J&R AQUATIC ANIMAL RESCUE

2026
EXOTIC PET SURRENDER EVENTS

YEAR-END IMPACT REPORT





ANIMALS	EVENTS	ATTENDEES	FB VIEWS
585	32	704	412,773

A statewide, judgment-free alternative to releasing unwanted exotic pets — protecting animals, waterways, and the communities we share.

JANUARY 10 – NOVEMBER 14, 2026 • WISCONSIN

SURRENDER, DON'T RELEASE

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A year of access and impact

32 completed events in 2026 • 192 documented surrenderers

In 2026, J&R; Aquatic Animal Rescue (JRAAR) delivered 32 Exotic Pet Surrender Events across Wisconsin, receiving 585 animals and providing an accessible alternative to abandonment or release. The program also drew 704 event attendees and generated 412,773 recorded Facebook views.

ANIMALS	EVENTS	SURRENDERERS	ATTENDEES
585	32	192	704

2026 compared with the published 2025 report

Measure	2025	2026	Change
Completed events	25	32	+28.0%
Animals surrendered	527	585	+11.0%
Attendees	411	704	+71.3%
Facebook views / reported reach	627,536	412,773	See note

The 2025 report describes Facebook campaign reach/views; the 2026 workbook records Facebook views. Because tracking definitions may differ, no year-over-year digital engagement percentage is presented.

What the numbers show

Animal welfare: Hundreds of animals entered safer care pathways. The most frequent recorded reasons involved inability to care for a pet, time constraints, or lack of space.

Invasive species prevention: The data identifies 22 animals in the NR-40 category (18 goldfish, 3 koi, and 1 Quaker parrot), illustrating the value of a responsible surrender option.

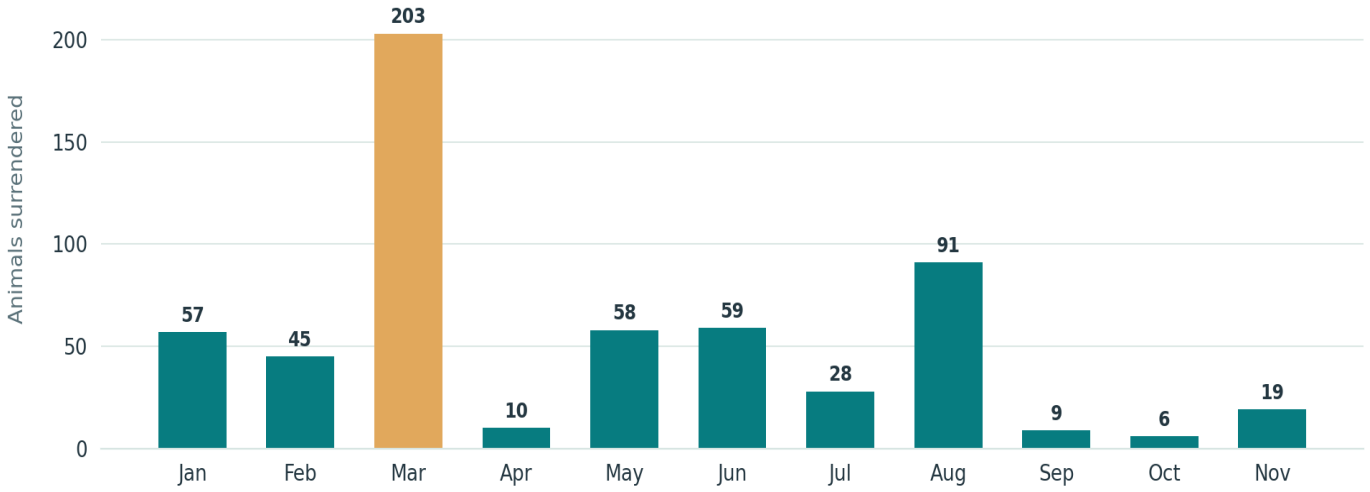
Statewide access: Event volume varied widely, from 1 animal at two smaller events to 183 at Kaukauna. High-volume and low-volume stops both create opportunities for education and intervention.

Scope: January 10–November 14, 2026. Annual totals and charts are recalculated from the event spreadsheet rather than relying on inconsistent pre-calculated summary cells.

02 / EVENT ACTIVITY

When communities used the program

32 events, 11 calendar months, multiple urban and rural venues



March accounted for 203 animals, driven by 183 at the March 7 Kaukauna event. August followed with 91 animals across three events. Across all 32 events, the median intake was 9 animals.

