

What should **Animal Control** look like on Denman & Hornby?



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BRANCH

PROJECT: Animal Control Feasibility / Engagement | Scope of Work

Comox Valley Regional District

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Executive Summary

Animal control services for Denman and Hornby Islands have been discussed at various points, but without a clear, evidence-based understanding of the nature of the issue or what level of service, if any, would be proportionate and supportable.

This study was conducted to provide that clarity, specifically to understand:

- whether animal-related concerns are meaningfully experienced across the islands
- how those concerns are perceived in terms of significance and impact
- what type of service, if any, residents would value
- and whether there is alignment around potential service approaches

The study was conducted between April 1 and May 1, 2026, and included a resident survey, in-person engagement on both islands, targeted outreach through local channels and associations (Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (HIRRA) and Denman Island Residents Association (DIRA), and interviews with relevant stakeholders (including RCMP, SPCA, and Denman and Hornby Fire Chiefs).

A total of 348 survey responses were collected and analyzed, with near-equal representation from Denman and Hornby. Participation was grounded in year-round and long-term residents, providing a credible basis for interpreting the findings.

Key Findings

Animal-related concerns are widely experienced, but not universal.

A majority of respondents reported direct experience with animal-related issues, while a substantial minority did not. This reflects a meaningful level of concern, but not a consistent experience across the community.

The issue reflects a pattern of behaviour and management, not a single problem.

Concerns are driven by roaming animals, livestock and wildlife interactions, and owner behaviour, pointing to accountability and management practices as central factors.

Impacts extend beyond nuisance into rural and agricultural contexts.

Concerns are most frequently associated with agricultural and rural properties, indicating that impacts may include harm to livestock, wildlife, and working lands, not only disturbance in public or residential spaces.

Concerns are ongoing rather than seasonal.

Most respondents indicated that issues occur year-round or without a clear pattern, confirming that the issue is persistent rather than tied to peak visitor periods.

Perceptions of severity are divided.

Residents are split between those who view the issue as significant and those who view it as minor or not an issue, reflecting differing lived experience and contributing to a lack of consensus on service need.

Residents prioritize response over presence.

The strongest priorities relate to incident response, complaint tracking, and reporting pathways, while patrol presence ranked lowest. This indicates a preference for a targeted, on-demand response model rather than a proactive enforcement approach.

Service Level Considerations

The survey tested three illustrative service levels, ranging from minimal complaint management to a higher-service model with seasonal patrols.

A response-based model is the closest fit, but not a consensus position.

A moderate, on-demand service model — where response occurs only when required — received the highest level of support. However, no option achieved majority support.

Preferences remain stable when cost is introduced.

Support patterns changed only marginally when estimated household costs were included, indicating that preferences are not driven solely by price.

A meaningful portion of residents are not aligned with any service model.

A substantial share of respondents did not support any of the options presented, suggesting that for some, the issue is not cost alone, but a lack of alignment with formal service approaches.

Implications for Consideration

The findings indicate that animal-related concerns on Denman and Hornby Islands are real, visible, and widely experienced, but not universally encountered or consistently perceived as severe. This results in a community perspective that is meaningful, but not unified.

Across all areas of the study, a consistent pattern emerges:

- Residents prioritize responsive, incident-based support, rather than proactive enforcement or continuous presence
- A moderate, on-demand service model is the most aligned of the options tested
- There is no clear consensus on a preferred service level
- A significant portion of residents are not aligned with any formal service approach, regardless of cost

Taken together, the findings do not point to a single, clearly supported solution. Rather, they define a narrow band of viable options, centered on a limited, response-based service, alongside clear constraints related to cost, scope, and community alignment.

As part of this work, a review of service approaches in other small and rural island jurisdictions has also been completed (see Appendix B). These examples reinforce the importance of aligning service design with local conditions, including geography, population, and service expectations, rather than applying urban or standardized models.

Understanding The Context

This feasibility study sits at the intersection of service delivery, community expectations, and fiscal reality. The question is not simply whether residents want an animal control service, but what kind of service is realistic, defensible, and sustainable for Denman and Hornby Islands given their unique geography, population dynamics, and cost sensitivities.

Over the past decade, the concept of animal control services for the islands has surfaced multiple times, often with strong community interest but limited political or financial momentum. The current context is meaningfully different. A formal service request from both island resident associations, combined with available feasibility funding and clear political interest, has created a narrow but real window to advance the conversation.

At the same time, the constraints remain significant:

- Denman and Hornby would be the only service areas funding the program, making cost-per-household a critical factor.

- A full-service, 24/7 animal control model comparable to urban areas is neither feasible nor appropriate given ferry access, geographic isolation, and contractor limitations.
- Community perceptions are nuanced. Many residents believe most local pet owners are responsible, while concerns tend to focus on seasonal population increases and visitor-related issues.

This creates a high-risk environment for poorly framed engagement. Asking residents whether they “support” animal control without clearly linking service levels to cost would almost certainly produce misleading results. Likewise, open-ended or advocacy-driven engagement risks amplifying polarized views rather than generating decision-ready insight.

What this study needs to do is different. It must balance community voice with operational reality, quantify willingness to pay rather than abstract support, and clearly articulate trade-offs between service levels and cost. The outcome must be evidence-based, neutral, and credible to both residents and decision-makers.

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this feasibility study is to provide CVRD and the Electoral Area Director with clear, defensible data to inform a decision about whether, and how, to proceed with an island-specific animal control service.

Specifically, the study will:

- Measure level of support for animal control services when service models and costs are clearly defined
- Identify preferred service types or tiers (e.g., complaint-driven, emergency-only, limited hours)
- Assess willingness to pay at different price points
- Distinguish between full-time and seasonal residents, recognizing different usage patterns and cost implications
- Capture qualitative context that explains *why* residents feel the way they do
- Produce findings that are suitable for Board-level decision-making and public transparency

Overview

This study was designed to establish a clear and practical understanding of animal-related issues on Denman and Hornby Islands, and to assess whether a formal animal control service is warranted and supportable within a small, rural island context.

Consistent with the approved scope of work, the approach combined multiple, complementary methods to ensure that findings reflect both community experience and operational realities.

The methodology included:

- **Quantitative research**, through a structured Denman and Hornby resident survey, designed to capture the nature, frequency, and perceived severity of animal-related concerns, as well as preferences for potential service approaches and willingness to pay
- **Qualitative input**, through targeted stakeholder interviews and open-ended survey responses, providing contextual insight into how issues arise, how they are currently managed, and where gaps exist
- A **contextual review of available administrative information**, informed by discussions with agencies that receive or respond to animal-related inquiries, including the RCMP, SPCA, and the CVRD animal control contractor
- **Direct, on-island engagement**, providing opportunities for residents to ask questions, share perspectives, and participate in the survey in person

Recognizing the geographic and demographic characteristics of Denman and Hornby Islands—including a small population base, a mix of full-time and seasonal residents, and varied levels of digital access—the study was supported by a deliberate, multi-channel engagement strategy designed to maximize awareness and participation.

