



# Annual Review of Cases 2001

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## INTRODUCTION

Some of the members of the APBC have gathered the data used in this report during consultations with their clients. The information is part of the case history taken at the time of a first consultation and used to help in the diagnosis of the specific problem, or problems, that the animal is exhibiting.

The purpose of the review is to examine trends in behavioural problems seen by members and to look at relationships between the presentation of certain types of behavioural problem and other aspects of pets' lives. It is not the intention of the authors to imply causal relationships between these factors and the problems, since the data are necessarily anecdotal rather than the results of controlled scientific experiment. However, anecdotal evidence is not without value, and may highlight factors that need to be taken into account when, for example, rescued dogs are re-homed, or a particular breed is recommended as a pet.

## CASES SUBMITTED

The proportion of males and females referred with behaviour problems is remarkably consistent in dogs. Over the past four years between 58% and 62% of canine cases seen have been males. The difference between the sexes is statistically significant (Mann-Whitney U,  $P < 0.05$ ). In cats, however, the variation is slightly greater, with between 48% and 61% being males.

The very high number of feline cases seen that are neutered, between 98% and 100% over the past four years, is likely to reflect the proportion of domestic pets that are neutered. The same may be true of the proportion of neutered dogs presented, since neutering is less frequent among the canine population than the feline.

**Table 1.**

Total cases reported by participating APBC members in 2001

	Dogs		Cats	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Number seen</b>	718 (63%)	423 (37%)	145 (58%)	106 (42%)

<b>Number of problems</b>	1349 (62%)	810 (38%)	176 (56%)	137 (44%)
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Average number of problems per dog - 1.89 (1.87 per male and 1.91 per female)  
Average number of problems per cat - 1.25 (1.22 per male and 1.29 per female)

The three most commonly referred breeds also remain consistent, with the only variation over the past four years being the relative positions of German Shepherd dogs and Border Collies in the list. Crossbreeds are always the most frequently referred. It is not possible to draw inferences about whether these breeds are more prone to behavioural problems than others, since the representation of the breeds in the total canine population is impossible to determine. Although German Shepherds are usually among the breeds most frequently registered with the Kennel Club, Border Collies and working sheep dogs are often unregistered or registered under the working and obedience register, while crossbreeds are, by definition, unregistered.

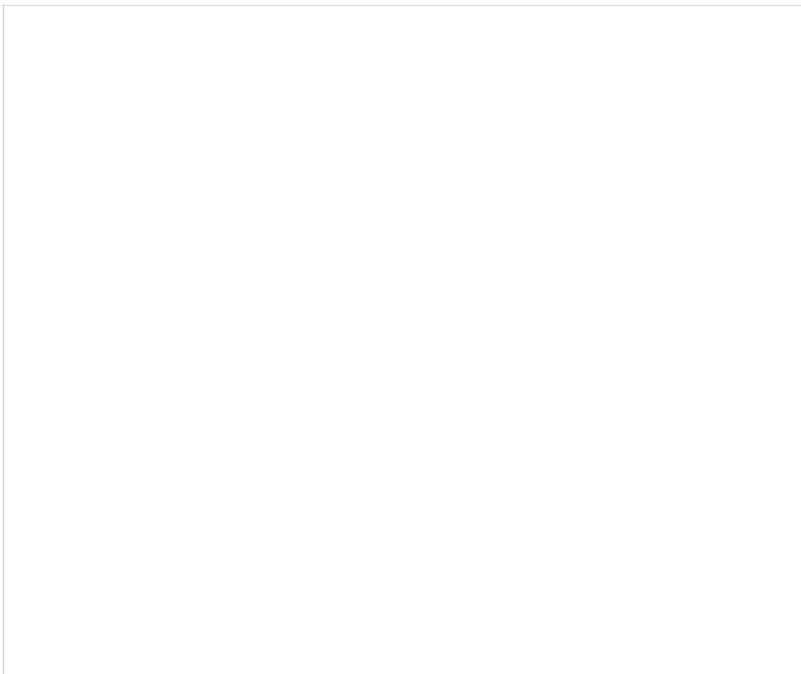
For feline breeds the same problems arise, although it is likely that the domestic short hair is more commonly represented in the population than any breed.

