

Feral Cat Management in Canada

Lessons Learned in Toronto



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Toronto Feral Cat Coalition Member Groups



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JOHN TORY
MAYOR

Proclamation

Feral Cat Awareness Day

October 16, 2017

WHEREAS Feral Cat Awareness Day is an opportunity to educate cat owners and caregivers about a number of resources available to them including the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program and colony management in Toronto, to help control the feral and street cat populations.

Toronto Animal Services is a member of the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition and participates in the TNR program. Catching feral cats, spaying/neutering them and returning them to their colony is one of the ways Toronto Animal Services is helping to control their population.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor John Tory, on behalf of Toronto City Council, do hereby proclaim **October 16, 2017** as "**Feral Cat Awareness Day**" in the City of Toronto.



John Tory
Mayor of Toronto



TORONTO

by the numbers

(2010 - 2018)

Over 15,000 cats sterilized



Built over 5,000 winter shelters



93% drop in feral cat euthanasia



56% drop in stray intake



Certified over 2100 caretakers



Over 600 colonies registered



Three PetSmart grants



Hundreds of volunteers

Over 40,000 pounds
of donated food distributed

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1 Introduction

Lethal measures are a common approach to resolving human/feral cat conflicts in Canada. We are approached regularly by government officials, advocates and rescue groups facing human/feral cat conflicts for information on the best management practices and techniques to mitigate conflict. In City of Toronto (“the City”) staff and local rescue groups have taken several key steps that have allowed municipal staff to address feral cat colonies humanely, while minimizing problems and ensuring public safety. We believe similar success can be achieved in other municipalities. Many locations and conditions that attract and support feral cat colonies in Toronto can be found in the majority of municipalities throughout Ontario, and indeed, the rest of Canada.

When managing human/feral cat conflicts, municipal staff and politicians play a critical role in the process and are necessary if any positive changes are to come. A common view has been that free-roaming cats can simply be ignored or killed.

Practices focused on conflict prevention have been and will continue to be demanded of municipalities by the public, for a number of reasons. In recent years, there has been shift in societal values and an increasing push for humane solutions. People are upset at the thought of domestic companion animals being abandoned and their health and well-being ignored. Equally upsetting is cats being euthanized in shelters for lack of space, resources and temperament. Some people object to the noise and mess that can be created by free-roaming cats but also object to them being killed.

Many municipalities are facing a realization that old solutions for managing free-roaming cats were ineffective and a growing body of research proving the importance of TNR; the economic realization that preventative measures cost less than reactive and repetitive measures, when costs buried in department budgets and expenditures by rescue groups and individual rescuers are considered; and residents who demand progressive, safe, cost-effective, humane, and sustainable solutions.

Together these circumstances present an ideal opportunity for municipalities to put in place a comprehensive program for managing feral cats on the basis of best practices.

2 History of Feral Cats in Toronto



Volunteers at a Toronto Street Cats clinic,
one of three free clinics in Toronto.

Communities throughout Canada share an immense cat population dilemma. Many thousands of healthy, adoptable cats are euthanized every year because there are not enough available homes for them all. Euthanasia due to homelessness is the largest cause of death in cats¹. In spite of high infant mortality, an estimated 80 percent of kittens in shelters are born from feral mothers (Levy and Crawford, 2004); and every kitten born and taken into the shelter system is effectively competing for adoption against cats already in the shelters.

In Toronto the estimated feral cat population was once as high as 100,000. In 2010 the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition (“Coalition”) was formed. The Coalition includes Toronto Animal Services (TAS), humane organizations, and rescue and advocacy groups, formed to work collectively to improve the lives of feral and free-roaming cats through strategic and coordinated trap-neuter-return programs. Between 2010 and 2015, euthanasia of feral cats at City shelters dropped by 93%. Stray intake dropped by 85% from 2010 to 2017 (Appendix 1). We believe, with the City’s implementation of additional progressive policies and additional partnerships, these numbers will continue to decrease.

¹ “There is no disease or condition of companion animals that takes more of their lives than euthanasia.” Janet M. Scarlett, DVM, MPH, PhD, Professor of Epidemiology at Cornell University

The list of services provided by TAS includes injured and dead wild animal pick up, open admission for owner surrendered animals, by-law enforcement and investigations, pet adoptions and spay/neuter services.

In 2009 having secured much-needed funding for shelter renovations to TAS's East Shelter, City Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker stipulated that renovations would include a spay/neuter clinic for a feral cat trap-neuter-return-manage (TNRM) program. Organizations and individuals involved in cat rescue were invited by the City to a meeting and this was the beginning of the coordinated effort to assist colony caretakers (residents who volunteer their time and money to care for feral cats). *It was decided that in order to access free spay/neuter clinics, caretakers would first have to complete a 3-hour workshop about best practices, hosted by Community Cats Toronto, a group dedicated to education and colony data collection. Upon completing the course caretakers could make an appointment with the City's clinic.* The clinic opened in August 2010. Soon after, Toronto Street Cats, a group of volunteer vets operating out of the Toronto Humane Society, also began to offer free spay/neuter surgeries to certified caretakers. Clinics run by the Toronto Humane Society and the Ontario SPCA additionally provide free surgeries. Combined, since 2010 these clinics have sterilized for free well over 10,000 feral cats.



Volunteers from Community Cats Toronto conduct monthly workshops to teach members of the public about TNRM best practices. The workshop is mandatory for those seeking access to free services.

2.1 Bylaw Definitions

Imbedded in *Toronto's Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals* (Appendix 2), a feral cat is defined as "a cat found in the City of Toronto that has no owner, is not socialized and is extremely fearful or resistant to humans."

A feral cat colony is also defined as "a collective term, referring to a group of mostly or all feral cats in the City of Toronto that congregate as a unit."

Undefined prior to 2013 these bylaw amendments now provide the City the ability to address a feral cat and a feral cat colony clearly and directly. *It is important to note that a "no free roaming" clause is omitted intentionally allowing for community trap-neuter-return-manage efforts to proceed without the risk of bylaw violations.*

2.2 Live Trapping and Euthanasia

Live trapping and euthanasia is a common management tool but not an effective one.

Prior to the formation of the Coalition, when residents presented a feral cat to Toronto Animal Services, few options were available. Cats were often euthanized. In the four years preceding the formation of the Coalition, the City euthanized an average of 1,343 cats per year (for behaviour or temperament). This number dropped to just 120 feral cats in 2015 – a 91% decrease.

The City alone does not have the resources to trap stray and feral cats on a regular and continual basis. Furthermore trapping and euthanasia was not a socially acceptable option to City residents. The City was often criticized for not "doing more" for cats, so much so that many residents still believe that cats admitted to the care of TAS are euthanized after the required holding period. The City continues to work to change this perception and provide better customer service.

For these reasons, live trapping and euthanasia is not recommended.

2.3 Live Trapping and Relocation

The City has tested relocation, on a very limited scale, as an option for feral cats. The approximately 50% survival rate caused concern. Cats introduced to a new colony either disappeared or were found dead and malnourished. As a result, the City no longer relocates feral cats.

Some non-feral cats who are hard to adopt (due to litter box issues, insistence on being outdoors, etc.) are put into a barn program. Barns are assessed for suitability and cats are frequently adopted from these barns (see Barn Buddies – Appendix 3). Because there are few barns that fit the list of requirements that make this kind of partnership and subsequent adoptions successful, this is a limited option and is recommended only as one tool to be used in conjunction with a comprehensive TNRM program.

3 Problems and Solutions

3.1 Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage

TNRM involves trapping, vaccinating, spaying or neutering, ear-tipping cats (to identify them easily and at a distance as sterilized) and ongoing colony monitoring and management. It is recommended that cats are observed as they recover in a safe, warm and secure environment to ensure there are no complications from the anaesthetic or the surgery. Recovery times based on TNRM best practices are as follows: healthy male - 24 hours; healthy female – 24 to 48 hours; lactating female - 12 hours; and late term spay – 48 to 72 hours. Upon a safe recovery, cats are then returned to their colonies where they are fed and monitored daily by their caretakers. In addition to their spay/neuter clinic, the Coalition member group, Toronto Street Cats, also builds shelters for ferals, for use particularly in winter. Whenever possible young kittens and socialized adults are rescued from the streets and put into an adoption program.



Cats are monitored as they recover post-surgery before being released to their colony caretaker.

