



The **TNR*** **MANUAL**

*Trap, Neuter and Return



Click on this link to see the video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIIO4ulg2ak



Click on this link to see the video *Compassion in Action*:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_MNoBaSv2U

The TNR* MANUAL

*Trap, Neuter and Return

The purpose of this document is to help interested groups to establish a TNR program in their communities. The information in it comes from a variety of sources, most of which can be found on the Internet. We are grateful to those who have provided it for the benefit of others who care about the quality of life of feral cats.

CONTENTS

I What is TNR

- I Arguments for TNR
- I Spaying pregnant cats
- I Goals of TNR Coalition
- 2 Web resources with information about TNR
- 2 Jobs for Volunteers
- 2 How others can help
- 3 Structure for a TNR Coalition

4 Building your Coalition: A Step-by-Step Guide

- 5 Items to consider for the agenda at your first Coalition meeting

7 Shelter-building Workshops

8 The Colony Caretaker Group

10 The Procuring and Distributing Donated Cat Food Team

11 Feral Cat Advocacy

- 11 Educating Your Municipality
 - 11 Finding By-Laws
 - 11 Approaching Council
 - 12 The Solution
 - 12 Case Study: Toronto Feral Cat Coalition
- 15 Documents that may be of use to new groups



What is TNR?

TNR involves trapping, vaccinating, spaying or neutering, and ear-tipping cats (to identify them as sterilized). Cats are then returned to their colonies where they are fed and monitored daily by volunteer colony caretakers. A TNR Coalition also endeavours to provide shelters for the cats, particularly in winter. Whenever possible young kittens and socialized adults are rescued from the streets are offered for adoption.

Arguments for TNR

Excerpts from a March, 2012 article by Dr. Hanna Booth of the Toronto Feral Cat TNR Coalition. “Communities throughout Canada share an immense feral cat over-population problem. Many thousands of healthy, adoptable cats are euthanized every year because we simply don’t have enough homes for them all. Euthanasia due to homelessness is the largest cause of death in cats. An estimated 80% of kittens are born from feral mothers; and every kitten born is competing for adoption against cats already in the shelter system.”

It is a well-researched fact that approximately 75 percent of the kittens born on the streets die before they reach the age of six months.

Imagine being a struggling street cat trying to find your next meal to supply nutrients to your gestating or nursing kittens, and then watching as three out of four of them die as a result of the harsh realities of life on the street.

Spaying pregnant cats

An often controversial aspect of a TNR program is spaying a feral cat who is pregnant. Consider the choices. If you release it to give birth to the litter and try to re-trap it and all its kittens at a later date, you’ll soon discover that it’s difficult to trap a cat for a second time – even providing that you will still have tabs on the cat and kittens a few months later.

Anyone familiar with feral cats knows how stressed they are during periods of confinement. They also know that to try to keep the cat confined for the gestation and lactating period – which may be up to four months – just isn’t a viable option.

Goals of TNR Coalition

Of course, a local TNR coalition will decide for itself, based on its resources and volunteers, which of these goals is desirable and attainable, according to the needs of the community.

Potential goals include:

- Establishing a free or low cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Conducting a public awareness campaign.
- Establishing communications between feral cat colony caretakers.
- Organizing a kitten foster/ socialization program.
- Establishing a work group to build overwintering shelters and to teach others to build shelters.
- Procuring donations of cat food and distributing it to colony caretakers.

Web resources with information about TNR

The following web sites contain information which may be useful to anyone interested in forming a TNR Coalition:

www.torontostreetcats.com
www.feraltoronto.com
www.alleycat.org – nation-wide advocacy group in U.S.
www.neighborhoodcats.com – feral cat project in New York City.
www.urbancatleague.org – another NYC group.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=111O4ulg2ak
www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_MNoBaSv2U
www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/nc_tnr_handbook_04.pdf

www.youtube.com/watch?v=crsiHNK4Ya8-
Step-by-step demonstration of building a shelter.

Jobs for Volunteers

There are many different tasks that are required to run a successful TNR Coalition. Volunteers are needed to:

- Trap, transport and recover spayed/ neutered cats.
- Foster/socialize feral kittens.
- Conduct public awareness seminars about TNR.
- Join efforts to feed/monitor feral colonies.
- Solicit funds and materials for the Coalition.
- Build shelters for feral cats.
- Build a contact list and mailing list of volunteers.
- Document the formation of the group in words and images.
- Procure donations of cat food and distribute it to colony caretakers.