**Table 2.** Most commonly referred dog and cat breeds in 2001.

<b>Most Common Breeds Referred (Dogs)</b>	<b>Most Frequent Kennel Club Registrations 2001</b>	<b>Most Common Breeds Referred (Cats)</b>
Crossbreeds	Labrador	Domestic Short Hair Burmese Persian Siamese Domestic Long Hair
Border Collie	German Shepherd	
German Shepherd Dog	Cocker Spaniel	
Labrador	English Springer Spaniel	
Jack Russell Terrier	West Highland White	
Cocker Spaniel	Cavalier King Charles Spaniel	
Springer Spaniel	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	
Golden Retriever	Golden Retriever	
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	Boxer	
Terrier	Rottweiler	
West Highland White		

## CANINE CASES

The canine behaviour problems that were referred to some members of the APBC (and their associates) during the year 2001 are shown in Figure 1. The most common behaviour problem referred was aggression towards people (36%). This category included status-related aggression, fear aggression, possessiveness over the owner, food aggression and play biting.



## Key To Figure 1

AP Aggression towards people. Possible causes include fear or status.

AD Aggression towards dogs. Possible causes include fear or rank.

SP Separation problems - occur when separated from the owners.

F Fearful and phobic behaviour to auditory or visual stimuli.

AS Attention seeking behaviours e.g. barking when owner uses telephone.

T Training problems e.g. poor recall

Ch Inappropriate chase behaviour e.g. towards vehicles or joggers.

Misc Miscellaneous behaviour problems e.g. escapology and coprophagia

HT House training problems.

Car Problems during travel.

Other Other behaviour problems not classified.

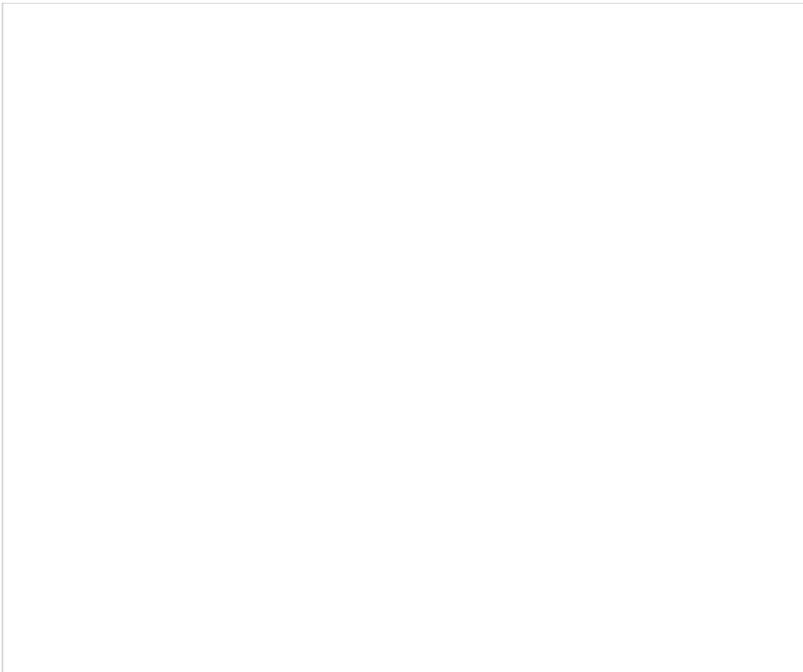
RB Repetitive behaviours e.g. tail chasing

Aggression towards other dogs was referred in 19% of cases. This category included fear aggression, chase motivated aggression, learned/frustrated play and aggression between same sex/opposite sex dogs in the family.

After aggression, separation problems and fearful and phobic behaviour towards auditory or visual stimuli were most frequently referred (9%). The most usual motivation for separation problems was anxiety, which may be due to an over-attachment to a member of the family. Symptoms of separation anxiety include destructive behaviour, vocalising and toileting. Other motivations in separation problems include attention-seeking, which may be a continuation of behaviour learned in the owner's presence and can include destructive behaviour and vocalisation, fear of being alone or of sounds heard while alone.

