

# No Kill Colorado

No Kill Colorado is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a compassionate future for all pets in the state. Unlike a shelter, it drives systemic change through advocacy, education, and data-driven reform, promoting the No Kill Equation to ensure all healthy and treatable homeless pets live.



This analysis was conducted via the Data Changemakers platform to provide No Kill Colorado with data-driven insights for policy and community improvements in animal welfare across the Colorado state. For this project, I am using shelter statistics data covering the years 2015 to 2024.



Data ChangeMakers

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Data Wrangling: Nicholas Migneault (via Data Changemakers)

Data Source: State of Colorado Department of Agriculture from the Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA)

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Overview

Intake Insights

Outcome Insights

Adoption Trends & Insights

Stray vs RTO Insights

Transfer vs -ve Outcome Insights



## Animal Statistics

All

## Species/Age

All

## State/County/City

All

## Year

All

Clear all slicers

### Total Unique Facilities

1039

### Total Animal Count

3.7M

### Total Animal Intakes

1.7M

### Total Animal Outcomes

1.7M

### Positive Outcomes

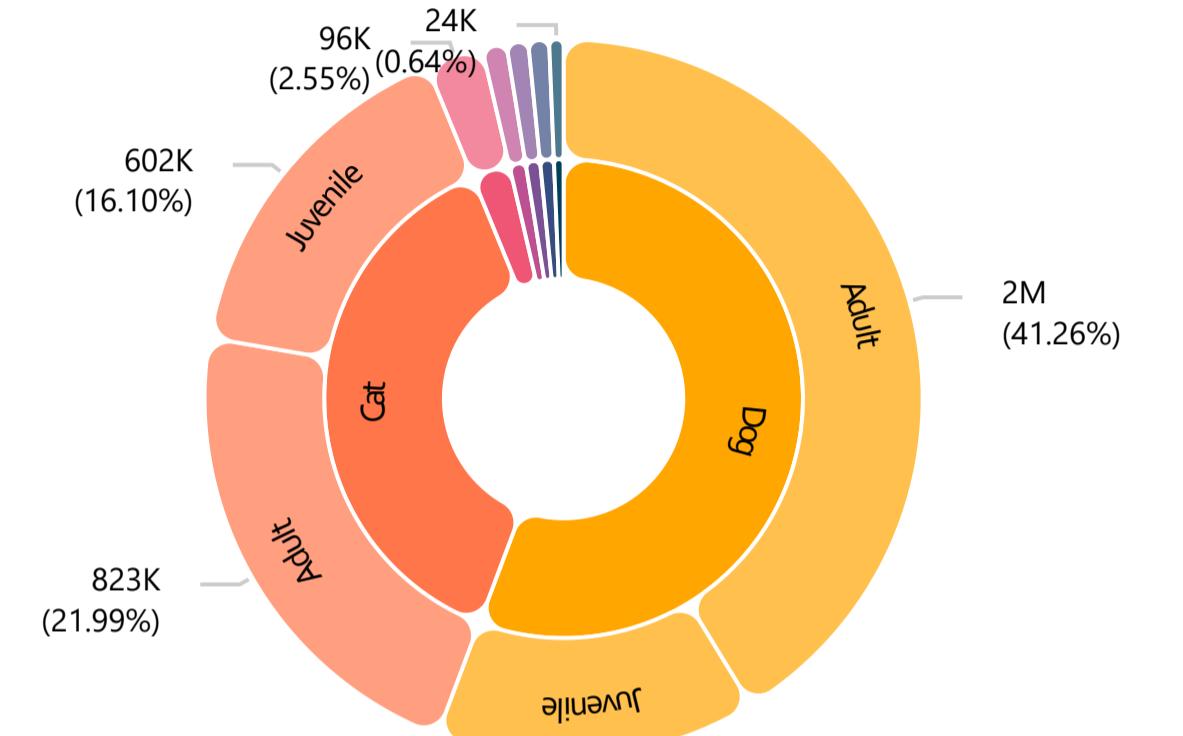
1.6M

### Negative Outcomes

128.4K

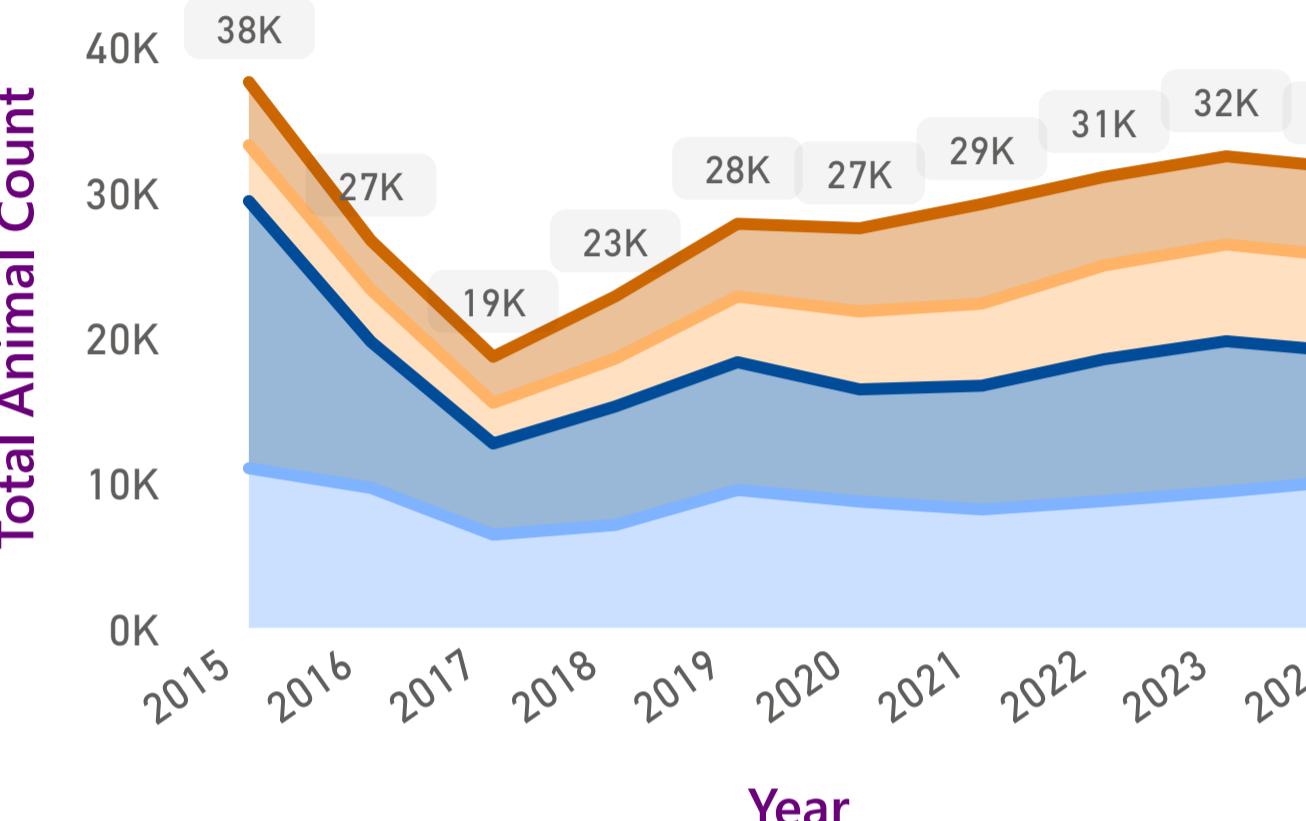
### Animal Count by Species and Age Group

