VOCAL is here to help cats in the community. In an emergency someone will always try to deal with a problem, however we rely on volunteers and many volunteers are also working full-time. We always try to assist but we cannot promise to be able to fix all the problems and ask that you do all you can to contribute to the welfare of cats on Crete during your holiday and afterwards. There are many ways you can help and support our work. Between us we can make a real difference for the cats of Crete.

If you are staying in a hotel and see cats in the grounds please do not encourage them to eat at your table in the restaurant or let them into your apartment/villa. You may love them and think you are helping but you may be putting their life in danger. When you have left, the cat assumes it can continue to visit the place where you were, but other guests who follow on might not be sympathetic and may complain. This can lead staff/villa managers to take drastic action, such as dumping or poisoning. If you wish to give food, find somewhere quiet and discreet, away from public areas, and encourage the cats to eat there.

Talk to the manager about their policy for cats at the resort, express your concerns and your wishes to see cats be cared for, but be aware they will always tell you what you want to hear - which might not be the truth! If you have a concern about the wellbeing of a cat at your resort contact the welfare group closest to you for advice.

To assist us in our work, for our neutering campaigns, make a note of numbers of cats at the resort, (Elounda/Agios Nikolaos), if you can tell the sex, their colours and their general physical condition etc. Please send this information including the exact name and location of your resort to vswain(at)miaow.info when you return home.

If you are in the Elounda/Agios Nikolaos area and would like to sponsor the neutering of a particular cat/s at your resort, please contact VOCAL for more information.

If you find very small kittens in a nest the mother is probably out seeking food. Unless it is an emergency, do not handle the kittens or disturb the nest. Do not draw other people's attention to them. Check back at regular intervals and only remove kittens from their nest if you know they are in danger or you are sure that the mother will not return. If the mother cat is feral and sees you nearby, she will not return. If she feels threatened, she may try to move them all. If there are several kittens in the litter, some may not survive the move or be abandoned.

If you find very young kittens, (less than 4 weeks old), in an exposed area - on open rough land, by or in a dustbin, by the road etc. it is likely they are dumped. Find shade and safety for them and contact VOCAL.

If you find an injured or sick cat (Elounda/Agios Nikolaos) please try to take the cat to the vet for treatment and contact VOCAL for advice.

If you are very sure that you want to give a permanent, loving home to a cat/kitten from Crete and live in Europe - for example, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland or the UK, it is a simple procedure to prepare a cat through a vet for travel within 1-2 days, and to take it on your flight. If you are interested in offering a permanent home, please contact VOCAL. A cat's normal life span is 15-20 years, this is a long term commitment you are making!

We have many cats waiting to go to permanent homes in Europe, or to our foster carers there. If you live in Germany, Austria, Holland or Switzerland and are willing to take cats to
the airport of your country, please check out our flight escort page and contact us for more information

VOCAL has an office in Elounda next to Peacock bar, on the road towards Agios Nikolaos. If it is closed and you would like to speak to one of us about our work, or help us with a donation, or buy some merchandise, please contact Virginia on 0030 6944 807727.

We hope you will have a very happy and enjoyable holiday on the beautiful island of Crete.

Virginia Swain-Dixon