

Together, We Can Reduce Cat Overpopulation

To end the tragic cycle of cat overpopulation, we must first become a nation of responsible pet owners and keep our cats indoors. Here are some things we can all do:

- ◆ Support local cat control and protection plans that remove feral cats from the environment. Contact your local Department of Animal Care/Control.
- ◆ Oppose legislation and local ordinances permitting Trap, Neuter, Release. Contact your local city or county council members.
- ◆ Support legislation requiring cat owners to register their cats, spay or neuter them, and prevent them from roaming free. Contact your local city or county council member.
- ◆ Do not feed unowned or feral cats without making a commitment to giving or finding them permanent, indoor homes.
- ◆ Never abandon unwanted cats. Instead, take them to your local animal shelter to give them the best possible chance of adoption into loving, lifelong homes.



Jake Berzon, Wikimedia.com

To find out more, visit www.abcbirds.org/cats

Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR): Bad for Birds, Bad for Cats



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There is a Better Solution

TNR advocates are compassionate people, but they are not taking into account the welfare of birds and other wildlife or the true welfare of the cats. A better solution is to trap and neuter feral cats, then relocate them to enclosed cat sanctuaries or shelters, or to adopt them out to safe and comfortable homes. TNR should stand for Trap, Neuter, Remove!



Marge Gibson



TNR Endangers Wildlife, Creates a Human Health Hazard, and Does Not Solve the Cat Overpopulation Problem



Cat Colonies are Hazardous Places

Feral cat colonies endanger human health from the spread of diseases such as rabies and toxoplasmosis, attract rats and raccoons, and threaten populations of birds and other wildlife.

The domestic house cat is one of the world's most effective predators. It is estimated that there are over 80 million feral cats in the United States, and each year, these cats kill hundreds of millions of birds and millions more other small animals.

Each year, millions of cats in colonies fall victim to horrible deaths as a result of being hit by cars, eaten by predators, or infected by disease.



Trap, Neuter and Release: Not the Solution

A technique called Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) has been wrongly suggested by some as a solution to the feral cat problem, with disastrous consequences. Volunteers catch feral cats, neuter them, re-release them into parks, neighborhoods, city streets, or even wild lands, and then feed them. The idea is that by spaying and neutering all of the cats, the colony will diminish over time, and eventually disappear.

Unfortunately, studies have repeatedly shown that this technique simply does not work. It is very difficult to trap and neuter all the cats, and the colonies become an attractive dumping ground for people looking to abandon unwanted pets. As a result, the colonies remain and often grow larger.

TNR does not address the fundamental problem of cat predation on birds and other wildlife. It is also inhumane. The lifespan of most feral cats is only two to five years, compared to up to 15 years for cats that are properly cared for indoors.

As a society we do not expect to solve dog overpopulation problems by turning unwanted dogs loose in the streets; the same should be true for cats. Ensuring responsible pet ownership is the key to any long-term solution to cat overpopulation.



Human Impacts



Feral cat colonies are breeding grounds for disease that can spread to humans. Cat feces can carry toxoplasmosis, a parasite of particular concern to pregnant women, since it has been linked to brain damage in children. Forty percent of women who contract toxoplasmosis pass it on to their unborn children.

Food at cat colonies attracts wild animals, exacerbating the spread of diseases such as rabies. The Centers for Disease Control states that more cats than dogs were reported rabid in the U.S. between 2000-2004, and that most humans are given the rabies vaccine as a result of exposure to domestic animals. As a result of potential human health impacts from cats, the CDC recommends that all cats be kept indoors and routinely vaccinated. Neither of these conditions is met by TNR.

What Are Government Scientists Saying about Roaming Cats?

Well-fed cats continue to kill birds. The number of pet cats in the U.S. has increased threefold in the last 40 years and approximately 65% of these are roaming for some portion of the day. These free roaming cats, added to the number of feral cats, total an estimated 140 million cats, which kill on average at least 1.4 million birds per day. In some areas, cat predation has decimated local bird populations, and has led to the disappearance of some species.