

# Hungarian Vizsla Breed Health Survey 2024/5

## Results

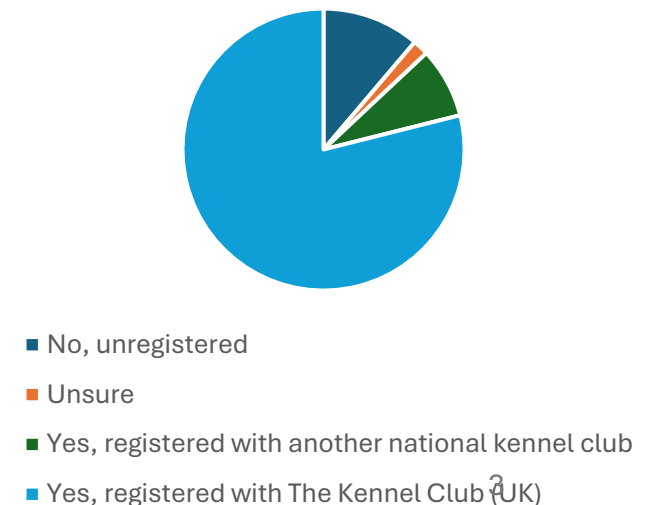
# 2024/25 Survey methodology and potential bias

- Survey was distributed through the Hungarian Vizsla Club and Hungarian Vizsla Society routes and through networks such as the Viz Whizz
- Survey was shared and pushed on social media, using both general interest and health-related vizsla groups beyond the club and society
- It is quite likely that the survey sample is more biased towards individuals with health issues than would be found in the general population, due to owners of such animals being more engaged and invested in contributing to a health survey, and through the very strong support communities particularly in the social media health groups
- Thus, disease prevalence, and characteristics influenced by health such as average life span, may provide a different and more negative picture than is true of the general population, although there is no way we can be certain of this

# Survey population characteristics

- There were 623 questionnaire completions covering 832 vizslas (all born since 2000)
- 706 vizslas were alive at the time of survey, 126 were deceased
- 409 were female, 423 were male
- 747 vizslas were based in the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, 85 were from overseas
- Just considering deceased individuals, the average life span of a vizsla was 10.5 years old. Whilst it was not statistically significant, females tended to live slightly longer than males (11 vs 10 years). There was no statistical difference in the lifespan of entire and neutered dogs, The maximum age of deceased or living vizslas was 16
- Over 86% of vizslas were acquired from a breeder, predominantly as a puppy 10 weeks and under (71%), or 11-16 weeks (12%)
- 5% of vizslas were rehomed (i.e. known background, uncomplicated). 3% were dogs 1 year and younger, 2% were over 1 year old
- 3% of vizslas were acquired from a rescue (unknown background, complications in health and/or behaviour), 1% aged 1 or under and 2% over the age of 1
- 6% of vizslas were bred by their owner

In the vizsla registered with a national kennel club?

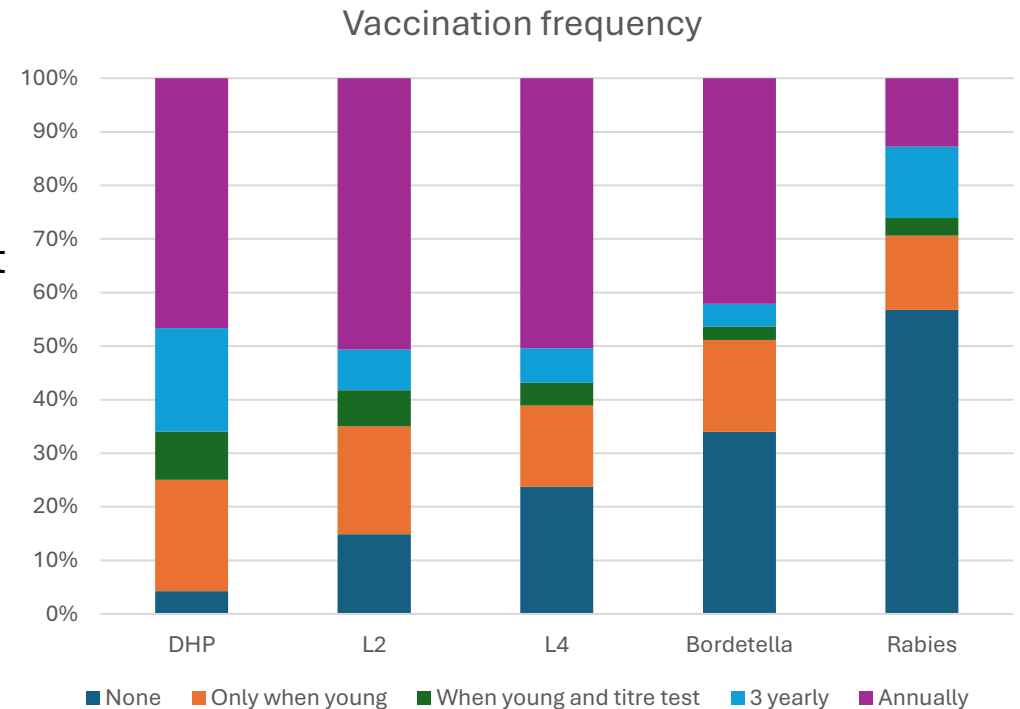


# Routine healthcare - vaccination

- The percentage of vizslas that have never received routine vaccinations varied between vaccine type: DHP (4%), L2 or L4 for leptospirosis (39% combined), Bordetella (34%) and Rabies (57%).
- The DHP vaccination frequency for annual and 3 yearly should be viewed with some caution. Whilst some vets do still vaccinate annually, many follow the 3 yearly protocol but owners may not be aware of which are given at each appointment.
- Reactions to vaccinations were rare (88% had never experienced a side effect) and when they occurred were generally mild. However, there were 3 severe reactions (severe swelling), and 3 cases thought to have triggered immune mediated conditions (out of 832 individuals).

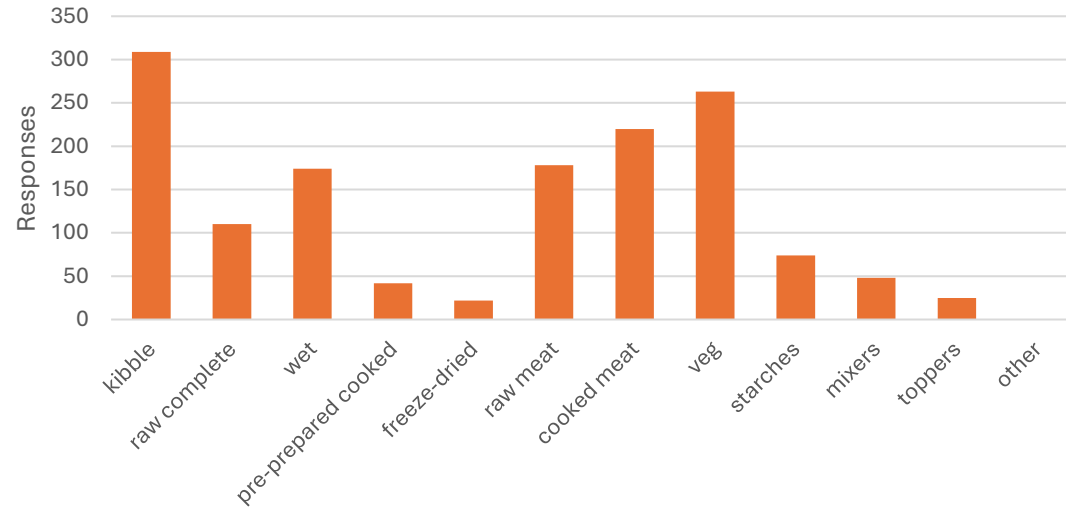
The other reported side effects were:

- Sleepy: 6%
- Off food: 3%
- Short-lived fever: <1% (2 cases)
- Skin irritation: 1.5%
- Localised swelling: 1.5%

