

THE SOLUTION

Cat removal has been proven to work when the artificial food source is also removed.

Feral adults can be socialized and make wonderful pets.

Enclosures can be set up on private properties in which cats and wildlife are truly protected.

Life and death in a cat colony is not a humane or responsible option. Euthanasia may be the most compassionate outcome for some of these cats. A painless injection is a far kinder and less self-indulgent choice than having cats be crushed by cars, attacked by dogs, ravaged by disease, or abused by cat haters.

The **American Veterinary Medical Association** has stated:

An insignificant percentage of the total number of unowned free-roaming and feral cats are being managed by humane organizations. Consequently, the reduction in the total number of free-roaming cats these programs will effect is insignificant.

Out of the 70 million feral cats that currently roam the U.S., not even 1% has gone through TNR. Therefore, the options of socialization/ adoption and sanctuary are no less workable solutions.

Education is our best chance of making a difference in the lives of these cats. Cat licensure, anti-roaming laws, and low-cost spay and neuter are all valuable tools. But, until we place value on the lives of all living creatures and educate the public to be more responsible caretakers, we will continue to be witness to the suffering of companion animals who do not have homes.

"If a fraction of the millions of dollars being expended to neuter, reabandon, and feed cats was directed toward enhancing education and supporting more effective animal control ordinances and their enforcement, we would be much farther down the road toward effectively reducing the problem of free-roaming cats than we are today".

Paul L. Barrows, DVM, PhD, DACVPM

An example of an ecosystem restored to balance according to the nonprofit *American Rivers*: reintroduced wolves have culled the elk herd overgrazing the banks of the Yellowstone River. Trout and beaver populations have rebounded.

Native predator populations fluctuate to match the population of their food source.

There is **no** balance when non-native, invasive predators are introduced into the environment.

The domestic cat (*Felis catus*) is a descendent of the African and European wild cats. They were domesticated thousands of years ago and have since become dependent upon humans for survival.

Native wildlife has not developed the mechanisms needed to survive alongside this non-native predator.

Releasing companion animals into the environment is inhumane and their presence can disrupt the ecological balance of nature.

Allowing cats to wander and breed uncontrollably is just *one more way humans have degraded habitat.*

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Do you really want to support programs that re-abandon cats to the wild? Do you really feel that TNR is an environmentally responsible solution?

TNR REALITY CHECK

**DO YOU BELIEVE SHE
DESERVES TO LIVE
INHUMANELY AND
DIE TRAGICALLY
OUTSIDE JUST
BECAUSE SHE ACTS
WILD?**

Trap-Neuter-Release is NOT an effective or humane solution for feral cats.



MAKE AN INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE DECISION...

WHY NOT TNR?

Unattainable Goals

(TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Release or Trap-Neuter-Return. TNR is also referred to as *feral cat colony management*).

TNR is a method in which feral (unsocialized) cats are trapped, altered and released to the wild and then fed indefinitely. The stated goal of TNR is to reduce the numbers of feral cats and eventually eliminate colonies through natural attrition. **HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT BEEN PROVEN AND OFTEN IS NOT THE CASE.** TNR is based on *perpetual colony maintenance*.

TNR advocates will cite reduced euthanasia rates at shelters as proof that TNR works. **This is not scientific proof that indicates a reduction in their actual numbers.**

Colonies often *grow* in size due to the attraction of neighborhood cats to the artificial food source and the dumping of cats by irresponsible pet owners.

Not every cat in a colony can be trapped. Those that remain are artificially sustained by the food provided and are better able to breed.

TNR only APPEARS to solve the problem of feral cat overpopulation. This method comes at the EXPENSE OF NATIVE WILDLIFE and poses risks to public health and is inhumane for the cats.

Wildlife Mortality

Well-fed cats hunt. The hunting instinct is separate from the urge to eat. Animals caught by cats usually die regardless of treatment, *including endangered species*.



Cat-attacked migratory bird.
Gray Catbird nestling.

Domestic cats are an introduced predator species not part of the ecosystem. The outdoors is **not** their natural habitat and they upset the balance of nature.

Habitat loss is the primary challenge wildlife faces, but cat predation is a **significant factor** in the decline of wildlife that should NOT be ignored.

Cats affect the rodent supply for our majestic birds of prey and some mammals.



These mosquito-covered kittens were part of a "managed" colony.

No environmental impact studies are done before a colony is supported. Some areas designated as critical habitat are home to many endemic species that **will be further strained** by cat colonies.

Inhumane Outcome for Cats

Cats often live miserable lives in colonies. They are hit by cars, attacked by dogs and wildlife, plagued by disease, and abused by people. This is no life (or death) for a companion animal.

Colonies may consist of 5, 10, or 20 cats or number into the hundreds. Caregivers cannot ensure that every cat gets food and water daily.

Feral cats are difficult to re-trap for subsequent care and therefore do not usually receive regular veterinary care.

Risks to Public Health

Cats carry many harmful bacteria. They transmit diseases to other animals and zoonotic diseases to humans. **Colonies can pose a serious risk to public health.**

Transmission of disease can occur through bites, scratches or fecal contamination.

Cats are the only species to shed the parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*, in their feces. Cats may defecate in the sand on beaches, in children's sandboxes, in vegetable gardens and flowerbeds. This parasite can live for many months in the environment and causes toxoplasmosis. TNR advocates will cite that humans have a better chance of acquiring toxoplasmosis from raw or undercooked meat than from

cats. However, contaminated meat also can be traced back to domestic cats. CDC link:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/toxoplasmosis/toxoplasmosis_brochure_8.2004.pdf

This parasite recently has been linked to schizophrenia in humans. See the 9/30/05 issue of the journal *Veterinary Parasitology*.

Cats that remain untrapped are not vaccinated for rabies. **Raccoons and other rabies vector species often feed alongside cats in colonies.** Those cats that *are* trapped and vaccinated usually are not



Trash left in the woods by cat feeders.

retrapped and revaccinated when the initial vaccine expires.

Colony cats could potentially be at higher risk for contracting **Avian Influenza A H5N1**.

In Conclusion

TNR enables abandonment. Education is the key to reducing the feral cat population. **TNR undermines efforts to educate folks about responsible pet ownership.**

TNR sends wrong and mixed messages. **No** domestic cat should be outdoors. TNR advocates say they respect the rights of feral cats to live outside. What about the rights of wildlife that truly has nowhere else to go? What about the rights of the public who may not want cats in backyards?

Many wildlife veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators, environmentalists, ecologists, biologists, and conservation groups strongly oppose TNR.

Feral, stray or pet cats - they are all domestic companion animals. Their home is not outdoors.

Respect local cat ordinances regarding licensing, roaming, feeding and harboring.