This included coordinated outreach through community associations, local media, CVRD communications, posters in high-visibility locations, and direct engagement, all of which directed residents to a single point of participation.

All survey responses—whether completed online or in person—were captured within a single, consistent dataset, ensuring integrity and comparability of results.

The intent was not to conduct broad, open-ended consultation, but to generate focused insight that reflects:

- the lived experience of residents
- the practical realities of service delivery in a rural island setting
- and the trade-offs between service levels and cost

Quantitative Research – Denman and Hornby Resident Survey

A structured **online survey**, administered through the CVRD Engage platform, was the primary quantitative component of this study.

Participation was limited to Denman and Hornby residents and property owners through an initial qualification step, ensuring responses reflect those directly affected by any potential service.

The survey captures:

- the extent and nature of animal-related issues experienced by residents
- where and how frequently those issues occur
- how concerns are perceived in terms of severity
- priority service needs
- alignment with defined service levels
- willingness to pay once cost is introduced

The instrument was sequenced from experience to evaluation, requiring respondents to assess defined service models in the context of their own experience and associated cost implications.

This approach avoids generalized expressions of support and provides a more reliable indication of what levels of service are both valued and realistically supportable within the local context.

Paper responses collected during on-island engagement were incorporated into the overall results.

Qualitative Research – Stakeholder Interviews & Contextual Inputs

Qualitative and contextual inputs were used to supplement survey findings and provide additional insight into how animal-related issues are currently experienced, reported, and managed on Denman and Hornby Islands.

Input was obtained through targeted interviews with organizations and individuals who either receive animal-related inquiries or encounter related issues in an operational or community capacity. This included:

- Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (HIRRA)
 - Reina LeBaron, Executive Director
- Denman Island Residents Association (DIRA)
 - Jenny Balke, Chair
- RCMP (Bike Patrol Unit)
 - Rob Brennan
 - Daniel Stone
- CVRD Animal Control Contractor (Comox Valley)
- BC SPCA (Comox Valley)
- Hornby Island Fire Rescue
 - Doug Chinnery, Fire Chief
- Denman Island Fire Department
 - Rob Manering, Fire Chief
- The Unleashed Dog Boutique
 - Renee Gonzalez

In addition to interview input, available administrative information was reviewed where possible. Due to the absence of a formal animal control service on the islands, no centralized dataset exists. As a result, available information is limited and derived from agency records and observations.

Across these sources, consistent patterns were identified:

- a relatively low but recurring number of incidents
- a range of issue types, including roaming animals, nuisance behaviour, and livestock interactions
- frequent reliance on agencies without a formal mandate to respond
- the absence of a clear reporting or response pathway

These inputs are used to provide context and directional evidence, and to support interpretation of survey findings. They are not intended to represent a comprehensive or statistically complete record of incidents.

Findings & Insights: Resident Survey

This section presents the findings from the Denman and Hornby resident survey, with a focus on who participated, what residents reported experiencing, and the key patterns that emerged from the data. The intent is to establish a clear evidence base on the nature, distribution, and perceived seriousness of animal-related issues before turning to service preferences and cost considerations.

Participation Overview

Total responses: 348

All responses were captured through a single dataset, including:

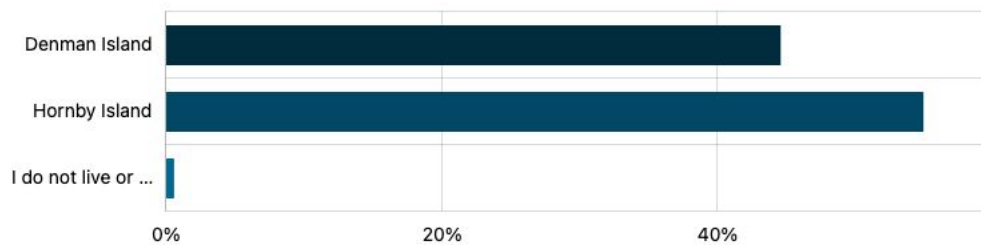
- Online submissions
- In-person participation (paper + assisted completion)
- Mailed responses (entered manually)

Participation and Respondent Profile

A total of 348 completed survey responses were received, providing a substantial base of resident input from across both islands. Participation was well distributed between Hornby and Denman, resulting in near-equal representation from the two communities.

1. Island representation

- Denman Island: **44.54% (n=155)**
- Hornby Island: **54.89% (n=191)**
- I do not live or own property on Denman or Hornby Island: **0.57% (n=2)**

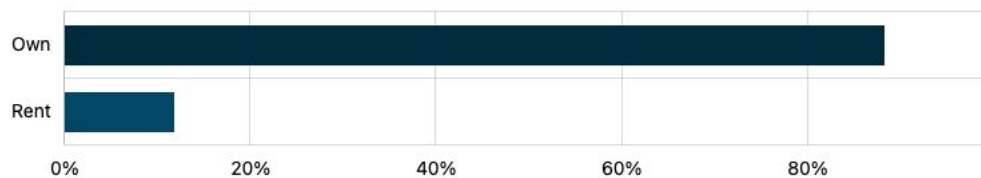


Insight:

Responses were distributed across both islands with near-equal representation, providing a credible basis for interpreting the findings as reflective of both communities rather than disproportionately shaped by one island.

2. Property Ownership vs. Rental Status

- Own: **88.22% (n=307)**
- Rent: **11.78% (n=41)**

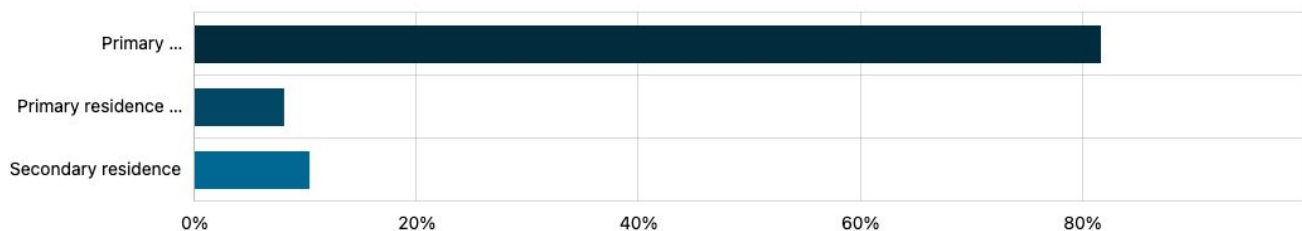


Insight:

The respondent base is heavily weighted toward property owners, which is directly relevant given that any future service model would be funded through property taxation. The findings therefore reflect the perspectives of those most directly impacted by potential cost implications.