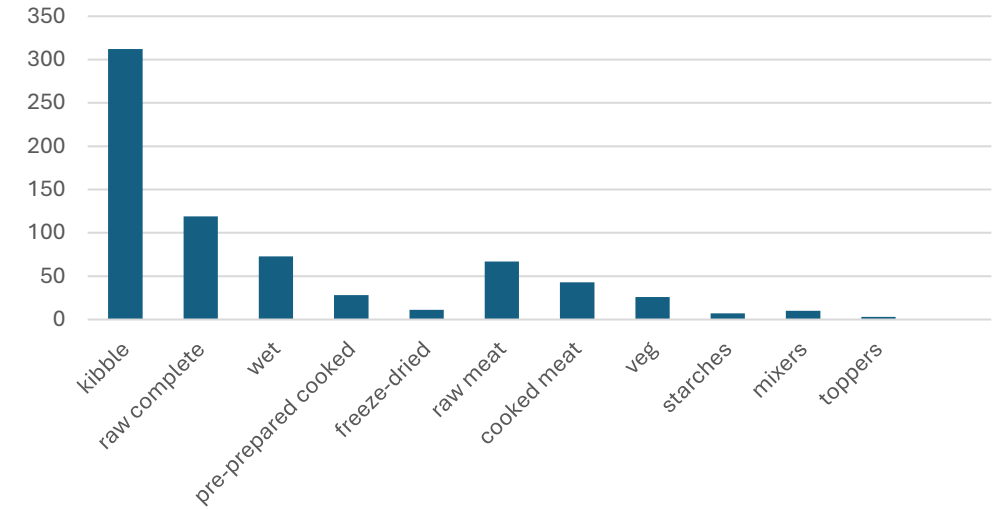


# Diet

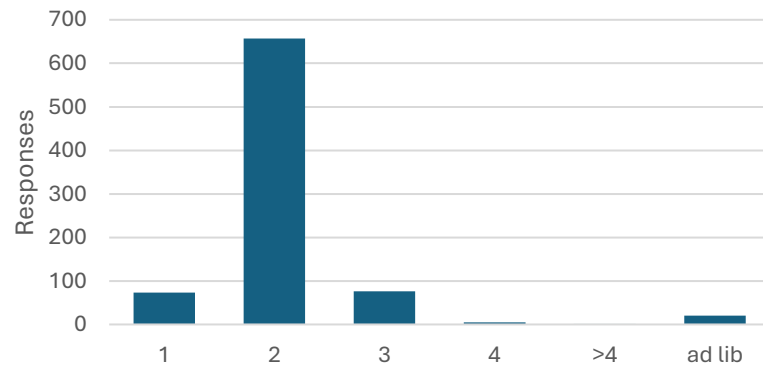
All regularly fed foods



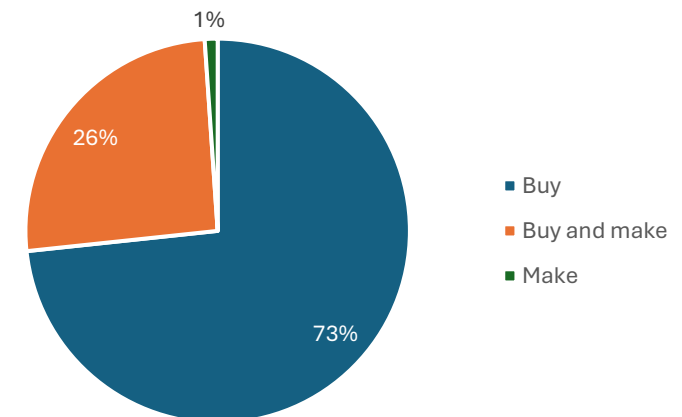
Main source of energy (1 or 2 selections only)



How many feeds a day?



Do you buy or make their food?



# Exercise and weight

Excluding puppies under a year of age who may have restricted exercise, vizslas received an average of 95 minutes of structured walks per day, and a further 100 minutes of unstructured exercise such as play, roaming garden.

Most vizslas received one (40%) or two (50%) structured walks per day.

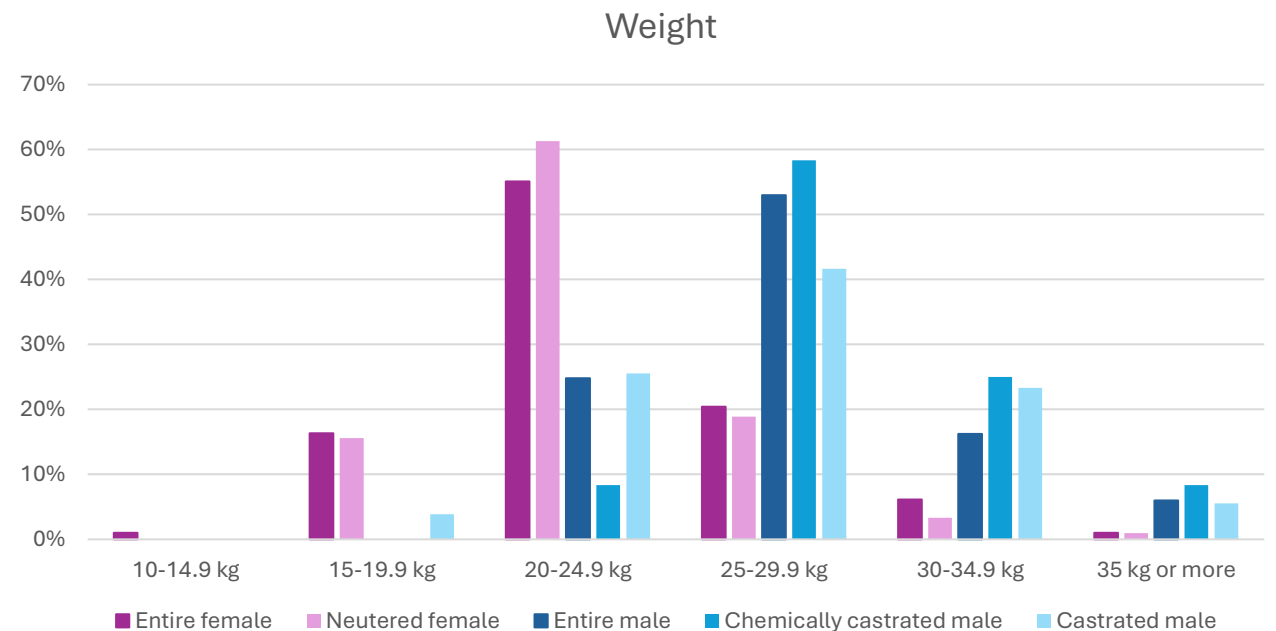
75% vizslas are walked both on and off lead, 20% only off lead and 5% only on lead.

Exercise patterns are reasonably consistent across the week/month for most (73%) of vizslas.