### Aggression Problems

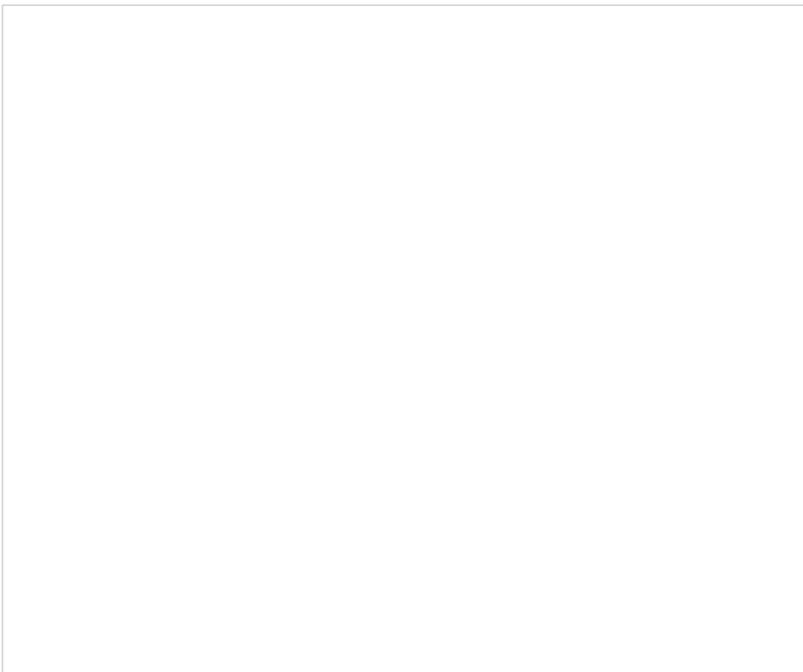
A more detailed analysis of the aggression problems referred in dogs during 2001 shows that fear aggression towards people was most frequently presented (25.5%), followed by aggression towards dogs (12%), and status-related aggression towards people (6.5%).



### Key To Figure 2

- FAP Fear Aggression towards people
- FAD Fear Aggression to dogs
- SA Status-related aggression to people

For aggression towards people (see Figure 3), 30% of the cases referred displayed fear aggression towards people outside the home; 18.5% displayed status-related aggression towards their owners; 18% showed fear aggression towards people in the home; 17% displayed territorial aggression within the home/garden; 6.5% displayed fear aggression towards family members; 4% carried out play biting; 3.5% guarded food and 2.5% were possessive over their owners.



### Key To Figure 3

- SA Status-related aggression to owners
- FT Fear aggression (territorial within the home/garden)

FH Fear aggression (to people in the home)  
FO Fear aggression (to people outside the home)  
FF Fear aggression (towards family)  
PA Possessive over owner  
FG Food Guarding

Figure 4 shows aggression towards other dogs, in which 63.5% of the cases referred displayed fear aggression; 20% showed aggression towards dogs of the same sex in the family; 8.5% of the aggression shown was learned/frustrated play; 5% showed aggression towards dogs of the opposite sex in the family and 3% of cases were chase motivated.

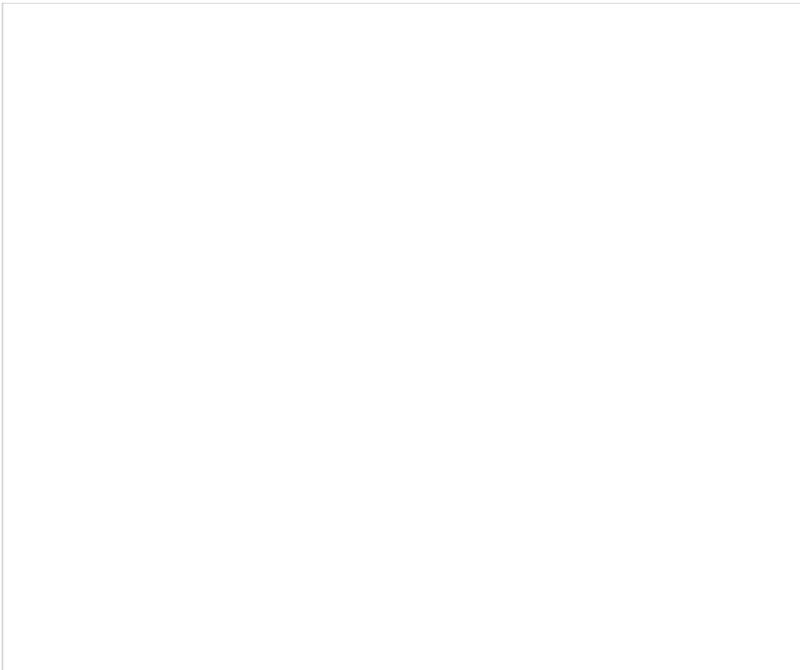


#### Key To Figure 4

FA Fear aggression  
CA Chase motivated aggression  
LA Learned aggression/frustrated play  
SS Aggression between same sex dogs in the family  
OS Aggression between opposite sex dogs in the family

Fear aggression when a dog encounters people or other dogs can occur for two reasons. Firstly, fear aggression may be shown if a dog is unused to people or other dogs. This problem often arises through a lack of socialisation during the sensitive period of puppyhood, between three and twelve to fourteen weeks of age. Secondly, a dog will often display fear aggression if it has previously had an unpleasant experience with people or other dogs.

