Overview of the year

The mission of Darwin Animal Doctors has always been to protect the Galapagos through veterinary care and humane education. To that end, 2013 has been our biggest year yet.

Veterinary Work

Our tireless veterinarians, vet techs, and vet students from around the world worked plenty of overtime this year to save animals. For a small, volunteer-run clinic, our people - of all levels of experience - handled every type of case possible on the Galapagos.

Over one third of our cases were sterilizations to humanely limit the number of dogs and cats on Galapagos, and we gave parasite treatments to nearly all of our patients to stem the tide of invasive parasites on this UN World Heritage Site. Our small crew of volunteers also handled enormous challenges above and beyond the call of duty with procedures such as all-night amputations, serious car accident emergency care, and cancer treatments. Our people surmounted all of these complicated cases in our tiny clinic like champions.

We had 1,261 cases this year. Of these, 705 were patients seen at our clinic on Santa Cruz Island, the most populated of these islands. But thanks to a partnership with the government of Galapagos, we were invited to serve many other areas of Galapagos, including Floreana Island and remote highlands and farms. We also began a partnership with the Isabela Oceanographic Institute, which allowed us to treat many animals on the biggest island of Galapagos, Isabela.

In 2013, DAD treated patients on three of the four populated islands in the Galapagos, giving many animals their first veterinary visits ever.
2013 was also a big year for general humane education in Galapagos. Thanks to a generous grant by LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics, and thanks to the guidance of humane education group HEART, we started the year with a humane education PSA that played on Galapagos television. The PSA taught local people the value of putting their dogs on leashes to prevent the animals from killing endemic wildlife, unwanted breeding, and getting hit by cars. After many airings of the PSA, the local people told us that more and more of their neighbours began walking their dogs on leashes.

We also printed LUSH-funded, HEART-driven continuing care documents that we handed out to residents in Galapagos, to teach how to look for potential health issues in their animals, and care for their animals post-surgery.

Details of our education and veterinary results will be covered below, under Markers of Success.

Media Spotlight

DAD also had a notable amount of media coverage this year for our work in Galapagos. We got attention from large media channels like Discovery’s blog.

http://bit.ly/1Y1YdR

And just as importantly, Galapagos media took notice. We were covered by great island news sources like Fundar Galapagos.

http://bit.ly/1h36DqJ
We utilize several markers to gauge the success of our work. We cannot simply go by number of cases alone, since we could treat animal emergencies every day of the year and still not safeguard the future for the animals of Galapagos. Here are the standards we go by.

**Patient Longevity**

The first standard we use is the age of our patients. Before Darwin Animal Doctors (DAD) began in 2010, dogs and cats on Galapagos lived short and often tragic lives. They bred indiscriminately on the streets before coming to tragic ends due to poisoning or car accidents. Fewer than 14% of our patients this year were born before DAD began in Galapagos, which tells us that very few animals on Galapagos survived very long before DAD started.

Meanwhile, once an animal becomes a DAD patient, they have a survival rate of over 96%. And this year, 100% of our return patients from previous years are still alive.

**Humane Education**

Since the Galapagos was an environment without a permanent, full-time, practicing veterinary surgeon until our arrival, we often had to teach locals to bring in their animals for regular exams and how to determine that their animals may need veterinary care.

Last year, our clinic was at maximum capacity nearly every day with sterilizations and emergencies. This year, after an intense focus on humane education, the picture is very different.

Nearly one quarter of all our cases this year were annual checkups. This is hugely encouraging, because it means that we are no longer simply spaying and neutering the droves of unsterilized animals on Galapagos and treating tragic accident victims. Residents with companion animals now know the value of preventative care.

Another encouraging statistic is that nearly one out of every five of our patients this year came back for follow-up visits, which further tells us that people on Galapagos are taking the health of their animals seriously, following our advice on when to bring them in, and watching for potential issues in our patients before they become fatal.
Government and Community Partnership

DAD can only be a success if we have the cooperation and support of the Galapagos government. This year, we are proud to announce a productive partnership with the Agen-cia de Regulación y Control de la Bioseguridad para Galápa-gos (ABG). The ABG is responsible for managing invasive species on Galapagos, like dogs and cats.