Most female vizslas weigh 20-24.9 kg

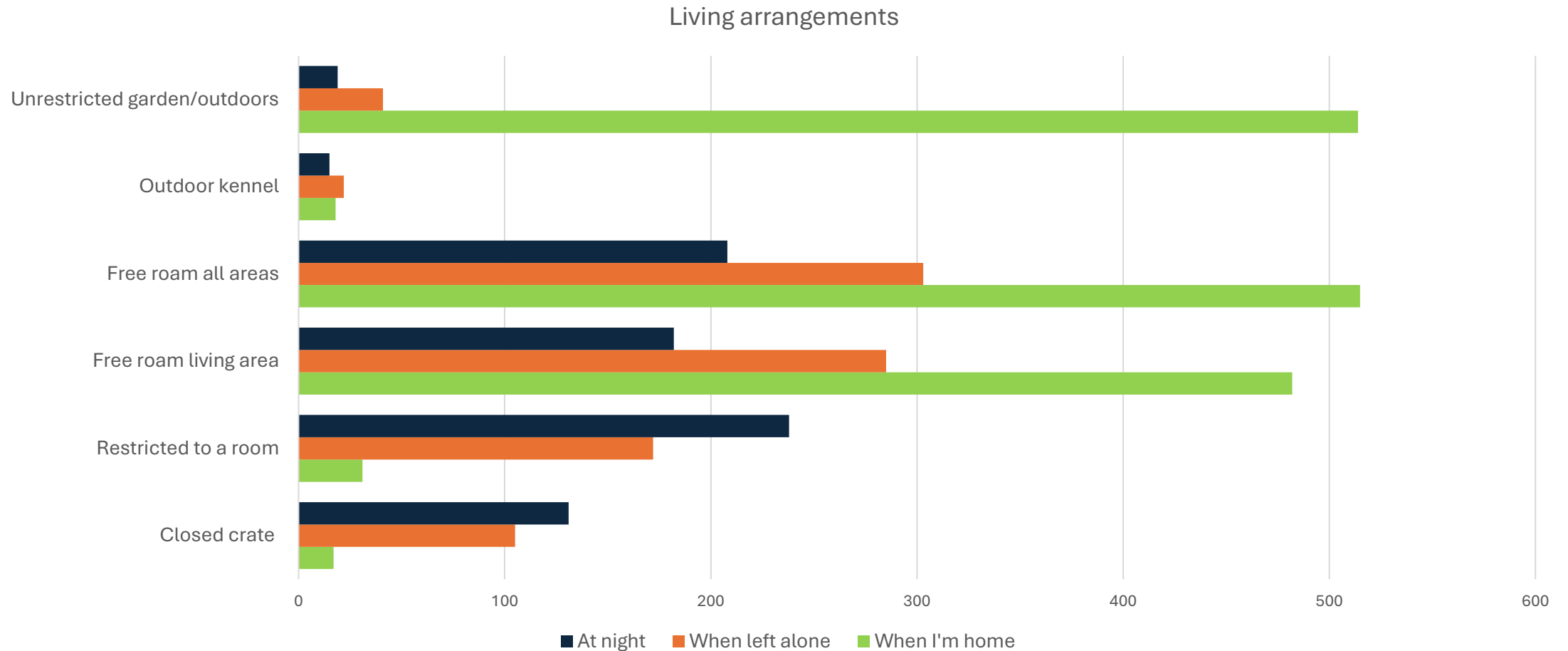
Most male vizslas weigh 25-29.9 kg

There wasn't a difference between weights of entire and neutered vizslas. However, weights were bucketed into 5kg divisions so small differences would not be picked up by this survey.



# Living arrangements

Most vizslas have free access to most of the home and garden when owners are home and are kept loose in the home when alone or overnight. Few are kept in kennels.



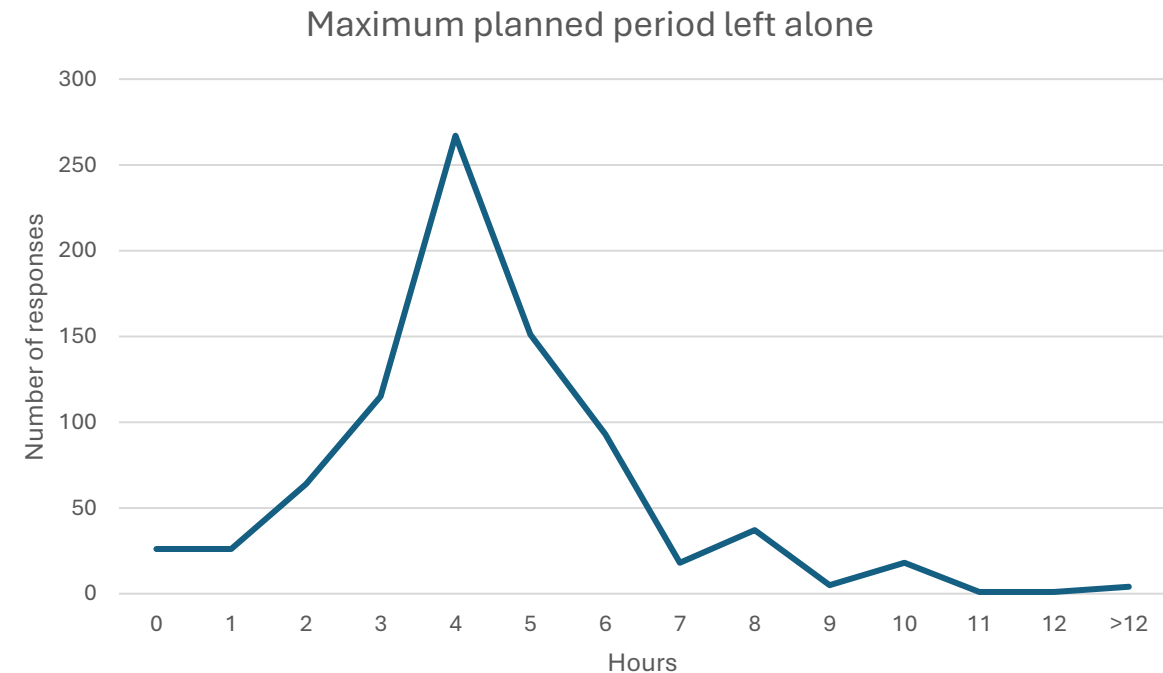
# Lifestyle

## Working dogs:

- 12% of dogs are working gundogs (74) and 2% are search dogs (10).
- 47 respondents claimed another type of work was performed, but most were primarily companions.
- Of the others, 4 were retired working gundogs and there were one each of the following: therapy dog, medical alert dog, service dog, assistance dog, scent dog.

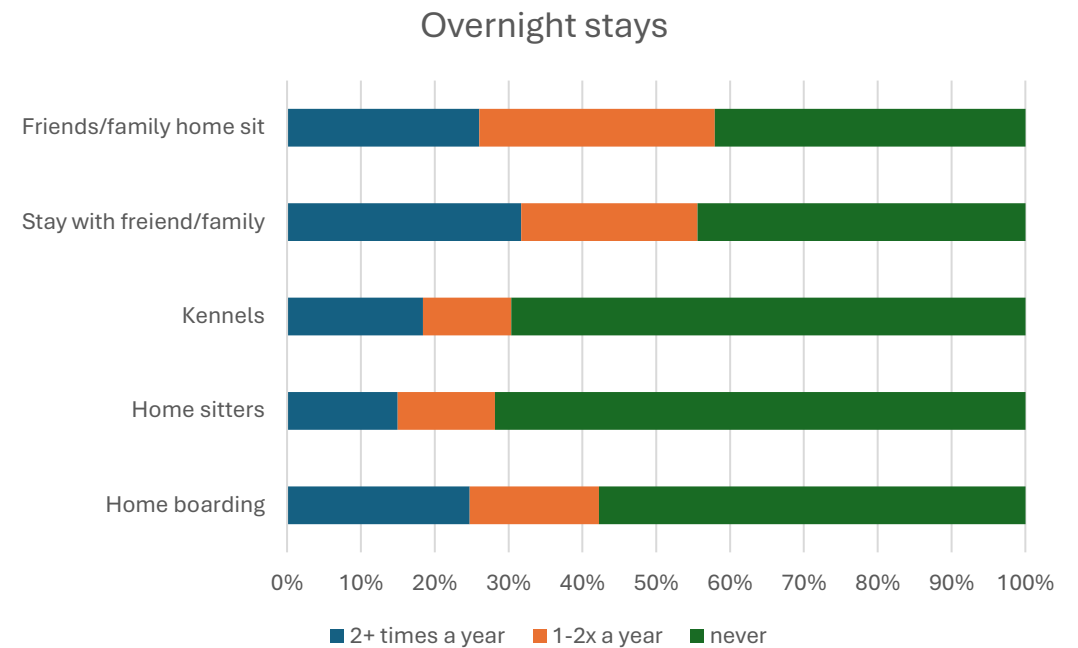
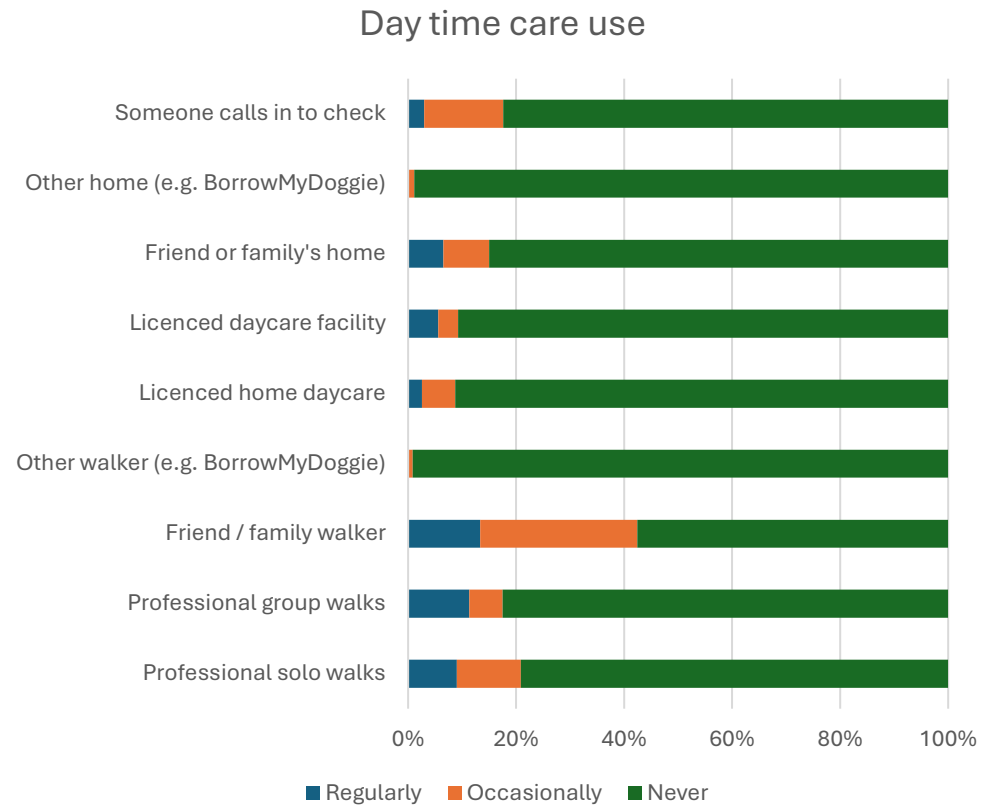
## When owners are out:

- Most dogs happily spend 3-5 hours left alone (planned absences)
- Smaller numbers are never left alone, or are left for extended periods
- Reasons for extended periods included whilst the owner worked a night shift



# Lifestyle 2

- Owners use a variety of solutions to support daytime and overnight care
- Friends and family are most often used
- At least 30% of dogs have 1 or more overnight stays in professional facilities per year (home boarding or kennels)



# Training

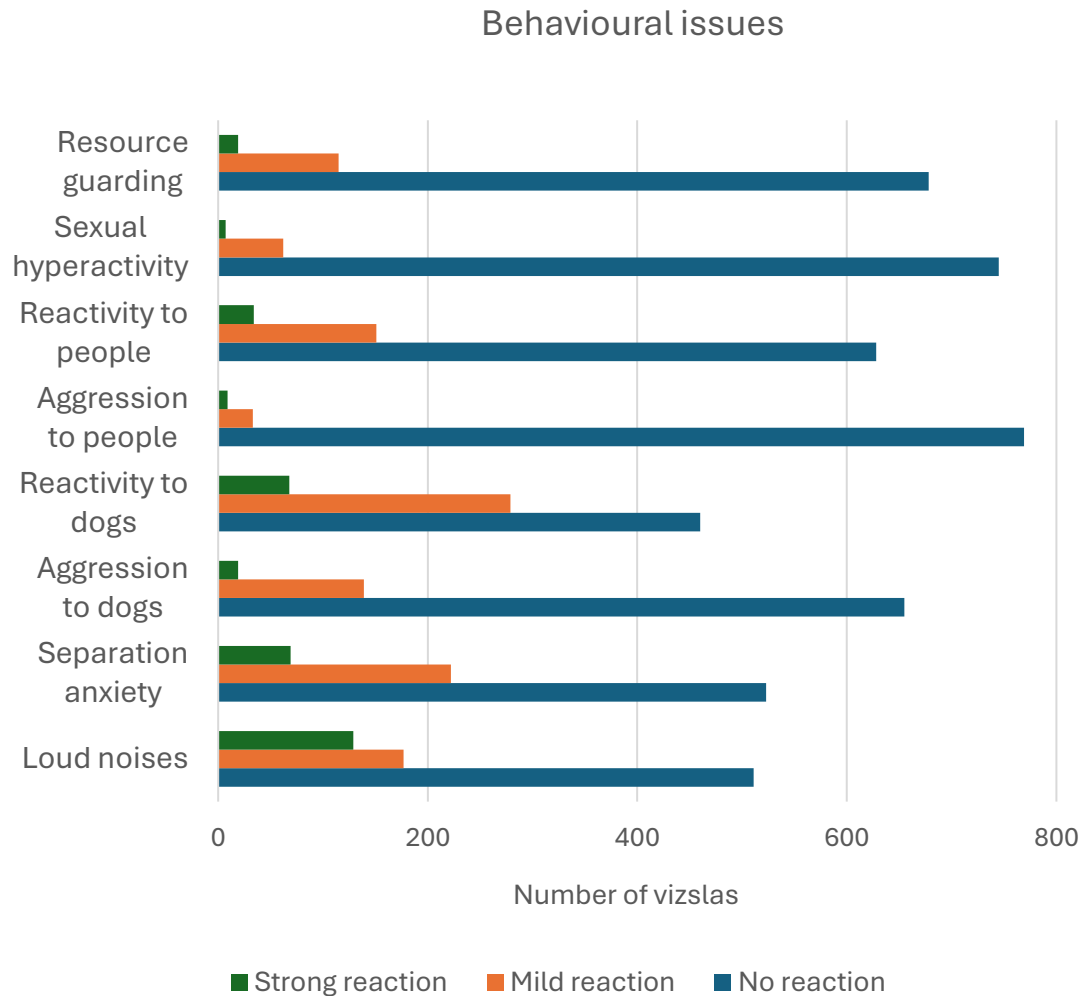
- Two thirds (67%) of dogs attended puppy classes, a further 9% attended one off socialisation sessions and 24% did neither
- Overall, 82% would say their puppy classes were successful
- There was a slightly greater percentage classifying puppy classes as successful if classes were in an outdoor setting (field, riding arena) compared to indoors (village hall): 87% vs 79%
- Those who attended puppy classes in multiple settings rated the training most successful (92%), suggesting that exposure to different environments is positive.



- Around half of all vizslas continue to participate in some form of regular training, with gundog training being the most popular format
- Many dogs participate in more than one form of training

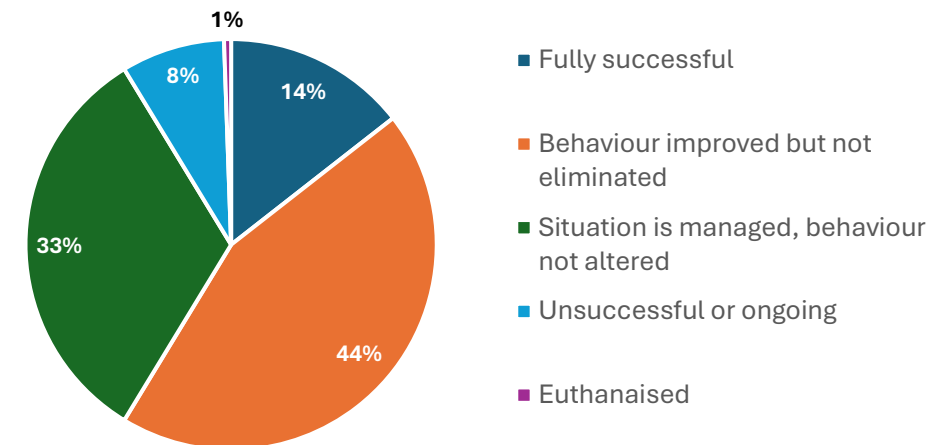
# Behavioural issues

Fear of loud noises, separation anxiety and dog reactivity were the commonest reported behavioural issues.