TNR has been practiced for over 20 years in the UK, South Africa and Denmark. After 1-3 years of TNR, researchers in Rome found colony sizes decreased by 16-32% (Natoli 2006). TNR is an effective, long-term strategy to stabilize or modestly reduce the size of feral cat colonies as well as improve the health of these cats (Levy, 2003). Many cities in the U.S. have implemented strategic TNRM programs and the trend is continuing to grow in Canada.²

Prior to the formation of the Coalition, TNRM and rescue efforts in Toronto was a patchwork of groups working independently of each other. For decades these efforts had no apparent impact on the feral cat population in the City. Now, with coordinated efforts

² These are just two municipalities where animal care and control addresses community cat populations: Surrey, BC (<http://surreycats.wix.com/coalition>)
Kingston, ON (<http://www.spayneuterkingstoninitiative.org/>)

and pooling of resources, stray and feral cat numbers are decreasing (Appendix 1). *Only when free and low-cost TNRM services became available and the City and rescue groups began working together has a measurable impact occurred.*

In addition to definitions of feral cat and feral cat colony, *Toronto's Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals* also includes provisions for a "Trap Neuter Return Program" for feral cats and "Spay/Neuter Clinics" (Appendix 4).

Donations to TAS and revenue from pet licensing help to make TNR services and other progressive programs possible. In 2014 Municipal Licensing and Standards issued 80,690 dog and cat licenses, with an 82% renewal rate and 51% completed online³. These numbers increased in 2015⁴ and again in 2016⁵, with a license renewal rate of 90%, 75% of which was completed online.

3.1.1 Mobile Spay/Neuter Vehicle

In 2014 the Welland & District Humane Society launched its mobile spay and neuter clinic, the first of its kind in Canada, thanks in part to PetSmart Charities of Canada. In addition to serving the Welland area, the mobile clinic has been used in other communities where veterinary assistance is limited.

In 2016 Toronto's "SNYP Truck"⁶ was officially launched thanks to mentorship from the ASPCA in New York City. Again, thanks to a generous grant from PetSmart Charities of Canada, the TAS mobile "**Spay Neuter Your Pet**" truck began visiting priority neighbourhoods where transport was a barrier for residents needing pet care. For low income residents fees for sterilizations are either subsidized or waived. Pets are recovered under observation in their cage on the vehicle and returned to their waiting owners at the end of the day.



³ City of Toronto, "Municipal Licensing and Standards 2015 Operating Budget". <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-75392.pdf>

⁴ City of Toronto, "Municipal Licensing and Standards 2016 Operating Budget". <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-89461.pdf>

⁵ City of Toronto, "Municipal Licensing and Standards 2017 Operating Budget". <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-100592.pdf>

⁶ City of Toronto, www.toronto.ca/snyptruck

While mobile clinics are not designed to address feral cats specifically, spay/neuter of owned but possibly free-roaming cats certainly contributes to a reduction in kittens being born, kittens who may end up in shelters and rescue groups.

3.2 Human/Feral Cat Conflicts

3.2.1 Property and Wildlife

The City regularly receives calls of complaints, typically when one neighbour is upset with another. Likewise, users of public property may be concerned that cats are being attracted to the area “because people are feeding them”. Indeed there may be cause for concern if caretakers are not following best practices.

Feral cats may be fouling the neighbour’s garden or cat food may be attracting unwanted wildlife. With Toronto’s healthy and abundant wildlife population⁷, *careful feeding of colony cats is crucial*. Small animals such as rats, squirrels, raccoons, and increasingly due to warmer weather, opossums are attracted to cat food. But foxes and coyotes are more visible and problematic; these omnivores are often feared and misunderstood by the public⁸. Foxes and coyotes have adapted to life in urban environments and will feed opportunistically on unsecured garbage and food waste, birds feeding at bird feeders, rabbits, mice and rats, and even small family pets who are left unsupervised. Lesley Sampson of Coyote Watch Canada was interviewed⁹ after a dog was mauled by a coyote in Mississauga. She says:

“cities are going to have to get used to wildlife in their midst. The only effective approach is what we call, DNA — Do Not Attract. If a territory can’t support a family, coyotes will move on. But if there is a food source, it encourages coyotes to hang around because they’re getting that food source. In the [Toronto] Beaches, it’s a situation. There’s abundant feeding going on ... People leaving chicken out for coyotes.”

Efforts are made to educate both the upset neighbours and any caretakers who are not following best practices. The City and Coalition member groups have created several Toronto-specific educational handouts to distribute to residents during canvassing¹⁰.

Problems also occur between condo or apartment building management and residents feeding stray and feral cats on or near condo/apartment property.

⁷ <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=766a036318061410aVgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

⁸ For more information about coexisting with coyotes, visit CoyoteWatchCanada.com

⁹ <http://www.torontosun.com/2017/02/26/living-with-coyotes-in-the-gta>

¹⁰ <http://www.TorontoFeralCatCoalition.ca/links-resources/>

In some cases, wildlife removal companies were hired by building management to trap and remove cats, and on a number of occasions, trappers brought cats to City shelters. Because domestic cats are not wildlife, companies were repeatedly informed that relocating cats was illegal and counterproductive to TNRM efforts taking place in the City.

If a resolution cannot be reached, the City, as a last resort, will remove some or all colony cats from a specific location.

3.2.2 Human Health

There are a few diseases that are often associated with cats and other animals who share our urban environments, including distemper, rabies and toxoplasmosis.

The City's website addresses distemper and rabies (Appendix 5):

Which diseases in urban wildlife can be spread to people in Toronto?

Rabies is a viral infection of the brain and nervous system which is spread by the bite of an infected animal. Rabies has been eliminated from Toronto in all animals but bats. Treatment with vaccine after a bite from an infected animal is very effective in preventing illness from rabies. [...]

I have heard about distemper and mange. Can I get these illnesses?

These are common diseases in wild animals but are not a human health concern. Distemper has not been shown to cause illness in humans. Mange is caused by a tiny parasite similar to a tick called a mite. It can cause an itchy skin reaction in people usually after close contact with an infested pet. The rash goes away after contact with the infested animal is stopped since animal mites cannot survive long on people.

In 2014 when a resident tried to create alarm about toxoplasmosis, members of the Coalition reassured City councillors and staff that this concern was unfounded. Toxoplasmosis is caused by a parasite prompting flu-like symptoms and is usually contracted from poorly cooked food, poor sanitation, and indoor cats. It is a common disease that is seldom recognized because most infected people do not become sick. "In those who have symptoms of the disease, the illness is mild, with swollen lymph nodes and some discomfort. Estimates suggest that one-third of Canadians have been infected. [...] If people do not

wash their hands after contact with contaminated material or before eating or drinking, the organism is transferred from the hands to the mouth and is then swallowed.”¹¹ Toxoplasmosis is clearly not a serious health threat since millions of Canadians share their homes with cats and there is yet to be a reported epidemic.

Because managed colony cats are monitored daily, transmittable diseases are of minimal concern to the health of the general public. Sick and injured cats can be treated and any abnormal behaviour that may be cause for alarm can be reported. This is precisely the reason for municipalities to provide TNRM and vaccination services and to support efforts of colony caretakers as much as possible. Caretakers are the front-line workers keeping humans and cats safe and healthy.

¹¹ <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/toxoplasmosis.html>

4 Applying Best Management Practices

With increased awareness and compassion, residents in municipalities across North America are increasingly seeking non-lethal solutions to problems between humans and feral cats. It is important to note that strategies are not generically applicable, and each situation must be approached and assessed individually, to determine the best plan.

Understanding cats, the history of rescue and TNR efforts in the community, the number of cats in need and their distribution in the municipality, and all the various strategies available for managing conflicts provides all the information needed to assess and improve a situation. The situation may seem overwhelming, but with the right knowledge and resources, and with community support and participation, the situation can be resolved effectively and efficiently.

To manage a large region with multiple human/feral cat conflicts throughout, such as an entire municipality, a multi-stage approach may be required. Providing municipal staff with the resources needed to implement the most cost-effective, long-term solutions and best management practices can be achieved by developing a comprehensive plan, to evaluate and prioritize the big picture and the future, to plan finances, to prevent future issues, and to save money. The following approach lays out the components of a comprehensive plan.

1. List all current feral cat conflict sites.
2. Evaluate each conflict site (including geographic area, number of feral and/or friendly cats, if a caretaker is present, care and feeding practices, etc.)
3. Develop specific recommendations for each site.
4. Estimate cost for each site.
5. Prioritize conflict site interventions.

4.1. Education and Community Action

Talking to the public: There is a lot of misinformation circulating about feral cats: they're dangerous, they can fend for themselves, they'll go away if we stop feeding them, they can be removed or relocated and the problem is solved. The reality is that many feral cats are the direct result of people abandoning pets or letting them roam free and reproduce.

People also believe that cats are attracted to areas because people are feeding them. While in some cases cats may be attracted to areas where a birdfeeder or garbage attracts wildlife, quite often cats arrive in an area and *then* people begin to care for them out of compassion.

The biggest challenge for the Coalition so far has been to find volunteer trappers and create a community outreach team to operate year-round. Toronto Animal Services does have a small number of educational officers but not enough to meet the needs of the City, given the various and extensive services already provided to residents. The Coalition continues to strive to fill this service gap. Trapping is particularly difficult since many residents of Toronto do not own cars and transporting trapped cats to clinics is not possible otherwise.



