NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

‘Operation Sterilise!’: SPCA manages cat population on St John’s Island

*Singapore, 19 May 2011* – An animal sterilisation “SWAT” team of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) has operated on two occasions; March 5 to 7 and May 7 to 9 2011, taking its first steps in managing the domestic cat population on St John’s Island.

With the approval of the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) and Sentosa Leisure Group, a team consisting of SPCA staff and veterinarians cruised over to St John’s Island with the necessary equipment to set up in the appointed surgery room. A total of 37 stray cats to date, have been sterilised. 20 cats (10 males and 10 females) were sterilised on the first trip, and another 17 cats were sterilised on the second trip.

“We are exhausted but completely elated by the result,” said Deirdre Moss, Executive Director of the SPCA. “It was a real team effort; from the volunteer veterinarians, the SPCA staff to the added hands provided by Sentosa Leisure Group.”

As Singaporeans prepared for Polling Day on 7 May, SPCA staff arrived at the island with much anticipation and were glad to see those cats which were sterilised previously, thriving. While part of the team saw to the trapping, the rest of the team proceeded to feed the hungry masses. SPCA staff also stayed the weekend on both trips to ensure that the animals were comfortably recovering. The felines made a swift recovery before being released the next day.
The highly complex ‘Operation Sterilise!’ was conceived when two staff had visited the island on a recreational trip and noticed a thriving but unsterilised feline population. A subsequent recce and survey of the cat population on St. John’s Island, by a team of four SPCA staff in February, confirmed the growing numbers of the unsterilised cat population as litters of newly born kittens were observed. A haven for many bird species including magpies, robins and owls and the occasional Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, St John’s Island is also home to a considerable number of domestic cats – over 100 in total – that are cared for by a handful of residents.

St. John’s Island is unlike Singapore’s mainland, which has many individuals and/or animal welfare groups chipping in to reduce the numbers through arranging for the animals to be sterilised. In the last financial year, the SPCA distributed over 1700 vouchers (a total of $63,000) to caregivers in Singapore, enabling them to have a community cat sterilised at a participating veterinary clinic, with SPCA paying the cost.

The SPCA will be making subsequent trips to St. John’s Island to continue its sterilisation efforts. The SPCA acknowledges the invaluable assistance of the veterinarians and staff who have helped made this project possible, including Sentosa Leisure Group and the AVA for their support.

Note to Editor: Please refer to ANNEX A for five photos.

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**About Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)**

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is the first registered animal welfare charity in Singapore. The two main objectives of the SPCA are to promote kindness to animals and to prevent cruelty to animals. Relying mainly on donations from the public and fundraising, the Society provides various animal welfare services to the community including a 24-hour emergency service, cruelty investigation, a sterilisation voucher programme for strays as well as running an animal shelter for abused and abandoned pets and strays. For more information, visit [http://www.spca.org.sg](http://www.spca.org.sg)