Only with the blessing of the ABG can we treat animals outside of our clinic. Thanks to our new working relation-ship with the ABG, we held four highly successful remote campaigns with the permission of the government this year.

We saw 46 cases in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island. We also began a very fruitful partnership with the Isabela Oceanographic Institute, through which we treated an additional 496 animals on Isabela Island, the biggest island of Galapagos. Finally, we treated an additional 14 animals on Floreana Island, the least populated of the islands.

Each new approved campaign means the government appreciates our services more and more, and are pleased with the results of each previous campaign.

Variety of Cases

Lastly, the variety of cases we treat indicates how many issues locals recognize in their animals now. The numbers tell us people are looking for health indicators in their animals and care deeply about their companions.

This year, we treated everything from stab wounds to nail trims. From things as sensitive as heart murmurs, to things as specific as dogs who ate chocolate. People started noticing everything from anorexia to dehydration in their animals and brought them to our clinic for it.

And the people care so much about their animals that they use all means available to get their animals to us.
Ingenuity, the Mark of a Darwin Animal Doctors Volunteer

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of DAD. Their character, determination, and ingenuity every single day define our clinic more than anything else.

From deadly invasive diseases that should not exist on Galapagos, to exotic parasites, DAD volunteers have dealt with all manner of surprises in their patients, and have always found ways to deal with these unexpected situations. Beyond that, though, they prove their worth in other ways every day.

Even in their downtime, DAD volunteers learn how to be better veterinarians in any setting. And in an environment with limited means, they find creative ways to train. They even found a clever way to improve their suture skills: by practicing on plantains.

Some patients came in with possible blindness. Without fancy equipment to test the patients, DAD volunteers created makeshift obstacle courses to find out if the animals could find their way through them.

We endeavor to give our volunteers more of the tools to do their jobs that any first world clinic would be expected to have. While we continue to build up our infrastructure, though, it is reassuring to know that DAD volunteers will always find a way to deal with anything that comes their way.
DAD used 82% of its financial resources this year on running the clinic and education program, and keeping the clinic up and running. The rest of the funds were used to invest in the longevity of the organization.

In 2013, we had $51,177.40 in income, and we had $47,600.34 in expenditures. Below is the breakdown.

We spent $37,289.60 in Galapagos/Ecuador itself. Of this, $17,297.15 went to keeping the clinic physically up and running: clinic rent, utilities, permits and registration, and administrative grants and stipends. Another $3,187.29 was used for purchasing medicine locally in Ecuador. Pet food supplies cost another $1,321, and local radio and TV spots cost $1,321. The rest of the budget was for necessary expenditures in running the clinic, such as weekly cleanings, clinic laundry, maintenance and infrastructure repairs, dormitory and office supplies, and education program printing services.

$8,606.02 was spent on medicines and other medical supplies in the US, that we brought to Galapagos.

As for our other expenditures: We spent $44.76 on website hosting fees. For fundraising, we spent $995.96. Another $664.99 was for corporate registration and expenses.

In 2014, we will continue to use resources to save the most animals and educate the most people possible!
This summer, I was lucky enough to spend three weeks in the Galapagos Islands with Darwin Animal Doctors. I was eager to get some great clinical experience, help the local pet population, and help preserve unique native wildlife. The experience was everything I hoped for and more, filled with great people, beautiful scenery, grateful owners and their pets, and an unexpected new addition, Felix! Here is the story of Felix and how he landed himself in the United States!

One day at the clinic, a woman, Maria, stopped in. She was going to bring in her neighbor’s dog (with their permission) that was living in the highlands. The pup needed to be neutered and treated for fleas and ticks. When I heard her talking about the dog, I imagined a hardy ‘boar’ dog prepared for the wilderness of the ‘highlands’ (which I had not visited yet). But about an hour later, in came Felix, a ridiculously cute fluffy terrier mix, deliriously nice and trusting of all. Maggie (a friend also volunteering) brought him into the clinic for his examination. He followed her in, and immediately after she sat down, he clumsily plopped himself in her lap. He was matted on his behind and covered in fleas and ticks but wagging his tail and giving doggy kisses to everyone.