Toronto's mobile microchip vehicle (the "Chip Truck") offers TAS an opportunity to discuss all animal services with residents, and the new SNYP Truck also opens a dialogue in the community in a constructive way. Having positive points of contact with residents is a welcome change from a previous relationship based on distrust and hostility. Part of the educational component about feral cats in Toronto is an explanation of the new and valued programs and services offered by Toronto Animal Services – a rebranding exercise of sorts.

Part of this exercise is a consistent message across Coalition member groups, supporting each other's feral cat work. To this end, the Coalition has produced and regularly updates a document that is used to answer frequently asked questions from members of the public. Residents regularly call multiple groups when seeking assistance. With a FAQs document developed jointly by Coalition member groups, we can ensure information disseminated to the public about each other's services is accurate and consistent.

To streamline the Coalition's communication process, cloud-based software called Cat Stats¹² has been integrated. The collection of data has been spread across a number of Coalition member groups, so if a resident inquires about a specific colony location, several internal emails are sent to track down the necessary information, which is time-consuming and sometimes duplicates effort. Now, with a centralized method for data collection, any Coalition member group can easily answer such an inquiry. A centralized database will also make measuring successes easier since statistics can be pooled.

¹² www.CatStats.org

Vet Partners: While providing the public with subsidized and free spay/neuter services was an important first step, we are finding that inquiries for additional veterinary services, like dental, are increasing. Now that feral cats are being cared for properly, cats are aging and needing care. Because provincial legislation restricts the kind of services TAS can provide residents, a survey was sent to all veterinary clinics in Toronto, seeking, among other partnership opportunities, services for feral cats at either regular or discounted rates. Responses were collected with the intention of disseminating it to the public, making it easier for colony caretakers to find vets in the City, as the need arose.

The Coalition is always seeking vet partners. Not only are services needed, but vets are also an important source of information for the general public.

4.1.1 Regent Park Spay Strays Project: 2011

The mission of this joint Coalition project was to provide free spay/neuter services to all unowned street cats in one of Toronto's most vulnerable communities - Regent Park. Regent Park was the oldest and largest public housing development in Canada. It was a 69-acre social housing community in downtown Toronto that housed approximately 10,000 residents in over 2,000 rent-geared-to-income units.

Historically, due to the lack of affordable services, the majority of cats in Regent Park lived unsterilized and roaming the streets. This area was a prominent source of kittens, with documented high rates of animal surrenders to TAS shelters. Shelter intake data from the Toronto Humane Society (THS), which is in close proximity to Regent Park, also revealed Regent Park to be a prominent problem spot for surrendered, stray and injured animals. A massive redevelopment plan for Regent Park resulted in a higher than usual abandonment rate as the impoverished community was being relocated.

In the spring of 2010, Toronto Cat Rescue (TCR) and Annex Cat Rescue (ACR) volunteers worked in a section of Regent Park that was slated for demolition later that year. Thanks to assistance from residents, TCR and ACR volunteers were able to track the cats who had no owners and, over the summer, they rescued the adoptable kittens, helped to tame strays and to TNR feral cats. The work from that summer resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of litters born the following spring. Residents also reported a dramatic decrease of the nuisance behaviours of the male cats.

Another reason that Regent Park was chosen as a target area for the project was that there was a great need and opportunity to educate children about responsible cat care (Regent Park had a high population of youth 18 years and younger). Based on the experience of rescue groups working with residents in Regent Park, we knew this population was open and welcoming to support and education on animal issues.

Toronto Street Cats enlisted volunteers for door-to-door canvassing, promoting the importance of spay/neuter, explaining the free TNR services available, and signing residents up for appointments. Although Regent Park is very close to the clinic performing TNR, residents frequently did not keep their appointments. To remedy this, volunteers arranged transport – picking up cats and returning them at the end of the day. Residents were initially very reluctant and distrusted the process; word of mouth and skilled, nonjudgmental volunteer canvassers eventually overcame these barriers.

Funded by PetSmart Charities of Canada, and with Toronto Street Cats spearheading the project, 644 cats were sterilized. The projected timeline for this work was one year but continued into 2013.

4.1.2. Feral Cat Recovery Centre: 2012

Many caretakers live in apartments or other situations with no room to keep a cat or multiple cats, prior to and following surgery. Feedback from colony caretakers identified the lack of recovery space as a significant obstacle to TNRM efforts. This feedback pushed the City and the Coalition to address the shortfall of a space to recover cats. In early December 2012, the Recovery Centre¹³ opened in a City of Toronto complex in central Scarborough, close to the clinic at Toronto Animal Services' East Shelter. Here, volunteers from Coalition member group, Toronto Cat Rescue, manage a safe and healthy space for feral/stray cats to recover from their spay/neuter surgeries, prior to being returned to their colonies.

The maximum capacity of the Centre is 40 cats with present equipment and volunteer levels.

In addition to providing a safe and secure place for cats to recover from spay/neuter surgery, the Centre is also a place for caretaker support and for Coalition members to store supplies and materials pertaining to TNRM programs. The Centre manages a "trap bank" to provide traps to colony caretakers and trappers who do not have access to them otherwise and has overwintering shelters available for purchase.

The Centre is equipped with a loading dock, allowing large corporate donations of food to be accepted and redistributed to colony caretakers.

Half of the Centre's operational budget is paid by Toronto Animal Services with the remainder covered by other Coalition member groups.

In 2017 the Centre admitted over 600 cats, whose caretakers accessed the various free TNR clinics offered by Coalition member groups.

¹³ www.feralcatrecoverycentre.com



4.1.3. Toronto West Cats Project: 2015

Following the success and popularity of the Regent Park project, TAS conducted a “Toronto West Spay/Neuter Project”, offering free sterilizations for cats in three priority areas identified by TAS as notable neighbourhoods of cat intake for their shelters.

In addition to being spayed or neutered, all cats received a vet exam, vaccines, deworming and ear treatment. Feral and free-roaming cats were ear-tipped while owned cats were not.

Having learned from the Regent Park project, the City included in its grant request funding for a coordinator to conduct community outreach, schedule appointments and arrange transport and trapping as needed.

Due to the distance from the City’s east-end clinic, the cats remained with TAS for two days of observation after surgery.

The city councilor representing the area was appreciative and enthusiastic and helped to promote the project.

Again funded by PetSmart Charities of Canada, the Toronto West Spay/Neuter Project sterilized over 400 cats and was completed in 1 ½ years.

Public involvement and education is key to managing feral cat populations and human/feral cat conflicts effectively. It is important for everyone to understand what is being done to manage cat conflicts (the approach), as well as how and why that course of action was chosen and is being implemented. It is likely that many municipalities can cite an example of a conflict that started out

being managed poorly, causing public outrage that could have been prevented with better communication and understanding between the municipal body and the residents of the area. We have learned the hard way the importance of a municipality having at least a basic knowledge of feral cat management strategies, and being informed on what is happening in their region, to be able to hear and respond to residents. Proper feral cat management should be a joint effort if any long-term harmony is to be found. Taking on a Pilot Project will not only demonstrate the leadership of the municipality in adopting best management practices but will encourage pride and ownership in the project on the part of the community.

Recommendations for Governments and other organizations:

- Make educational resources easily accessible to the public.
- Hold community meetings before taking action, and involve the residents in the decision, as they will be the ones affected by it.
- Enlist the participation of organizations that provide educational presentations within the community on coexisting with feral cats.
- Recruit volunteers from the community to help with shelter building or large-scale community canvassing.
- Make your plans transparent and available.

Recommendations for Residents and private landowners:

- Educate yourself on feral cats management strategies.
- Involve yourself in the decision-making process – it is going to affect you directly, and you should have your say in the matter. If you don't like the way a feral cat conflict is being handled, do something to change it! Bring this manual to your municipality's attention. Inform them of their different options – they may be unaware!
- Work with your community members. Most of the time you will find that others want to achieve the same goal you do!

5 Summary and General Do's/Don'ts

DO define cat, feral cat, feral cat colony and TNRM in local bylaw.

DO implement all applicable non-lethal options available to you as the best course of action to mitigate the conflict. Preventing the conflict is the only long-term solution that makes humane, cost-effective sense.

DO ask vets to perform a proper ear-tip on all cats, friendly and not friendly, who are being sterilized at TNR clinics (a straight, ¼ inch, left ear tip removal). This not only helps to identify sterilized cats quickly and easily, at a distance, but helps to discourage people from taking advantage of TNR services for non-colony cats.

DO microchip cats. A scan of a cat brought in to a shelter will reveal when the cat was sterilized, vaccinated and from which colony the cat originated.

DO apply for any applicable and available grants, such as those offered by PetSmart Charities of Canada. Beginning with a capital project or a small target area is a good way to guarantee success.

