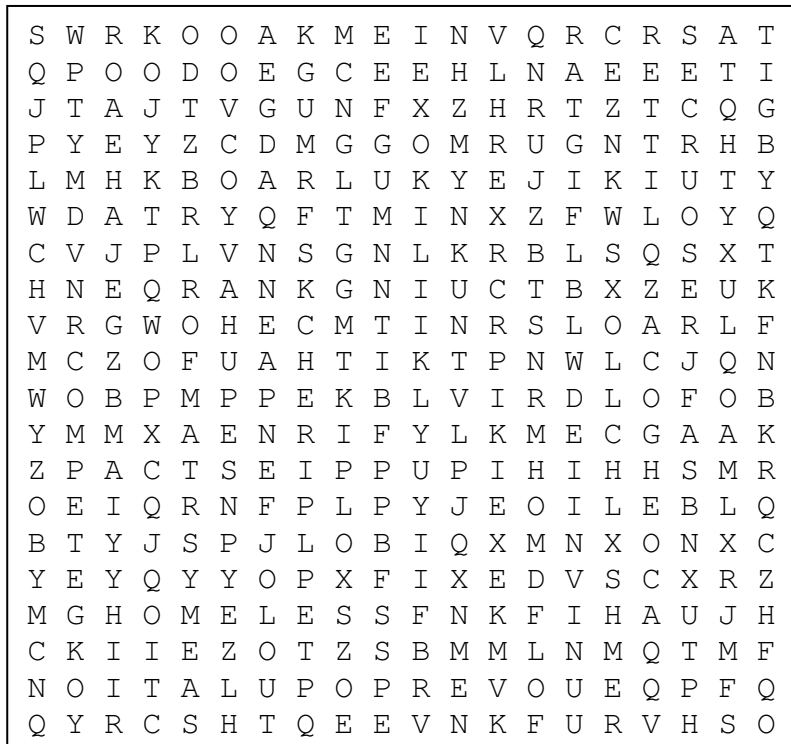


END PET OVERPOPULATION!

Read the story, learn about pet overpopulation and what you can do to help, and then look for the **bold** words – you can find them all in the word search!



Overpopulation happens when there are too many of one kind of animal living in the same place, and not enough **resources** to go around. In nature, the resources that animals **compete** for are things like food and habitat, and the resource that there is the least of is what determines how many animals can survive – that special resource is called the **limiting factor**, because it limits how big the population can get. “**Carrying capacity**” is the scientific word for how many animals can live together before they become overpopulated.

Cats and dogs don’t have to compete for things like food, because we provide that for them, but they still compete for one very important resource: homes. And there just aren’t enough homes to go around! Every year in the United States, **millions** of cats and dogs become **homeless** – 5-7 million, in fact. The reason that there are so many pets who don’t have homes is that some people don’t have their pets **fixed** and allow them to **reproduce** (or have babies), and dogs and cats have babies much faster than people do. An average **litter** is six **kittens** or **puppies**, and a cat or dog can have more than one litter every year.

Getting your pets fixed means taking them to a veterinarian and having a simple surgery done so that they can’t have babies. A **spay** surgery is for girl pets and a **neuter** surgery is for boy pets. Making sure that your pets can’t have babies is the most important thing you can do to help homeless pets who are waiting to be adopted! Spaying and neutering is also very **healthy** for dogs and cats; a pet who is fixed is much less likely to have cancer, to run off and get hurt, or to get into a fight.

To find out more about pet overpopulation and what you can do to help, stop by the Woodford Humane Society! And remember: Always get your pets fixed!