3. Residency profile of respondents

- Primary (year-round) residence: **81.61% (n=284)**
- Primary residence (seasonal majority of the year): **8.05% (n=28)**
- Secondary residence: **10.34% (n=36)**

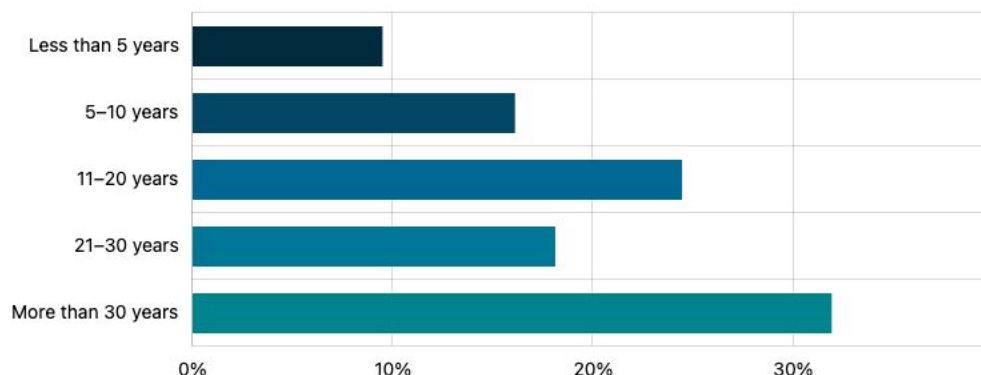


Insight:

Responses are strongly anchored in the perspectives of year-round residents, ensuring that findings reflect consistent, lived experience on the islands, while still incorporating input from those with seasonal or secondary residency.

4. Length of connection to the islands

- Less than 5 years: **9.48% (n=33)**
- 5–10 years: **16.09% (n=56)**
- 11–20 years: **24.43% (n=85)**
- 21–30 years: **18.10% (n=63)**
- More than 30 years: **31.90% (n=111)**

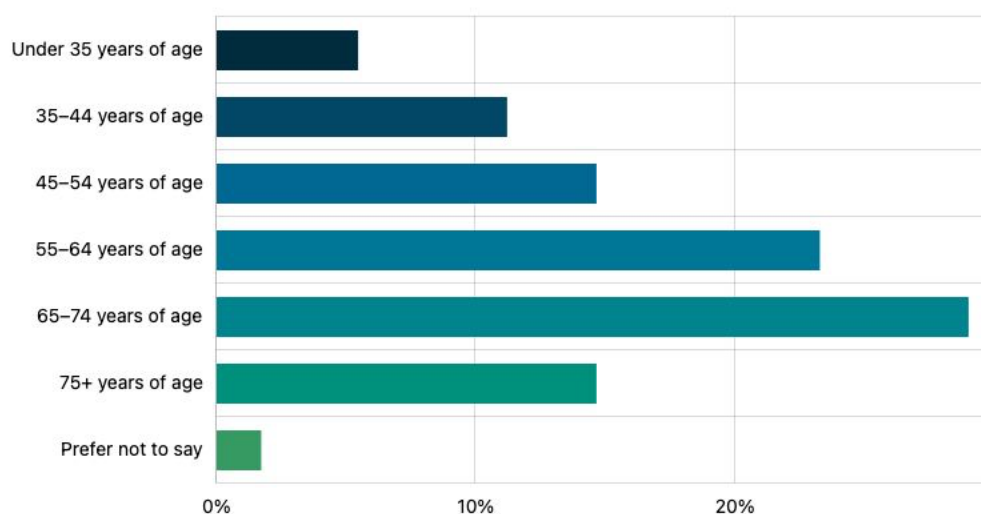


Insight:

The respondent base is strongly informed by long-term island experience: 74.43% have lived on or owned property on the islands for more than 10 years, including 31.90% for more than 30 years. At the same time, 25.57% have been connected for 10 years or less, providing representation from newer residents as well.

5. Age distribution

- Under 35 years of age: **5.46% (n=19)**
- 35–44 years of age: **11.21% (n=39)**
- 45–54 years of age: **14.66% (n=51)**
- 55–64 years of age: **23.28% (n=81)**
- 65–74 years of age: **29.02% (n=101)**
- 75+ years of age: **14.66% (n=51)**
- Prefer not to say: **1.72% (n=6)**



Insight:

Participation was strongest among residents aged 55 to 74 (52.30%), consistent with the older demographic profile of the islands. However, 31.32% of respondents were under age 55, indicating meaningful participation across age groups rather than input concentrated solely among older residents.

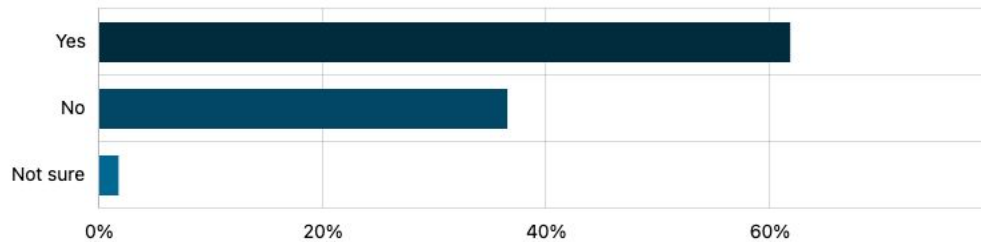
Resident Experience with Animal-Related Issues

6. A majority of respondents have personally experienced animal-related issues

Respondents were asked whether, in the past three years, they had personally experienced or been directly affected by a concern involving domestic animals on the island. A majority reported that they had.

Personal experience with animal-related concerns

- Yes: **61.78% (n=215)**
- No: **36.49% (n=127)**
- Not sure: **1.72% (n=6)**



Insight:

A clear majority of respondents (61.78%) reported direct experience with animal-related issues, confirming that these concerns are widely encountered across the islands. However, a substantial minority (36.49%) reported no direct experience, indicating that exposure is uneven rather than universal. This divide is significant, as it helps explain the variation in perceived severity and the lack of consensus observed in later responses regarding service levels and willingness to pay.

6a. Open-Ended Responses: Nature of Reported Experiences

Respondents who indicated they had personally experienced animal-related issues were invited to describe those situations in their own words. While responses varied in detail and circumstance, several consistent themes emerged.

1. Livestock and wildlife impacts, often with significant consequence

A recurring theme involved incidents where domestic animals—most commonly dogs—interacted with livestock or wildlife. These included reports of animals being chased, injured, or killed. These situations were often described as highly distressing and, in some cases, financially impactful for property owners.

2. Roaming and uncontrolled animals as a persistent concern

Many respondents described dogs roaming off-leash or outside of owner control, including entering private property, approaching people or other animals, and creating ongoing nuisance or safety concerns. These were frequently characterized as repeat occurrences rather than isolated incidents.

3. Aggressive or threatening encounters

A number of responses referenced direct encounters involving aggressive behaviour, including dogs approaching or confronting residents, pets, or livestock. While not always resulting in physical harm, these interactions contributed to a perception of risk and unease.

