







Unintentionally Creating Your Own Colony

Some individual caregivers unintentionally create their own feral cat colonies when they set out food in their yard. While leaving food out may appear to be doing a good deed, you may be attracting wildlife and overwhelming numbers of feral cats. As these feral cats are unlikely to be spayed/neutered, the problem snowballs when the strays begin to reproduce. In an incredibly short period of time, the caregiver realizes that there are suddenly dozens of kittens in the yard. The situation is now undeniably out-of-control because the individual cannot financially care for all the cats. Scenarios like this are especially common in rural and residential areas. Do not feed stray cats in your community unless you are physically and financially ready to trap each one, get each one spayed or neutered, and then feed each one for the rest of his or her life.

Trapping

Trapping feral cats is not something done on a whim. It must be planned in advance with great care taken in the selection of the type of trap you will use and the time when you will trap. Before setting out your trap, contact the veterinary hospital where you will take the trapped cat for surgery and vaccinations. In addition, identify the location you will hold the cat in as he or she recovers from surgery. You cannot simply release a cat hours after the surgery is completed. The cat needs time to recover in a safe environment with adequate food and water until he or she is ready to return to the wild.

What Can You Do?

-  Spay or neuter your cat and urge your family and friends to do likewise.
-  Keep your cat indoors so he or she does not roam and become part of a feral cat colony.
-  If you know of a colony in your area, contact the local shelter to see if there are feral cat colony caregivers who can help.
-  Treat all animals with respect.

Thank you
for caring!



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**TRAP
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RETURN**





Trap-Neuter-Return

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the most humane and effective method to manage feral cat colonies. TNR inhibits the ability of feral cats to reproduce, thereby reducing the number of kittens born in a colony. Some people feel killing feral cats is the best way to stop their reproduction. However, when one cat leaves a colony, another one is sure to take his or her place. As long as the cats are able to reproduce, no amount of killing will dramatically reduce a colony.



What is a Feral Cat?

Feral cats are either born in the wild or were housecats who have been on their own for a considerable time and are no longer well socialized with humans. They may live between 2 and 10 years, depending on whether they are alone or part of a managed colony. Some previous housecats who have been on their own can become housecats again if given proper care and socialization. Kittens born in the wild, if handled by humans at an early age, can also become housecats if given proper care and socialization.

Feral cats endure extreme weather conditions, predation from other animals, and attacks from humans whether by poison, trapping, or gassing. Feral cats are estimated to be in the tens of millions in the United States.

Caring for Feral Cats

Feral cats are trapped, spayed and neutered, vaccinated against rabies, and returned to live out their lives in a colony managed by one or more caregivers. During the surgery, feral cats will have the tip of the left ear surgically removed as a way to identify that the cat has been spayed or neutered. Caregivers are responsible for making sure the cats have potable water, food, and shelter. They also take responsibility to trap any newcomers to the colony and have them spayed and neutered and vaccinated. In addition, caregivers trap any cats in the colony who are in need of medical treatment.

Purpose of TNR

TNR is not the same as rescuing cats and placing them for adoption. Most feral cats are not able to make the transition from the wild to a home. TNR aims to control the population of cats at a particular location by reducing their numbers through spay and neuter, while still providing some quality of life to the adult cats. TNR also minimizes or eliminates some of the negative behaviors exhibited by intact male and female cats, such as scent marking and yowling. TNR also provides a public health benefit by vaccinating feral cats against rabies. TNR is a public service that protects the community and cats who have few, if any other options. Randomly killing cats to reduce stray cat populations will do neither.

Feral cat colonies should never be relocated unless there is great danger to the cats in their current location. Cats can be territorial and will return to their original location even if relocated to a safer place.