DO partner with local rescue groups to assist with adoptions and community outreach.

DO collect and compile statistics and consider using cloud-based software, like Cat Stats, if multiple stakeholders need access to current data.

DO consider launching a shelter-building program. Providing cats with shelter from rain and winter weather is humane, compassionate and a fun and positive activity in which volunteers of all ages can participate. Visit TorontoStreetCats.com to learn more.

DO take the time to explain to residents the efforts that are being made to help cats in the community. Spending a few minutes to explain the situation faced by animal services and rescue groups, and the programs being used and policies being considered, helps residents to understand the magnitude of the situation.

DO ask for and make it easy for residents to donate to progressive animal services programs. Thanking supporters and sharing success stories of animals helped and rescued enables the community to understand how funds are used and the importance of donating.

DO educate residents about responsible pet ownership, including the importance of spaying and neutering cats and who to contact about surrendering their cat (to prevent them being 'dumped').

DON'T pick up healthy strays at random. Friendly cats and kittens may be admitted to the shelter to enter the adoption stream, space permitting. Stress on shelter resources can be alleviated by asking residents to make appointments for owner-surrenders and encouraging caretakers of outdoor cats, friendly and feral, to access TNR services.

DON'T penalize caretakers. Even if caretakers are not utilizing best practices, they are performing a service. Try to keep an open and productive dialogue with these members of the community. It may become necessary to sever the relationship with antagonistic caretakers but their efforts to help these abandoned animals should be recognized and appreciated.

6 Conclusion

The City has implemented a number of bylaws and policies that have contributed to the decrease in the number of cats in the City's shelters. **One particularly important contribution to this effort is the City's dedicated veterinary staff.** Having vets on staff, and ones who are progressive and devoted, is one reason the City has been able to make so much progress in such a short timeframe. Contracting services to a local vet is an alternative to having in-house spay/neuter services. And a model like London's East Village Animal Hospital¹⁴ can be equally productive and robust. It is recommended that information be sent to local veterinary clinics to inform them that the city is not in competition with them, but that the city is treating feral cats who would otherwise not be seen by a vet. As well, Toronto Animal Services makes it clear to caretakers that the City is allowed to provide free **TNRM services** for feral cats and **only for feral cats**. Free TNRM services are not provided to owned cats and no other services beyond sterilizations, flea treatment and vaccinations is performed (TAS Operating Practice, Appendix 6). Unless a feral cat is surrendered to the City are additional treatments for ailments like broken extremities, illness, and fractured or infected teeth, permitted by provincial legislation.

Dr. Esther Attard, Chief Veterinarian with Toronto Animal Services, explains what has made Toronto's success possible.

"The City does not have a ban on free-roaming cats. Having a ban would make TNR illegal.

"Toronto has gone one step further. We held public consultations to discuss changes to the City's bylaws pertaining to TNR programs. We had good discussions in these consultations and most people who attended have been very positive with the agenda surrounding feral cats and TNR. TNR is a legitimised method used by the City as a means to address the feral cat population by imbedding it in our bylaw in 2014. Other municipalities may prefer to do the same via policies.

"As well, for residents who inquire about stray cats, we have found it useful to provide an explanation about roaming cats (Appendix 7).

"Prior to our bylaw changes in 2014, Toronto Animal Services implemented a "Feral Cat Policy" where all healthy feral cats that are brought to City shelters would be returned to their location of origin or relocated when necessary. This policy was updated in 2015 (Appendix 8).

¹⁴ <https://evah.ca>

“Also, a new partnership between Toronto Animal Services and Toronto Cat Rescue (TCR) saw an additional 1,200 cats transferred out of city shelters and adopted in 2014 – a considerable contribution to decreasing pressure on shelter resources and space and increasing staff morale. In TCR’s 2014 Annual Report¹⁵, TCR states that the group made the commitment to rescue through Toronto Animal Services to reduce the number of cats euthanized in City of Toronto shelters. Prior to this decision, TCR rescued cats from all over the city - colonies, owners, backyards, shelters, and independent rescuers. TCR chose to streamline rescuing in 2014 focusing on Toronto shelters to reduce duplication of efforts and to make a real impact in Toronto. This perfectly illustrates why partnerships with rescue groups are so important.

“A third significant change in 2014 was an amendment to Toronto’s municipal licensing by-law, Chapter 545¹⁶ as it pertains to pet shops. The by-law was updated to include the following provision:

545-260.1 Pet Shops to obtain animals from specified sources.

545-260.2 Every keeper of a pet shop must obtain cats and dogs from only the following sources:

- A. municipal animal shelters;
- B. registered humane societies;
- C. registered shelters; and
- D. rescue groups.

“Finally, funding for Toronto Animal Services’ programs is through donations. If a municipality can collect donations through their licensing program, that’s the easiest way to begin to move forward.”

Dr. Hanna Booth and Dr. Esther Attard, veterinarians with Toronto Animal Services, have attended several conferences and have done extensive research on community-wide TNR programs in North America. They are open to connecting with any municipal staff to discuss hurdles and steps to a successful TNR program.

Dr. Esther Attard: eattard@toronto.ca

Dr. Hanna Booth: boothhanna@gmail.com

¹⁵ <https://torontocatrescue.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/toronto-cat-rescue-annual-report-2014.pdf>

¹⁶ https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_545.pdf

7 Acknowledgements

The information in this document has been compiled, in thanks, to Dr. Esther Attard (Chief Veterinarian, Toronto Animal Services), Dr. Johanna Booth (Founding Veterinarian, Toronto Street Cats), Bill Howes and Kali Hewitt-Blackie (volunteers, Toronto Street Cats) and Martin Field (community advocate).

This manual has been reviewed by Liz White, Barry Kent MacKay, Shelly Hawley-Yan, Lesley Sampson, Dr. Johanna Booth, and Martin Field.

Special thanks need to be extended to the following organizations for providing the photographs used in this manual: Toronto Street Cats, Community Cats Toronto, and Toronto Animal Services.

8 Additional Resources

Toronto Street Cats: torontostreetcats.com

Community Cats Toronto (formerly Toronto Feral Cat Project): communitycats.ca

Feral Cat Recovery Centre (operated by Toronto Cat Rescue): feralcatrecoverycentre.com

Neighbourhood Cats TNR Handbook: neighborhoodcats.org/resources/books-videos-more

Alley Cat Allies: alleycat.org

Video of the Toronto Feral Cat TNR Coalition's work: <https://vimeo.com/41095624>

9 References

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Appendix 1

Figure 1

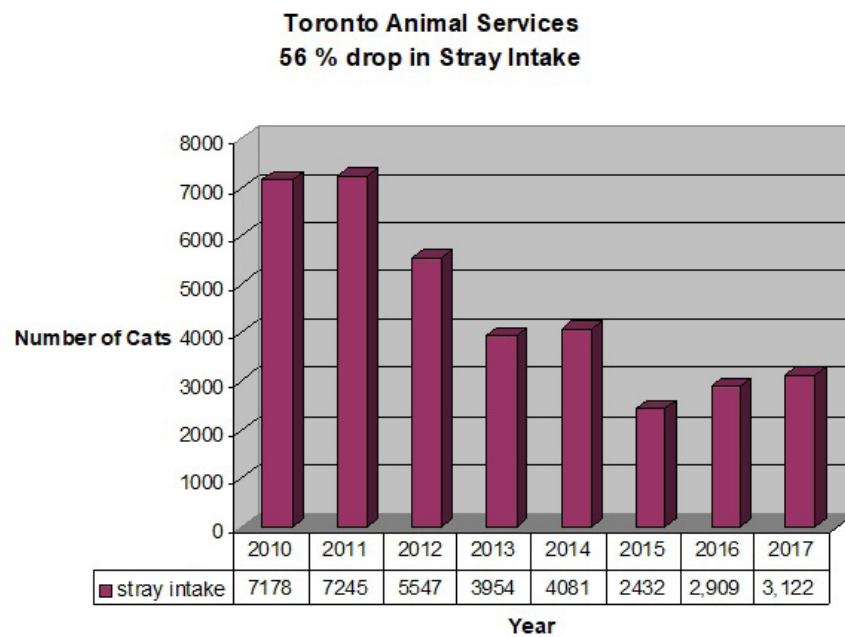
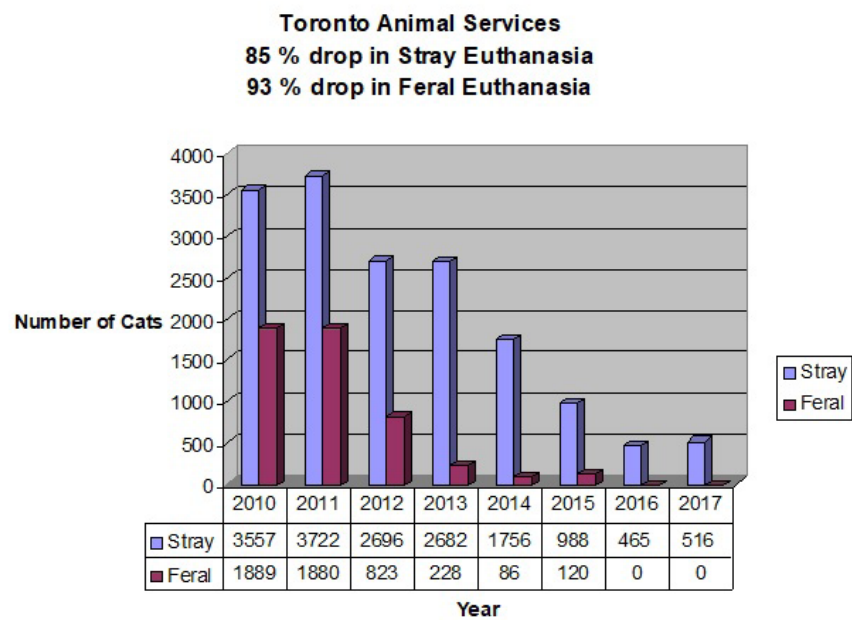