Highest-volume event stops

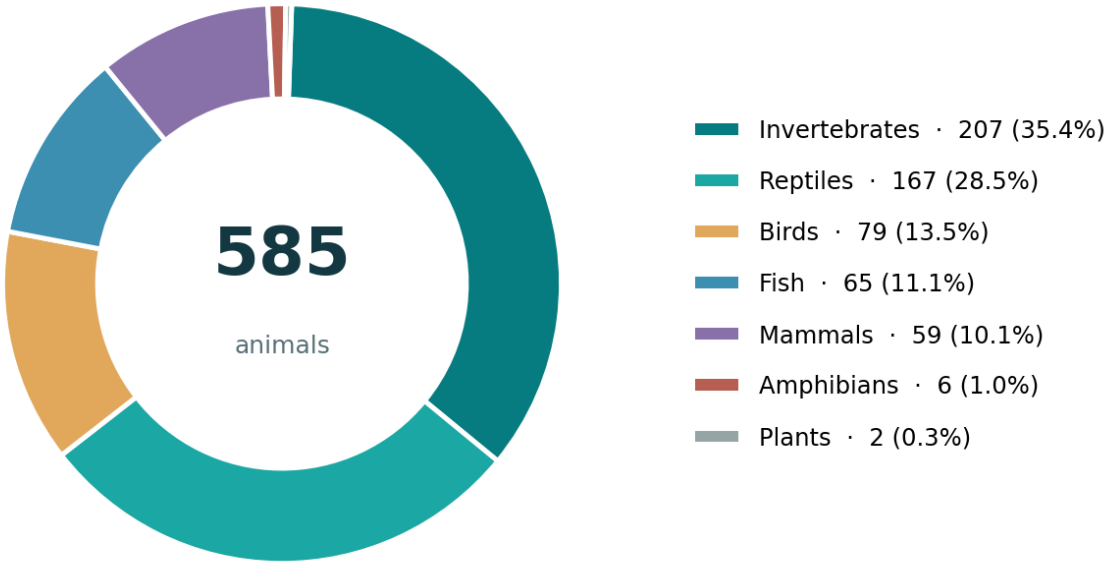
Date	Location	Animals	Surrenderers
Mar 7	Kaukauna–1000 Islands	183	6
Aug 15	Bristol	48	30
Aug 8	Cadott	29	9
Jan 24	Edgerton Public Library	28	3
Jun 6	Waupun	26	3
May 2	Rhinelander District Library	25	8

Concentration effect: Kaukauna represented 31.3% of all animals surrendered in 2026. Without that event, the remaining 31 events averaged 13.0 animals each. A single large intake can therefore shift annual averages substantially.

03 / ANIMAL COMPOSITION

What kinds of animals came in?

Biological grouping of all 585 reported animals, including aquatic invertebrates



Species and animal-type highlights

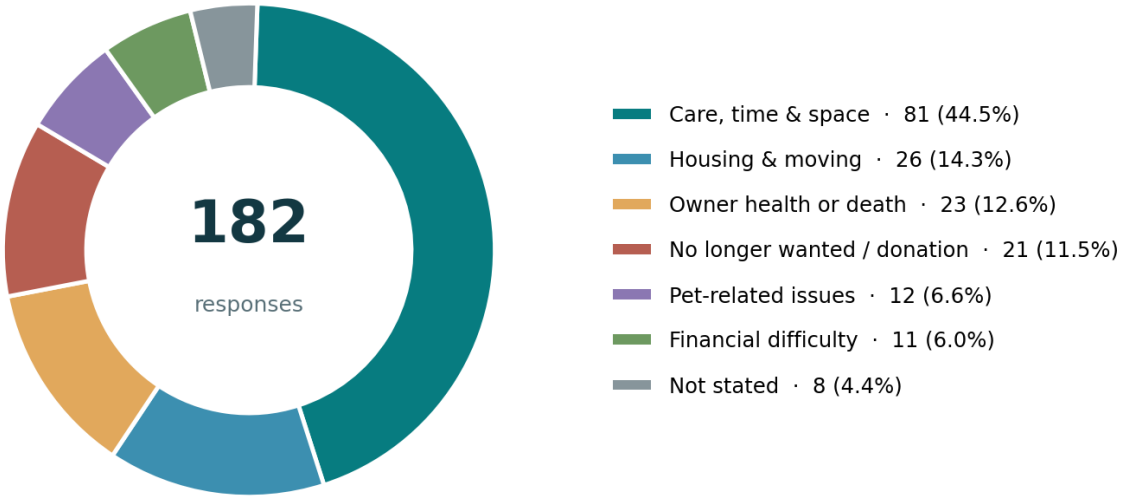
Animal as recorded	Count	Share of all animals
Mystery Snail	181	30.9%
Parakeet	66	11.3%
Assorted Community	38	6.5%
Red Eared Slider	34	5.8%
Bearded Dragon	32	5.5%
Ball Python	22	3.8%
Dubia	20	3.4%
Goldfish	18	3.1%
Rat	15	2.6%
Leopard Gecko	13	2.2%