For owners of animals with mild or strong reactions:

- 64% attempted to modify their vizsla's behaviour without seeking help
- 21% worked with a dedicated behaviouralist/trainer on a 1:2:1 basis
- 5% went to group training classes
- 4 % modified the behaviour through medication
- 1% sought surgery (e.g. neutering)

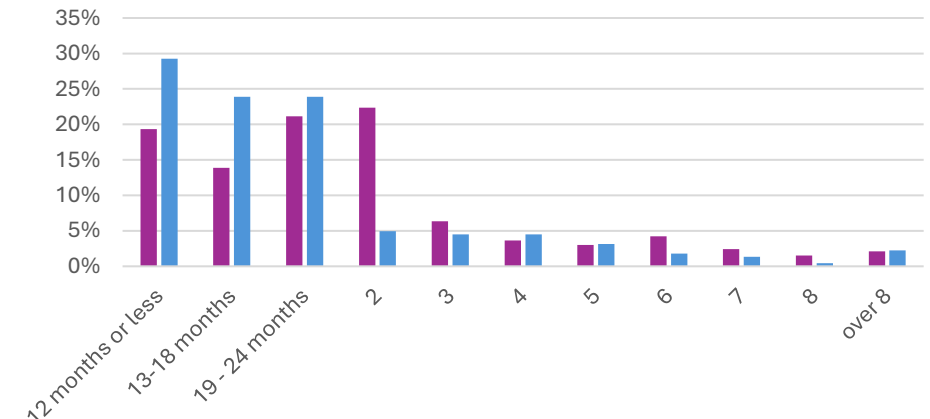


# Neutering

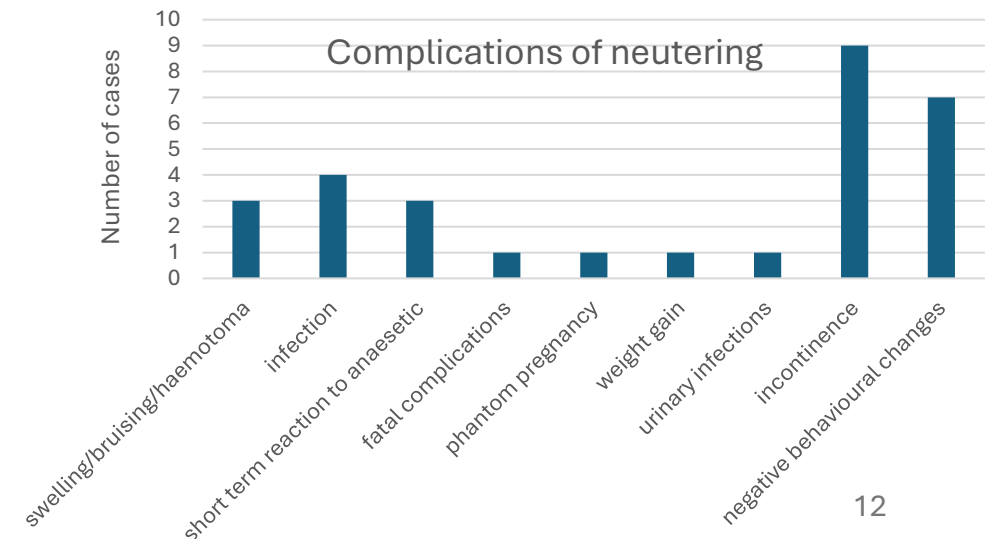
- 57% of males and 66% of females were neutered. 15 of the 242 males that were neutered were chemically castrated.
- Most vizslas that were neutered were done so before the age of 2 (males) or 3 (females).
- 20% of females and 30% of males were neutered by the age of 1. 11/269 females and 14/225 males were neutered by 6 months of age, with three vizslas neutered before the age of 8 weeks. These three were neutered by the breeder and all bred in Australia, not the UK.
- 2/3 of bitch spays were traditional (removal of uterus and ovaries) with 1/3 performed laparoscopically (removal of ovaries only).
- 94% of vizslas that were neutered reported no complications or consequences.
- The most common reason cited for neutering was to prevent pregnancies (30%). Managing unwanted behaviours accounted for a further 18%. Other reasons cited included:
  - following vet suggestion (not on medical grounds) 10%
  - requirement of rehoming/daycare/walkers 8%
  - prevent complications of seasons 9%
  - medical reasons (e.g. pyometra & cryptorchid) 8%
  - perceived health benefits 6%
  - convenience 4%
  - other 7%

|                     | Female     | Male       | Total      |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Entire              | 139        | 181        | 320        |
| Chemically neutered |            | 15         | 15         |
| Surgically neutered | 270        | 227        | 497        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>409</b> | <b>423</b> | <b>832</b> |

Age at neutering



Complications of neutering



# Breeding and reproductive health

- 13% of vizslas had been bred from (where the breeding was known), producing 237 litters in total
- Of the 58 bitches bred from, 36 (62%) whelped one litter, 16 (28%) whelped 2 litters, 5 (9%) whelped three and a single bitch whelped 4 litters
- Of the 29 stud dogs, most had only bred a single litter. However, the range of litters sired varied from 1-27
- Most matings and births recorded no issues. There were 6 caesareans and 3 still births reported
- Health issues in pups produced were uncommon and varied, without obvious patterns. They included
- Under or overbite (3); lazy eye (1); deformed or missing limbs (2); cleft palate (2); umbilical hernia (1); midline defect (1); heart murmur (1); liver shunt (1); brain tumour (1); seizures (2); allergies (2);
- There were 12 reported pyometras. All were subsequently spayed and reported successful recovery.

# Eyes (1)

- 92% of respondents reported no eye conditions (764/832 )
- 6/832 have had cataracts (<1%)
  - One was secondary to diabetes
  - Three were seen in old age
  - Two others were minor
- 6/832 had an entropion or ectropion
  - One was due to muscle wastage from VIP
  - Others were typical entropions diagnosed in young dogs, two unilateral and three bilateral
- 7/832 have had glaucoma
  - One early onset (3yo), others 8-12 years at onset
  - 6/7 assumed primary glaucoma, 1/7 secondary following diabetes
  - 5/7 in females (5/6 primary glaucoma)
  - Two just diagnosed (awaiting treatment). All others with primary glaucoma had enucleation – where medical treatment was tried, it was not successful
- 15/832 have suffered an eye trauma
  - One has eye inflammation, under investigation for possible autoimmune disease
  - All others were grass seed/thorn/similar traumas

# Eyes (2)

## **Other eye conditions (34 responses, free text):**

Growths on eyelid requiring removal (4)

Melanoma in the eye requiring removal (2)

Superficial keratosis (1)

SARDS (2)

Iris atrophy (1)

Cherry eye (2)

Ectopic cilia (1)

Unequal pupil size (1)

Cracked glass eye (1)

Membrane degeneration (1)

Pupillary membrane retention (self resolved) (1)

Corneal ulcer (2)

Conjunctivitis (3)

Dry eye (5)

Allergies leading to watery / gunky eyes (5)

Uveitis (1)