How others can help

People or organizations who cannot volunteer can assist by:

- Donating funds or supplies and materials for a clinic.
- Donating funds, cat food, or materials to build shelters for feral cats.
- Inviting a speaker from the TNR Coalition to a meeting.

Structure for a TNR Coalition

There are four basic work groups within a Coalition. Details of their tasks are listed below.

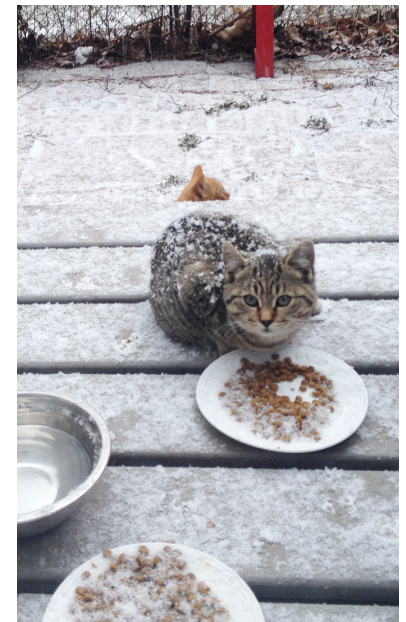
- 1 The spay/neuter clinic group.
- 2 The colony caretakers group.
- 3 The shelter-building group – with a sub-group that looks after seeking donations of materials.
- 4 The food procurement and distribution group.

1 The spay/neuter group organizes all aspects of the clinics including: locating clinic space; recruiting volunteers, including veterinarians; securing needed instruments and medical supplies; communications with colony caretakers who have cats to be neutered; transport and recovery of spayed/neutered cats. For information on how to set up a spay/neuter clinic, visit www.feralcatproject.org/ocm/ocm.aspx.

2 The colony caretaker group organizes the work and requirements of colony caretakers including: courses for new caretaker volunteers; communications among caretakers; sharing information and materials such as straw, donated food, etc. For more information on this aspect of our work go to www.feraltoronto.com.

3 The shelter-building group solicits tools and materials to be used; recruits volunteers; trains volunteers in building; conducts workshops to build overwintering shelters; processes requests for shelters; stores and distributes completed shelters; receives and receipts donations for shelters. The contact link for more information on this aspect of our work is tnrths@gmail.com

4 The food procurement and distribution team solicits, transports, and distributes donated cat food to colony caretakers. More information about this group can be obtained from tnrths@gmail.com.



Building your Coalition: A Step-by-Step Guide

1. As in a game of tag – “You’re it”! You’re the person with the idea. Now the challenge is to bring others on board and get them to work together towards a common goal – a community project designed to improve the lives of street cats.

2. Now you’ve got to decide on an interim name for your group. We suggest “Yourtown Street Cats”.

3. Next you need a way to communicate with others who’ll help. We suggest that you use Google’s gmail because it has e-mail, contacts, and a documents section – which lets you store documents you create (or borrow) in cyberspace where they can be shared with others in your group. You should also have a phone number for people who don’t have ready access to e-mail.

4. Now you need a very brief description of your project – an “ad” designed to fire up the imaginations of others who’ll help. Use your own words and information from page one of this document.

5. At this point, organizing your project is like tossing a pebble into a lake. You start with the pebble (remember – “You’re it!”). You toss the pebble into the lake (kerplunk!) and you watch the ripples flow out

from it. In other words, you look around your circle of friends and your community to see who your potential allies might be.

6. Conferring with these few new allies, set a date, time and location for an inaugural meeting. We suggest a time early on a Saturday afternoon, as this will likely be the time for project work groups to meet in the future.

7. Now you need to use all of your collective contacts to get the word out. Use e-mail, social media, free classified ads, notices on bulletin boards, and any other way you can think of to let people know that the meeting will take place and the purpose of the meeting – to build your Coalition. The notice should contain the email address and a phone number where people can contact your group.