Birds Cat Dog Other Rabbits Reptiles & Amphibians

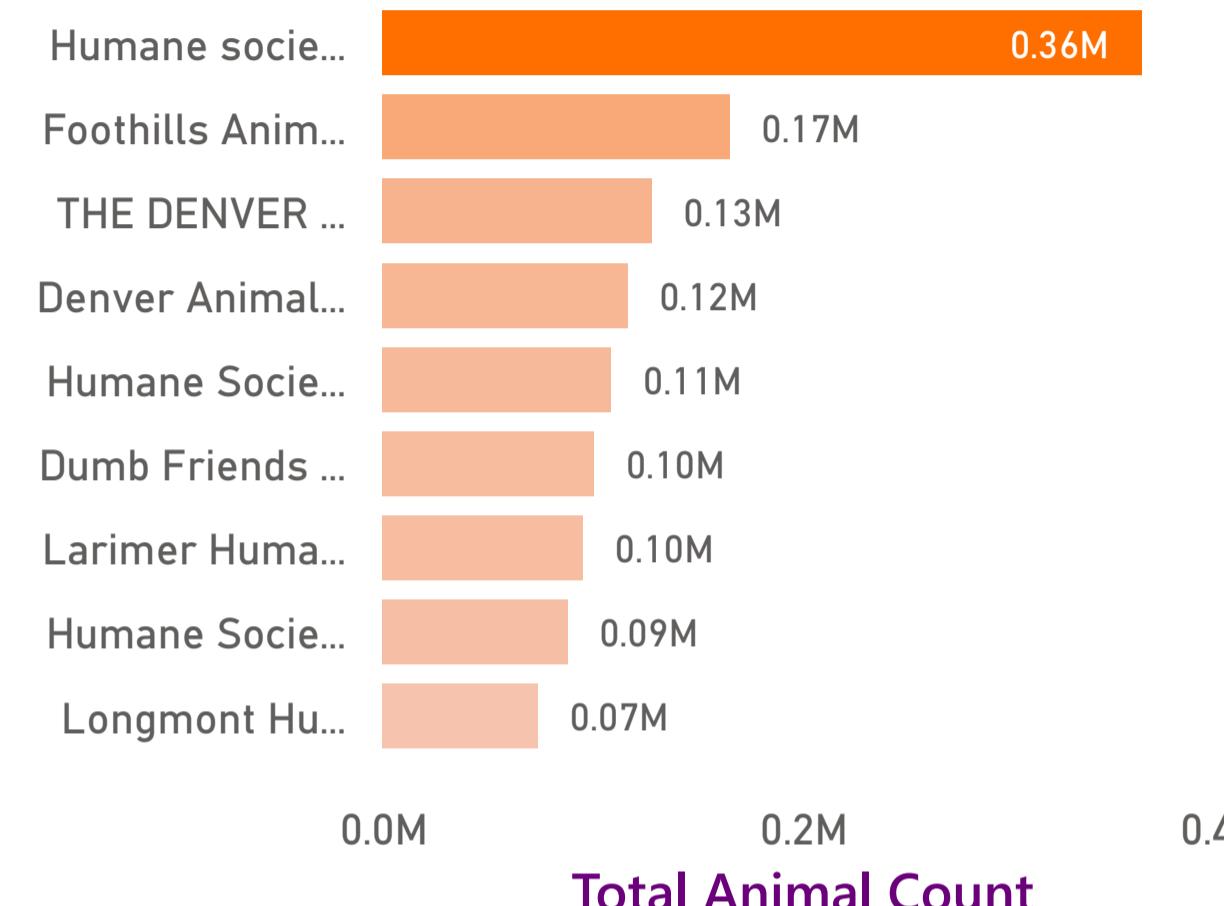


### Yearly Shelter & Foster Trends

Beginning Shelter Count Ending Shelter Count Beginning Foster Count Ending Foster Count