4. Lack of accountability and limited recourse

Across responses, a consistent theme was frustration with the absence of clear enforcement, reporting pathways, or follow-up. Incidents were often described as recurring, with limited ability to address repeat behaviour.

Insight:

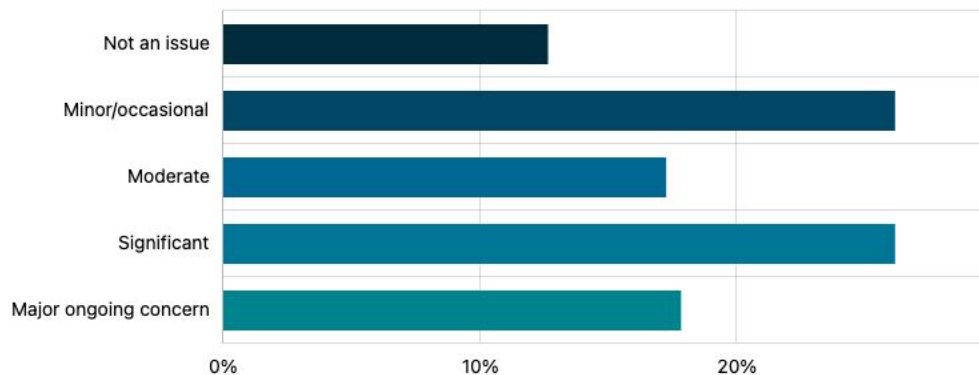
Taken together, these responses reinforce that animal-related concerns are not limited to minor nuisance issues, but include situations with tangible impact and, in some cases, heightened risk. At the same time, the absence of a clear response mechanism contributes to a perception that issues persist without resolution.

7. Perceptions of severity are divided, reflecting differing lived experiences across the community.

Residents were also asked to assess the overall significance of domestic animal concerns on their island. The results show no single dominant view of severity, but they do indicate that most respondents perceive at least some level of issue.

Overall significance of concerns:

- Significant concern: **26.15% (n=91)**
- Major ongoing concern: **17.82% (n=62)**
- Moderate concern: **17.24% (n=60)**
- Minor / occasional issue: **26.15% (n=91)**
- Not an issue: **12.64% (n=44)**



Insight:

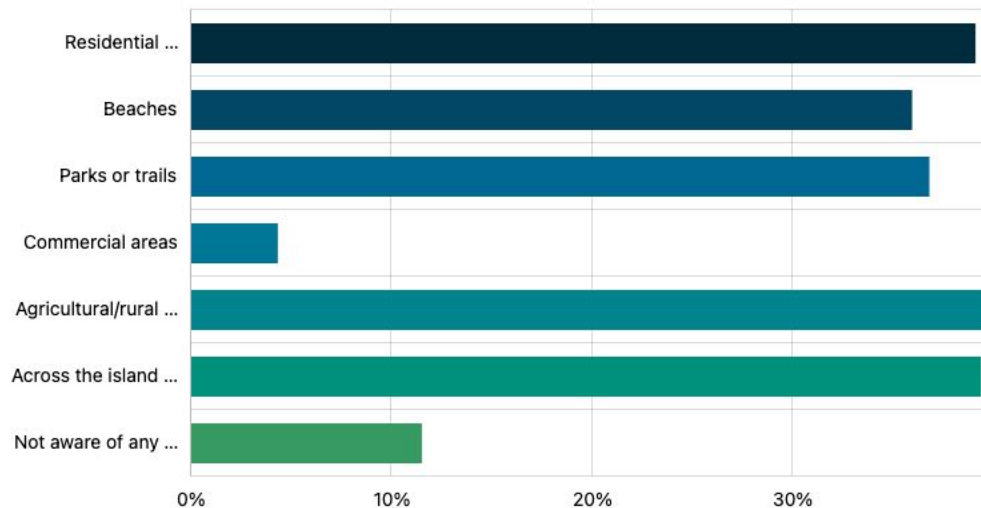
Perceptions of severity are closely divided, with 43.97% of respondents identifying concerns as significant or ongoing, compared to 38.79% who view them as minor or not an issue. This near parity indicates that while the issue is widely recognized, its perceived seriousness varies considerably based on individual experience. In practical terms, this division helps explain the absence of consensus on service levels and highlights the challenge of designing a response that aligns with both those experiencing frequent impacts and those who are not.

8. Animal-related concerns are experienced across the islands, with slightly higher concentrations in rural and agricultural areas

Animal-related concerns were not confined to one setting. They were reported across residential, rural, and public locations. However, agricultural and rural properties emerged as the single highest-ranked location type.

Where concerns most commonly occur:

- Agricultural / rural properties: **39.94% (n=139)**
- Residential neighbourhoods: **39.08% (n=136)**
- Across the island generally: **39.37% (n=137)**
- Parks or trails: **36.78% (n=128)**
- Beaches: **35.92% (n=125)**
- Commercial areas: **4.31% (n=15)**
- Not aware of concerns: **11.49% (n=40)**



Insight:

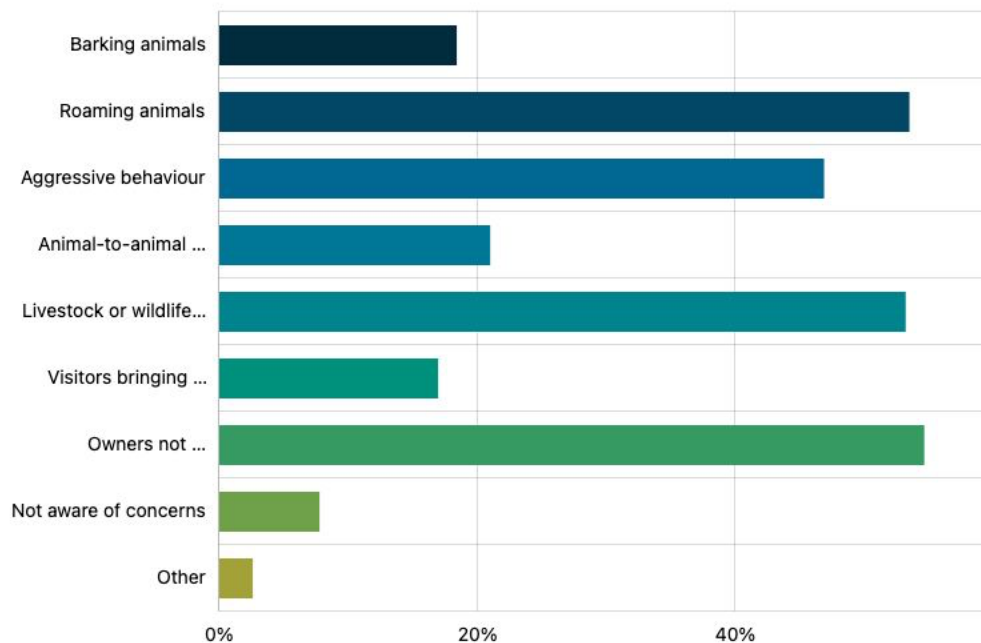
While responses indicate that concerns are broadly distributed across the islands, agricultural and rural properties (39.94%) emerge as the most frequently identified setting, followed closely by “across the island generally” and residential neighbourhoods. This is notable, as it aligns with more serious types of concerns referenced elsewhere in the data, including livestock interactions and animal-related incidents. In practical terms, the issue is not limited to public nuisance or shared recreational spaces; it also affects rural and working properties, where impacts can be more consequential.