8. The next step is to plan your meeting. Don’t try to build Rome in a day, but set yourself a few achievable goals. The first goal is to outline for people the idea behind the project and your goals for the meeting. This should be done with the enthusiasm needed to engage them in the project. An important goal is to collect the names & all contact information for everyone

who attends. Another is to ask each person how they came to be there and what interest they have that brought them to the meeting. Ask each person to provide the names and contact information of others who they know who might be interested in helping. (Remember the ripples in the pond?)

9. After a general discussion with questions and answers about the project, ask people to identify which of the four work groups (outlined above) they’d like to work with. Emphasize that you’re not looking for a lifetime commitment from them. You just want their help in getting the project off the ground.

10. At the conclusion of your meeting, make a collective decision as to where and when you need to meet again. Congratulate those in attendance on their contribution to the project and end on a positive note.

11. End your meeting after a maximum of two hours. Running a long meeting that drags on for hours is one way to make sure that people don’t come to another.

Items to consider for the agenda at your first Coalition meeting:

Naming your organization – a name if one of the first things you’ll need. Make this naming a group exercise so that as many people

as possible will feel a sense of ownership of the project.

Getting the word out – consider ways to get your project known in the community so that you can recruit volunteers, find donations and sponsors. Find someone with contacts in the media and skills at drafting media releases and articles.

Documenting your project – do you have a member or a friend who could video the process of establishing your coalition? Video can be very useful in informing the public and potential donors of your project. It can also help to get publicity for your project, and to help volunteers and potential volunteers understand your goals. Documenting your experience could help other communities to establish their own projects.

Decide on a spokesperson – confusion and misunderstandings arise when a group has more than one person speaking in public or in the media on behalf of the organization. Designate one person for this job and ask all others to refer questions to that person. Others can be designated to speak for the group on specific topics.

Compile a calendar – pool your knowledge and list all the upcoming community events. Consider how your group might participate to become better known and to recruit

volunteers. Building the calendar can also help people feel a sense of ownership of the organization.

Build a web site – it doesn't have to be fancy, but it's important to get something up as soon as you've chosen a name for your group. There are plenty of young people who can build it for you – and earn community service hours in doing it. They can also get you started with Facebook and other social media. On your site, list your needs – financial, materials, equipment, furniture, tools and work space - and list the tasks available for prospective volunteers.

Communications – consider a virtual phone line. This is a line in a Bell office that doesn't ring and doesn't have to be answered. Subscribe to "call answer" and have a volunteer monitor the line daily for messages. Once your project has a name, establish an e-mail account. We've found that gmail is the most versatile and best meets our needs.

Seek a Donations Coordinator – look for someone with fund-raising experience who can write and submit grant proposals for your group and can approach service clubs and businesses for material and/or financial support. They may be willing to fund your start-up or give ongoing financial support.

Charitable status – one of the first questions you'll get from prospective donors is "will I get a tax receipt?" Do you want to pursue charitable status? Is there an animal help organization in the community that you could "piggyback" on, in order to provide charitable tax receipts to donors?

Structure, constitution & by-laws – although this doesn't have to be dealt with in your embryonic stage, it's something to consider for the future. Maybe there's a volunteer among you who has related experience. Check with other organizations for their experience.

Now that you're started...give people something to do. You might want to start by building shelters. It's something that can be done quickly by a small number of people and it has positive results – shelters that will keep feral cats warm and dry. Nothing succeeds like success, and you can use a successful shelter-building workshop to build upon. But first, let's look at how to organize a shelter-building workshop.

Shelter-building Workshops

As outlined on page 3, the shelter-building group solicits tools and materials to be used; recruits volunteers; trains volunteers in building; conducts workshop to build shelters; processes requests for shelters; stores and distributes completed shelters; receives and receipts donations for shelters.

The tools you need can be found in almost any home workshop. You need:

- several large box cutters
- a yard stick (or meter stick, depending on your generation!)
- large scissors
- a gun for applying adhesive

The materials you need can be purchased at a Home Depot or similar store. These stores generally have a budget for charitable donations, and they should be asked. (You'll need a letter outlining your project.) Some of the materials can be donated by individuals. Some may be found as left-overs from a DYI or home improvement project.