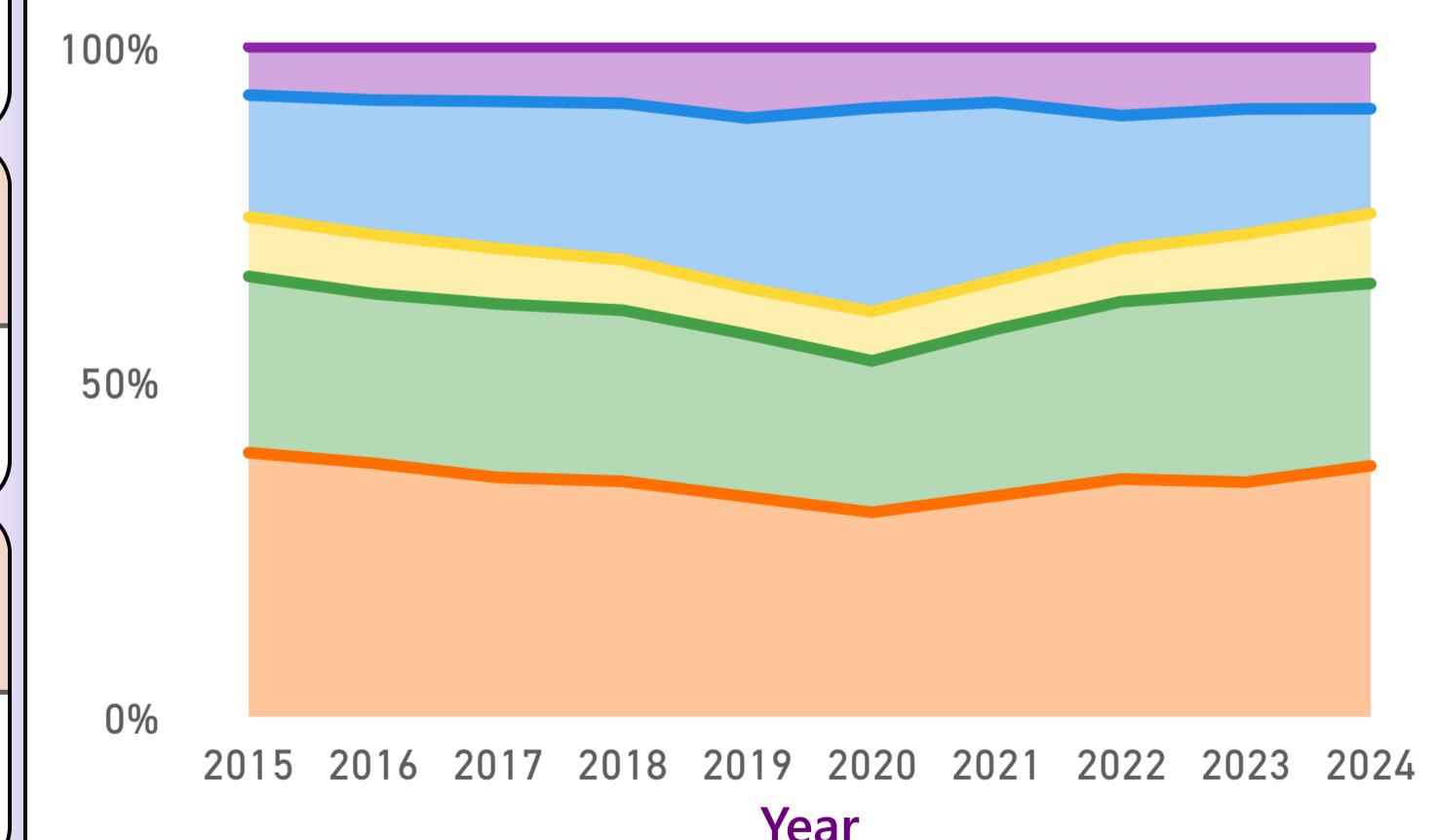


### Top 10 Facilities by Animal Count



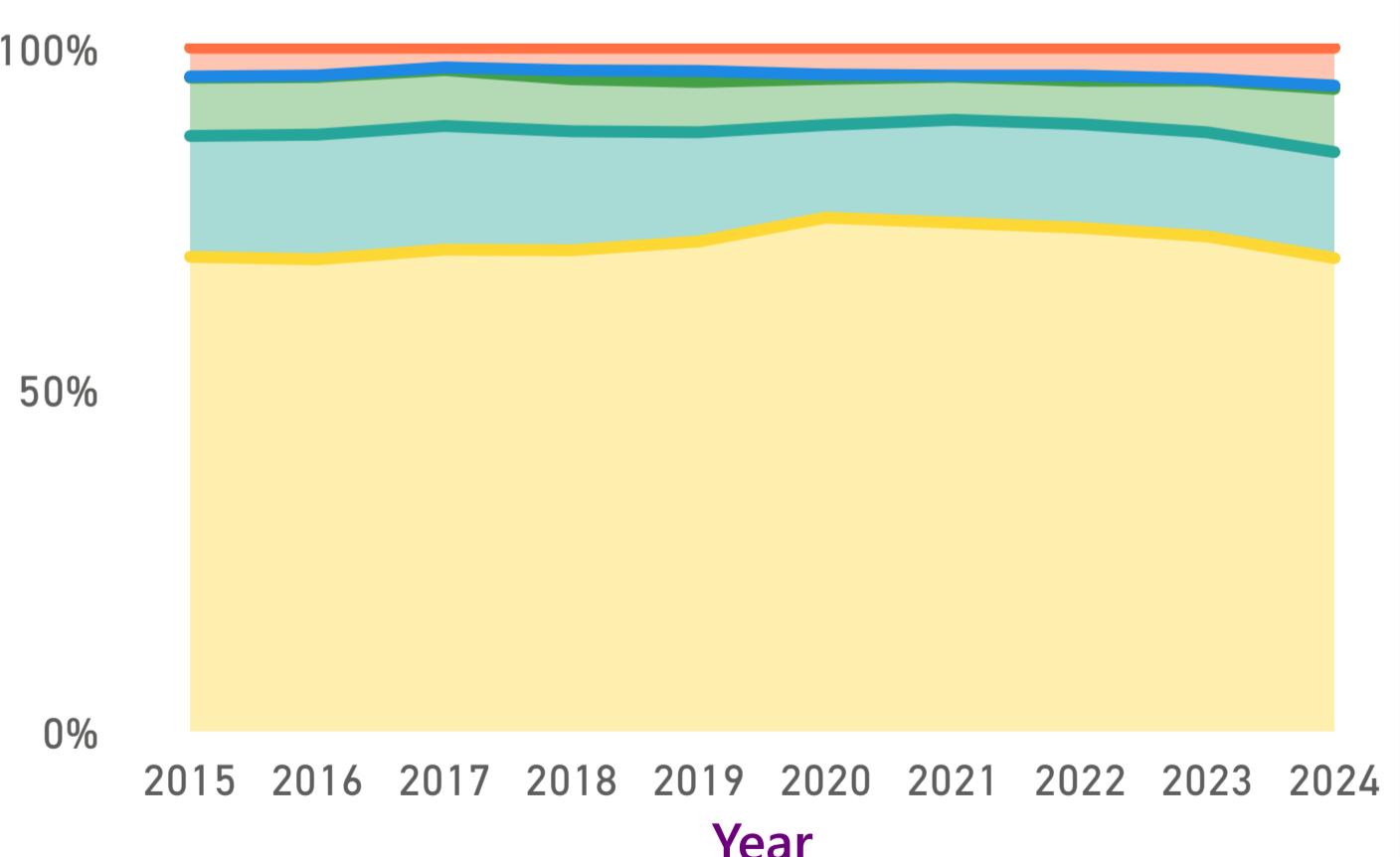
### Animal Intake Composition Over Time

Total Intake... Total Intake... Total Intake... Total Intake...



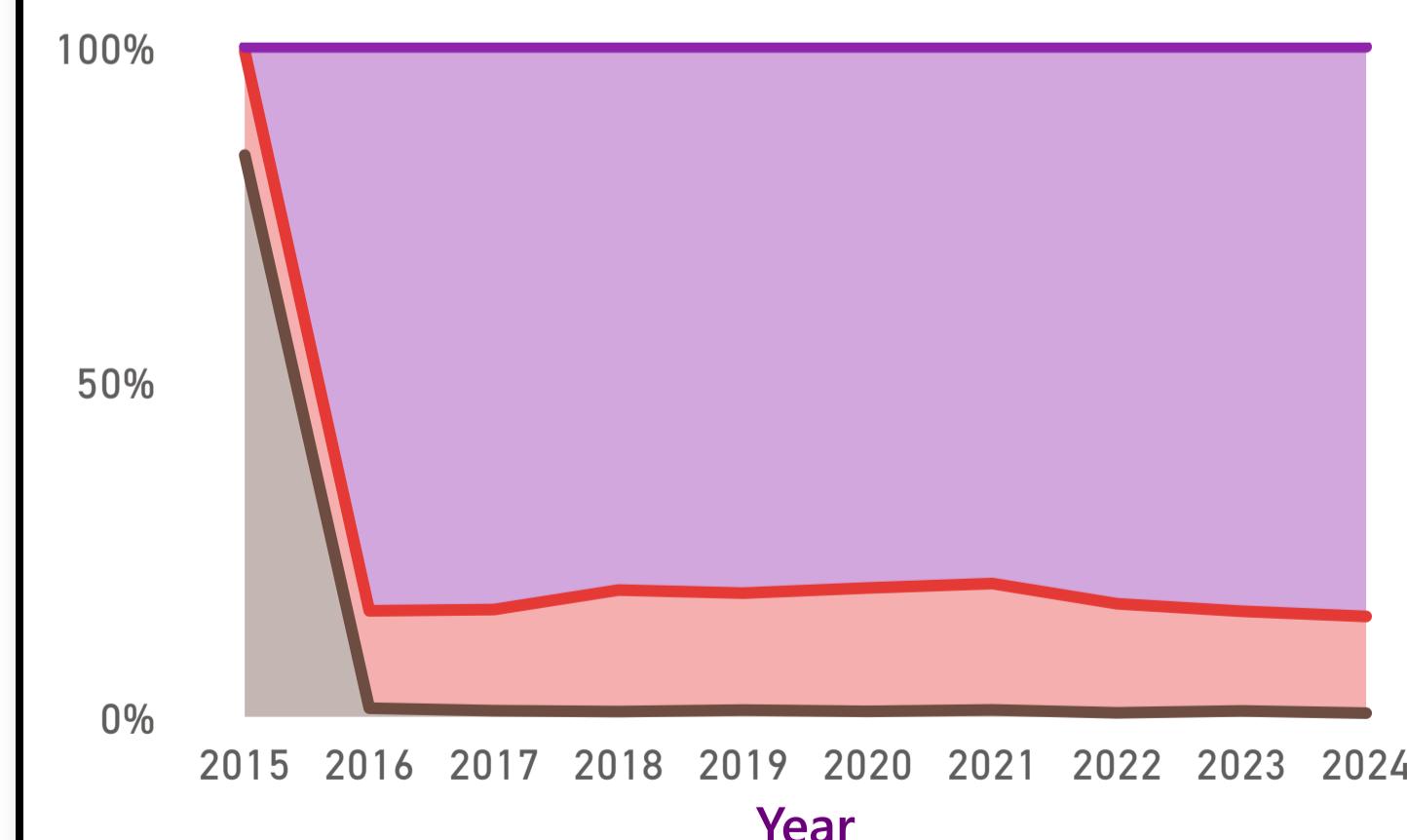
### Positive Animal Outcomes Over Time

Total Outcome Missin... Total Outcome De... Total Outco...



### Negative Animal Outcomes Over Time

Total Outcome Missin... Total Outcome De... Total Outco...