Behaviour counsellors are often asked if having another dog will help a dog with behaviour problems and it may intuitively seem that having a canine companion would help to prevent a dog from becoming aggressive to other dogs. However, the data displayed in Figure 5 suggest that the opposite is true. A dog that has a canine companion during its first year of life is more likely to have been referred for aggression to other dogs away from home than one referred that was raised without a companion. This may be because it has not learned to approach other dogs without the support of a companion. In some cases the dog may learn to be aggressive because the dog it lives with is aggressive to other dogs.



### Key to Figure 5

FD Fear aggression towards dogs

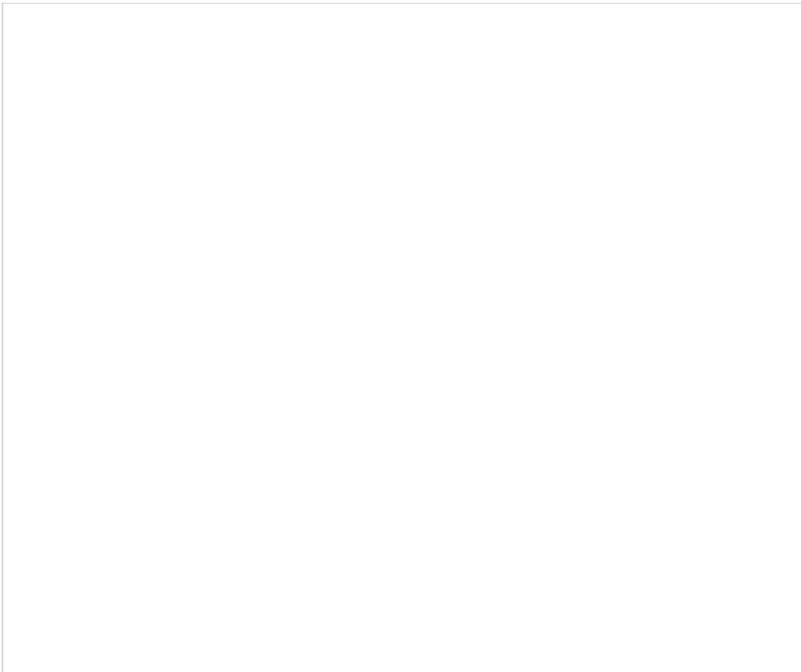
F/L Frustrated play or learned aggression towards dogs

Dogs with a canine companion during their juvenile period also had a slightly greater chance of being referred for frustrated play behaviour manifested as aggression towards other dogs. This may be because they expect other dogs to play with them in the same way as their early companion. This is thought to be particularly likely to occur if the dog they have lived with has not inhibited the physical strength they use in play and incompatibility between their expectation and how other dogs behave causes frustration. These figures support the argument for ensuring that puppies raised with another dog in the first year of life benefit from opportunities to socialise with other puppies at puppy socialisation classes and experience the world without their companion some of the time.

Six percent of dogs that grew up with a canine companion were referred for status related problems towards their owners. This compares with fifteen percent of dogs raised without a companion referred for the same reason. This may indicate that the presence of a canine companion during the juvenile period helps a dog to have a better understanding of the hierarchical structure of the family. An alternative explanation could be that owners of multiple dogs are more likely to give appropriate signals to the dogs so that they do not become confused about their status.

### Separation Problems

For separation problems, the motivation was anxiety (over-attachment) in 65% of the cases referred; boredom (14%), fear (12%) and attention-seeking (9%).



### Key To Figure 6

OA Over-attachment (anxiety)