The day went on, and when everything was finished, Felix was still there long after all the other dogs were picked up by their owners. After dinner, I couldn’t resist keeping him out with us, so I let him out, and he ran over to me and put his extremely oversized paws on my lap, so I picked him up onto my lap. With content, he wiggled his little butt around a bit to get comfy, rested his head on my shoulder, and feel asleep for about a half hour. Maggie just chuckled and shook her head… she knew I was in love!
Felix went home the next day. And eventually, my time in Galapagos ended. On my ride home for the airport back in the US, I was chatting with my boyfriend Dan about all the great experiences I had and the great people I had met. I told him I was sad about not being able to adopt Felix, but I reassured myself everything happens for a reason! Soon after we started talking about it, I received a Facebook message from Emma (a veterinarian volunteer), that Felix was at the clinic and his owner decided he would be better in a different home. Our president, Tod, was luckily still there and agreed to take him back with him for me! I was so excited and couldn’t believe it! I guess it was meant to be!

I picked him up late the night of his arrival in New Jersey with Maggie. He was so excited to see me, his tail not just wagging but doing full circles! He slept most of the car ride home to Connecticut, resting his head on my lap. He was just so happy I couldn’t be more pleased.

Dan and I are so happy to have a new little buddy in our lives. He is going to have a great life full of great adventures and lots of love from both four and two legged friends!! My trip was amazing but being able to snuggle Felix and give

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**SHARING OUR LOVE OF COMMUNITY AND ANIMALS**

by Clara Greenwood, Veterinary Surgeon from the UK

Over the last month, I have been lucky enough to be working at Darwin Animal Doctors on Santa Cruz Island in the Galapagos. As a clinic, we have seen a huge variety of cases ranging from parasitic infections to road traffic accidents to poisonings and puppies being born. It has had its high and low points, as this job always does, but I have been amazed by the love and kindness shown by the community to the animals and to us here at DAD.

My favourite animal tale, so far, is that of Huesos (“Bones”), also known as Rex. He was found wandering the streets emaciated and disorientated, hence the name Huesos. Normally, we do not take in animals from the street but this lovely Doberman was so close to death we simply couldn’t leave him. We took him into the clinic and into our hearts whilst he slowly recuperated. As we had been lucky enough to have a blood analyser donated to the clinic, we tested his blood and found that his internal organs were all really healthy and that we had no other concerns for him apart from the fact that he was really weak, especially in his back legs. We slowly built up his strength with short walks.
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After a couple of weeks with us, he disappeared from the clinic one evening. We were distraught and searched for him around town all night and morning. The following day, a lady came to the clinic saying that her dog had been missing for over a month and had returned last night. She was very worried as he was so thin and wanted us to check him over. Sure enough, it was Huesos, who had recognised where he was from going on his walks and had taken himself home. His owners were overjoyed to see him as he had been missing for so long they thought that he had died. We were also overjoyed to know that he had such a loving home and we now knew his real name was Rex. Rex is now doing really well at home, and although it will take time for him to fully recuperate, he is getting stronger day by day.

YATCHI!

Meet Yatchi, a happy dog of one and a half years old. He lives in the highlands of Isabela Island. A friend of ours visited the farm Yatchi lives on, and found out that Yatchi got hit by a car a month prior and was still limping on his front leg. Despite that, he was still escaping to be the Casanova of all the females in the neighborhood!

The owner was really desperate to get him checked and castrated. So we went there on a Sunday and examined Yatchi. His right front leg was broken, but slowly healing. This process, luckily, always goes quickly in young dogs! And the fact that he was still limping suggested he would be careful with that leg; a little bit of pain prevents a dog from fully using his hurt leg. This reduces the chances that the dog will break that leg again.

After we examined him, we found no reason not to castrate him. Since the floor of the clinic was really slippery, we decided to castrate him at home, in the highlands. This way, there would be no chance of him falling down and breaking the leg again! After surgery, Yatchi woke up where he normally sleeps, between the little chicks and the fighting cocks (yes, unfortunately they have those here and use them for fights…). The owner was impressed by the procedure! According to him, it was performed “as they would do surgery on a human.”

At this moment, Yatchi is doing great and is now a happy castrated dog. And hopefully he will stop chasing the females soon!