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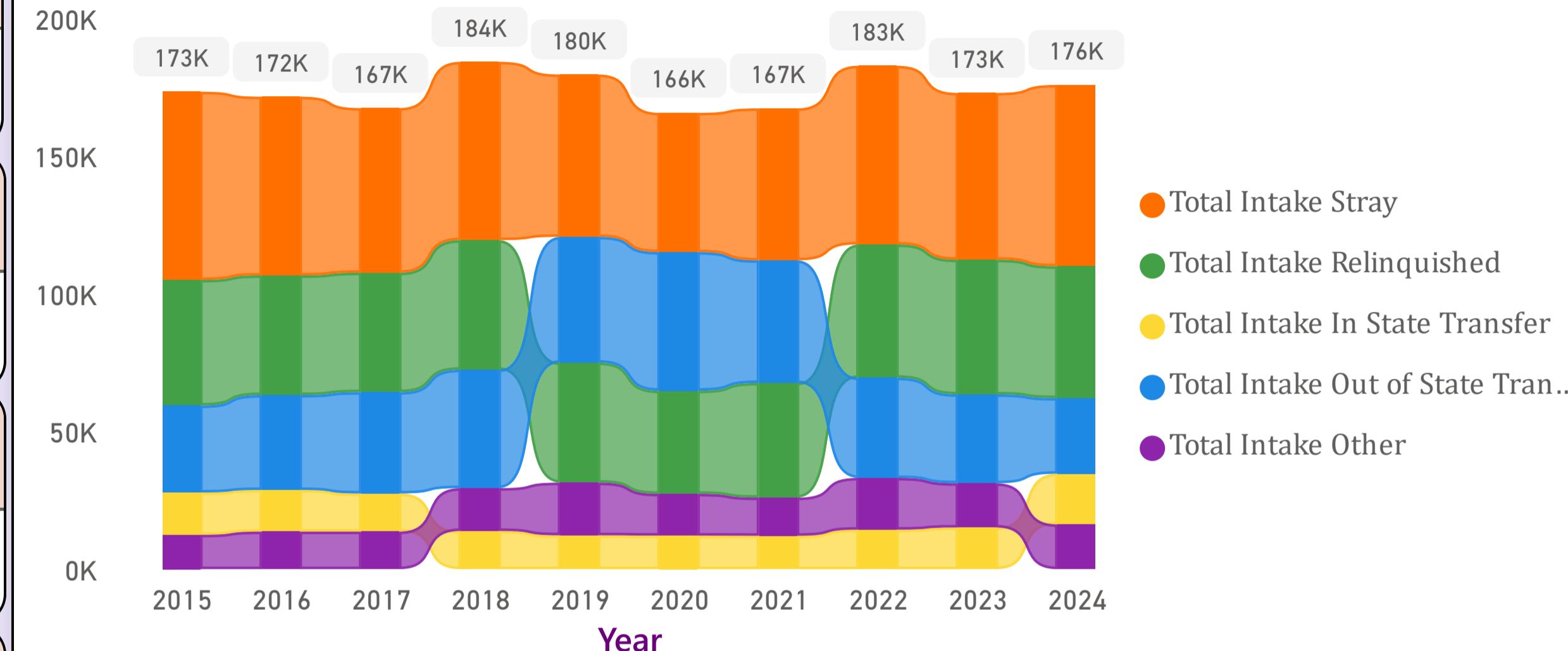
### Positive Outcomes

1.6M

### Negative Outcomes

128.4K

## Animal Intake Trends by Category



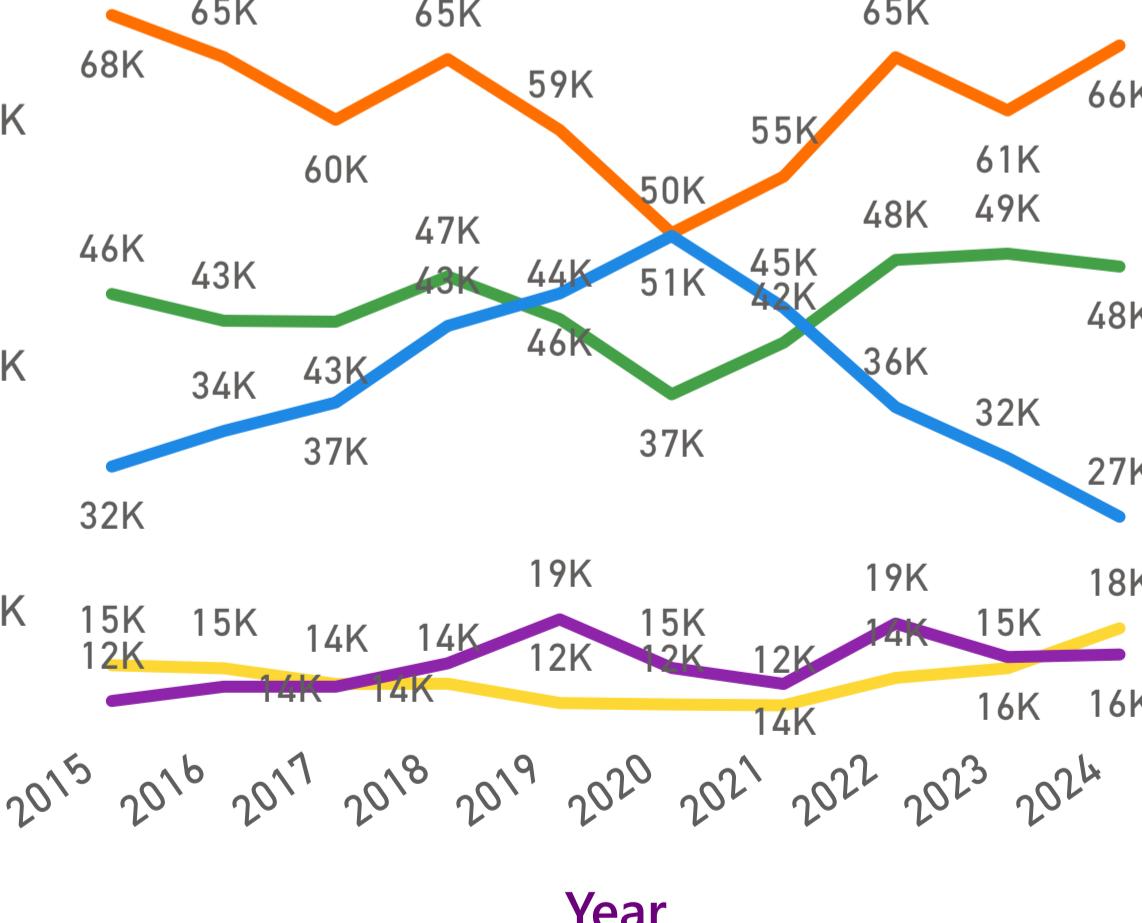
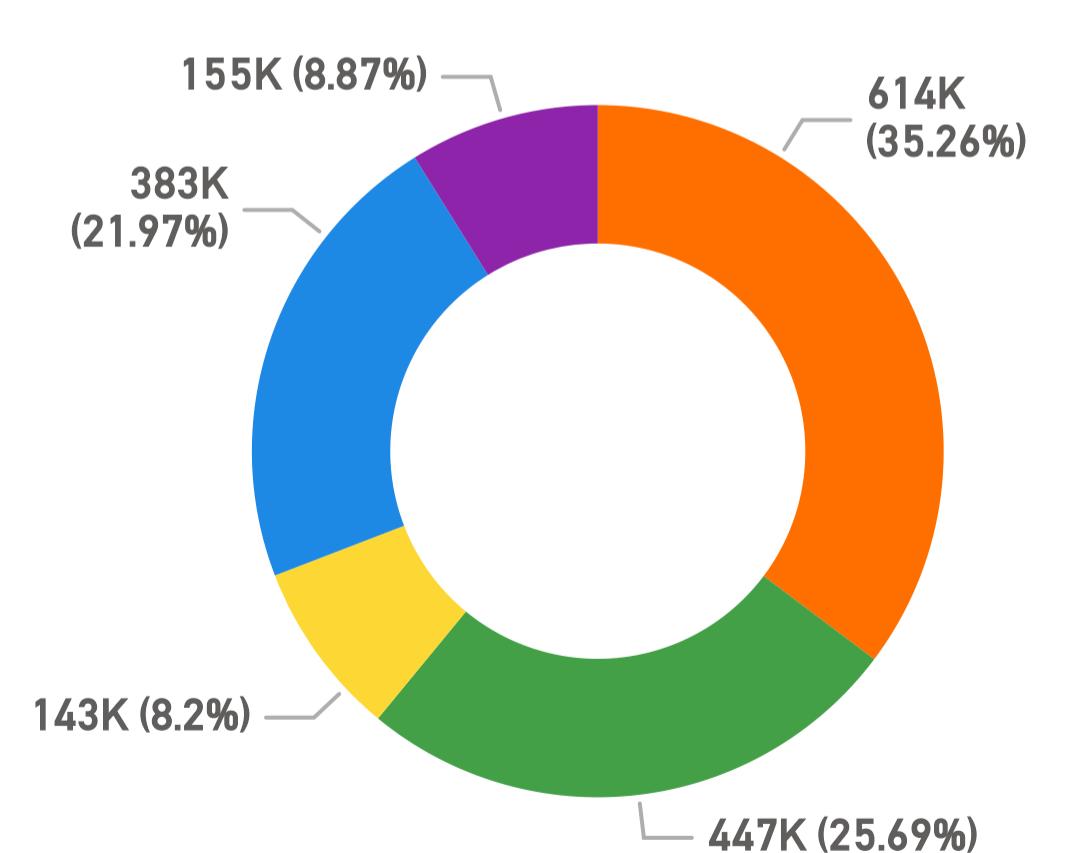
- Stray (35.26%) and Relinquished (25.69%) are the dominant intake types, collectively accounting for over 60% of all animals across the period.

