

In each issue of *Today's Veterinary Practice*, **Pet Health by the Numbers** correlates article topics with statistics provided by Banfield Pet Hospital (banfield.com). These statistics are extracted from data collected from the medical records of nearly **2.3 million dogs** and **470,000 cats** presented to more than **850 Banfield Pet Hospitals** in 2013.

Learn more about data collection by reading **Welcome to Pet Health by the Numbers** (January/February 2014 issue) and **Key Findings from the State of Pet Health 2014 Report** (May/June 2014 issue), both available at tvjournal.com.

Flea Prevalence in Dogs & Cats

Article: **Feline Arthropods: Recommendations from the Companion Animal Parasite Council** (Page 59)

The following tables outline the prevalence of fleas in dogs and cats presented to Banfield Pet Hospitals in 2013.

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Prevalence of Fleas by U.S. Climate Region (2013)

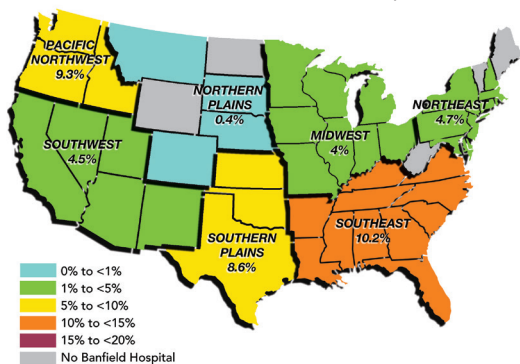
Region	Dogs			Cats		
	Presented	With Fleas	Percentage	Presented	With Fleas	Percentage
Midwest	307,311	12,440	4%	70,360	5152	7.3%
Northeast	299,531	14,026	4.7%	74,085	7383	10%
Northern Plains	100,362	450	0.4%	20,087	98	0.5%
Pacific Northwest	125,105	11,693	9.3%	39,838	7642	19.2%
Southeast	749,357	76,334	10.2%	139,437	22,595	16.2%
Southern Plains	338,076	29,170	8.6%	51,528	5538	10.7%
Southwest	404,448	18,198	4.5%	73,479	6724	9.2%

Region with Greatest Prevalence of Fleas by Patient Age* (2013)

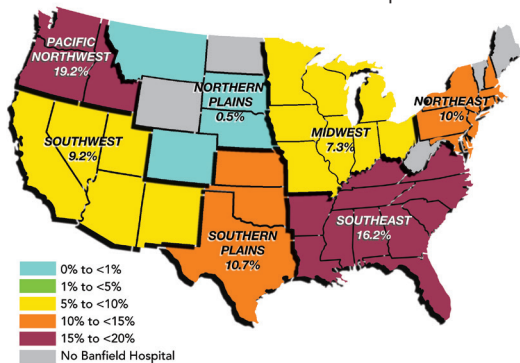
Age	Dogs: Southeast		Cats: Pacific Northwest	
	Presented	% with Fleas	Presented	% with Fleas
Total	749,357	10.2%	39,838	19.2%
Juvenile (< 1 year)	184,655	12.1%	7155	25.7%
Young adult (1 to 3 years)	192,424	8.4%	7288	19.1%
Mature adult (3 to 10 years)	351,335	9%	17,203	17%
Geriatric (> 10 years)	78,467	9.4%	9955	16%

* NOTE: Age group totals will not match overall totals. Age groups are derived from visit age in 2013; some pets may have been counted in multiple age categories (eg, a pet that visited as a juvenile and then as a young adult in 2013).

Canine Flea Prevalence Map



Feline Flea Prevalence Map



Path to Pet Wellness: These data confirm that fleas are a common problem in dogs and cats,¹ particularly in very young animals. Cats were more likely to have fleas than dogs, probably because of their roaming activities.

The Southeast, Southern Plains, and Pacific Northwest demonstrated the highest prevalence of fleas for both dogs and cats. Warmer and more humid environments benefit flea development; however, other factors, such as the presence of feral animals, degree and vigor of flea control used, and seasonal changes, may play a role in flea burden and exposure.¹ More studies are needed to document the prevalence of fleas in different regions and identify factors that contribute to variability in local flea populations and exposure risks.

Veterinarians need to educate pet owners about the risks of flea exposure^{2,3} and recommend strategic, effective, and safe flea control and prevention, even in areas with low flea prevalence.

—Sandra N. Koch, DVM, MS, Diplomate ACVD

References

1. Beresford-Jones WP. Prevalence of fleas on dogs and cats in an area of central London. *J Small Anim Prac* 1981; 22(1):27-29.
2. Van Der Snoek TKR, Overgaauw PAM. Fleas as vectors of emerging zoonosis. *Una Salud Revista Sapuvet de Salud Publica* 2011; 2(2):59-79.
3. McElroy KM, Blagburn BL, Breitschwerdt EB, et al. Flea-associated zoonotic diseases of cats in the USA: Bartonellosis, flea-borne rickettsioses, and plague. *Trends Parasitol* 2010; 26(4):197-204.