The 181 mystery snails account for 30.9% of all animals in the year-end total. This makes the invertebrate category unusually prominent. For planning and comparison, monitor both individual animals and surrendering households.

04 / REASONS FOR SURRENDER

Why owners surrendered pets

182 individual reasons recorded in the worksheet • denominator is not 585 animals



Grouped reasons for surrender

Reason group	Responses	Share
Care, time & space	81	44.5%
Housing & moving	26	14.3%
Owner health or death	23	12.6%
No longer wanted / donation	21	11.5%
Pet-related issues	12	6.6%
Financial difficulty	11	6.0%
Not stated	8	4.4%

44.5% of documented reasons were related to care, limited time, or lack of space. These are actionable prevention topics for outreach: realistic care requirements, enclosure size, daily time needs, and long-term responsibility.

Data interpretation: the 182 reason entries and 192 surrenderers are separate worksheet totals, without a documented one-to-one linkage. The original 18 reason labels appear on page 6.

04 / REASONS / DETAILED LOG

All recorded reasons for surrender

Original reason labels retained, with minor spelling cleanup for readability

Reported reason	Original category	Responses	Share
Cannot care for	Owner	40	22.0%
No time / attention	Owner	27	14.8%
Moving	Owner	21	11.5%
Do Not Want	Owner	20	11.0%
Health	Owner	17	9.3%
No Space	Owner	14	7.7%
Cannot Afford	Owner	11	6.0%
Did Not Say	Did Not Say	8	4.4%
Passed Away	Owner	6	3.3%
Landlord	Owner	5	2.7%
Compatibility	Pet	3	1.6%
Needs companions	Pet	3	1.6%
Compatibility with people	Pet	2	1.1%
Donation	Owner	1	0.5%
Breeding	Pet	1	0.5%
Equipment caught fire	Pet	1	0.5%
Odor	Pet	1	0.5%
Health	Pet	1	0.5%