9. Reported Animal-related concerns are driven by multiple, closely aligned issue types rather than a single dominant problem

Residents identified a range of issue types, but the highest-ranked categories were closely aligned and point to a pattern of ongoing animal management concerns rather than isolated nuisance complaints.

Types of situations most commonly creating concern:

- Owners not following expectations or rules: **54.60% (n=190)**
- Roaming animals: **53.45% (n=186)**
- Livestock or wildlife interactions: **53.16% (n=185)**
- Aggressive behaviour: **46.84% (n=163)**
- Animal-to-animal conflict: **20.98% (n=73)**
- Barking animals: **18.39% (n=64)**
- Visitors bringing animals unfamiliar with the island: **16.95% (n=59)**
- Not aware of concerns: **7.76% (n=27)**
- Other: **2.59% (n=9)**



Insight:

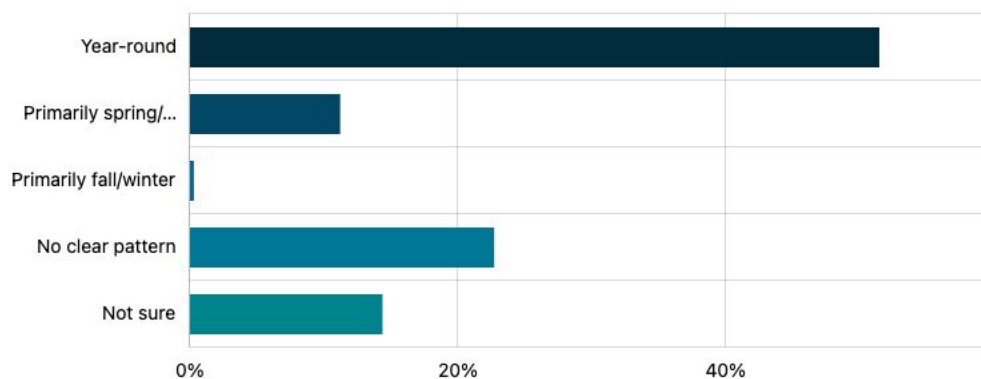
The top three concern types—owner behaviour (54.60%), roaming animals (53.45%), and livestock or wildlife interactions (53.16%)—are nearly identical in frequency, indicating that the issue is not driven by a single dominant problem but by a cluster of related factors. Notably, the prominence of owner behaviour suggests that accountability and compliance are central drivers, rather than animal presence alone. This has direct implications for service design, pointing toward response and enforcement mechanisms rather than purely containment or infrastructure-based solutions.

10. Reported issues are not seasonal and are experienced as an ongoing issue

Residents were asked when animal-related concerns most commonly occur. The responses do not support a strong seasonal pattern. Instead, the dominant view is that issues occur year-round or without a clear pattern.

Timing of issues

- Year-round: **51.44% (n=179)**
- No clear pattern: **22.70% (n=79)**
- Primarily spring/summer: **11.21% (n=39)**
- Not sure: **14.37% (n=50)**
- Primarily fall/winter: **0.29% (n=1)**



Insight:

A combined 74.14% of respondents report that concerns occur either year-round or without a clear pattern, compared to just 11.21% who associate them primarily with spring and summer. This indicates that animal-related issues are not driven primarily by seasonal population increases or visitor activity. In practical terms, this suggests that any service response would need to be structured as an ongoing capability rather than a seasonal or peak-period intervention.

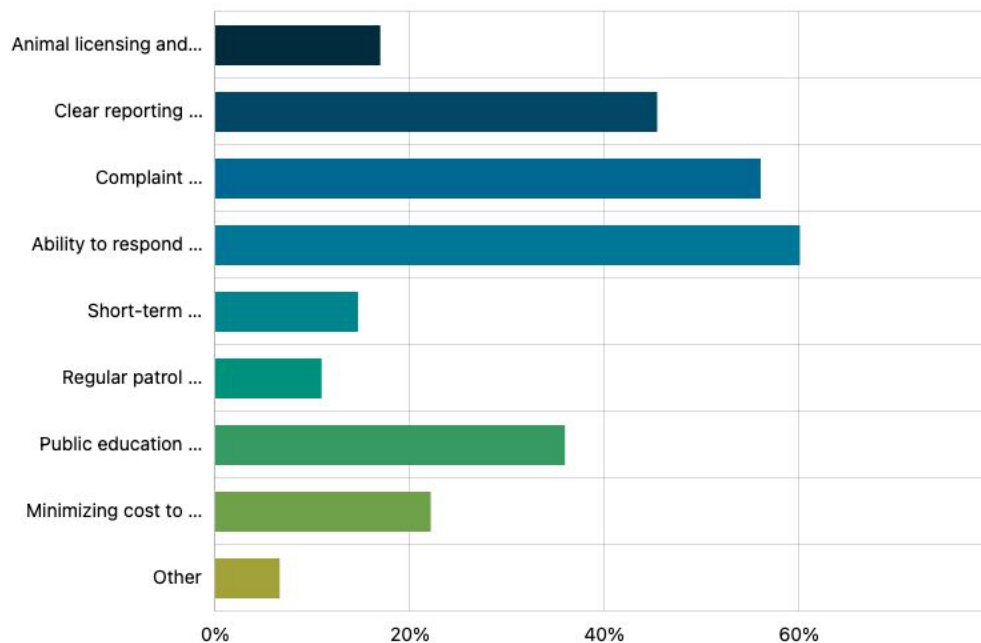
Assessment of Service Priorities

Residents were asked what would matter most if animal control services were introduced or expanded on Denman and Hornby Islands.