- Total intake peaked in 2018 (184K) and reached its lowest point in the pandemic year of 2020 (166K).

- Stray and Relinquished intakes have increased and are now stabilizing at high levels (approx 65K and approx 48K in 2024, respectively).

- Out of State Transfers have sharply declined to the lowest point on the chart in 2024 (approx 28K) after peaking in 2020.

- In State Transfers: This smallest category has shown a clear upward trend since 2021, nearly doubling its value in 2024.



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3.7M

### Total Animal Intakes

1.7M

### Total Animal Outcomes

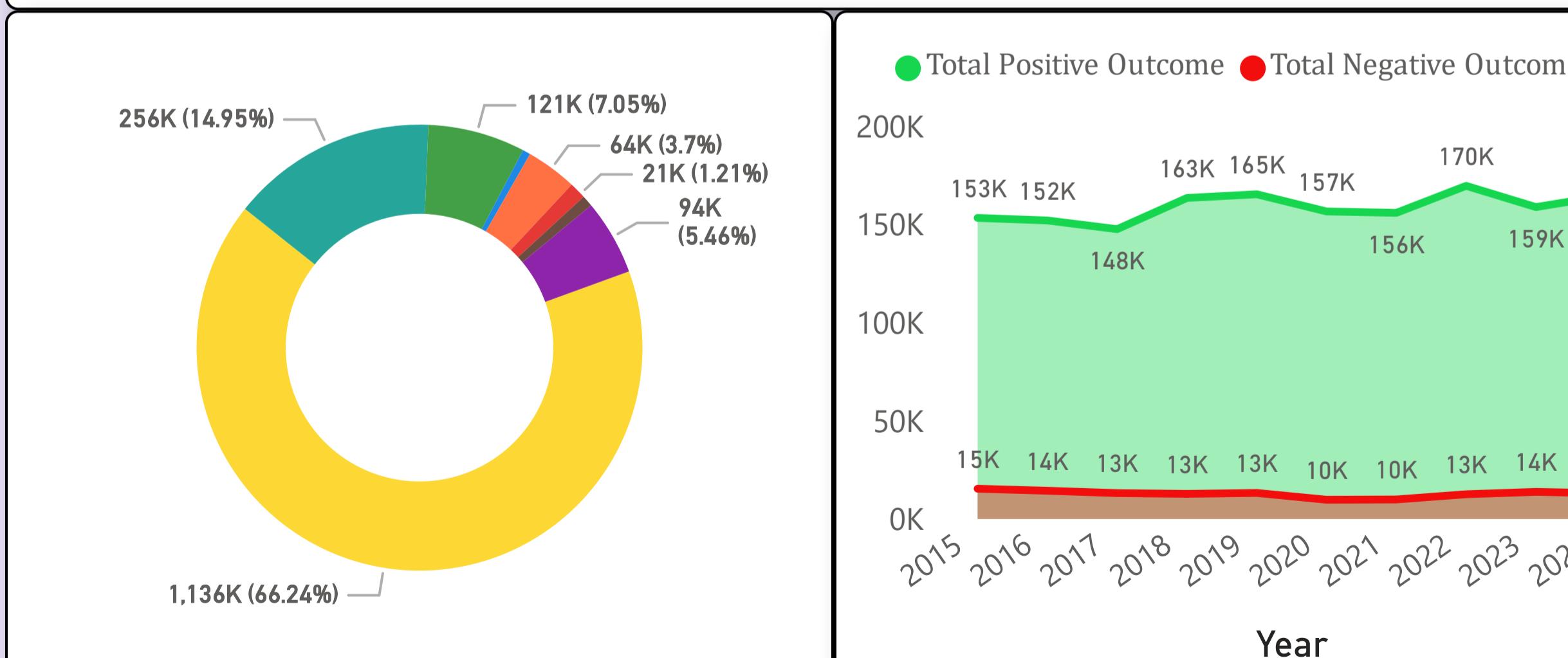
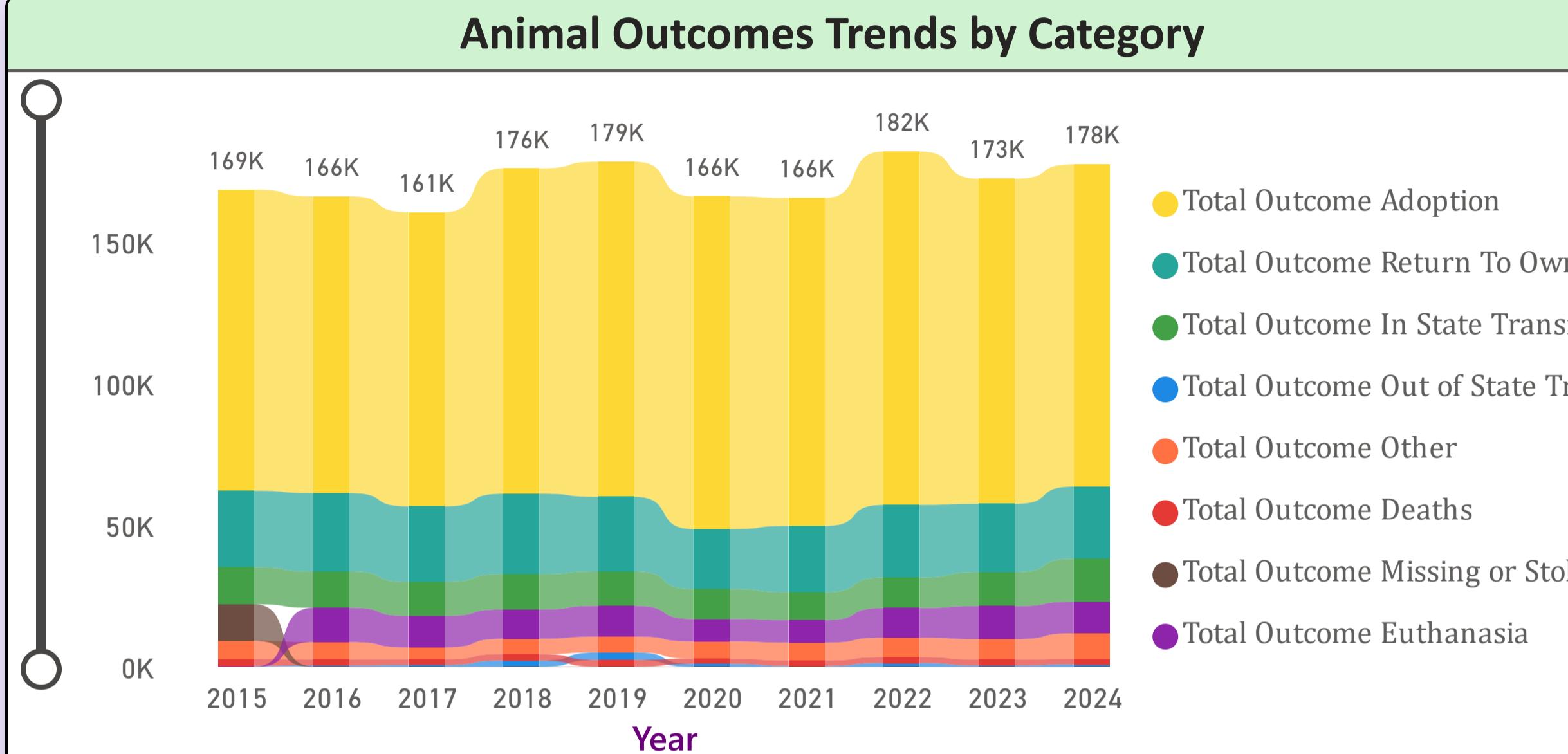
1.7M

### 1,586,788 Total Positive Outcome

92.52% Live Release Rate

### 128,376 Total Negative Outcome

7.48% Negative Outcome Rate



- Adoption (66.24%) is the primary outcome, forming the large majority of all animals leaving the facilities.