What the responses suggest

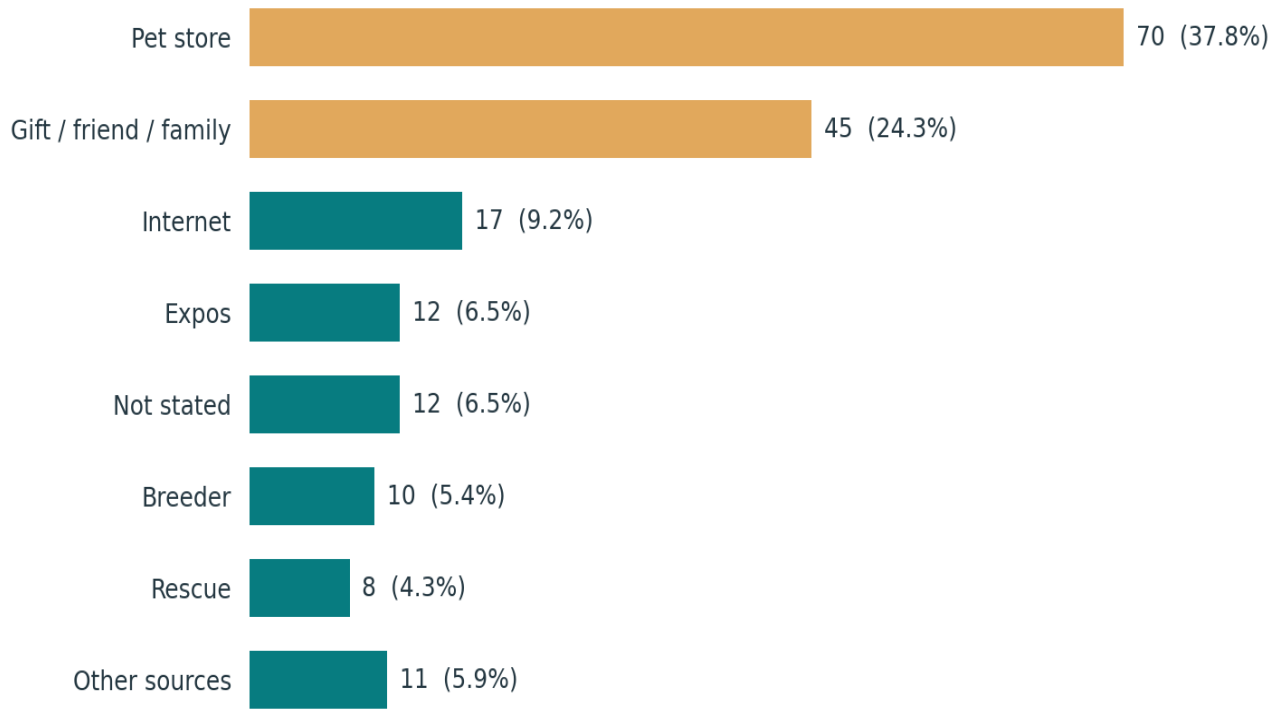
The most frequent single reason was “cannot care for” (40), followed by insufficient time or attention (27), moving (21), and no longer wanting the pet (20). Owner health and bereavement were also meaningful factors. These explanations support a judgment-free approach that helps people seek assistance before an animal is released or abandoned.

Surrender reasons describe reported circumstances, not verified motives or assessments of any individual caregiver.

05 / ANIMAL ORIGINS

Where surrendered pets came from

185 origin entries recorded in the workbook



Pet stores were the most frequently reported source (70 of 185 entries; 37.8%), followed by pets received as gifts from friends or family (45; 24.3%). Together, these channels represented 62.2% of documented origins.

Practical opportunities for prevention

At the point of acquisition: Share care sheets explaining adult size, lifespan, housing, nutrition, veterinary needs and the long-term cost of keeping the animal.

For pets given as gifts: Encourage agreement from the future caregiver, research on the species, and a realistic plan if circumstances change.

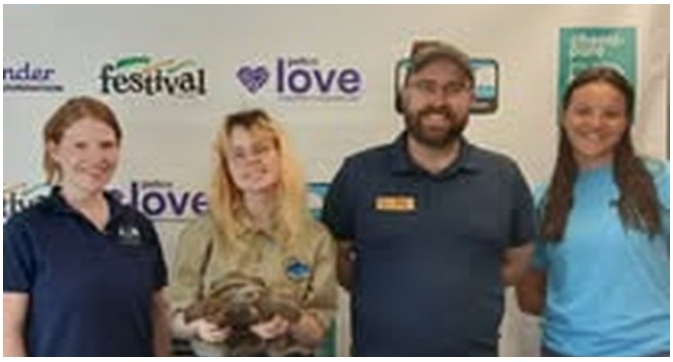
At events: Link surrendered-pet services with practical prevention education, humane alternatives, and invasive-species guidance.

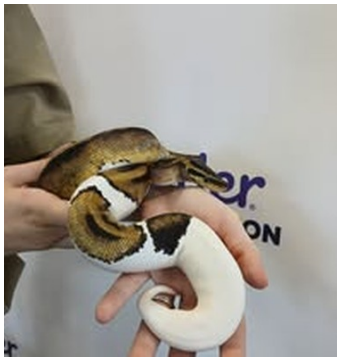
Origin responses are reported sources, not a causal determination that stores, friends, breeders, or expos caused a surrender. The origin denominator (185) is distinct from the reason denominator (182).

06 / PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

Conservation and responsible care

Safe surrender • Pathogen screening • Community partnerships







Keeping unwanted exotic animals out of the environment

The dataset flags 22 animals under Wisconsin NR-40 designations: 18 goldfish and 3 koi listed as restricted, and 1 Quaker parrot listed as prohibited. Providing a lawful surrender pathway helps reduce the risk of intentional release, animal suffering and ecological disruption. The number recorded reflects intake, not confirmed avoided releases.