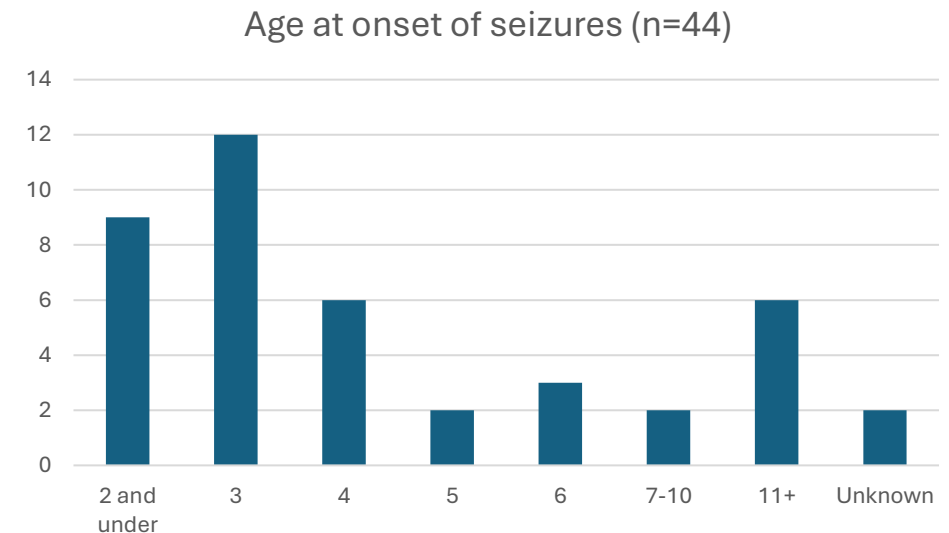
Horner syndrome following eye infection (1)

# Ears

- 85% of vizslas have not suffered with any ear issues (710/832). There were no differences between males and females, nor between entire and neutered individuals. Diet did not influence the proportion of individuals with chronic ear infections (10% kibble, 9% raw).
- The most common ear condition was recurrent or chronic ear infections (86, 10%)
- A further 1% had suffered an occasional ear infection (9), 1% suffered with waxy/yeasty ears (8), seven had itchy ears due to allergies (1%) and there was one case of eczema
- There were five cases reporting idiopathic ulcers on the ear tips (3) or diagnosed pinna vasculitis (2)
- Seven dogs had suffered trauma to the ear, including split ears from shaking, cuts/bites from other dogs and grass seeds embedded in the ear
- One dog reported congenital aural atresia
- One reported a benign tumour of the outer ear

# Neurological conditions including seizures (1)

- There were 5/832 cases of laryngeal paralysis
  - One started aged 7, others aged 11-12
  - All showed slow progression with either no treatment required (3) or steroid treatment (2)
  - One died of a respiratory event related to the paralysis
- There were five cases of brain/spinal tumours
  - Four cases of tumours to the brain and one to the spine. Of those in the brain, one in the pituitary (age 5, managed with steroids/pain relief for 3 years before death) and three of unknown origin (aged 4, 5 and 13 – all discovered following seizures and all rapidly fatal).
- There were 45 cases of seizures
  - Eight occurred in individuals aged over 7 at onset
  - Two cases had unknown age of onset due to rehoming
  - Two cases occurred alongside a cancer diagnosis
  - Of the remaining cases, 31 were either diagnosed as idiopathic epilepsy or fit the assumptions of it (onset aged 6 or under, no attributed cause) ( $30/832 = 3.6\%$ )
  - 22/44 cases take medication to manage the seizures (2.6%)
  - 25 cases were categorised as severe or frequent, one of which was a first seizure and fatal
  - 20 cases were mild (e.g. drooling, absence) or infrequent and required no medication



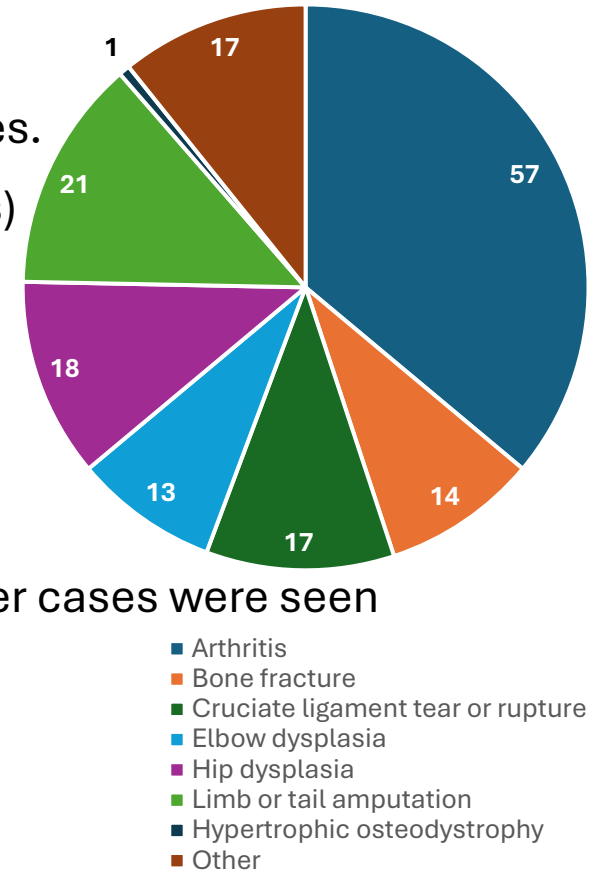
# Neurological conditions including seizures (2)

Other neurological conditions included (sample size 832):

- Three cases of Paroxysmal Dyskinesia
- Immune mediated conditions causing neurological symptoms:
  - Two cases of Myasthenia Gravis
  - A case of IMPA triggered head tremors
  - A case of Steroid-responsive meningitis-arteritis (SRMA)
  - A case of Flycatching syndrome linked to IBD
- One case of meningitis
- 2 cases of facial paralysis
- 6 cases of spinal damage or deformity
  - One case of disc damage to the spinal cord that caused temporary paralysis, fully rehabilitated with physio/hydrotherapy
  - Five cases of congenital vertebral deformity (1) or intervertebral disc disease (4)
- Three cases of dementia
- One case of idiopathic neurological degeneration

# Bones and joints

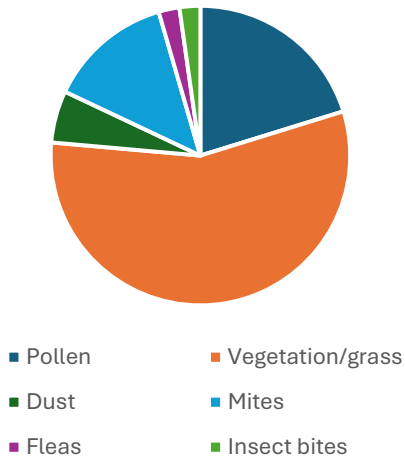
- 84% of respondents had no bone or joint conditions
- Arthritis was the most prevalent condition affecting 5% of females and 9% of males.
- There were 18 cases of hip dysplasia and 13 cases of elbow dysplasia (no sex bias)
- There were 17 cases of cruciate ligament tears or ruptures. 3 cases were attributable to specific trauma (e.g. fall from height), rest through normal activities. 9 treated with TPLO and 3 unspecified surgery, 3 managed conservatively and 2 unspecified. Males were significantly more likely to suffer than females (13:4). 85% of males (11/13) with cruciate injury were neutered against 57% of all surveyed males being neutered which was statistically significant. All three trauma-caused cases were under 2. The other cases were seen reasonably consistently from 1-2 years through to 9 years of age.
- There were 19 cases of tail amputation due to “happy tail” (no sex bias)
- There were two limb amputations, one due to gunshot trauma and one due to osteosarcoma
- Other conditions included bone cancer (2), spurs (2), OCD (2), spondylosis/stenosis (5), abscess/cyst (2), IMPA (2), septic arthritis (1), trauma (1)
- Note – some dogs had multiple conditions



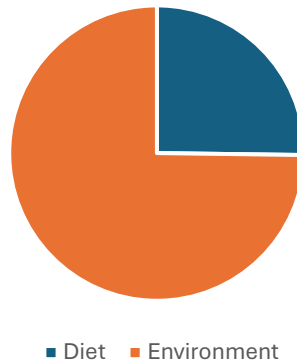
# Skin conditions and allergies

- 77% of vizslas have never suffered from a skin condition or allergy
- Of the 23% that have, 141 (75%) are mild or occasional and 47 (25%) more severe or complex, requiring regular ongoing veterinary treatment