Figure 2



Appendix 2

*Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 349. Animals*¹⁷ was updated to include provisions for feral cats and TNR. Definitions added include:

FERAL CAT - A cat found in the City of Toronto that has no owner, is not socialized and is extremely fearful or resistant to humans.

FERAL CAT COLONY - A collective term, referring to a group of mostly or all feral cats in the City of Toronto that congregate as a unit.

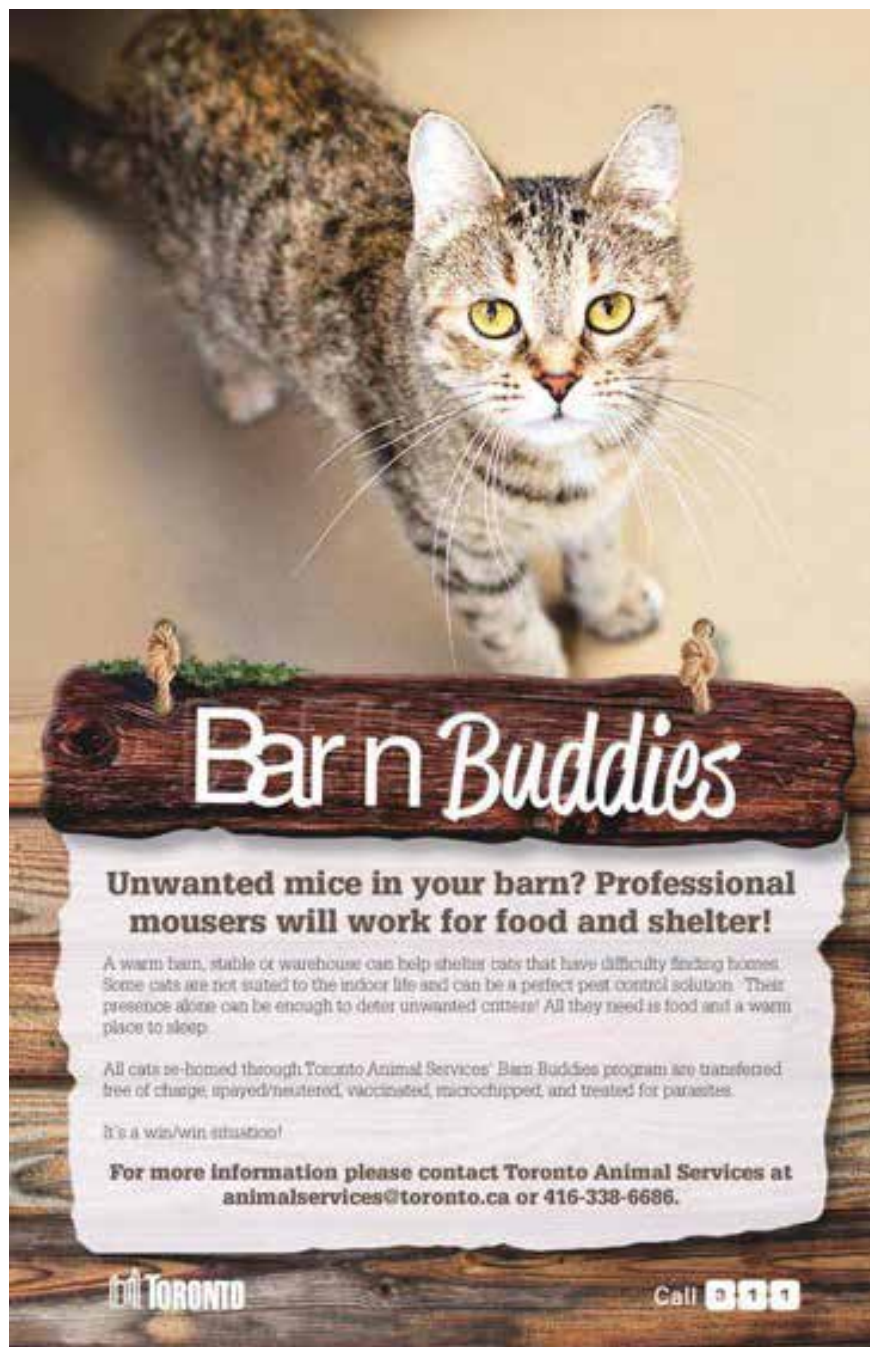
TRAP NEUTER RETURN PROGRAM -

A trap-neuter-return ("TNR") program that traps feral cats, sterilizes and attempts to return them to the locations where they were found.

¹⁷ http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_349.pdf

Appendix 3

Toronto Animal Services “Barn Buddies” program



Appendix 4

TORONTO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 349, ANIMALS

ARTICLE VI Feral Cats, Trap Neuter Return Program

§ 349-22. Feral Cats.

- A. The Executive Director may operate a trap, neuter, return program in respect of any feral cat or feral cat colony and maintain a record of the feral cat's sterilization.
- B. Any feral cat may be spayed or neutered by the Executive Director and subsequently released.
- C. Where, in the opinion of the Executive Director, a feral cat is injured or ill and should be euthanized without delay for humane reasons, the feral cat may be so euthanized.

ARTICLE VII Spay/Neuter Clinics

§ 349-23. Previously established clinics continued; supervision; requirements for spaying and neutering.

- A. Clinics established for spaying or neutering dogs and cats are referred to as "City Spay/Neuter Clinics".
- B. City Spay/Neuter Clinics shall be operated under the control and supervision of the Executive Director.
- C. Subject to § 349-22B, no dog or cat shall be spayed or neutered at a clinic unless:
 - (1) The dog or cat is owned by a resident of the City;
 - (2) The dog or cat is the property of the City; or
 - (3) The dog or cat has been adopted from a City animal centre.

§ 349-24. Fees.

- A. Where a dog or cat is spayed or neutered, a fee shall be paid to the Executive Director in advance of the spaying or neutering being performed in the amount specified in Chapter 441, Fees and Charges.
- B. Despite Subsection A, an additional fee in the amount specified in Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, payable in advance of redeeming the cat or dog may be charged if the spay or neuter surgery was complicated by the physical condition, including pregnancy, of the dog or cat.



Wildlife

Urban Wildlife Fact Sheet

What is urban wildlife?

This term refers to animals that live in cities and towns, and are not pets or farm animals. Common examples of urban wildlife in Toronto include rodents, pigeons, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, foxes, coyotes, rabbits, bats and opossums.

Does urban wildlife carry diseases?

Like any animal including pets, urban wildlife can carry diseases. Rarely do these diseases affect people. Usually close contact with the infected animal (such as a bite or living with the animal) or contact with their feces or urine is required for disease to be passed from wildlife to a person.

Which diseases in urban wildlife can be spread to people in Toronto?

There are very few documented cases of diseases spreading from wild animals to people in Toronto. The three most important conditions are discussed below.

Rabies is a viral infection of the brain and nervous system which is spread by the bite of an infected animal. Rabies has been eliminated from Toronto in all animals but bats. Treatment with vaccine after a bite from an infected animal is very effective in preventing illness from rabies. Even though bats found in Toronto test positive for rabies every year, the last person to get rabies in Toronto was in 1931.

Raccoon roundworm is an intestinal parasite found in raccoon feces that can cause a severe infection of the brain in people. This very rare disease affected one child in Toronto in 2005, and was the first known case of the disease in Canada. No other cases have been reported in Toronto.

Illnesses affecting the digestive system are common and have many different causes. Symptoms of this group of illnesses may consist of any combination of nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and diarrhea. Organisms found in wild animals (Salmonella, E. coli, Giardia, etc) are known to cause these kind of illnesses and are passed to people through animal feces usually through contaminated food or water. Hand washing, water treatment and proper food preparation are important ways to prevent getting sick from these organisms.

