

## Report from the Bylakuppe project – December 2011

Over the past two months, the Bylakuppe Dog Health & Anti-Rabies Project has treated many sick dogs and performed a few animal-birth-control (ABC) surgeries. We have had a some dedicated volunteers onsite since our last report, and are preparing for the visit of many more up to the end of the current season in February 2012, which is also when Tibetan New Year (*Losar*) is celebrated.

The number of ABCs performed has been greatly diminished by the onset of a distemper outbreak which began around a month ago and is currently causing tragic losses to our lovely canine friends.

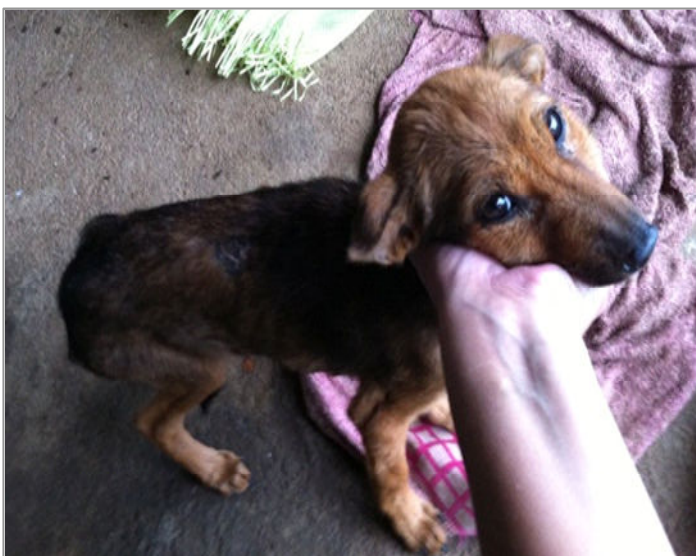
The outbreak hit the clinic hard, affecting many dogs and killing most of those infected. Sadly, we had many puppies living at the clinic at the time – left by the locals who had learned that we take good care of dogs.

The local project workers have obtained additional distemper vaccine and will be giving it to as many dogs as possible over the next few weeks in an attempt to save as many dog as possible. Over just the past two weeks, the project has treated seven distemper cases and three suspect distemper cases. Six of these have died so far.

A few cases have survived only to suffer neurological deficits. Sometimes they eventually die of the neurologic problems secondary to the infection. But now we've been to Mysore (three hours away) and bought vaccines, there is hope that we can stop this disease and protect our local dogs.



*Distemper has been causing much sadness, especially among our puppy patient population.*



There has also been some joy at the project with many dogs successfully treated for serious gastroenteritis problems. Otherwise, there has been a case of possible toxicity treated, fractures have been healed, pain has been relieved, and personnel trained to manage cases of paralysis. There is now a dog onsite with a tarsal fracture that needs amputation. The dog is comfortable and the amputation is scheduled for when our next experienced surgeon, Dr Michael Heath soon arrives at the project.

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***So many dogs, mainly puppies, are needing our help to fight, and now to prevent, distemper.***

## Bylakuppe volunteer news

Dr Heath has been a fabulous support to VBB, promoting the project around his home town in Victoria, Australia at every chance he gets, including stalls such as the one pictured below. We thank him for his enthusiasm, time and enormous generosity.

Michael will arrive in Bylakuppe (with his fellow-vet wife, Lisa and their two young boys) in mid-December to help with the disease outbreak and to fire up the ABC surgery on dogs that have already been vaccinated for distemper.

We have farewelled volunteers Dr Kristina Tribulova, Dr Anabel Blake and Ms Lizanne Siqueira, who all did fabulous work in the months of October and November. Thank you, ladies!

Now we have US vet Dr Natalie Lowry on the project who shows great enthusiasm and initiative. Since only arriving on the project at the beginning of December, she has developed a spreadsheet of all the current inpatient cases that she shares with me online via Gooledocs!



We plan to have this reporting method constantly updated by volunteers on the project as they work so that they can easily ask questions and get help from other vets who can read through the case files from locations around the globe. It also means that I can follow in detail the work of the project. It also allows volunteers who will arrive on the project to see what the current inpatient status is, and those volunteers who have gone home to watch the progress of the animals they have treated.

Our local administrator, Ms Sonam-la, is confident with the processing of Protect Area Permits (PAPs), so volunteers who will be coming to the project in future should be able to be issued with their PAP if they apply for it more than three months in advance, thereby enabling their accommodation at the guesthouse.

Anyone interested in volunteering with this project should please apply for a PAP well in advance of the expected departure. This is a free permit and we are happy to process your application even if you change your mind about volunteering because we wish for volunteers to be able to stay in the free and comfortable accommodation of the guesthouse which situated next to the project (so don't forget your earplugs as well!).

Finally, our thanks as always go to the Fondation Brigitte Bardot and our other very generous sponsors who have transformed this project into something truly unique and wholeheartedly embraced and supported by the local population and the Tibetan Buddhist monastery in which it is located.

*Dr Sally Nixon,  
Project Manager, Bylakuppe, South India*



*The monastery guesthouse where VBB volunteers stay when their Permit is issued.*