

What we can do – and what we can't do to help you

We can

- Provide you with copies of this brochure to give to your neighbours so that they better understand the issues.
- Provide a workshop to teach you how to manage the feral cat population on your street. Visit communitycats.ca to register today.
- Offer you the websites and email links listed below where you can find more information about feral cats and how to live with them.
- Suggest that you read and copy the brochure "How to deal with cats in your neighbourhood" found at www.alleycat.org. The site contains comprehensive information about feral cats.
- Visit www.communitycats.ca to learn more and to register for a course.
- Arrange the loan of traps so that you can take feral cats to free spay/neuter clinics.
- Offer free spay/neuter operations as well as vaccinations and a health check for each cat.
- Provide a recovery space where sterilized cats can spend a few days following surgery before being returned to their colony.
- Offer donated cat food for ferals when available.

We can't

- Get rid of the "problem" of feral cats in your neighbourhood.
- Re-locate colonies to another neighbourhood.
- Offer feral cats for adoption. (After they're more than eight weeks old, they generally can't be socialized to live with humans).
- Trap feral cats and transport them to and from clinics and the recovery centre.

For more information about feral cats

Animal Alliance of Canada:
animalalliance.ca

Community Cats Toronto (courses & information):
communitycats.ca

Toronto Animal Services (TNR clinics): linked from
toronto.ca

Toronto Feral Cat Coalition:
torontoferalcatcoalition.ca

Toronto Humane Society TNR clinics:
torontohumanesociety.com/what-we-do/trap-neuter-return

Toronto Street Cats (TNR clinics):
torontostreetcats.com

OSPICA:
ontariospca.ca

Toronto Cat Rescue:
torontocatrescue.ca

Annex Cat Rescue:
annexcatrescue.ca



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Neighbours talk about feral cats



"The first thing to understand about feral cats is that they are not native to North America" says Kali, a Toronto homeowner.

"The first cats probably came aboard ships from Europe where they were kept on board to control the rats and mice. When the voyages ended at our shores, some of these working cats became household pets. Some escaped, some were abandoned or lost to form the basis of today's population of feral cats. And today, many feral cats are the direct result of people abandoning pets or letting them roam free and reproduce."

It's ironic that feral cats today perform much the same function that their ancestors did. They control the population of rats and mice in our neighbourhoods. Those who oppose feral cats should realize that without them, there's little doubt that we would have an even greater problem – rats and mice that can spread disease.

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How can we control the population of feral cats?



Cats are very efficient at reproduction unless they are spayed or neutered. Fortunately, you have neighbours (known as colony caretakers) who

devote their own time and money to improving the lives of feral cats which helps control the feral cat population. They do this by practicing TNR – which stands for Trap, Neuter, and Return. They trap the cats and take them to a spay/neuter clinic where they're sterilized, vaccinated, are given a health check-up, and have a tip removed from one ear to identify them as having been spayed or neutered. They are then returned to their colony.

The sterilization of feral cats reduces nuisance behaviour and roaming in feral cats and leads to fewer complaints to Animal Services.

The TNR program has been proven to be the most effective way of controlling the population of feral cats in North America. Feral colony caretakers are offered a course on TNR that is conducted by Community Cats Toronto and is open to the public. The course is designed to help them more effectively look after feral cats.

Feral cats are not socialized to people and cannot be adopted. However, feral kittens, if trapped at an early age, can be taken to the Toronto Humane Society, Toronto Animal Services, or any cat rescue group where they can be adopted out as household pets. This also helps to control the population of feral cats.

Doesn't feeding attract more cats?



their own shelter and food sources such as rats and mice and congregate where they find them. It's important to understand that the cats were in the neighbourhood before anyone fed them. Feeding them merely helps to make their lives easier. It doesn't attract more cats and is not responsible for the feral cats being in the neighbourhood. In fact, if your neighbour practices TNR, the population of feral cats actually decreases.

Feeding bans and a trap/euthanize approach simply will not work and are not socially acceptable policies in a city like Toronto. When cats are removed from a location, new cats move in or survivors breed to capacity. This vacuum effect is well-documented.



pollution and cars. It is our responsibility to treat all animals humanely, especially when the issues they face are human created (including not spaying/neutering cats).

A common myth about feral cats is that they congregate where people feed them. In fact, like all animals, the cats find

But aren't they dirty?



Colony caretakers often take feral cats to a veterinarian where their health needs are looked after. This

reduces health risks to humans – which are small because cats have very low rates of disease.

Feral cats are, in fact, cleaner than dogs. They produce no more fecal waste than raccoons, possums, rats, mice and other wild animals. With feral cats there are ways of managing their fecal waste. If you'd like to learn more about deterring cats from digging in your yard, visit www.alleycatallies.org and read *How to Live With Cats in Your Neighborhood*.

The bottom line...

The City of Toronto saves tax dollars thanks to volunteers who sterilize and care for stray and feral cat colonies. The City of Toronto supports TNR.

Feral cats are the direct result of people abandoning their unaltered cats or permitting them to roam. The reality is that feral cats are here to stay and that the best option for us as members of the community that we share with them is to learn to live with them as best we can.

Please note that harming or killing feral cats is against anti-cruelty laws in Ontario and law-breakers are vigorously pursued. Not only are the laws enforced, but animal rescue groups and activists are relentless in pursuing and heaping public scorn on anyone who kills or injures feral cats.