Frog testing supported by Josh's Frogs

Frogs received through the program were tested for chytrid fungus, and the reported results were negative. This testing was funded through a grant from Josh's Frogs. Negative findings are reassuring for the sampled frogs but do not establish freedom from all infectious diseases.

Thank you to our 2026 sponsors

WISCONSIN DNR

Conservation and invasive species prevention

FESTIVAL FOODS

Community support and outreach

CHEMI-PURE

Event support and animal welfare

We also thank the libraries, nature centers, local conservation partners, rescue colleagues, volunteers and host organizations that helped make statewide events possible.

APPENDIX A / EVENT RESULTS

Event-by-event results

Per-event counts from the 2026 Data worksheet

Date	Event location	Animals	Surr.	Att.	FB views
01/10/26	Necedah–Siegler Memorial Library	9	4	12	13,602
01/17/26	De Soto Library	11	4	9	17,816
01/24/26	Edgerton Library	28	3	3	18,425
01/31/26	Saukville	9	3	12	14,139
02/07/26	Milwaukee–Kosciuszko Center	18	8	52	18,964
02/21/26	St. Croix Falls	4	4	11	19,276
02/28/26	Monroe	23	7	13	21,528
03/07/26	Kaukauna–1000 Islands	183	6	54	13,471
03/14/26	Barneveld	14	7	20	14,505
03/21/26	Berlin Public Library	4	3	9	13,525
03/28/26	Green Lake	2	2	26	11,597
04/11/26	Rib Lake	1	1	4	17,234
04/17/26	Stevens Point	8	6	25	16,026
04/25/26	Shawano Library	1	1	6	12,577
05/02/26	Rhinelander Library	25	8	25	13,328
05/09/26	Kewaunee Library	5	3	13	9,727

Event capacity varies considerably. A small number of animals surrendered at one venue should not be interpreted as low public value: educational encounters, safe referrals and opportunities for conservation outreach are also part of the program.

APPENDIX A / EVENT RESULTS

Event-by-event results

Per-event counts from the 2026 Data worksheet

Date	Event location	Animals	Surr.	Att.	FB views
05/17/26	Wautoma	3	3	101	10,056
05/30/26	Marinette	25	4	9	10,280
06/06/26	Waupun	26	3	11	9,662
06/13/26	Baldwin	15	12	30	13,023
06/20/26	Madison	10	6	14	10,696
06/27/26	Oconto	8	5	14	12,380
07/11/26	Antigo Library	3	2	10	11,310
07/18/26	Milwaukee–Kosciuszko Center	25	20	28	11,645
08/08/26	Cadott	29	9	15	13,501
08/15/26	Bristol	48	30	45	16,199
08/22/26	Wisconsin Dells	14	6	19	11,803
09/12/26	Beaver Creek Reserve	9	4	15	7,292
10/08/26	UMISC	4	3	50	7,636
10/24/26	Lancaster	2	2	9	8,987
11/07/26	Milwaukee–Kosciuszko Center	14	9	15	6,763
11/14/26	Coon Valley	5	4	25	5,800

2026 TOTAL

32 events **585 animals** **192 surrenderers**

Additional totals: 704 attendees and 412,773 Facebook views. The dataset supplies event-level counts but does not directly link specific surrendered animals or reasons to particular events.

APPENDIX B / ANIMAL CATEGORIES

Detailed animal intake inventory

Every animal-type row from the annual source worksheet • 585 total

Source group	Subcategory	Animal listed	Count
Bird	Cockatiel	Cockatiel	2
Bird	Conure	Sun	2
Bird	Parakeet	Indian Ringneck	2
Bird	Parakeet	Parakeet	66
Bird	Parakeet	Rosy Bourkes	1
Bird	Parrot	African Gray	1
Bird	Conure	Green Cheek	2
Bird	Lovebird	Peachface	1
Bird	Parakeet	Parrotlet	1
Freshwater	Fish	Assorted Community	38
Freshwater	Plant	Unregulated	1
Freshwater	Pleco	Common Pleco	1
Freshwater	Salamander	Axolotl	2
Freshwater	Snail	Mystery Snail	181
Freshwater	South American Cichlid	Assorted	5
Herp	Crab	Hermit Crab	6
Herp	Frog	Clawed Frog	3
Herp	Frog	Green Dart Frog	1
Herp	Lizard	Bearded Dragon	32
Herp	Lizard	Crested Gecko	2
Herp	Lizard	Fat Tail Gecko	2
Herp	Lizard	Frilled Dragon	1
Herp	Lizard	Gargoyle	2
Herp	Lizard	Iguana	3
Herp	Lizard	Leopard Gecko	13
Herp	Lizard	Ornate Monitor	1
Herp	Lizard	Pictus Gecko	1
Herp	Lizard	Rankin's Dragon	1
Herp	Lizard	Viper Gecko	2
Herp	Lizard	Water Dragon	1
Herp	Lizards	Black-and-white Tegu	1
Herp	Snake	Ball Python	22
Herp	Snake	Burmese Python	1