AS Attention-seeking

F Fear

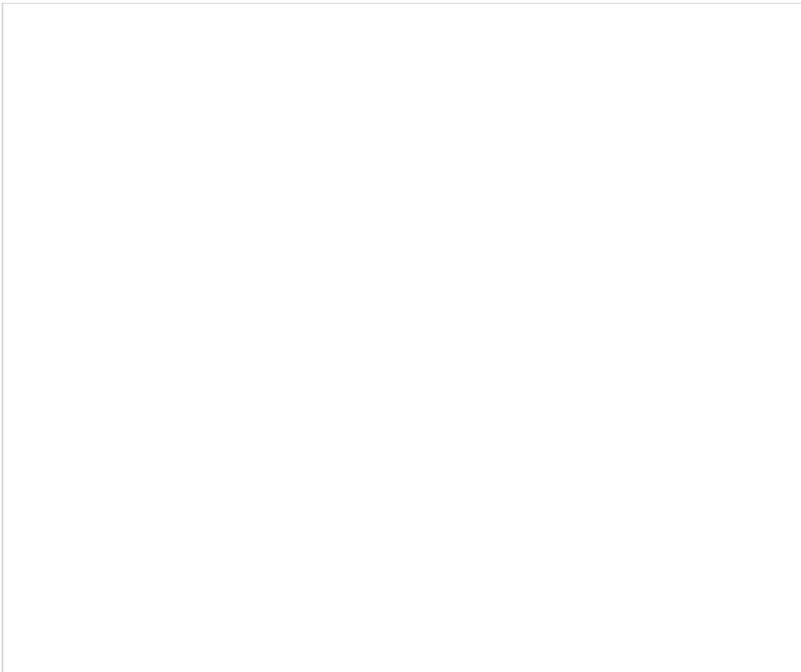
B Boredom

### Neutering and Behaviour Problems

	<b>Dogs</b>	<b>Bitches</b>
<b>Number Seen</b>	718 (63%)	423 (37%)
<b>Percentage Neutered</b>	62	68

Table 3

The percentage of dogs and bitches that were neutered can be seen in table three. An unexpected variance of these ratios in the reporting of a problem might indicate hormone influence or the effect of neutering. This is dependent upon whether if entire or neutered animals are presented more frequently than expected.



### Key to Figures 7 & 8

FT Territorial behaviour due to fear

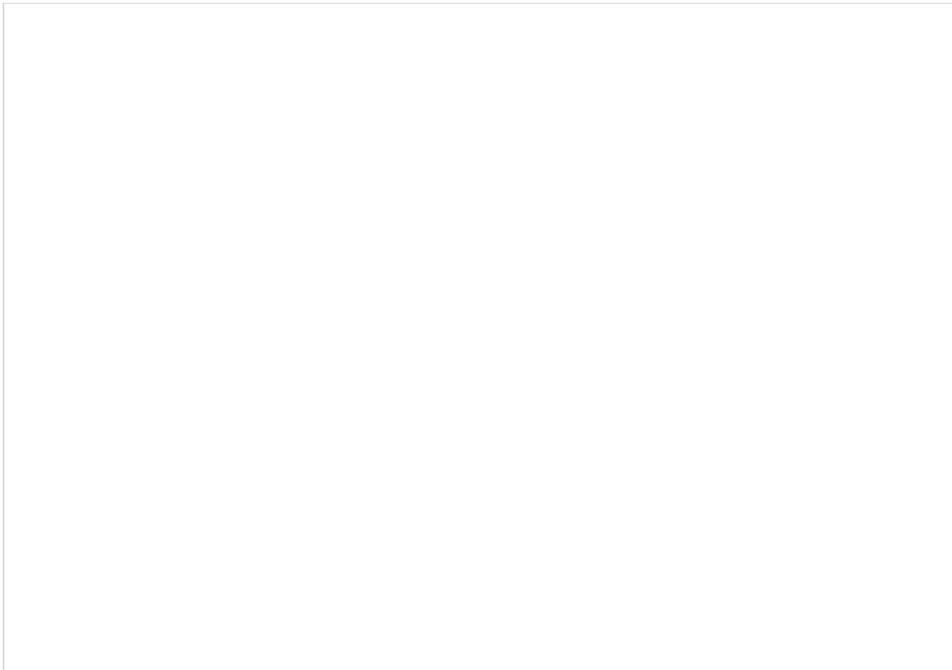
FI Fear aggression towards people inside the house

FO Fear aggression towards people outside the house

FD Fear aggression towards dogs

DSS Aggression towards dogs of same sex within home

Figure 7 shows that entire males were referred disproportionately for aggression towards dogs of the same sex within the home, which might be expected intuitively. Figures 7 & 8 show that there was a disproportionate number of entire males and females referred for fear aggression towards people inside the home and a disproportionate number of entire females were referred for fear aggression towards people outside the home.