I have heard about distemper and mange. Can I get these illnesses?

These are common diseases in wild animals but are not a human health concern. Distemper has not been shown to cause illness in humans. Mange is caused by a tiny parasite similar to a tick called a mite. It can cause an itchy skin reaction in people usually after close contact with an infested pet. The rash goes away after contact with the infested animal is stopped since animal mites cannot survive long on people.

How do I prevent my family and myself from getting an illness from urban wildlife?

Our usual behaviours have made diseases from urban wildlife in people rare. Below are some important tips to take and remember:

- Let wild animals be wild - do not try to touch them, feed them or keep them as pets
- If you have a pet, vaccinate it against rabies
- Cover sandboxes so animals cannot use them as a bathroom
- Wash your hands thoroughly after coming in contact with a wild animal, pet or animal feces, and always before preparing or eating food

Appendix 6



Spay/Neuter Clinic for Feral Cats — Trap-Neuter -Return (TNR) Operating Practice

1. Toronto Animal Services (TAS) Spay/Neuter (S/N) Clinics will only accept feral cats for sterilization from a Colony Caretaker who is willing to take ownership for all the cats within a specified colony that is a) located within the boundaries of the City of Toronto, and b) registered with Toronto Animal Services.

The Caretaker must also undertake colony site visits with a TAS Animal Care and Control Officer (ACCO) to evaluate and assess the colony as required.

2. Only feral cats will be accepted into the clinic. If the cats are social and able to be handled easily we will not normally perform spay/neuter services and the cat will be released to the Caretaker unaltered. There may be some exceptions, for example – if the cat is socialized to people and well established as part of the feral cat colony and the Caretaker is unable to re-home it from the colony at that time, TAS will consider sterilizing it to ensure no future kittens are born into the colony.
3. The colony Caretaker must attend one of the Caretaker Colony Workshops workshops prior to the TAS Feral Cat S/N Clinic accepting cats from a particular colony.
4. Clinics will give priority to accepting cats from specific colonies where the majority of cats are trapped at the same time, and can be brought to the clinic over the fewest number of days. The goal is to sterilize entire colonies as quickly as possible. This method has been demonstrated to have the best measurable success. The positive impact should be to first stabilize the colony so that it does not increase in numbers, and secondly, to see a reduction in colony size to eventually no colony through attrition. This will also improve the quality of life for feral cats as well as reducing the number of cats placed in (and euthanized) in our shelters.
5. All feral cats will be ear-tipped as part of their sterilization procedure; this allows ease of identification once released. One centimeter is removed from the left ear tip in order to visibly identify an altered free-roaming cat to avoid future transport, stress and anesthesia. Kittens are ear-tipped proportionally less than one centimeter.
6. Cats must arrive at the clinic in approved traps (2-door Tomahawk traps or approved equivalent) at 8:30 am on the day of their scheduled appointment.

continued...

Appendix 6



Spay/Neuter Clinic for Feral Cats — Trap-Neuter -Return (TNR) Operating Practice

7. Two pounds or 900 g is the minimum weight for surgery. Kittens weighing less than two pounds will be returned without being sedated or altered.
8. All cats are scanned for microchips. If a microchip is found, the spay/neuter procedure will not be performed. We will attempt to contact the chip registrant and inform him/her of how the cat was transported to the clinic and how best to retrieve the cat. If we are unable to locate the chip registrant, the cat will be returned to the Caretaker unaltered.
9. All feral cats will be picked up from the TAS S/N clinic in their traps by their colony caretakers no later than 5:30pm on the same day as their surgery. Cats that are not picked up after surgery as directed will be considered abandoned and handled in accordance with TAS policies and procedures. (Limited exceptions: Any alternative arrangements must be agreed to by the TAS Veterinarian on duty that day.)
10. Euthanasia of feral cats presented to the clinic for sterilization will be considered in some circumstances. If the examining veterinarian believes a cat is suffering, determines that a cat is in very poor health, or believes that it is inhumane to return the cat to a free-roaming lifestyle, the cat will be considered surrendered to TAS and the cat may be euthanized under the direction of the Veterinarian and without contacting the colony caretaker first.
11. We reserve the right to refuse future services to any person who engages in any inappropriate treatment of staff, property or cats.
12. All practices are in place to insure the greatest safety for the cats while they are in the care of TAS.

Appendix 7

Toronto Animal Services “Stray Cat Script”, 2012

Cats are permitted to roam in the City and will only be picked up by Toronto Animal Services if the cat is injured and requires immediate medical assistance.

Due to the low owner redemption/claim rate (less than 10%) for cats, Animal Services suggests finders of healthy, social/friendly cats leave the cat where it was found, as the cat is likely owned by someone in the neighbourhood and will return home on its own.

Where the finder of a stray cat is concerned about the cat’s well-being, the cat can be brought to an Animal Centre, 7 days per week. Shelter staff will scan the cat for a microchip which may provide information on the registered owner, and will check our lost animal reports.

Outdoor cats

Outdoor cats live a life that is a mystery to their owners. Your outdoor cat will happily use the neighbour’s garden or lawn as a giant-sized litter box, causing a great deal of aggravation. Many are also breeding with other cats, increasing the already overwhelming population of unwanted, homeless cats. Outdoor cats are prone to getting lost and hundreds of cats die annually on the streets of Toronto, alone and unidentified. Searching for a lost cat, especially if it does not have a city registration tag as required by the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349 is a time consuming and often disappointing effort. Less than 10% of lost cats in Toronto are reunited with their owners.

It’s a fact that an indoor cat lives a longer, healthier life than that of an outdoor cat. An indoor cat never faces the dozens of dangers waiting outside your front door like cars, other cats waiting to fight or exposure to disease and parasites. Cats raised indoors are perfectly content with their world. Those that have experienced the outdoors will need some time to get used to being inside. A cat run in the backyard may be the initial step to help your outdoor cat learn to relax and enjoy the comforts of home.


Roaming cats

If you allow your cat to roam outside, you are still responsible for your cat’s actions. The City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 349, prohibits cat owners from allowing their cats to cause damage or nuisance to a neighbour’s property. This means that your cat should be kept indoors or supervised while outdoors so that you can be sure you are complying with the bylaw.

Complaints

If you wish to file a complaint about a cat that is a nuisance, contact Animal Services during their regular business hours to submit a service request. Animal Services will speak to the owner of the cat and inform them that their cat cannot be a nuisance to the neighbours. Animal Services will also ensure that the owner is complying with the cat licensing requirements.

Appendix 8

 Municipal Licensing and Standards Division		
STANDARD OPERATING and/or SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE		
FERAL CAT POLICY	Number	TAS-45
	Date Original	August 10, 2015
	Last Reviewed	
		Approved By:
Section	Toronto Animal Services	Manager, Animal Services

1. Purpose:

To provide direction to staff for the intake and disposition of feral cats.

2. Authority:

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349 Animals
Toronto Feral Cat Trap-Neuter-Return Coalition
Toronto Street Cats
Alley Cat Allies
Toronto Feral Cat Recovery Centre

3. General:

A **feral cat** is any cat that is too poorly socialized to be handled or placed into a typical pet home and must be trapped or sedated for examination. Feral cats are closer to being wildlife than pets. Any cat that is not confined to a house or another enclosure is considered to be free-roaming. Feral cats are a subpopulation of **free-roaming** cats. While free-roaming cats are generally the cause of cat-related problems in a given area, feral cats are usually blamed.

An **abandoned cat** is one who may be tame but does not currently have an owner and is free-roaming. **Stray cats** are currently or recently owned cats that may be lost from their homes. They are usually well socialized initially but over time may become feral.

“When feral or free-roaming cat populations are significant enough to generate complaints in a community, a local, state or municipal agency will be tasked with responding. An agency’s or organization’s response will depend on the local ordinances; the resources available; the sophistication of the community regarding cats; the proportions of feral, socialized, and owned free-roaming cats; and the nature of the complaint.

There traditionally have been four approaches to feral cats:

1. Trap, remove and euthanize
2. Trap, remove and relocate to a new colony or place in a sanctuary
3. Trap, neuter and return (TNR) feral cats to the original site (or the more complete management option, TTVAR-M – Trap, test, vaccinate, alter, return and monitor or manage)
4. Wait and See

Appendix 8

Socialized un-owned cats may be placed in various settings for adoption or may be euthanized in any of these scenarios. Owned free-roaming cats can only be reunited with their owners if they have identification, or if they are held in a shelter or otherwise made available for their owners to find them." (*Community Approaches to Feral Cats*, Margaret R. Slater, DVM)

In order for Toronto Animal Services to take an approach other than intake and euthanasia of feral cats, there needs to be political and community support as well resources.

