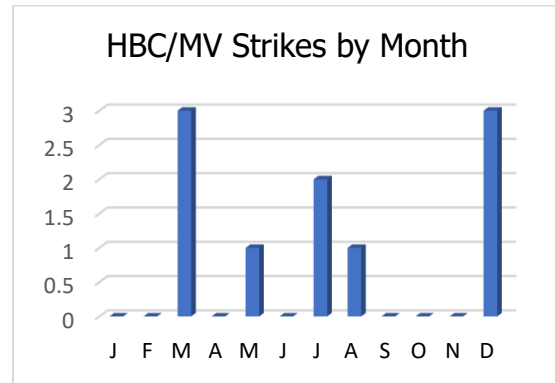
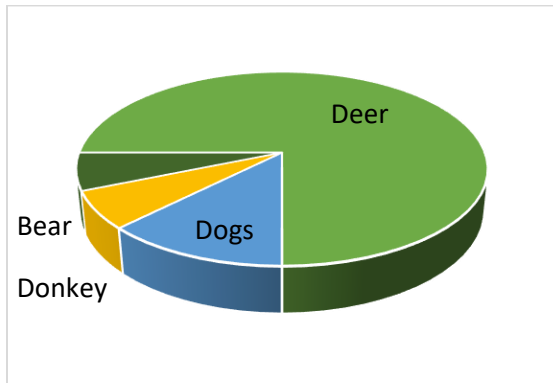
The majority of Animal Control calls are complaints and loose, missing, or found animals. Loose animals are any domestic animal that is outside of its housing or enclosure, or off its property and unattended by the owner. A found animal is a domestic animal that was loose but has been corralled or secured by some method by someone other than the owner. The reason for the 422 calls to Animal Control this year are as follows:

#	Reason
64	Loose Animal
48	Complaints
39	Missing Animal
33	Found Animal
27	Sightings (Bears, Moose)
24	Bites
24	Quarantines/Rabies Exposures
22	Injured/Sick Animal
16	HBC (Hit By Car)/MV Strikes
14	Dead Animal
14	Investigations/Follow-Ups
13	Kennel Inspections
11	Transports
11	Assists
10	Animal Damaged Property
7	Criminal Complaints/Court
7	Interviews
6	Inside Building/Infestation
4	Inside Hot/Cold Vehicle
4	Stuck/Trapped/Rescued
4	Neglect/Abuse
3	Community Outreach
3	Spay/Neuter Vouchers
3	Training
2	Surrender
2	Concern/Distress
2	Removal
2	TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release)
2	Orphaned
1	Abandoned (All Others)
1	Hearings (All Others)
1	Probation Violation (All Others)
1	Illegal Trapping (All Others)



HBC (Hit-by-Car)/Motor Vehicle Strikes

Of the 16 HBC/MV Strike calls, 3 were domestic animals and 13 were wildlife animals. The domestic animals were 2 dogs and a donkey; all 3 were killed. Both dog strikes were hit and runs. The wildlife animals included 12 deer and 1 black bear.



Interagency Involvement

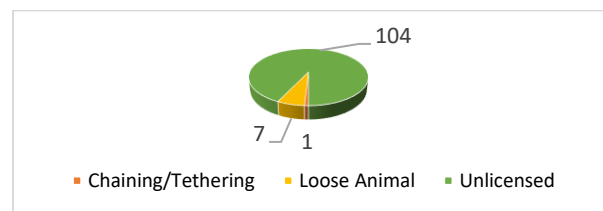
Animal Control works with numerous agencies and departments as well as rescues, shelters, veterinarians, and fund providing charities. In 2023, ACOs transported 11 animals for emergency care.

Animal Control worked with MSPCA, MDAR, Environmental Police, and Mass Wildlife on cases this year. We have received funding for animal care from the Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) and several spay/neuter vouchers from the Massachusetts Animal Fund.

Citations

Animal Control issued 111 citations this year. Of the 111 citations, 23 were issued as warnings, 43 were voided, 13 were paid and 32 were unpaid (these figures will change as violations continue to be returned and processed). The 111 citations were issued for the following offenses:

#	Violation/Offense
1	Chaining/Tethering Confinement Restrictions
7	Loose Animal
103	Unlicensed Dog



Court Cases

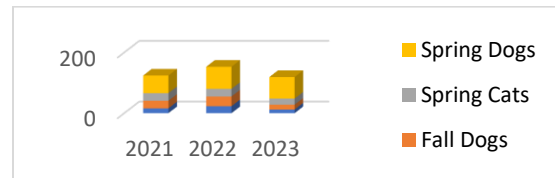
Animal Control submitted 23 Criminal Complaints to Clinton District Court in 2023. The violations for the Criminal Complaints were as follows:

Counts	Violation	Offenses	Type
1	Failure to Pay Violation	Loose Dog	Misdemeanor
10	Cruelty to Animals by Custodian		Felony
10	Cruelty to Animals		Felony
12	Intimidation of a Witness		Felony
21	Failure to Pay Violation	Unlicensed Dog	Misdemeanor

Rabies Clinics

Two rabies clinics were held this year, one in the spring and one in fall. Both were held at the VCA Sterling and assisted by ACAB (Animal Control Advisory Board) volunteers. The spring clinic brought in 71 dogs and 20 cats and the fall clinic brought in 16 dogs and 12 cats. In all, 119 animals were vaccinated through these clinics. Total vaccinations figures are below:

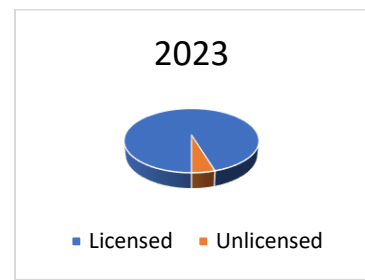
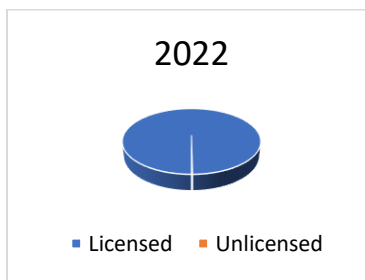
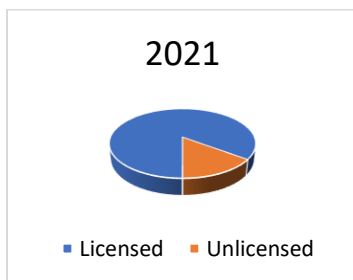
	Spring	Fall	Total
Dogs	71	16	87
Cats	20	12	32
Total	91	28	119



Dog Licensing

Sterling residents licensed 1,497 dogs and 14 kennels in 2023. There were approximately 74 dogs that remained unlicensed.

Year	Licensed	Unlicensed	Total	Percentage
2021	1308	228	1536	85%
2022	1586	21	1607	98%
2023	1497	74	1571	95%



Intakes

Animal Control had 21 intakes this year. There were 4 wildlife animals and 17 domestic animals. All 4 wildlife animals were transferred to tufts, 3 died and 1 was treated and transferred to a Wildlife Rehabilitator. Owners claimed and took possession of 11 dogs that were loose or found. Animal Control took in 1 dog and 1 cat that were killed by motor vehicle strikes and remained unclaimed. An elderly cat was surrendered to a rescue. A found bearded dragon went unclaimed and was transferred to Rainforest Rescue and used in the educational program at Davis Farmland. A hatchling chicken was found in Princeton and taken to Sterling Police. The chicken was adopted by a Princeton Firefighter with a farm. A homing pigeon who was blown off course during a strong storm was given water, food and time to rest with Animal Control before being released at a location familiar to the bird, at the owner's request. The owner said his bird would find its way home from there. Below are some of the intakes from 2023.



Training

This year, ACO Jones completed "The Forensics of Dog Aggression", ACOAM "Birds of Prey, Wingmasters" training, and the "State Ethics Commission Conflict of Interest Law Training".

ACO Jones, along with members of the Sterling Police and Fire Departments completed "Nero's Law" training. Under Nero's Law, Ambulances are now required to transport injured police K9's in emergencies. While Sterling does not have any K9's, neighboring departments and agencies do, so it is very important that our first responders know how to respond to and manage a K9 patient, should they be in town assisting our department.

Media

Sterling Animal Control in the news:

- *The ACOAM Catch Monthly Newsletter, 1st Edition*, "Unlikely Friends" by Animal Control Officer Kelly Jones, Sterling
- *WCVB Boston* "Beaver tail found nailed to MA tree"
- *Boston.com* "Beaver tail nailed to tree in Sterling prompts investigation"
- *WCVB5* "Severed beaver tail found nailed to sign in Sterling"
- *Boston 25* "Public's help sought after beaver tail found nailed to Sterling tree"

- *Worcester Daily Voice* "Residents feel "awful" after beaver tail found nailed to tree in Sterling"
- *Spectrum News* "Investigation underway after severed beaver tail found in Sterling"
- *Spectrum News* "Sterling Animal Control Rescues Raccoons in Dumpster"

Community Outreach

In June, ACO Jones presented through CMDART (Central Mass Disaster Animal Response Team) for Emergency Managers and CERT Coordinators. Two separate trainings that ACO Jones presented were "Reading and Handling Animals in Emergencies", which included a hands-on demonstration and the Service Animals portion of a "Working Animals Training".

In July, ACO Jones, along with CMDART President Joanne Griffin, gave a presentation at the Sterling Senior Center. They discussed emergency planning and preparedness for pet owners.

In September, ACO Jones deployed with CMDART to the Red Cross Emergency Shelter set up at Sky View Middle School in Leominster after significant flooding displaced numerous residents. Any pets that were taken in at the shelter were managed by CMDART.

In October, ACO Jones visited an elementary school in Holden as a Mystery Reader for a 2nd grade class. The kids heard a book about Animal Control Officers and viewed a presentation with some of the animals that ACO Jones has worked with.

Noteworthy Cases

On February 8th, Sterling Police and Fire were dispatched to a large animal rescue on Pratts Junction. The owner indicated their horse had attempted to jump out of its stall and was stuck teetering atop the stall opening. The District 8 Technical Rescue Team was called out along with Animal Control. The horse was freed within 45 minutes. Photos by Sterling Fire below.



In March, Animal Control opened an Animal Cruelty/Neglect Investigation for Vintage Meadows, the farm formerly operated on Flanagan Hill. After a two-month long investigation and with the assistance of Detective Chase, ACO Jones filed felony charges against the two owners of Vintage Meadows. After a probable cause hearing, 8 charges from the Criminal Complaint were issued. The charges include 2 counts of Animal Cruelty by a custodian and 2 counts of Animal Cruelty for each owner. The case is currently being prosecuted at Clinton District Court.

On October 12th, while providing ACO coverage for Clinton, ACO Jones responded to an apartment building for a report of numerous raccoons trapped inside a dumpster. Upon arrival, ACO Jones located a total of 6 large adult raccoons at the bottom of the dumpster. With the assistance of a ramp and a little encouragement all 6 were able to climb out and went on their way. Photos of the "trash bandits" are below.