## Key to Figure 9

SA Status related aggression

FT Territorial aggression due to fear

DSS Aggression to dogs of same sex within the family

## Domestic and Kennel

Most of the dogs referred that were obtained from domestic or kennel environments were puppies. The environment in which dogs are kept during the first weeks of life can affect the potential for fearful behaviour in later life. Dogs that had been obtained from a domestic environment were less likely to have been referred for territorial aggression due to fear than status related problems, the opposite to the trend was found in dogs obtained from kennel environments.

## Rescue

Most referred dogs obtained from rescue societies were acquired at an older age\* and had lived in at least one previous home. These dogs were more likely to be referred for territorial aggression due to fear than status related aggression. Twenty-eight percent of dogs obtained from rescue societies were referred for aggression to other dogs away from home, which contrasts with twenty-one percent of dogs obtained from domestic environments and nineteen percent of dogs obtained from kennels.

*\*Age dogs were obtained: 87% of dogs and 90% of bitches obtained from a domestic environment and 75% of dogs and 77% of bitches obtained from a kennel environment were under seven months old. Only 16% of dogs and 29% of bitches obtained from rescue societies were under seven months old.*

## SUMMARY OF CANINE CASES

- Significantly more males than females were referred with behaviour problems.
- The two most frequently referred behaviour problems during 2001 were fear aggression towards people and fear aggression towards dogs.
- The most common breeds referred during 2001 seem to be in keeping with the trends

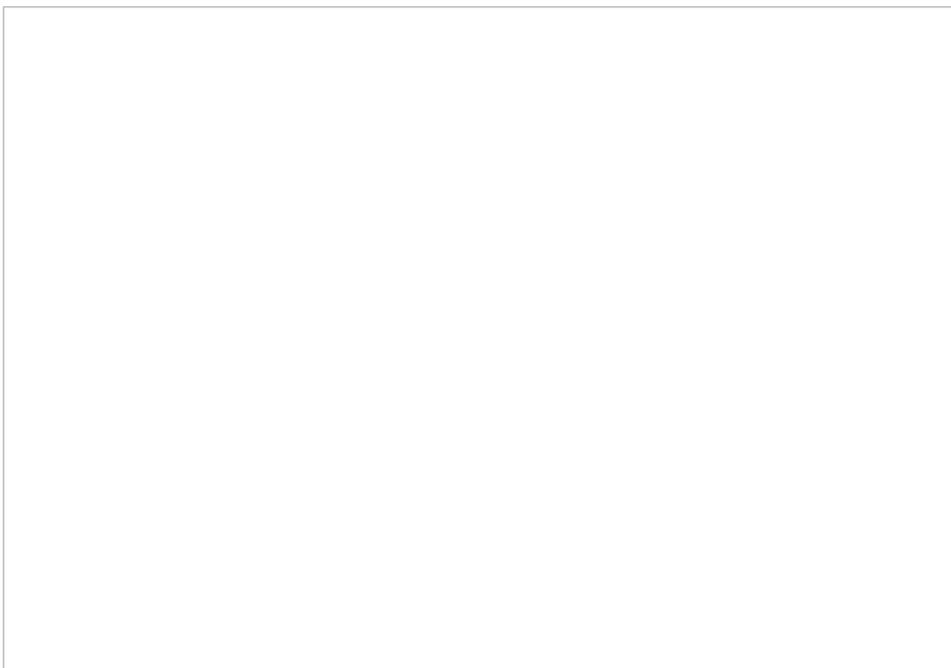
in the general population.

- Dogs that had a canine companion during the first year of life were referred more often for fear aggression or frustrated play behaviour towards dogs away from home than those that did not have a companion.
- Dogs that had a canine companion in the first year of life were less likely to be referred for status problems involving their owners than those raised without a companion.
- Entire males were more likely to be referred for status related problems towards other males within the home than expected from the proportion of entire males in the whole population. Similarly, both entire males and females were referred more frequently than expected for fear aggression towards people within the home and entire females were referred more frequently than expected for fear aggression towards people away from home.

Dogs obtained from kennel environments and rescue societies were referred more often for territorial aggression due to fear than status related problems. For dogs obtained from domestic environments the reverse is true.

## **FELINE CASES**

Figure 9 shows the feline behaviour problems that were referred to some members of the APBC during the year 2001. The most common behaviour problem referred was indoor marking (25.5%). This category included spraying, middening and scratching. House training problems were observed in 25% of the cases referred. This category included breakdowns of appropriate toileting and failure to establish appropriate toileting. Aggression towards cats was observed in 18% of the cases referred. This category included territorial aggression, redirected aggression and social aggression within the home. Aggression towards people was observed in 15.5% of cases referred. This category included redirected aggression, predatory aggression, fear aggression, aggression during handling, learned aggression and idiopathic aggression.