4. Procedure:

Feral cats admitted to Toronto Animal Services that are deemed healthy by a TAS VETERINARIAN will be sterilized, ear tipped, vaccinated, administered topical anti-parasitic medication and microchipped as soon as possible after entry. Once recovered, they should be returned to their location of origin, or if necessary, relocated to an appropriate site. Refer to the Feral Cat Intake Decision Chain for guidance.

A. INTAKE OF A POTENTIAL FERAL CAT

1. When a potential feral cat is brought into the shelter, the ACCO shall:
 - a. Assess the cat on entry and ensure that it is a feral cat:
 - Arrives in a trap
 - Unsocial and/or unable to handle
 - Check for ear tip
 - Note any obvious injuries or illness
 - b. Obtain as much information as possible about the cat from the Finder:
 - How long has the Finder seen this cat around their residence?
 - Is the Finder the feeder?
 - How were they able to capture the cat – by knowing if a trap was required, will help to determine if the cat can be handled or not
 - What is the exact location where the cat was trapped? – it may be different from the Finder's address and will be required if TAS Staff are returning the cat to the location of origin.
 - Have they been trapping cats on a regular basis on their property? If so, have they brought cats to the animal shelter before? Search the records to see if cats were brought in previously by this individual. If so, were the other cats feral/redeemed/put up for adoption et cetera.
 - What type of behavior has the finder observed in this cat? Was the cat approachable before – could anyone get near the cat when it was out wandering around

B. DISCUSSING TNR OPTIONS WITH THE FINDER

Discuss the Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program with the Finder when the cat has been assessed to be feral whether not an ear tip is evident. Determine if they are willing/able to care for the cat as an outdoor cat.

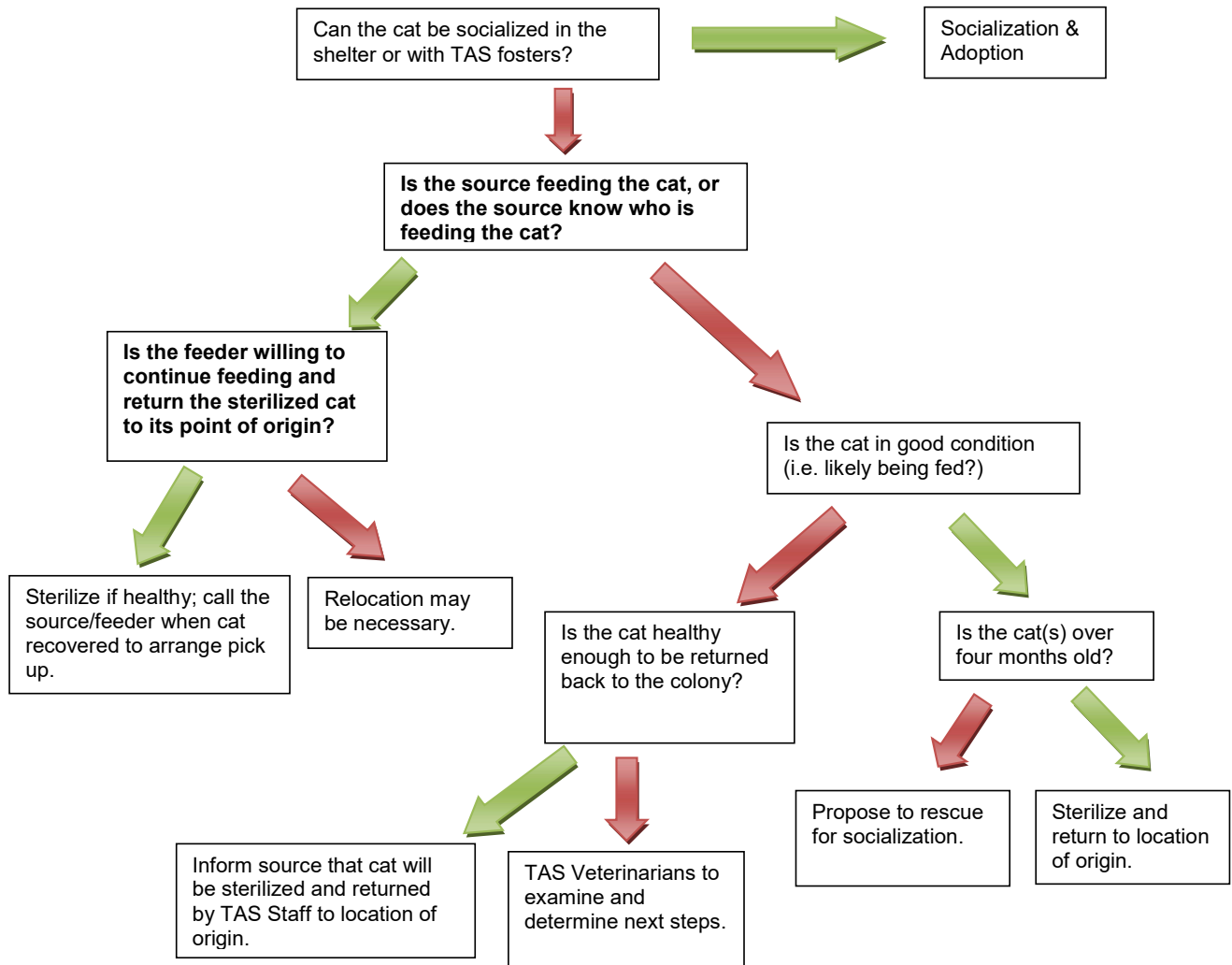
1. If the Finder is willing:
 - a. Proceed with TNR and have them register the cat or colony. Send the completed Registration Form (fax or scan) to the Spay/Neuter Clinic CLERK.

Appendix 8

- b. Once the cat has been sterilized, contact the Finder to retrieve the cat post sterilization +/- recovery. TAS can provide 1-2 days recovery space for the cat if needed.
 - c. The Finder will return the cat to its location of origin and continue to care for the cat. Outdoor shelters may be provided if necessary.
 2. If the Finder is unwilling or unable to help:
 - a. Ensure that the exact location where the cat was trapped is recorded in Chameleon so that the cat can be returned to the correct location
 - b. Arrange with the Spay/Neuter clinic to have the cat sterilized at the next clinic for your Region.
 - c. Make arrangements with the ACCO1 for transport back to the location of origin. Transport can occur 24 hours post-op for males, and 48 hours post-op for females. Times may vary based on circumstances, such as surgery requirements, environmental conditions et cetera.
 - d. If relocation of the cat is required, discuss with shelter MANAGEMENT.
 3. Ensure that all notes are recorded in Chameleon including those relating to the conversation between STAFF and Finder.
- C. PREPARING A FERAL CAT FOR TNR
 1. Inform the TAS VETERINARIAN, the Spay/Neuter Clinic CLERK, and the Spay/Neuter ACCO1 that there is a potential feral cat requiring TNR or that an ear-tipped feral cat has been brought into the shelter. Where necessary, the cat should be sterilized at the next scheduled clinic at the Region to ensure that the cat is returned to its location of origin as soon as possible to minimize stress and disease.
 2. If the cat is healthy it will be sterilized, ear tipped, vaccinated; administered topical anti-parasitic medication and microchipped.
 3. If the cat is not scheduled to undergo sterilization that day, set up the cat in the feral cat room, with feral cat den, blanket inside the den, food, water, litter pan with litter.
- D. OTHER SCENARIOS
 1. If the cat is a kitten that is of an age where it can be socialized (eight to 12 weeks old), staff shall advise shelter MANAGEMENT and the kitten will undergo an adoption assessment process.
 2. A cat may be euthanized prior to the end of the redemption period should the TAS VETERINARIAN determine that the cat is unhealthy, injured or poses a potential threat to the public if released.

Appendix 8

Feral Cat Intake Decision Chain



NO



YES



- Questions bolded must be asked of source on intake
- Kittens less than 800 g ARE NOT eligible for sterilization and must be transferred or fostered until they meet TAS criteria for sterilization

Appendix 8

Toronto Animal Services East Spay/Neuter Clinic Feral Cat TNR Registration Form

Prior to registration please read the Operating Practice, Consent and Waiver and the Post-Op Instructions documents to ensure that your feral cat colony meets the required clinic criteria.