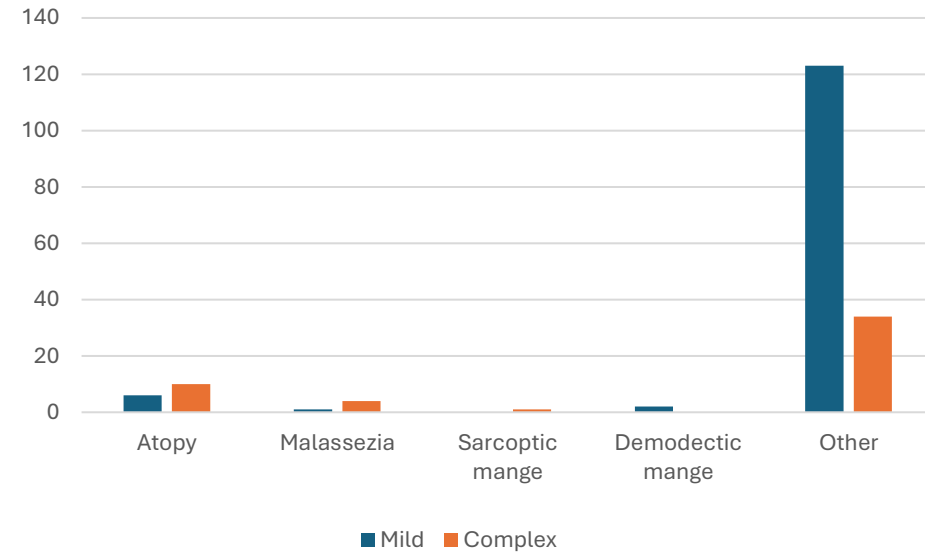
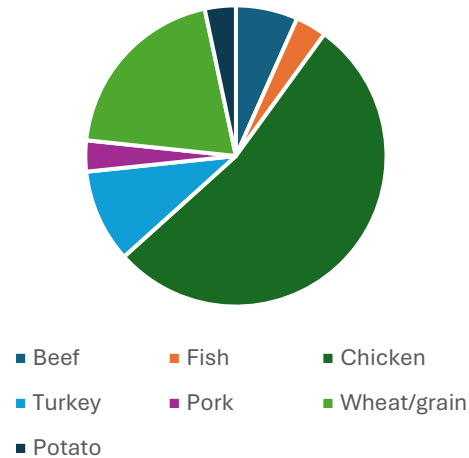
Environmental allergens



Allergy triggers



Diet allergens

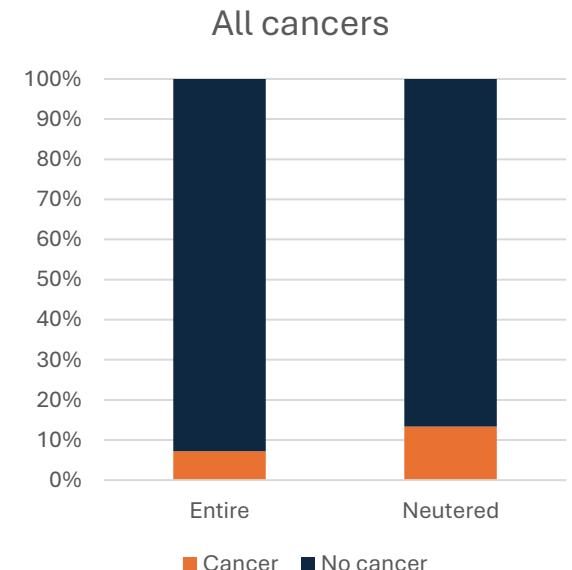


# Digestive issues

- 87% (721/832) of vizslas have not had a digestion problem
- Bloat, or bloat with GDV was reported in four cases (1 in 200)
  - Two triggered by excessive drinking, one by stolen cat kibble swelling in stomach, one not specified
  - One drinking case was secondary to other morbidities (Addisons and suspected leukaemia), led to GDV and did not recover following surgery including gastropexy, the second water cases did not lead to GDV, the cat kibble case led to GDV and required gastropexy. The fourth provided no further information.
- There were 34 cases of ingestion of a foreign object(s)
  - Socks were the preferred item (16 cases), followed by serviettes and cotton/paper goods (4) and seaweed (3). Other items included other small items of clothing, plastics, leather, copper pipe, stones and food items (e.g. fruit stones, corn kernels).
  - When outcomes were provided, most objects passed naturally (13/25), some required induced vomiting (7/25) or surgery (6/25). One case was a repeat offender requiring multiple surgeries and died of sepsis following one episode.
- 6% of vizslas had a veterinary-diagnosed food intolerance
  - Various triggers with chicken the most common, followed by wheat but many had multiple triggers or did not list them
  - 78% were diagnosed by the age of two with 60% by the age of 1
  - There was no difference in food intolerance rates between raw-fed and kibble fed dogs
- Other digestive issues reported included pancreatitis (3), mega oesophagus (2) and IBD (1)
- 8% had required medical intervention following ingestion/injection of toxins, venom etc
  - 6/832 had suffered from a snake bite (none fatal), 3/832 had a serious reaction to a sting or bite from an insect
  - 55 cases of ingestion of toxic or poisonous substances requiring medical intervention included: human foods (9 raisins/grapes, 5 chocolate, 1 xylitol), poisonous plants (5), human or veterinary medications (3), rat poison (2), recreational drugs (e.g. cannabis inc in human faeces) (8), other (3) or cause unknown (19)

# Cancer and tumours

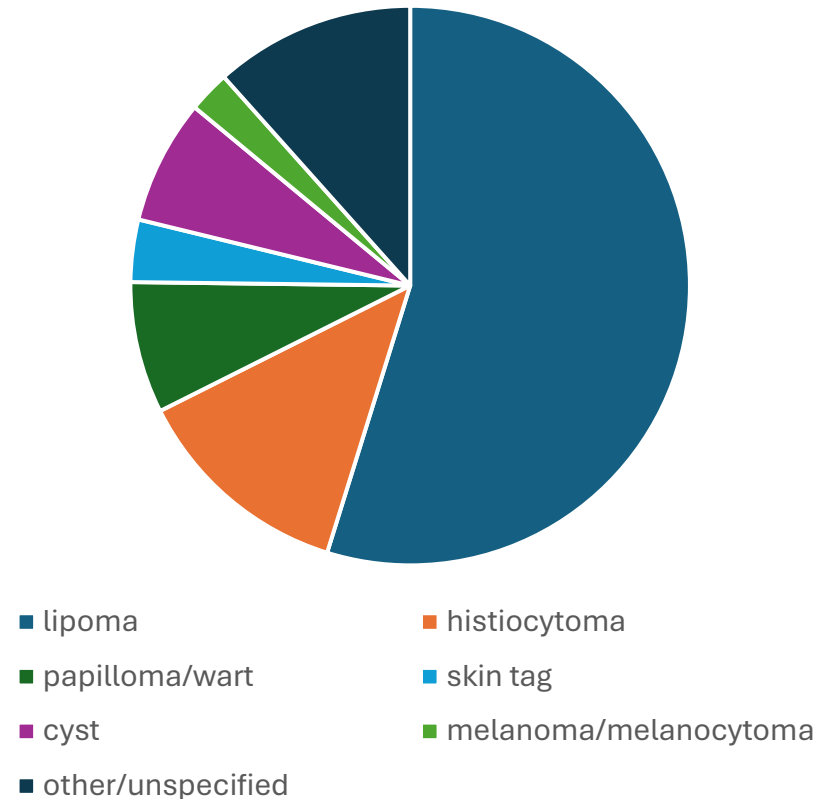
- 104/832 vizslas had been diagnosed with one or more forms of malignant cancer (12.5%). 16 had multiple unrelated cancers (2%).
- Rates of the following common cancers were:
  - Hemangiosarcoma (14 cases: 7 in neutered, 7 in entire; 6F:8M, most have very poor survival rates but a couple >12 months)
  - Lymphoma or Lymphosarcoma (16 cases; 13 in neutered, 3 in entire; 7F: 9M, poor survival rates (mostly <12 months) though a couple exceed 2 years)
  - Mast cell tumour (31 cases; 23 in neutered, 8 in entire; 16F:15M, almost all cured by surgery with only one case (MCT on bladder) proving incurable)
  - There is no statistical difference in these cancer rates between neutered and entire vizslas at the level of each cancer, although there was a weak trend for MCT and lymphoma/Lymphosarcoma to be slightly more prevalent in neutered vizslas (small sample sizes limited power of tests)
  - Looking at cancer rates cumulatively across all cancers, neutered vizslas had a higher prevalence of cancer than entire vizslas
  - There were no differences in prevalence between females and males
- A wide variety of other cancers were observed in smaller numbers, including:
  - Malignant melanoma (8 cases, mostly in aged 10+, very good survival rates)
  - Abdomen/bowel/rectum/anus (8 cases, all in aged 8+, variable survival rates)
  - Osteosarcoma (5 cases, one in a 4yo, rest in ages 7, 8, 11 & 13, mostly poor survival rate)
  - Carcinoma of the head/face/jaw/nasal areas (5 cases, ages 6, 6, 8, 11, 16, mostly poor survival rates)
  - Bladder (4 cases, all aged 8+, variable to poor survival rates)
  - Mammary (4 cases, aged 8+, good survival rates)
  - Brain (3 cases) and liver (3 cases, aged 10+)
  - Soft tissue sarcomas (3 cases, age 6-10, all presenting in leg, good survival rates)
  - Non-melanoma skin lesions (2 cases), spleen (2 cases)
  - Single instances of thyroid, kidney, spindle cell, neck, pancreas, prostate, back, unspecified