Classification note: the spreadsheet uses operational categories such as “Freshwater,” “Herp,” and “NR-40.” Page 4 re-groups these entries biologically so that snails and crabs count as invertebrates, and NR-40 animals count by their animal type.

APPENDIX B / ANIMAL CATEGORIES

Detailed animal intake inventory

Every animal-type row from the annual source worksheet • 585 total

Source group	Subcategory	Animal listed	Count
Herp	Snake	Corn	3
Herp	Snake	Kingsnake	3
Herp	Snake	Rat Snake	1
Herp	Snake	Sand Boa	1
Herp	Tortoise	Hermann's	1
Herp	Tortoise	Russian	4
Herp	Tortoise	Sulcata	4
Herp	Turtle	African Sideneck	2
Herp	Turtle	Alligator Snapping	3
Herp	Turtle	Asian Box Turtle	1
Herp	Turtle	Central American Wood	1
Herp	Turtle	Cumberland Slider	3
Herp	Turtle	Florida Softshell	1
Herp	Turtle	Map	2
Herp	Turtle	Painted	5
Herp	Turtle	Red-eared Slider	34
Herp	Turtle	River Cooter	1
Herp	Turtle	Yellow Belly Slider	12
Insect	Roach	Dubia	20
NR-40	Prohibited	Quaker Parrot	1
NR-40	Restricted	Goldfish	18
NR-40	Restricted	Koi	3
Plant	Houseplant	Mangave	1
Mammal	Chinchilla	Chinchilla	7
Mammal	Degu	Degu	1
Mammal	Ferret	Ferret	10
Mammal	Guinea Pig	Guinea Pig	9
Mammal	Hedgehog	Hedgehog	6
Mammal	Rabbit	Rabbit	3
Mammal	Rodent	Gerbil	5
Mammal	Rodent	Mouse	3
Mammal	Rodent	Rat	15

Integrity check: The 65 source inventory rows sum to 585 animals, equal to the summed event-level total. Plants (two records) are shown in the inventory and included in the annual total for consistency with the uploaded source.

APPENDIX C / DOCUMENTATION

Methodology and next steps

How percentages and findings were calculated

Data and percentage definitions

Primary 2026 source: Surrender Events(1).xlsx, worksheet “2026 Data” (32 dated event rows, 65 animal-type rows, 18 surrender-reason rows, and 38 animal-origin rows). All counts in this report were recomputed by summing the applicable source records.

Animal pie chart: Class percentages divide biologically regrouped animal counts by 585 animals. The workbook’s “Freshwater” category contains fish, snails, an axolotl and one aquatic plant; “Herp” includes crabs and frogs. Animals recorded under “NR-40” are assigned to birds or fish for the pie chart.

Reasons pie chart: Seven interpretive categories group the 182 recorded reason entries. Each slice represents its share of 182 recorded responses, not of the 585 animals. The original line-item reasons are preserved on page 6.

Origin chart: Counts and percentages use 185 recorded origin entries. “Other sources” combines minor categories. Reason and origin totals do not necessarily equal the 192 recorded surrenderers because the worksheet does not establish one-to-one linkages.

Historical comparison: 2025 counts use JRAAR’s published 2025 Exotic Pet Surrender Events Year-End Impact Report (25 events; 527 animals; 411 attendees; 627,536 reported reach/views). Digital definitions may not be perfectly comparable.

Suggested priorities for future events

- Maintain both metro and rural stops; use household counts alongside animal counts to plan staffing.
- Expand outreach on time, space and long-term care needs, which dominate documented surrender reasons.
- Work with pet stores and gifting households on practical care education and no-release messaging.
- Continue monitoring NR-40 intakes and use grant-supported health screening where relevant.

FIND UPCOMING SURRENDER EVENTS

https://www.jraar.org/exoticpetsurrenderevents