- Return to Owner (14.95%) is the second most common outcome and showed a noticeable increase in 2023 and 2024.

- Total outcomes peaked in 2022 at 182K and were lowest in 2017 at 161K.

- Positive Outcomes (Adoption, RTO, Transfer) consistently make up over 90% of all yearly outcomes, with negative outcomes being minimal.

- Euthanasia (5.46%) and other negative outcomes show an overall decline in absolute numbers from 2015 to 2021. Since 2021, a sustained upward trend shown, peaking in 2024.

- Out of State Transfers were highly volatile, spiking in 2019 before dropping significantly and remaining low in subsequent years.



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### Total Adoption Outcomes

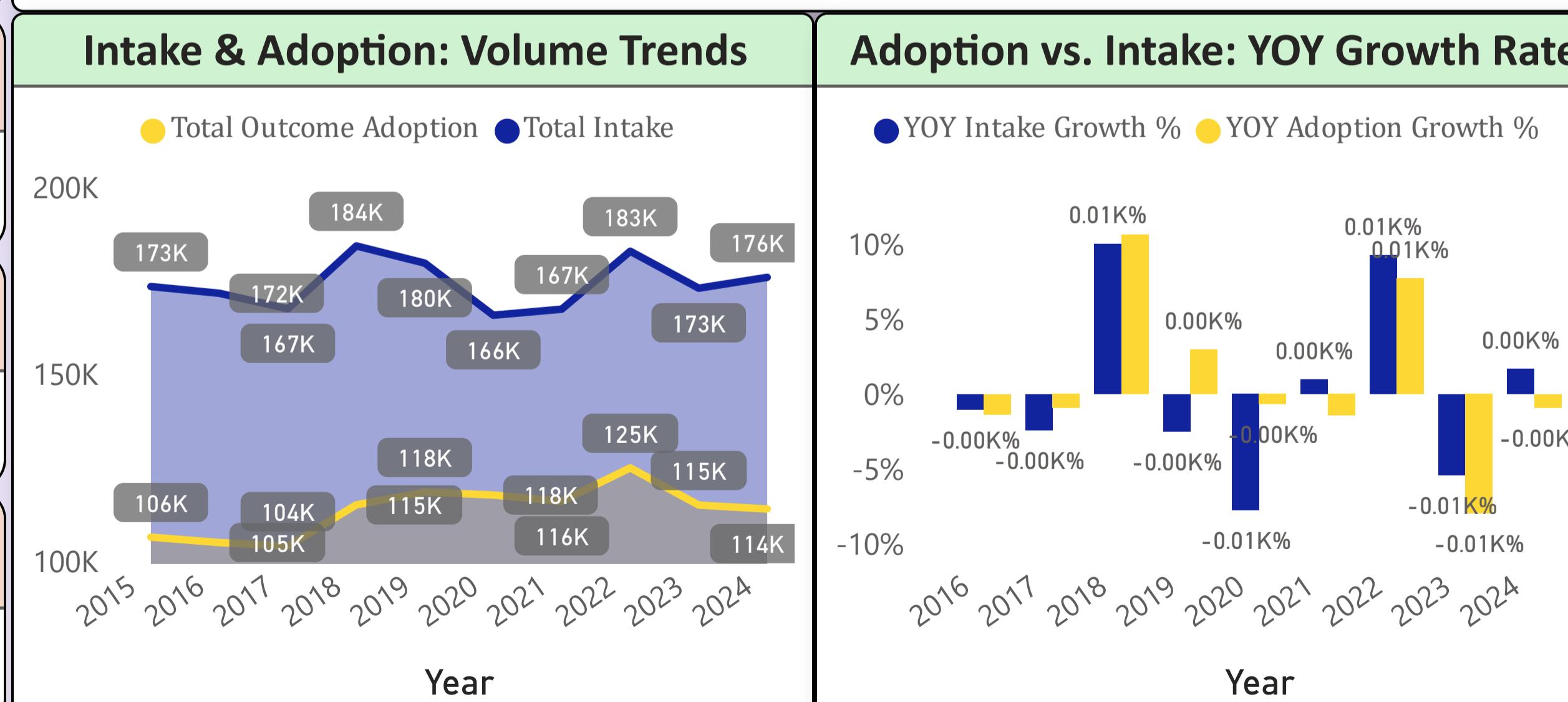
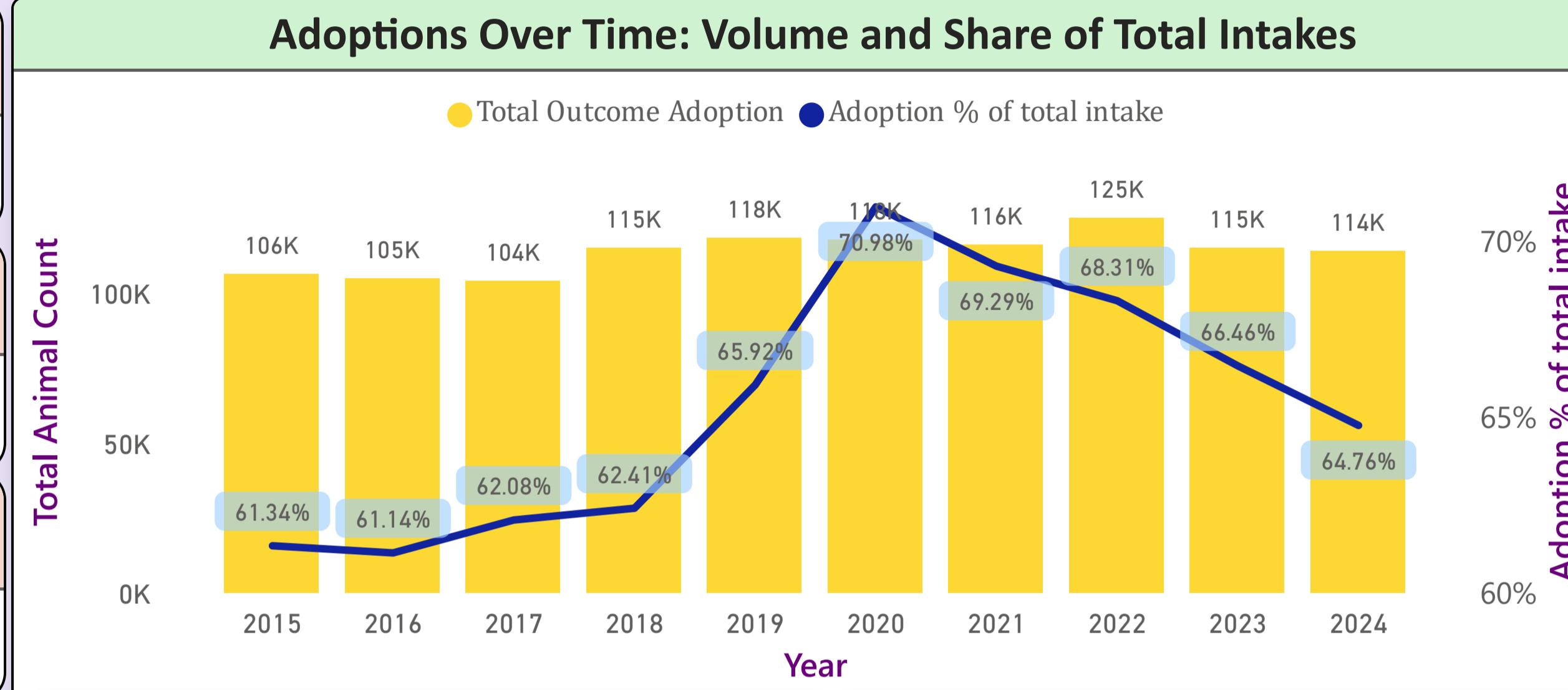
1.1M

