

Town of West Paris, Maine

Animal Control Annual Report – Calendar Year 2025

Brandon E. Holmes, Animal Control Officer

Overview

In 2025, the Town of West Paris continued to receive full-time, on-call Animal Control coverage through a single municipal Animal Control Officer, providing 24/7 response for public safety, animal welfare, and ordinance enforcement. Services included stray response, bite investigations, cruelty and neglect investigations, livestock containment, dangerous animal complaints, community cat management, and coordination with law enforcement, shelters, veterinarians, and volunteer partners.

A total of 303 calls for service were handled in West Paris during the 2025 calendar year, representing a wide range of public safety and animal welfare concerns.

Call Volume by Category

- Stray or loose animals – 180
- Bite investigations and quarantine enforcement – 27
- Sick or injured animals – 21
- Livestock at large – 17
- General animal control and ordinance issues – 12
- Neglect investigations – 11
- Owner surrenders and shelter transports – 10
- Cruelty to animals investigations – 8
- Deceased animals – 5
- Kennel inspections and compliance checks – 4
- Aggressive behavior complaints – 3
- Noise and administrative complaints – 4 combined
- Abandonment cases – 1

Each of these calls often required multiple follow-ups, coordination with veterinarians and shelters, and in several cases, court documentation and ongoing compliance monitoring.

Public Safety and Enforcement

Bite investigations and aggressive animal complaints continued to be a significant portion of the workload. These cases required rabies quarantine enforcement, owner education and compliance checks, coordination with Maine CDC and local health officers, and court-ready documentation when necessary.

Cruelty and neglect investigations were conducted in coordination with local law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office when applicable, with emphasis on early intervention, evidence preservation, and ensuring animals received appropriate medical care and shelter placement.

Livestock and Large Animal Response

West Paris generated a notable number of livestock-related calls in 2025, including loose cattle, goats, and other farm animals. These incidents required rapid roadside safety response, coordination with owners and neighboring farms, temporary containment and traffic control, and follow-up on fencing and husbandry compliance.

Community Cat Initiative

A major accomplishment in 2025 was the continued development of the West Paris Community Cat Program. Through partnerships with shelters, veterinarians, trappers, and volunteers:

- 64 community cats were spayed or neutered
- 27 additional cats entered the shelter system for adoption or placement
- Multiple unmanaged colonies were stabilized through Trap-Neuter-Return and caretaker support
- Feeding stations and winter shelter guidance were provided to colony caretakers
- Nuisance complaints were resolved through sterilization rather than displacement

This proactive approach reduced nuisance calls, prevented hundreds of future births, and improved overall public health and animal welfare outcomes.

Mileage and Field Activity

In 2025, 8,261 miles were logged responding to West Paris calls. This includes emergency response, shelter and veterinary transports, follow-up compliance checks, court-related travel, and community cat trapping and clinic transport.

Preparing for 2026: Local Spay and Neuter Access

Significant planning work was completed in 2025 to establish monthly spay and neuter clinics in Harrison beginning in 2026. This will dramatically reduce transport distance for surgical appointments, lower mileage and fuel costs, increase access for low-income residents, expand capacity for community cat sterilization, and improve response times for urgent medical referrals. This local access point represents a major efficiency gain for West Paris and surrounding towns.

Continuing Education and Outreach

Throughout 2025, public education was provided on responsible ownership and licensing, bite prevention and containment, livestock fencing and winter preparedness, community cat management, emergency planning for pets, and lost animal recovery protocols. Residents were encouraged to use dispatch as the primary reporting method for emergencies, ensuring rapid and documented response.

Closing

The 2025 year reflected a continued shift toward proactive animal welfare, strong public safety integration, and long-term population control through spay and neuter and community partnerships. West Paris benefited from consistent, accountable, and data-driven Animal Control coverage, with measurable outcomes in reduced roaming animals, stabilized cat populations, and improved response coordination.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon E. Holmes

Animal Control Officer

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