

38 greyhounds are being put down a month in Ireland

Animal welfare groups are calling for greyhound breeding to be limited to protect dogs.

AN AVERAGE OF 38 greyhounds are being put down every month in Ireland because of overbreeding and a lack of homes for them, animal welfare groups say.

Thousands of greyhounds have been put down in Ireland in the last few years and hundreds more are being exported to countries with terrible animal welfare records, according to the Greyhound Rescue Association Ireland (GRAI).

The group has joined forces with UK greyhound welfare groups to call for greyhound breeding to be restricted to help protect them.

Nearly twice as many greyhounds are retiring every year than can be rehomed, the GRAI says. Meanwhile, young dogs that don't make the grade are being put down or exported.

“Currently the market is flooded with greyhounds,” GRAI spokesman Richard King told *TheJournal.ie*.

Thousands of greyhounds are bred here each year and those that are not up to standard are either put down or sent abroad to places like China, South America, Pakistan or Spain.

Last month, the plight of three greyhounds who were exported to Macau, China, was raised by the GRAI.

“Those greyhounds will die at the track,” King said. “There are no rehoming projects over there. That's three young dogs – that we know of – who will definitely be dead in the next couple of years.”



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Between 2010 and 2015, at least 105,000 greyhounds were born in Ireland but just 94,405 were named for racing. That leaves more than 10,000 greyhounds who don't make the grade – many of whom end up being put down.

Just under 3,000 were destroyed in Irish dog pounds between 2010 and 2014 but the GRAI believes thousands of others don't make it to the pounds.

“They're brought to the vet to be put down or else we know there are unscrupulous owners and trainers who take other measures, such as the greyhounds that were shot in Limerick four years ago,” King said.

Greyhounds are often owned by syndicates and don't build up a personal relationship with their owners. When they retire, it's often difficult to find a home for them.

Limit breeding

The GRAI is calling on the government to put measures in place to limit the breeding of greyhounds.

“If there were less greyhounds being bred, then they would be highly valued and better taken care of, both on and off the track,” said King.

It's also calling on the Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) – which has responsibility for the greyhound industry – to do more for greyhound welfare.

“The Irish Greyhound Board recently announced investment of €700,000, but it did not outline one cent for greyhound welfare or retirement of greyhounds,” said King.

We want to meet with them to discuss their lack of effort for retired greyhounds in Ireland.

Comment is being sought from the Irish Greyhound Board and the Department of Agriculture.

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