### Adoption Rate by Tot Outcomes

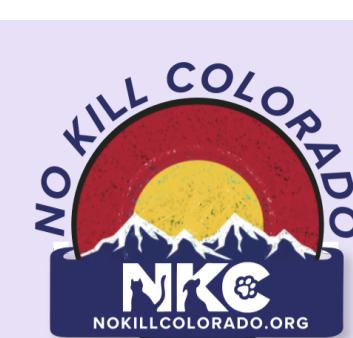
66.2%

### Adoption Rate by Tot Intakes

65.2%



- Adoption is critical, driving 66% of all total outcomes. Sustaining high adoption volume is essential for operational success.
- Adoption growth generally kept pace with Intake growth during surge years (2018 and 2022), showing system responsiveness.
- Both Total Intake and Total Adoption volume peaked in 2022 (Intake at 182K, Adoption at 125K), and both have seen a subsequent slight decline.
- The 2023 Adoption growth rate dropped sharply (approx -8%) compared to the Intake decline (approx -5%). This signals a critical need for increased resources toward marketing, outreach, and events to address slowing placement.
- The pronounced slowdown in adoption growth in 2023 acts as a clear signal for immediate strategic interventions, such as fee-waived events or public campaigns, to prevent capacity issues.
- The high efficiency achieved in 2020 (70.98% Adoption Rate) should serve as the target for future



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### Total Stray Intake

614.1K

### Total RTO Outcome

256.4K

### RTO Rate by Tot Outcomes

14.9%

### RTO Rate by Tot Stray Intakes

41.8%

336,386  
Total Dog Stray Intakes

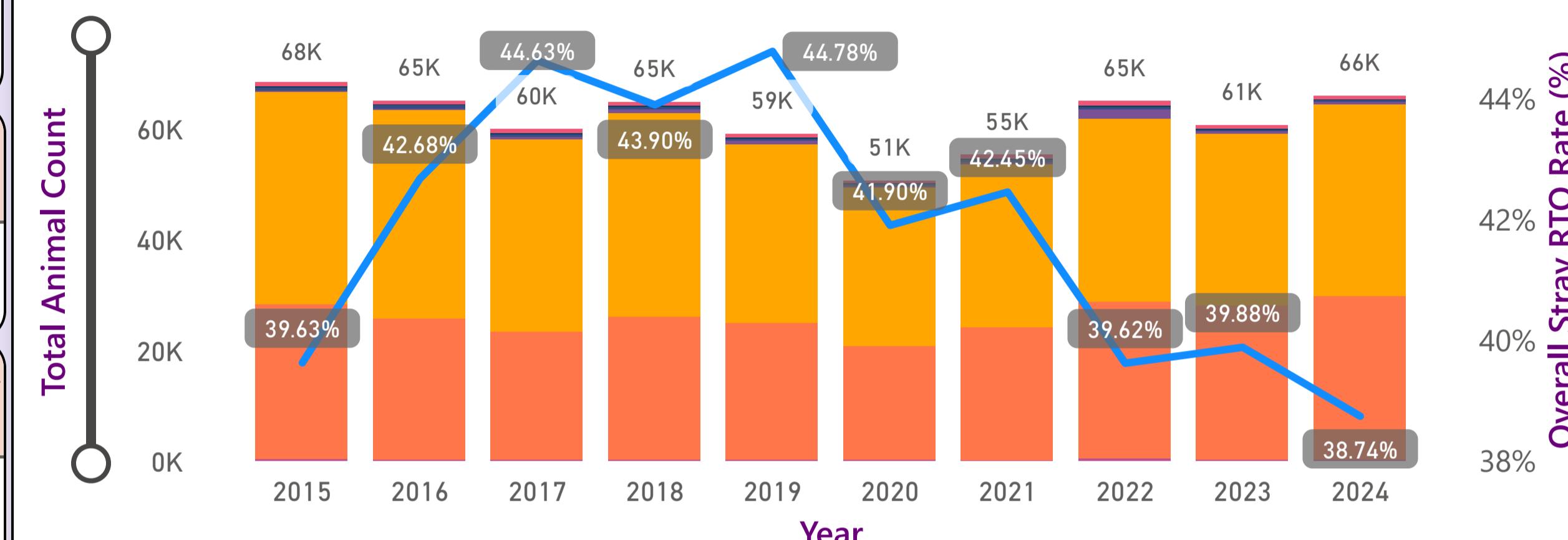
256,721  
Total Cat Stray Intakes

222,215  
Total Dog RTO Outcomes

31,309  
Total Cat RTO Outcomes

### Stray Intakes and Return-to-Owner Rates by Species Over Time

Birds Cat Dog Other Rabbits Reptiles & Amphibians Small Mammals Overall Stray RTO Rate (%)



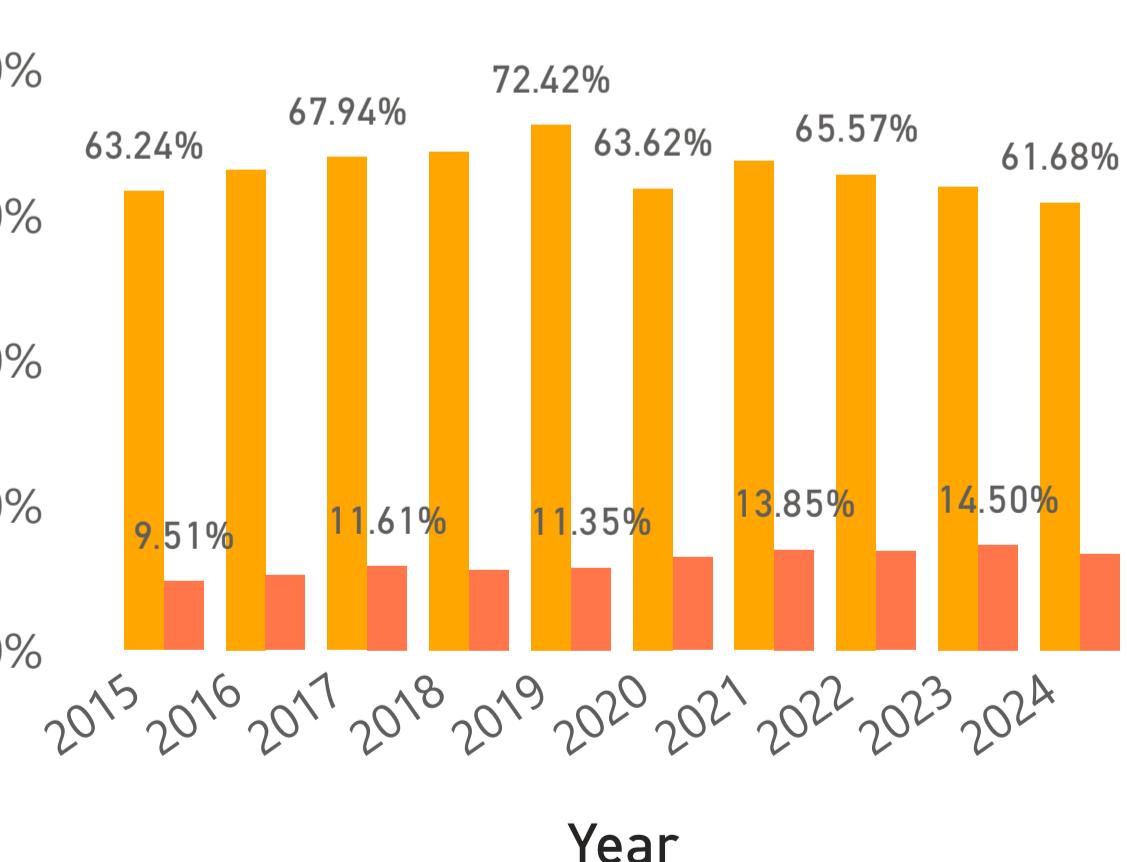
### Stray Intakes vs RTO Trends

Total Intake Stray Total Outcome Return To Owner



### Stray RTO Performance: Dogs vs Cats

Dog Stray RTO Rate (%) Cat Stray RTO Rate (%)



The Overall Stray RTO Rate (%) is declining significantly, dropping nearly 6 percentage points from its peak in 2019 (44.8%) to its lowest point in 2024 (38.7%) while Stray Intake volume is simultaneously rising (since 2020).

The decline in the RTO rate is compounded by rising Stray Intake volume since 2020. Fewer pets are being reunited (rate down) while more lost pets are coming in (volume up), placing greater strain on shelter capacity.

