

Animal name: Rambo

Animal number: 47292

Physical description: Large mix breed, brown and black

Description of identified behavior concerns:

Rambo was impounded on September 11, 2022 and was aggressive to intake staff, who were unable to examine him as he air snapped at the person attempting to scan for a microchip. A behavior evaluation was conducted on January 8, 2023 and was reported to leash easily after gaining trust, indicating some level of fear around novel people. He reacted to other dogs as he passed them while in kennels but seemed interested in other dogs from a distance, which could have been mild fixation. This is an area that needs to be explored as there are no notes on Rambo's body language when seeing the other dog. Knows some basic cues and likes playing with toys. Of some concern he did jump and circle when tension was on the leash but this stopped when there was slack on the leash. Leading us to need to investigate arousal issues, frustration tolerance and/or handling concerns. Though notes indicated that he was redirected with cues and treats, so arousal is our first line of inquiry. Also possibly indicating arousal issues is another note saying he likes to jump but is redirected with treats. More concerning, he has been noted to climb fences in the yards when other dogs are present. Also of concern is a note stating he has an intense stare, possibly a threat display, but that he is also playful and able to be redirected. He also was noted to bark at strangers but easily returned to playing. Another note of concern is that he took time to build trust with staff.

Kennel approach: Known handler approach with less known handler. Upon initial approach, he was laying at kennel front. Took treats. Jumping up on kennel front, hind feet remained on ground. Open kennel, head poked out and walked into loop for lead. Focus change from kennel/handler to door.

Video notes: Known handler - High tail, lip lick, Shake off outside of kennel, dragging/pulling handlers with leads to yard. Piloerect, knocked over the small dog mouthed head after it was down. Large dog, freeze, ears pinned back then flashes forward, high tail flag, head drops, wide steps, slow stalk. Full piloerect, while sniffing, the stuffed dog slightly moves and he flinches. Chuff at dog.

- Focus/glance on cameraman outside play yard. Eats treats in grass. Orients to observers and lip lick. Maintained piloerection on just shoulders. Stretch to eat treats out of hand of primarily known handler. Tail flag when unknown observer approached. Eye contact made, however very minimal (<1 second). Seeking treat behavior without association to handler. Lip lick with observer throwing treats over fence. Novel person at fenceline knelt down, distanced without approach
- Exiting play area: He jumped to known handler to grab leash. A 4 seconds hard stare at large stuffed dog with pounce. High flagging tail. Glance to observers to right of camera. Reorients to black dog for 1 second and another pounce away from dog. Another stare 1 second with look away. Treats dropped and will eats. 2 flailing leaps at handler with leash grab on landing. Rambo sat unprompted to untangle leash from handler. Focused on observers walking around. He approached the bench and is treat seeking but was not

focused making eye contact with handlers/observers. Did not take treats from second novel handler. Shake off

- Returning to building: Walking into dog pod: Sits at door. Jumped on handler. When in kennel, handler was able to hand feed and remove leads.

Outside handling: Walked out on double lead quickly. Fast direct approach to the stuffed small dog, observed to sniff and the stuffed animal fell over. Mouthed the stuffed dog quickly and left without direction/prompt. Walking and approached large stuffed dog. Spinal alignment, piloerect, slow approach with stretch to interact. Walked to play yard, eating dropped treats from grass, ate treats from hand with gentle mouth. Curved, relaxed. Got aroused in play yard with demonstrated “zoomies” and play bow. He showed a lack of affiliation throughout interaction by not approaching, maintaining distance, no eye contact, only approached to handlers was for treats. Novel handler approached outside of fencing, curved the edge farthest from Rambo, he did not approach until treats presented and thrown at him. A lot of movement throughout the play yard interaction but not demonstrable affiliation with known handlers.

Summary of risks to humans and management requirements:

Active avoidance, minimal of social signaling, history of threat display on intake, Very low affiliation

Identified leveling: IV

Summary of risks to conspecifics and management requirements:

Fixation with tense body language, actively avoidance with no social signaling, Attention not diverted with distance of 6ft or greater, recovery more than 30 seconds at a distance of 6ft or greater, rapidly approaches conspecifics (Unsafe to test with living conspecific, observed with stuffed dog), intrusive, tense, forward, or control behaviors.

Record reflects climbing fences with implied intent to close distance between conspecifics

Identified leveling: High V

Summary of risks to other domestic animals and management requirements:

Unable to assess

Identified leveling: Unable to assess

Recommendations and options based on risk assessment and management requirements:

The level of management for this animal is akin to that of an exotic canid that cannot be safely handled without significant precautions. If adopted out, Rambo would require the following to be

safely managed for the remainder of the life of the animal, as this level of aggression is unlikely to be remediated in any sense.

- Fully secure 10-12 foot fencing with airlocks to prevent escape and a shift area for cleaning and feeding with Coyote rollers to prevent escape with the intent to damage to other dogs.
- Provisioning of a full enrichment program for Rambo to meet quality of life and animal care standards for housing a large canid that meet or exceed the Association of Zoos and Aquaria (AZA) guidelines:
https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2332/large_canid_care_manual_2012r.pdf
- Enclosure must include provisions for severe weather, as Rambo is unlikely to be comfortable and may be dangerous if he lives in the home with a person unless advised by a qualified, and certified behavior consultant (PhD, CAAB or CDBC)
- Commitment to lifelong positive-reinforcement (only) training within protected contact as there is likely no behavior modification protocol that will impact this behavior in a positive direction. Any positive reinforcement behavior modification would need to be conducted by a qualified and certified behavior consultant (trainer is an insufficient level for this type of risk) to manage fear-based aggression (distance sessions may be appropriate) – (potential cost \$8,400/year)
- Possible partnership with a veterinary behaviorist for psychopharmaceutical intervention in partnership with a local veterinarian (potential cost: \$6,000 - \$10,000/year) in order to attempt to alleviate the unrelenting stress of living in proximity to people, which act as a clear trigger for aggression with this dog.
- Rambo will never be able to safely leave property.
- Rambo will need to be fully sedated for any veterinary health exams, any medical interventions, and basic husbandry (\$100 - \$300 in addition to regular cost of visit).
- Adopter must be careful to avoid any forms of punishment (including shock collar, prong collar, or choke chains) as that is likely to increase aggression, anxiety, fear, and stress per the recommendations of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) and the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behaviorists (AVSAB) –
<https://avsab.org/resources/position-statements/>