

Shoes for Spays Program Helps Cats, Dogs

Animal rescue group sells used shoes to raise funds for pet sterilization.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Stray cats in San Felipe, Mexico, benefit from an animal rescue group's shoe sales. Members of San Felipe Animal Rescue always are looking for a good pair of shoes. That's because the organization runs a program that raises funds for a spay/neuter project by selling barely worn to brand-new shoes on eBay.

San Felipe is a small fishing village on the Baja Peninsula, about 125 miles south of the U. S.-Mexico border and located on the Sea of Cortez. With an estimated 10,000 stray cats and dogs living on the streets, beaches, camps and in the desert surrounding San Felipe, the group took on the pet population issue, with the goal of getting it under control, said spokesman Steven Forman.

Unable to secure grants to fund such a project, the group worked with the University of Baja Veterinary School in Mexicali, which was able to provide veterinarians and technicians at affordable fees. Still, Forman said, the program costs upwards of \$3,500 a month to run.

"We couldn't get money from outside sources," he said.

Instead, local fundraising efforts have produced money for the group. By far, the most consistent source of income has come from the shoe business that SFAR runs on eBay.

Through the program, which takes in shoe donations and puts them up for sale on eBay, the group has been able to maintain its animal spay/neuter numbers. Forman said that 100 to 125 procedures are performed every month, all through the proceeds of shoe sales and donations.

"The sooner we can get our animal population under control, the sooner we can focus on the rest of the Baja Peninsula, by sharing our successes and failures with others that work for the humane treatment of animals," he said.