The performance gap between species is massive. Dog RTO rates are high (approx 61.7% in 2024), but Cat RTO rates are critically low (never exceeding 14.5% and at 13.2% in 2024). This strongly suggests that resources should be prioritized for community education and low-cost identification programs (microchips/tags) aimed specifically at cat owners.

Even the Dog RTO Rate has dropped substantially since its 2019 peak (approx 72.4%), indicating a failure in basic reunification methods (microchipping/tags) for the most successful species.



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**93,658**

Total Outcome Euthana...

**72.96%**

Euthanasia % of Negative

**20,802**

Total Outcome Deaths

**16.20%**

Deaths % of Negative

**13,916**

Total Outcome Missing ...

**10.84%**

Missing % of Negative

## Total Negative Outcomes

**128.4K**

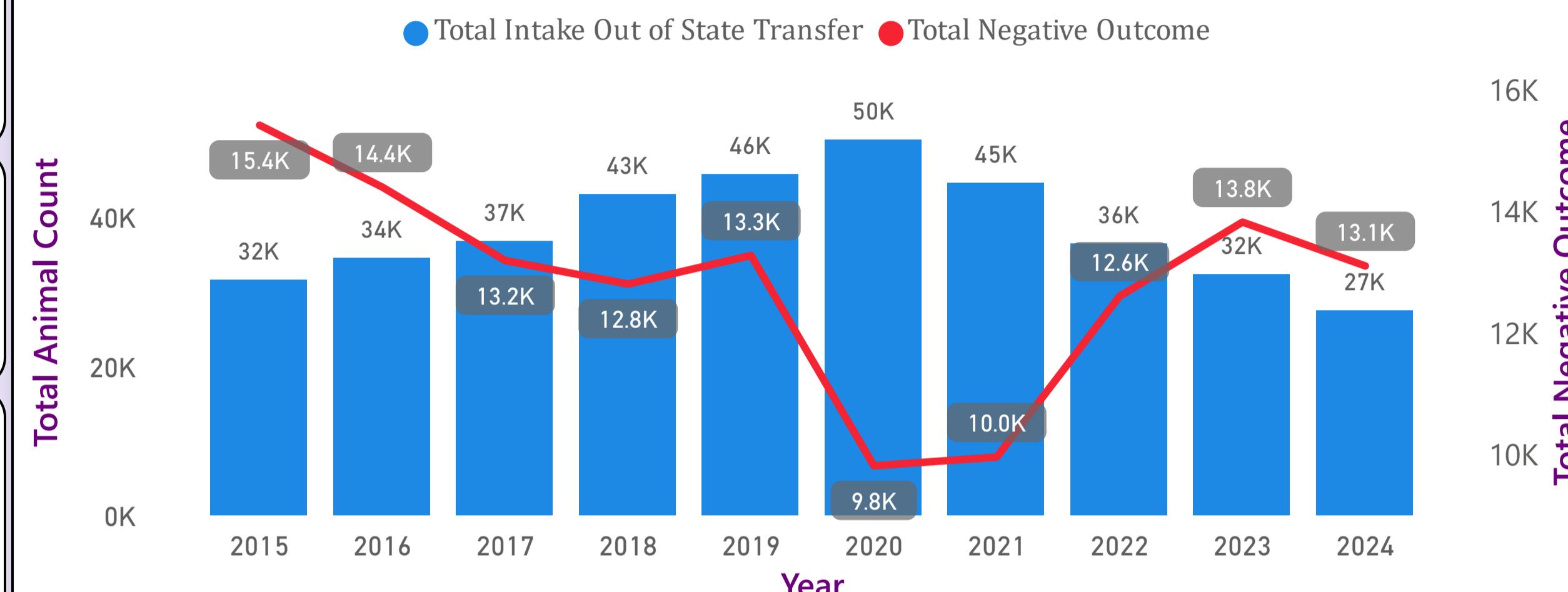
## Transfer - Negative Ratio

**0.34**

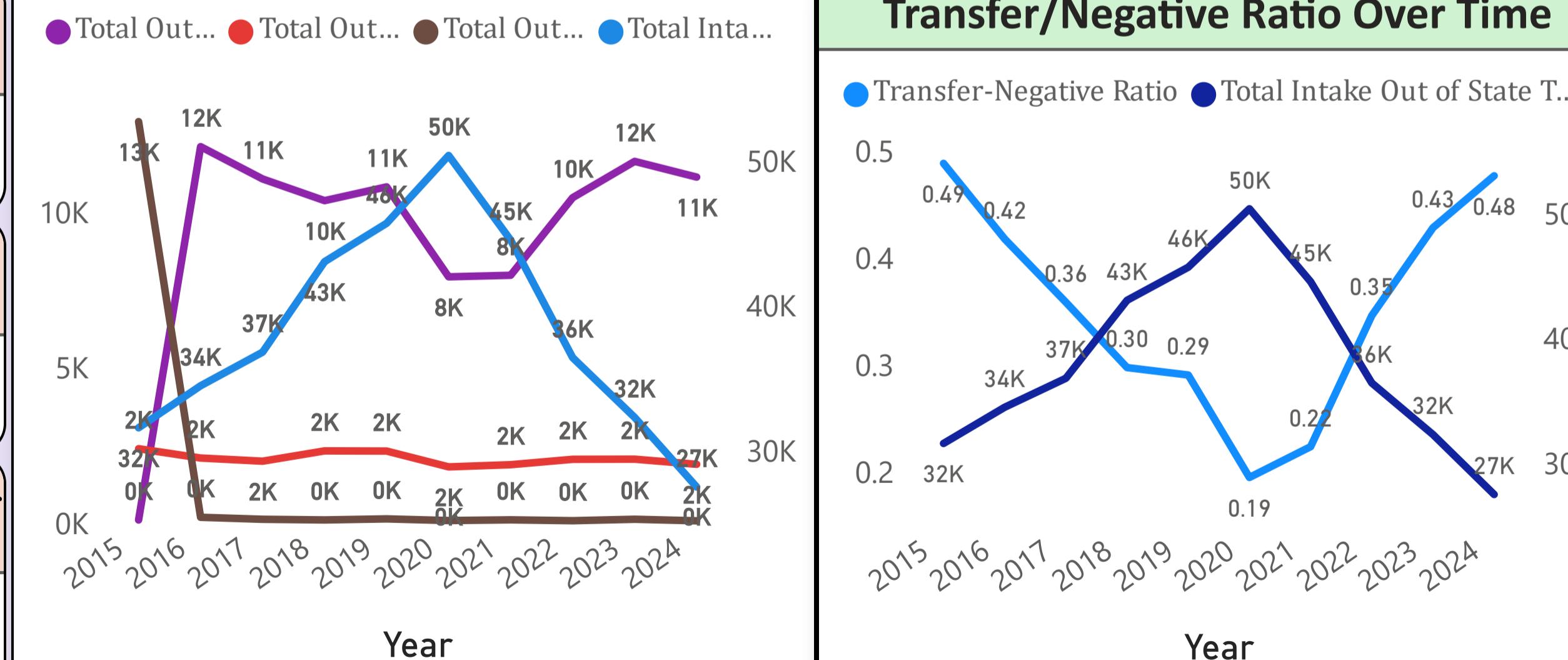
## Tot Inatke from Out-of-State

**382.6K**

## Out-of-State Transfers(Intake) vs. Negative Outcomes Over Time



## Transfer/Negative Ratio Over Time



• The system has demonstrated the capacity to absorb high volumes of Out-of-State Transfers without a corresponding spike in negative outcomes (deaths, euthanasia).

• The Transfer-Negative Ratio has been consistently well below 1.0 (at 0.477 in 2024 and as low as 0.195 in 2020), confirming that the shelter saves significantly more animals via Out-of-State transfers than it loses to negative outcomes.

• The Transfer-Negative Ratio has been climbing steeply since 2021 (from 0.224 to 0.477 in 2024). This signals increasing operational stress on internal resources, though the system is still functional.

• The overall negative outcome trend is driven almost entirely by Euthanasia (Purple line), while the volume of Deaths (Red line) and Missing (Brown line) remains low and stable.

• After 2021, the Euthanasia volume and OOS Transfer volume began moving in tandem, suggesting that internal resource constraints may be affecting both the intake decisions for OOS transfers and the