## Key To Figure 10

IM Indoor marking. Includes spraying, middening or scratching.

HT House training problems.

AC Aggression towards cats. Possible causes include territory or social.

AP Aggression towards people. Possible causes include fear.

AS Attention seeking behaviours.

B Bonding problems e.g. over attachment.

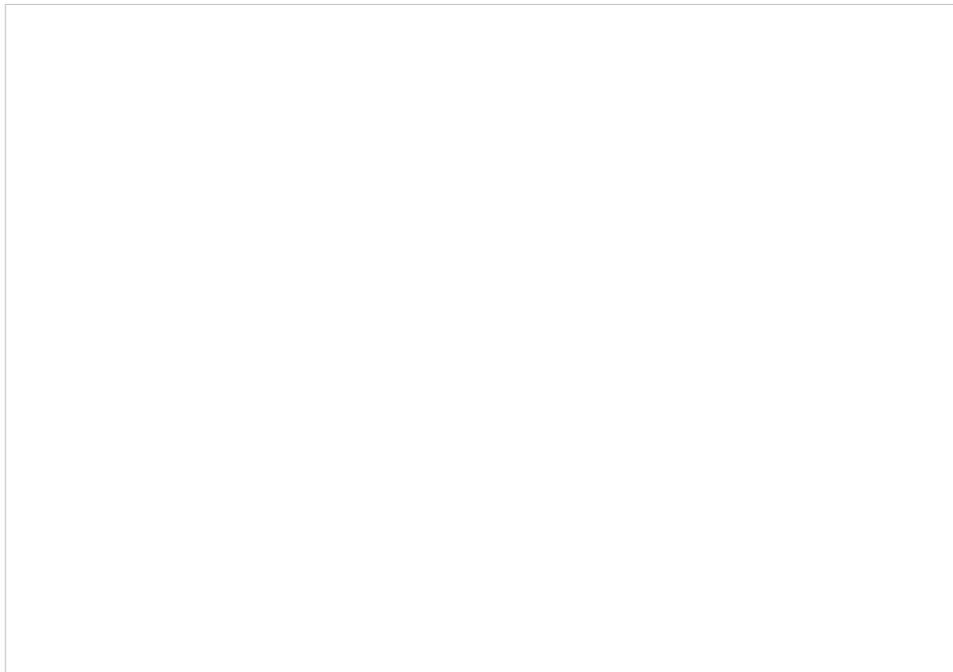
Misc Miscellaneous behaviour problems e.g. repetitive behaviours.

Other Other behaviour problems not classified.

F Fearful and phobic behaviour to auditory or visual stimuli.

P Pica (chewing or eating non-food items).

For aggression towards people, 26.5% of the cases referred displayed learned aggression or biting during handling; 18.5% displayed predatory aggression; 14.5% displayed fear aggression towards people inside or outside the home and 6% of the cats referred displayed redirected aggression or fear aggression towards the family.



## Key To Figure 11

RA Redirected aggression

PA Predatory Aggression

F Fear aggression (to people inside/outside the home)

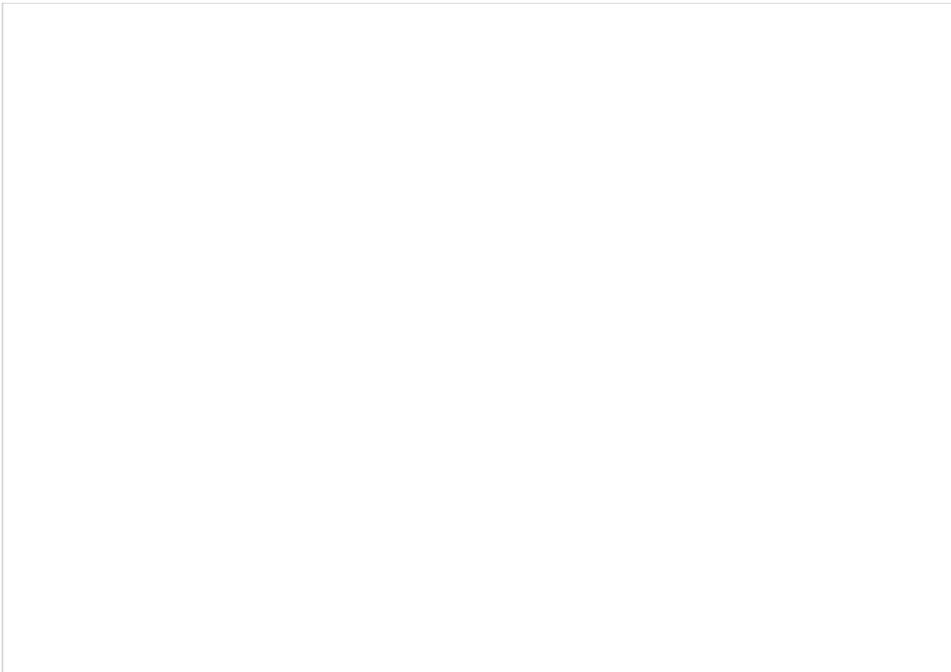
FF Fear aggression (towards family)