11. Residents prioritize responsive, on-demand services over proactive enforcement or patrol presence

Service priorities:

- Ability to respond to serious incidents: **60.06% (n=209)**
- Complaint documentation and tracking: **56.03% (n=195)**
- Clear reporting pathway: **45.40% (n=158)**
- Public education and awareness: **35.92% (n=125)**
- Minimizing cost: **22.13% (n=77)**
- Animal licensing and identification: **16.95% (n=59)**
- Short-term containment: **14.66% (n=51)**
- Regular patrol presence: **10.92% (n=38)**
- Other: **6.61% (n=23)**



Insight:

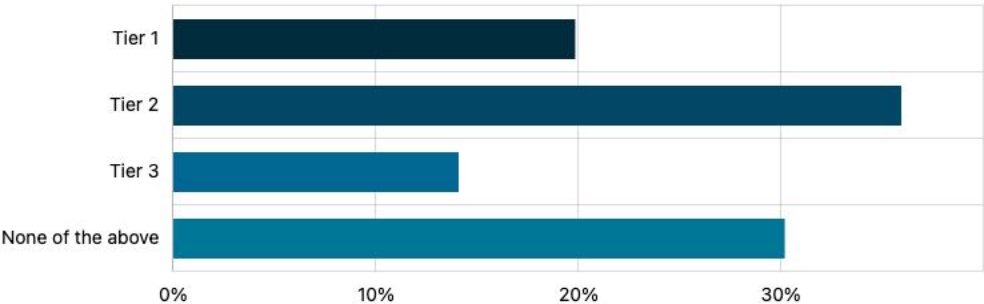
The highest-ranked priorities—incident response (60.06%), complaint tracking (56.03%), and reporting pathways (45.40%)—are all response-oriented functions. In contrast, proactive measures such as patrol presence rank lowest at 10.92%. This indicates that residents are not seeking a visible or enforcement-heavy service model, but rather a reliable mechanism to respond when issues arise. In practical terms, this points toward a targeted, on-demand service approach rather than a continuous presence model.

12. Tier 2 is the most supported service model, but no option achieves majority support

Residents were presented with three service levels and asked which level they believed was most appropriate based on service descriptions alone.

Preferred service level (no cost presented)

- Tier 2: **35.92% (n=125)**
- None of the above: **30.17% (n=105)**
- Tier 1: **19.83% (n=69)**
- Tier 3: **14.08% (n=49)**

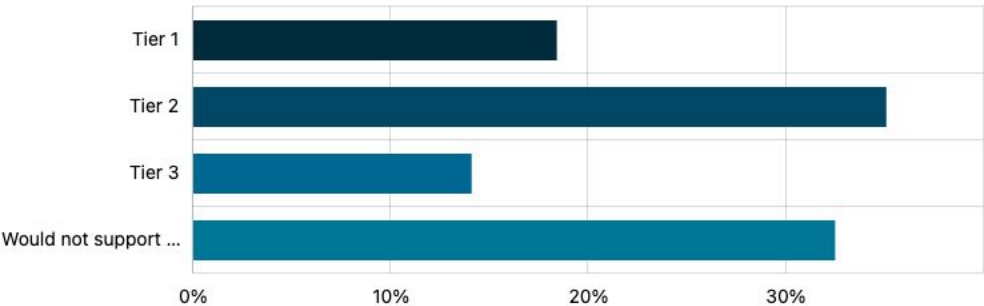


Insight: Tier 2 emerges as the most supported option; however, it falls well short of majority support, and nearly one-third of respondents (30.17%) selected “none of the above.” This indicates that even in principle, there is no clear consensus around a preferred service model. In practical terms, this suggests that any proposed approach will need to balance competing expectations rather than rely on a single clearly supported direction.

13. Tier 2 is the most supported service model, both before and after cost is introduced, but support remains divided.

Preferred service level (with cost)

- Tier 1: **18.39% (n=64)**
- Tier 2: **35.06% (n=122)**
- Tier 3: **14.08% (n=49)**
- Would not support any level: **32.47% (n=113)**



Insight:

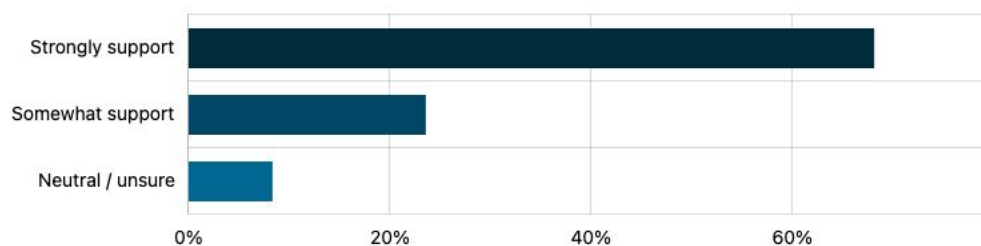
Tier 2 remains the leading option once cost is introduced, with support changing only marginally from 35.92% to 35.06%. This suggests that cost does not materially change overall preference among those inclined to support a service model. At the same time, the “would not support any level” response (32.47%) is closely aligned with the earlier “none of the above” response (30.17%), suggesting that opposition may reflect broader concerns about the proposed service options, not cost alone. In practical terms, Tier 2 remains the most viable model among those tested, but support is clearly divided.

14. Strength of Support

Residents were asked how strongly they felt about their selected option.

Strength of support:

- Strongly support: **68.10% (n=237)**
- Somewhat support: **23.56% (n=82)**
- Neutral/unsure: **8.33% (n=29)**



Insight:

A combined 91.66% of respondents indicate they strongly or somewhat support their selected option, including 68.10% who strongly support it. This indicates that responses are not tentative; residents appear to hold clear positions on the service options presented. In practical terms, this reinforces the importance of clearly articulating service trade-offs, because views appear well-formed on both sides of the issue.

15. Open-Ended Responses: Additional Input for Decision-Makers

Respondents were invited to share any additional input for decision-makers regarding animal control services on Denman and Hornby Islands. Responses were often direct and, in many cases, strongly expressed, with several clear themes emerging.

1. Clear division in views on the need for a formal service

Responses reflect a distinct split within the community. Some respondents expressed strong support for introducing or strengthening animal control services, often referencing repeated or high-impact incidents. Others expressed equally strong opposition, indicating that a formal service is unnecessary or not appropriate for the islands.

2. Preference for a limited, incident-driven approach rather than a standing service

Among those open to some level of service, there was a consistent preference for a narrowly scoped, response-based model. Ongoing patrols or continuous enforcement presence were generally not supported, with respondents emphasizing that intervention should occur only when required.

3. Expectation that responsibility remains with animal owners

A recurring theme was that animal management should primarily remain the responsibility of individual owners. Many responses emphasized accountability, awareness, and adherence to community norms over reliance on formal enforcement.

4. Concerns about cost and proportionality in a small island context

Respondents frequently questioned whether a formalized service would be proportionate to the scale of the issue, particularly given the size, rural nature, and tax base of the islands. Cost was raised not only as a financial consideration, but as a question of overall fit.

5. Need for clarity and consistency if a service is introduced

Across both supportive and neutral responses, there was a consistent expectation that any service should be clearly defined, applied consistently, and focused on addressing repeat or higher-impact situations.

Insight:

Taken together, these responses indicate that views on animal control are not only divided but firmly held. While there is recognition of specific issues, there is no shared expectation that a formal service is required. This reinforces that any potential approach must be tightly scoped, proportionate to the issue, and clearly aligned with community expectations.

Additional Insights and Cross-Analysis

While the preceding sections present findings by individual question, additional insight emerges when considering patterns across responses and the relationship between experience, context, and perspective.

