

CANINE CORNER

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The Beach Buddies

When I travel, I like to find opportunities to work with dogs in shelters and rescues on a volunteer basis. I am not alone. There are an increasing number of animal shelters worldwide which aim to make the most of time offered by interested and experienced volunteers.

Shelters are stressful places and various research teams at Arizona State University, Tufts University, Utrecht University and others have measured cortisol levels in shelter dogs to ascertain levels of stress and response to stimuli. In shelter dogs which have been taken for 'sleepover' visits, for example, the Arizona University research team found that even one night away from the shelter improved cortisol levels in the dogs.

Day trips are another option to remove dogs from the shelter, providing enrichment and building confidence and resilience for the activities of pet life.

The Maui Humane Society in Hawai'i has a 'Beach Buddies' programme (www.mauihumanesociety.org/beach-buddies/) specifically to provide day trips for dogs, for example. On Wednesdays and Fridays, three dogs are matched with visitors who have dog handling experience and who are willing to pay a minimum donation of \$50 for the privilege.

The dogs are taken out between the hours of 11:00am and 3:00pm. As this is the warmest part of the day, visitors are given directions for forested hikes in the upcountry area of the island or they are encouraged to take the dog to a dog-friendly restaurant. Each dog checks out of the shelter with a backpack of supplies for their adventure.

If you were lucky enough to have rental accommodation that is dog-friendly (most aren't), then you could also take the dog back for a taste of home life in air-conditioned comfort.

Dates for the Beach Buddies programme are released 90 days in advance and book up quickly. Unfortunately, our holiday was booked at shorter notice and so we were unable to participate, opting instead for a good, long visit to the Humane Society's shelter.

When planning your holidays for 2023, consider adding a volunteer aspect to your trip. It is very satisfying to be able to help animals whilst you are relaxed and happy on holiday.

Happy holidays to all the readers of *NZ Dog World* magazine. I look forward to writing for you in 2023. 🐾