PB Petting/Biting (biting during handling)

LA Learned Aggression

O Other

Aggressive behaviour exhibited between cats living in the same household, can be motivated for a variety of reasons, such as, defence of resources, fear or territorial behaviour to newly introduced cats or cats that return home with a new smell on their coats and are not recognised, redirected aggression and learned behaviour.



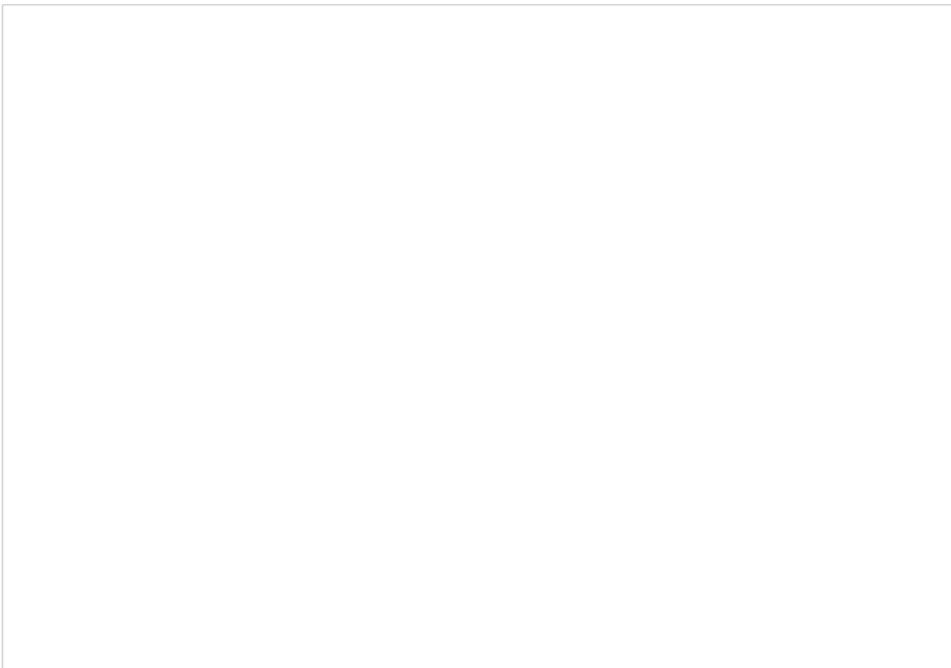
### **Key To Figure 12**

- TA Territorial aggression
- RA Redirected Aggression
- SA Social aggression within the home

87.5% of the cases referred displayed social aggression within the home; 9% displayed territorial aggression and 3.5% displayed redirected aggression.

### **Indoor Marking**

Indoor marking can take the form of spraying, scratching and middening. Spraying occurs when a cat deposits a small amount of urine, usually on a vertical surface. In the predominantly neutered pet population this behaviour is most commonly used to increase the sense of security felt by the cat. Middening, the deposition of faeces in a prominent position, is more often used to mark the cat's walkways away from the core area of its environment.



## Key To Figure 13

SP Spraying  
M Middening  
S Scratching

For indoor marking, 94% of the cases referred sprayed; 5% displayed scratching behaviour and 1% carried out middening behaviour.

### SUMMARY OF FELINE CASES

- The behaviour problems most frequently referred during 2001 were social aggression towards other cats within the home, inappropriate toileting and spraying.
- There was no difference between the number of males and females referred.
- The most common breeds referred during 2001 were domestic short hairs, burmese and persian cats.
- Cats referred for aggression towards people most frequently showed learned aggression or aggressive during handling.
- Cats referred for aggression towards cats were most likely to have shown social aggression to other cats in the home.
- Spraying was the most frequently referred form of indoor marking behaviour.