The observations below reflect directional patterns identified across the dataset, supported by both quantitative results and qualitative input.

1. Lived experience is the strongest differentiator in perspective

Across the findings, the most consistent distinction in viewpoint appears to be whether respondents have personally experienced animal-related issues.

- Those with direct experience more frequently describe:
 - specific incidents
 - higher perceived impact
 - and a need for some form of response capability
- Those without direct experience more often:
 - question the significance of the issue
 - emphasize proportionality and cost
 - and express less support for formal service models

Insight:

This suggests that differences in opinion are primarily shaped by direct exposure to incidents, rather than demographic characteristics. This helps explain the divided perspectives observed throughout the results.

2. Perspectives are not strongly defined by tenure on the islands

The dataset includes strong representation from both long-term residents and newer arrivals. Across these groups, views span the full range of perspectives, from strong support to strong opposition.

Insight:

There is no clear indication that tenure alone drives a consistent viewpoint. Instead, perspectives appear to reflect individual experience and expectations, rather than length of residency.

3. Patterns of response are broadly consistent across both islands

Responses from Denman and Hornby Islands show similar distributions across key areas, including:

- reported experience with animal-related issues
- perceived significance of concerns
- service priorities (response over patrol)
- and support for service models

Insight:

This consistency suggests that the issue is shared across both communities, rather than being driven by island-specific conditions. As a result, the findings support consideration of a unified approach.

4. Age does not appear to be a defining factor in shaping views

While the respondent base reflects the older demographic profile of the islands, responses across age groups include a mix of perspectives on severity, service need, and willingness to pay.

Insight:

There is no clear indication that views are strongly polarized by age. Similar to tenure, perspectives appear to be influenced more by experience and context than by demographic grouping.

5. Service expectations align with the nature of reported issues

When considered together, the data shows a clear relationship between:

- the types of issues reported (e.g., roaming animals, livestock interactions, owner behaviour)
- the locations where concerns occur (particularly rural and agricultural properties)
- and the services residents prioritize (incident response, tracking, reporting pathways)

Insight:

This alignment suggests that expectations for service are grounded in practical, incident-driven needs, rather than a desire for broad enforcement or presence-based models.

6. Strength of opinion is consistent across both supportive and non-supportive views

Responses indicate a high degree of conviction across the dataset, including among both those who support and those who oppose a service model.

Insight:

This reinforces that the issue is not one of awareness or uncertainty, but of differing and firmly held perspectives. As a result, any future direction will need to be framed around clear trade-offs, rather than assuming convergence of views.

Appendix A: Service Level Options and Pricing Levels

The survey included a set of illustrative service level options (“tiers”) and associated annual household cost ranges. These service tiers are illustrative examples only and are intended to help understand community preferences—they are not final or prescriptive options.

The descriptions below reflect the exact wording presented within the survey.

Tier 1 – Licensing & Complaint Management

- *Animal complaints would have a dedicated reporting and documentation process through the CVRD.*
- *Domestic animals would be included in the CVRD licensing system.*
- *An Animal Control Officer would visit periodically to sell licences and provide information.*
- *Complaints would be documented and managed primarily through remote contact with owners.*
- *No regular patrols and no on-island enforcement attendance.*

Tier 2 – Reactive Enforcement & Containment

- *Includes licensing and complaint documentation (Tier 1).*
- *An Animal Control Officer would travel to the island for serious incidents requiring on-site enforcement that cannot be solved remotely.*
- *If an animal requires temporary containment, local arrangements on the island could be used to hold the animal temporarily until it can be returned to its owner or retrieved.*
- *No regular patrol presence. Attendance would occur only when required for specific incidents.*

Tier 3 – Seasonal Patrol & Proactive Presence

- *Includes licensing, documentation, and enforcement response (Tiers 1 and 2).*
- *Weekly on-island patrols from May through October.*
- *Active presence at parks, beaches, and other high-use areas during peak season.*
- *Proactive enforcement, education, and licensing checks during patrol periods.*

Illustrative Cost Ranges

Respondents were also asked to consider potential annual household costs associated with each service level.

- **Tier 1 – Licensing & Complaint Management:** approximately \$15 per average household per year
- **Tier 2 – Reactive Enforcement & Containment:** approximately \$20 per average household per year
- **Tier 3 – Seasonal Patrol & Proactive Presence:** approximately \$30 per average household per year

Rationale for Illustrative Cost Ranges

The cost ranges presented above are illustrative and were developed to support informed evaluation of service levels, rather than to represent finalized program costs. The ranges were informed in part by a review of comparable service models in small, rural island contexts (see Appendix B), where a basic, complaint-driven service is delivered at approximately \$15–\$17 per household annually. Building on this, higher cost points were introduced to reflect incremental increases in service scope (e.g., on-island response and seasonal presence). Rounded figures (\$15, \$20, and \$30) were intentionally used to keep the focus on relative differences between service levels and to reinforce that these are high-level estimates designed to test alignment between service expectations and willingness to pay.

Appendix B: Small Rural Island Comparison

Southern Gulf Islands Animal Control Service: Capital Region District

Overview

The Southern Gulf Islands receive animal control services through the Capital Regional District (CRD) as part of a sub-regional Animal Care & Control service (Service 1.313). This is a shared service model, where participating electoral areas contribute to the overall cost of the service rather than funding a dedicated, locally delivered program.

In practice, the Southern Gulf Islands are not serviced by locally based staff or infrastructure. Instead, the CRD delivers animal control as a regional, centralized service, with resources deployed to the islands only when required. As a result, the service level experienced on the islands is significantly more limited than what would be associated with a locally staffed model.

Cost to Residents

The service is funded through a property tax requisition applied to participating electoral areas.

- **2025**
 - Total requisition (Southern Gulf Islands): **\$115,362**
 - Cost per average residential property: **\$16.84**
 - This equates to a typical residential assessed value of approximately **\$857,000** for Gulf Islands properties (BC Assessment 2025 data, valuation base July 1, 2024).
- **2024**
 - Total requisition: **\$102,602**
 - Cost per average residential property: **\$14.93**

These figures are drawn from CRD Financial Plan and Requisition Summary documents.

This equates to a low annual cost per household, reflecting the limited and shared nature of the service.

Actual Level of Service

The Southern Gulf Islands receive a **minimal, complaint-driven level of service**, defined by the following characteristics:

- **No local presence**
 - No animal control officers stationed on the islands
 - No routine patrols or proactive enforcement
- **Complaint-based response**
 - Service is initiated only when a complaint is submitted
 - Primary focus on dogs at large, nuisance complaints, and aggressive behaviour
- **Travel-based service delivery**
 - Officers attend from elsewhere in the region on an as-needed basis
 - Response times depend on priority and logistics
- **No on-island infrastructure**
 - No pound, kennel, or shelter facilities
 - Animals requiring impoundment are transported off-island
- **Narrow service scope**
 - Focused on dog control and public safety
 - Other matters (e.g., animal welfare, wildlife) are handled by other agencies

Key Takeaway

The Southern Gulf Islands model demonstrates that a regional district can provide a legally compliant animal control service at very low cost (approximately \$15–\$17 per household annually) by adopting a shared, centralized, and complaint-driven approach. However, this model delivers a limited level of service, with no local presence, no proactive enforcement, and reliance on travel-based response.

