

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark!

Black dogs are vicious! Black cats are demonic! I've heard it all when it comes to people's negative perception of black pets (especially during Halloween). Did you know that black dogs and cats are the last to be adopted and the first to be put down in kill shelters? If you're a true animal lover, I'm sure you find this perception to be outrageous and silly at best. Unfortunately, it is a real issue for a homeless pet that is unfairly viewed as more dangerous and less friendly simply because of the color (or lack thereof) of his fur!

Some would also argue that it is difficult to see the expression on a black dog's face - especially in a dark setting such as the pound, in a cage. Lighter colored dogs appear more expressive because there is more contrast between their dark eyes and lighter coat.. Hmmm??

I grew up having many super sweet black cats and cheerful black dogs, from Rottweilers to Hounds. I can honestly say there was no distinctive character or behavioral flaws in any of those pets. Furthermore, some of them had the brightest personalities in the pack!

Maybe this myth is a regional issue. Did you know that in England black dogs are celebrated and are very much desired and black cats are considered good luck?

After spending some time volunteering and fostering for animal rescue groups, I've learned that this phenomenon is called "black pet syndrome." Whenever a black animal is adopted from a shelter, the workers are overjoyed, knowing that these animals are frequently overlooked and unnoticed by potential adopters.

Many shelters have opted to

occasionally have a "Black Pet Special" (discounted adoption fee) to help get the pets adopted. In addition, to help alleviate that dark cloud of doubt and fear of black dogs, they are often accessorized in brightly colored bandannas and toys at adoption events.

I decided to share this message, on behalf of all of the animal shelter workers who work so hard to try to find homes for all of the pets; and on behalf of these animals who have no voice to help expel this myth. Please consider ALL of the animals in your search for a furry companion. There is no need to be afraid of the dark dogs and cats. They all have different personalities and a lot of love to offer, regardless of what color they are. (Take a look at some of the black beautiful pets up for adoption at local shelters in our "Adoptable Pets" section on pages 32 & 33!)

In this issue, we ventured into the complex world of animal hoarding and its impact on the animals involved. What happens to the animals in those cases? Also in this issue, see who's going back to school with your kids this fall: canines in the classroom! Dogs in the upstate are helping in the fight against bullying! Lastly, for those who always wanted to work with pets...check out the first in a series of articles on "Pet Care Careers" starting in this issue with how to become a professional dog groomer. And of course, there are many more articles and regular features to enjoy!

As always, thank you for reading Southern Paws & Tails. PLEASE patronize our wonderful advertisers! They help make this magazine possible!!

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Southern Paws & Tails

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