Please send completed form via fax to: 416-338-6282

For more information please call: 416-338-6281

Caretaker Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone # - Home / Cell: _____

Work: _____

Colony Name and Location: _____

Approx # of cats in colony: _____

Approx # of cats spayed/neutered: _____

How many cats in your colony seem to be socialized (i.e. not true feral)? _____

How long have you been a caretaker for this colony? _____

How many times a week do you feed and monitor this colony? _____

Are you experienced and comfortable with TNR practices? _____

If yes – approximately how many cats have you TNR'd? _____

If no – what training have you done to prepare for your first TNR effort? _____

Have you taken the TNR workshop provided by Community Cats Toronto? _____

If yes please give date taken: _____

Are you comfortable with mass trapping of feral cats? _____

What is the maximum number of cats you could trap and bring to the clinic on a given surgery

Created on January 23, 2011

Appendix 8



Operating Practice: Spay/Neuter Clinic for Feral Cats (Trap-Neuter-Release)

Location: Toronto Animal Services (TAS) East Spay/Neuter Clinic

1. TAS East Spay Neuter ("S/N") Clinic will only accept feral cats for sterilization if a colony caretaker is identified for the colony and taking ownership of the cats as part of the colony, a cat is from a feral cat colony registered with Toronto Animal Services, and the colony is located within the boundaries of the City of Toronto. The caretaker agrees to meet with a TAS Animal Care and Control Officer at the colony site so the colony can be viewed and their condition assessed prior to scheduling an appointment for spay/neuter surgery.
2. Only feral cats will be accepted into the clinic. If the cats are social and able to be handled easily we will not normally perform spay/neuter services and the cat will be released to the Caretaker unaltered. (Some exceptions – if the cat is socialized to people and well established as part of the feral cat colony and the caretaker is unable to rehome it from the colony at that time, TAS will consider sterilizing it to ensure no future kittens are born into the colony)
3. The colony caretaker must attend one of the Toronto Feral Cat Project Trap Neuter Release (TNR) Workshops prior to TAS Feral Cat S/N Clinic accepting cats from a particular colony.
4. TAS East S/N Clinic will give priority to accepting cats from specific colonies where the majority of cats from that colony are trapped at the same time and can be brought to the clinic over the fewest number of days. The goal is to sterilize 3 entire colonies by the end of three surgical days. This method has been demonstrated to have the best measurable success. The positive impact should be to first stabilize the colony so that it does not increase in numbers and secondly see a reduction in size to eventually no colony though attrition. We also believe that this will improve the quality of life for feral cats as well as reducing the number of cats placed in and euthanized in our shelters.
5. All feral cats will be ear tipped as part of their sterilization procedure; this allows ease of identification once released. One centimeter is removed from the left ear tip in order to visibly identify an altered free-roaming cat to avoid future transport, stress and anesthesia. Kittens are ear tipped proportionally less than one centimeter.
6. Cats must arrive at the clinic in approved traps (2 door Tomahawk traps or approved equivalent) at 8:30am on the day of their scheduled appointment.
7. Two pounds or 900 g is the minimum weight for surgery. Kittens weighing less than 2 pounds will be returned without being sedated or altered.
8. All cats are scanned for microchips. If a microchip is found, the spay/neuter procedure will not be performed. We will attempt to contact the chip registrant and inform him/her how the cat was transported to the clinic and how best to retrieve the cat. If we are unable to locate the chip registrant, the cat will be returned to the caretaker unaltered.
9. All feral cats will be picked up from the TAS East S/N clinic in their traps by their colony caretakers at 5:30pm on the same day as their surgery. Cats that are not picked up after surgery as directed will be considered abandoned and handled in accordance with TAS policies and procedures. (Limited exceptions: Any alternative arrangements must be agreed to by the TAS Veterinarian on duty that day.)
10. Euthanasia of feral cats presented to the clinic for sterilization will be considered in some circumstances. If the examining veterinarian believes a cat is suffering, determines that a cat is in very poor health, or believes that it is inhumane to return the cat to a free-roaming lifestyle, the cat will be considered surrendered to TAS and the cat may be euthanized under the direction of the Veterinarian and without contacting the colony caretaker first.
11. We reserve the right to refuse future services to any person who engages in any inappropriate treatment of staff, property or cats.
12. All practices are in place to insure the greatest safety for the cats while they are in the care of TAS.

Appendix 8



Toronto Animal Services (TAS) East Spay/Neuter Clinic Post-Operative Information and Instructions for Feral Cats

1. KEEP THE CAT WARM UNTIL FULLY AWAKE!

Keep the carrier or trap in a warm, dry, draft-free and sheltered area where you can check on it frequently. Cats that are not fully recovered from anesthesia are at risk of hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature) **which could make the cat become re-anesthetized and perhaps die.** While the cat is still drowsy, keep the carrier or trap in a room that is as warm as possible, ideally near 85° F. A cat's normal body temperature is 100° F; it can become chilled in a 70° F room before the anesthesia wears off. When the anesthesia has worn off and the cat is fully awake, it can keep itself warm in a cooler environment. Cover the cage or trap with sheets, towels or blankets to trap warm air and preserve body heat. If the cage or trap is on a cold floor (example: garage,) place a thick towel or blanket under AND over it to maintain the warmth and heat. Make sure there is ample ventilation in hot weather, so the cat does not overheat.

2. Water and food

If the cat is alert and you have safe access, provide water in a way that won't spill and get the bedding wet. The cat does not need water if it is eating canned food. For cats over 4 pounds: Provide canned food when the cat is fully awake. For cats/kittens less than 4 pounds: Provide a small amount (1 tablespoon) of canned food as soon as the cat is awake enough to eat safely. Provide additional canned food (approximately 1/2 the amount of a normal meal) 2 or 3 hours later. The morning following surgery, cats should be offered a regular sized meal of canned food twice daily while confined in the trap or cage prior to release (see section 5 below).

3. Normal surgery reactions

Eartips: Following an eartip, bleeding is expected.

Males: Expect slight bleeding from the scrotum of a neutered male for the first 24 hours. Larger toms may have more significant bleeding but should not require treatment.

Females: Many female cats develop a **sterile suture reaction**. This appears as a bump at the incision site DAYS after surgery. Suture reactions are sterile and do not require antibiotic treatment. The reaction is caused by the body breakdown/resorbing the absorbable suture. This is a necessary and expected result of absorbable suture, which we use so that external suture does not have to be removed after the skin heals. Cats with suture reactions feel well, play, eat and otherwise appear normal.

4. Safely observe the cat for the following problems:

- Failure to stay awake.
- Difficult breathing.
- Slow recovery. The cat should be able to move around 4 hours following surgery.
- Excessive bleeding from the incision (below the tail for males, on the belly for females.)
- Any abnormalities (swelling, redness, discharge) at the incision site. (see section 3 above for exception.)

If the cat develops these or any other problems that might be related to surgery, please seek veterinary attention first. Then call Toronto Animal Services to notify us that there has been a problem. It is important for the cat's health and our records/protocol that we learn of any problems as soon as possible.

5. Safe release

Unless otherwise instructed or noted on the medical record, cat(s) that are recovering without any of the problems listed section 4, can be released back to their colony location from the trap or crate 24-48 hours following surgery. If the medical record indicates the cat is lactating, she should be released sooner, but **ONLY** when she is fully awake, moving around easily and showing normal behavior. Cats can cause injury or damage to themselves, to you, or to your property if released while still under the effects of anesthesia due to impaired coordination.

CAT(S) #

Created on July 22, 2010

Appendix 8



CAT(S) #

Toronto Animal Services East Spay/Neuter Clinic Consent and Waiver:

I, the undersigned authorize the veterinarians at the Toronto Animal Services (TAS) East Spay/Neuter Clinic to perform feral cat surgical spay/neuter surgery on the above named cats (the "Cat(s)"). I am the Caretaker for the Cat(s), I have read and understand and agree to comply with the TAS East Spay/Neuter (S/N) Clinic Policies for Feral Cats and the TAS East S/N Clinic Post-Operative Information and Instructions for Feral Cats and have had the opportunity to ask questions concerning anything that I do not understand.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the Cat(s) have not bitten anyone in the preceding 10 days.

I understand and accept that there are risks inherent to anesthesia and S/N surgery for the Cat(s), particularly if the Cat(s) are pregnant, in heat, injured, sick, and/or have no medical history available. I understand that the Cat(s) do not undergo a preanesthetic evaluation by a veterinarian. I understand that these risks could complicate the Cat(s)' recovery and/or survival from anesthesia and/or S/N surgery.

I understand and agree that a TAS veterinarian, in his or her discretion, may euthanize any of the Cat(s) without contacting me if a Cat experiences a serious adverse reaction to anesthesia and /or complications during S/N surgery, or is deemed by the TAS veterinarian to be seriously ill, seriously injured, or unlikely to humanely survive if released to a free roaming lifestyle following S/N surgery.

I release and agree to hold harmless and forever discharge the City of Toronto, its agents, employees and servants from any liability whatsoever which may arise as a result of the S/N surgery performed on the Cat(s) and/or any related complications.

I have read and understand this consent and waiver.

Caretaker Name (print)

_____/_____/_____
Surgery Date

Organization

Phone#1

Phone#2

Address

Email Address

City, Province, Postal Code

Caretaker Name (signature)

Witness Name (print)

Witness Name (signature)

Updated January 23, 2011