Appendix C: Online Survey Verbatims

This appendix contains verbatim responses provided by survey participants to open-ended questions. Selected verbatim responses are presented to provide transparency and supporting context for the themes and insights identified throughout the report. A complete set of verbatim responses is available in the accompanying dataset. Responses have been reproduced as submitted, with minor formatting adjustments for readability where required.

Q 6a. Personal Experiences with Animal-Related Issues

Respondents who indicated they had personally experienced animal-related concerns were invited to describe those situations in their own words.

1. Roaming / Uncontrolled Dogs (n=78)

(dogs off leash, entering property, lack of recall or supervision)

- “dogs running loose ahead of their owner... I have to almost stop my vehicle”
- “neighbours let dogs roam free who come onto my property”
- “loose dogs escaping poorly fenced yards”
- “visitors’ dogs trespassed into our henhouse”
- “dogs frequently off leash with no recall, owners unable or unwilling to control them”
- “dogs wandering through properties and onto roads without supervision”

2. Aggressive Encounters & Safety Concerns (n=49)

(charging, biting, threatening behaviour toward people or pets)

- “Myself and my unleashed dog have been attacked by the same dog about seven or eight times. I finally stopped walking my dog in our neighborhood because it was too scary for both of us.”
- “Bitten twice by the same dog while biking in the park.”
- “Reactive dogs off leash at trailhead nearly attacked us.”
- “I was charged by a very aggressive dog... felt very much endangered.”
- “dog aggressively approached me while walking and owner could not control it”
- “large dog charged across property line barking and growling”

3. Livestock & Wildlife Impacts (n=34)

(injury, death, or chasing of livestock and wildlife)

- “a dog from my neighbourhood attacked and killed 90% of my chickens”
- “the same dog killed a lamb on my property... and later killed another lamb and chickens at my neighbour’s”
- “dogs mauled 13 sheep causing \$4,000 in damage”
- “aware of chickens killed by dog pack”
- “dogs chased deer repeatedly near our property”
- “dogs harassing wildlife and running animals in the area”

4. Ongoing / Repeat Incidents (n=26)

(same issue or dog occurring multiple times)

- “same dog attacked my livestock multiple times”
- “ongoing problem with aggressive dog while biking”
- “charged 7 or 8 times by the same dog... stopped walking my dog”

5. Nuisance / Disturbance (n=15)

(barking, intimidation, general disruption)

- “neighbors dog barks excessively and very loudly”
- “intimidating behaviour from dogs off leash while walking”

6. No or Minimal Negative Experience (n=5)

(neutral or no issue reported — included for balance)

- “I walk daily and have never had a bad encounter with dogs on Denman.”

Q 15. Additional Input for Decision-Makers

Respondents were invited to share additional input for decision-makers regarding animal control services on Denman and Hornby Islands. A complete set of responses is available in the accompanying dataset.

Perspectives on Need and Scope

- “I don’t think this is needed on the islands. Most people are responsible, and the few issues that do happen don’t justify creating a whole service.”
- “Honestly I don’t see this as a big enough problem to spend money on. There are bigger issues the community should be focusing on.”
- “I don’t want more rules out here. That’s not why people live on these islands, and it changes the feel of the place.”
- “This is not an urban environment and shouldn’t be treated like one. A formal service feels like overkill.”
- “There are issues, yes, but I’m not convinced a formal animal control service is the right answer.”
- “Most animals are well behaved, and the problems seem to come from a small number of situations.”
- “I don’t think this is a big enough issue to justify a formal service, especially when most people are already being responsible.”
- “there are problems, yes, but I don’t see how adding a service is going to change the behaviour of the people causing them”

Personal Responsibility and Community Expectations

- “People need to take responsibility for their own animals. That’s really what this comes down to.”
- “Dog owners should be managing their dogs properly instead of expecting enforcement to fix it.”
- “This is more about personal responsibility than bringing in another layer of regulation.”
- “Most of the problems come from a few irresponsible owners, not the majority.”
- “Education would probably go further than enforcement in a community like this.”
- “It feels like we’re trying to solve a behaviour problem with a service, which doesn’t really make sense.”
- “people come here because it’s not heavily regulated, so I would be concerned about adding something that changes that”

Support for Limited or Targeted Response

- “If anything is introduced, it should be minimal and only deal with serious or repeat incidents.”
- “A complaint-based system makes sense, but I wouldn’t support anything beyond that.”
- “There should be a way to respond when something serious happens, but not a full-time service.”
- “Focus on repeat offenders and real problems, not general enforcement.”
- “I could support something small and targeted, but not a big program.”
- “If you do anything, keep it simple and limited so it doesn’t become something bigger over time.”
- “If there is going to be something in place it should be very limited, otherwise it will just create more frustration than it solves”
- “I’ve lived here a long time and while there are occasional issues, I wouldn’t say it’s something that needs a structured program”

Cost and Proportionality

- “I would not support paying more taxes for this. It doesn’t feel justified.”
- “This seems like too much cost for what is, in reality, a pretty limited issue.”
- “Cost is a big concern, especially for people on fixed incomes.”
- “We need to be careful about adding costs for something that may not deliver much benefit.”
- “I don’t think the scale of the issue supports the level of spending being discussed.”
- “It feels like this is trying to fix a few bad situations with something that applies to everyone, which doesn’t seem right”
- “If someone’s dog is causing problems there should be a way to deal with that, but I don’t think that means a full service”

Service Approach and Implementation

- “If a service is introduced, it needs to be fair and applied consistently, otherwise it will just create more frustration.”
- “There needs to be a way to deal with repeat problems, because right now there really isn’t.”
- “The current situation doesn’t handle ongoing issues very well, especially when the same thing keeps happening.”
- “Any approach needs to reflect the rural nature of the islands and not impose something designed for cities.”
- “Clear expectations and some level of accountability would be important if anything is put in place.”
- “I don’t want to see a heavy-handed approach. This is a rural community and any service needs to respect that.”

Additional and Mixed Perspectives

- “I’ve seen both sides of this. Most dog owners are responsible, but there are a few who are not, and those are the situations that need to be addressed.”
- “There are definitely issues, but I’m not sure a formal service is the right solution. It feels like there needs to be a balance.”
- “Some kind of response is needed, but it should be limited and carefully thought through.”
- “The island context is unique, and whatever is done needs to reflect that rather than copying something from somewhere else.”
- “It’s not a simple issue. There are problems, but also a lot of responsible behaviour, and both need to be considered.”

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