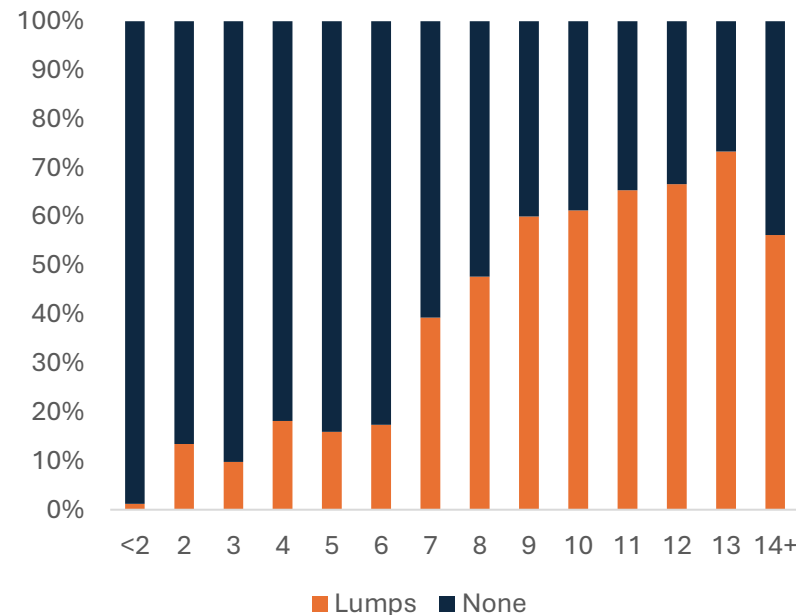
# Non-cancerous lumps and bumps

- Overall, 30% of vizslas reported having some form of non-cancerous tumour(s). Prevalence increased with age with over 70% of 13-year-olds having some form of lump. There was no sex difference. However, neutered vizslas were statistically more likely to have non-cancerous lumps than entire vizslas.

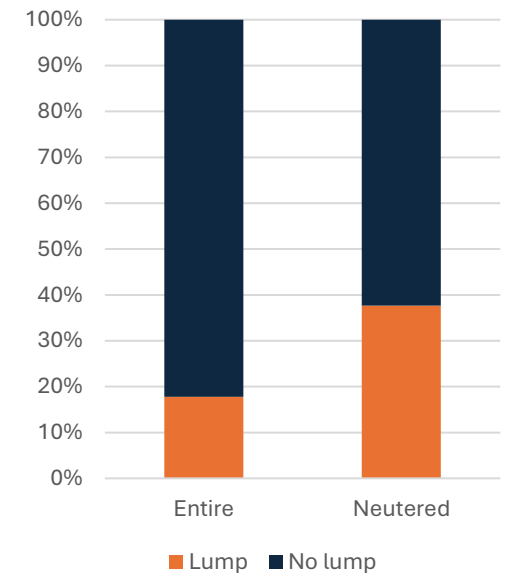
Types of non-cancerous lumps



Percentage of vizsla reporting non-cancerous lumps by age



Entire vs neutered



# Heart conditions

Vizslas rarely suffered from heart conditions (29 cases, 3.5%)

- Of those conditions reported, heart murmurs were the most common (14 instances)

The other conditions listed included:

- Pericardial effusion (3) and heart failure secondary to cancer (1)
- Heart failure (2)
- Endocarditis (1)
- Von Willebrand disease (2)
- Irregular rhythm (2) and supra ventricular fibulation (1)
- Haemolytic anaemia (1) and IMHA (Immune Mediated Haemolytic Anaemia) (1)
- IMPA (Immune Mediated Poly Arthritis) (1)

# Urinary complications and kidney disease

- There was only a single case of kidney disease reported (aged 13)
- There were 7 cases of recurrent bladder infections, around half in young vizslas that cleared up with age, and the remainder in elderly vizslas, often secondary to other diseases or their treatment (e.g. reduced kidney function following long term medication)
- 41/832 vizslas suffered with urinary incontinence, 7 males and 34 females
- All 7 males exhibited incontinence at end-of-life, secondary to cancers or kidney disease
- For 23/34 females the incontinence was spay related. Other cases were largely restricted to elderly females or excitement/anxiety dribbles in young bitches

# Immune mediated illnesses (1)

- There were 44 vizslas that reported some form of immune mediated illness (5%)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease was the most commonly-reported IM issue (1%, 10 cases)
- There were 7 cases of VIP (just under 1%), one of which also suffered with IMPA

| Condition                                                      | Cases |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Addison's Disease                                              | 3     |
| Hypothyroidism                                                 | 2     |
| Immune Mediated Haemolytic Anaemia (IMHA)                      | 3     |
| Immune Mediated Thrombocytopaenia (IMT)                        | 2     |
| Inflammatory Bowel Disease                                     | 10    |
| Lupus (including ECLE)                                         | 2     |
| Masticatory Muscle Myositis (MMM)                              | 2     |
| Myasthenia Gravis                                              | 3     |
| Pemphigus                                                      | 1     |
| Polyarthritis (IMPA)                                           | 5     |
| Steroid Responsive Meningitis-Arteritis (SRMA)                 | 4     |
| Vizsla Inflammatory Polyomyopathy (VIP)                        | 6     |
| Vizsla Inflammatory Polyomyopathy (VIP) & Polyarthritis (IMPA) | 1     |

# Immune mediated illnesses (2)

Age at onset (numbers refer to proportion providing info, e.g. 2 out of 3 provided info)

- Addison's (3/3): 3, 5 and 6 years old
- IMHA (2/3): 3, 7 years old
- IMT (2/2): 1 and 2 years old
- IBD (6/10): under 1, 2, 5, 7, 7, 8 years old
- Lupus (2/2): 1, 3 years old
- MMM (2/2): 1, 3 years old
- Myasthenia Gravis (3/3): all at 2 years
- Pemphigus (1/1): Aged 8
- IMPA – inc VIP & IMPA case (6/6): under 1, two aged 1, 4, 5, 8 years old
- SRMA (4/4): 2 cases at 1 year old, 2 cases at 2 years old
- VIP, includes VIP & IMPA case (4/7): under 1, 2, 2, 8 years old