The materials include:

- plastic tote bins (72-liter capacity or larger)
- durofoam insulation (4x8 sheets). This is styrofoam with a foil backing on one side.
- plastic drainage pipe. From Armtec in Orangeville, and available at TSC Farm Supply. (6" inside diameter.)
- gorilla tape (2" wide duct tape on steroids!)
- duct tape
- tubes of adhesive. Bull-grip or PL200
- bales of straw (not hay)
- rolls of Reflectix insulation (bubble-wrap with foil sides). Used only when durofoam not available.

Instructions on building shelters can be found in a Word document entitled "Shelter building tasks.doc". The document is available from Toronto Street Cats. Request it by e-mail to tnrths@gmail.com. Video showing shelter-building can be seen at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BD80hXf0Ig

Further information and documents related to shelter-building can be obtained at www.torontostreetcats.com.

The Colony Caretakers Group

As previously noted, the colony caretakers group organizes the work and requirements of colony caretakers including: courses for new volunteers; communications among caretakers; sharing information and materials such as straw, donated food, etc.

1. Organizing this group is a natural outflow from the shelter-building workshop. Once you've built the shelters you have to figure out who needs them and where they'll place them. In fact, you'll no doubt have identified one or two colony caretakers in forming your Coalition. They're people who have been quietly working with colonies of feral cats – some for years. No doubt they'll have already made links with one another to share information and resources. Building this work group is just a formalization and expansion of this network.

2. Start the process by interviewing

everyone who has shown an interest in your project. Ask them for any information they may have about people who have been caring for cats in any way in your community. Gather names and e-mail addresses of these people and e-mail them asking them to identify others who are cat activists in the community.

3. Once you've identified as many of these colony caretakers as you can, e-mail them with a brief explanation of your project and invite them to come to a brief meeting to discuss ways that they can help each other with their work.

4. At this meeting, collect as much contact information as you can from those in attendance. Provide them with Shelter Tips.doc and refer them to the web site (www.feraltoronto.com/en/) for colony caretakers in Toronto. You can also refer them to the other web sites listed in this document. All of these resources will

provide them with useful information. Your goal for this meeting will be to compile a list of colony caretakers in the community along with the location of their colonies. You can also use this opportunity to learn which of them needs shelters, how many they need, and where they will locate the shelters.

5. This meeting can also be used to learn what kinds of assistance caretakers need and to work out a game plan as to how the group can perhaps meet those needs. It is hoped that the meeting will identify a leader for the work group – a person who will coordinate communications among members of the work group and will speak for the work group when meetings require this.

6. One of the skills that need to be developed among colony caretakers is trapping their cats so that they can be spayed/neutered. Some among your group will likely have these skills and can pass them along to others. If outside help is required, contact the Toronto Feral Cat Project via their web site: www.feraltoronto.com. The group offers a TNR workshop which covers trapping along with many other aspects of a TNR program. The Neighbourhood Cats group in New York City also offers an online TNR handbook that is useful in learning trapping skills. (www.neighborhoodcats.com).

Sharing resources through a Trap Bank

Some in your community may already have traps. If not, you could pool resources to buy a few and build a Trap Bank. Traps can be purchased through the Toronto group – contact them via tnrths@gmail.com, or directly from the manufacturer. www.livetrap.com/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category_id=590

THS (Toronto Humane Society) has a large trap bank. Follow this link to their website for details: www.torontohumanesociety.com/what-we-do/trap-neuter-return.

Trap Loans

Traps for the purpose of trapping feral cats so that they can be spayed/neutered are available from the Feral Cat Recovery Centre. If you wish to take advantage of the trap bank at the Centre, more information can be found at www.feralcatrecoverycentre.com/trap-rental.html. A credit card number is held as a deposit.



The Procuring and Distributing Donated Cat Food Group

Another branch of Toronto Street Cats was established to try to meet the most pressing need of colony caretakers – food for their colonies. We began with one or two volunteers. An interim coordinator came forward and we soon had the nucleus for the new branch. We drafted a letter of introduction for each volunteer; we drafted a one-page description of the food procurement and distribution branch; and we drafted a receipt for donated food. We then sought new volunteers for the group through our regular newsletters.

The group compiled a list of manufacturers and distributors of cat food and a list of major veterinary clinics, then divided up the list and contacted each with a personal visit wherever possible. This procedure developed into a regular “farming” of this list to obtain donations.

Manufacturers and distributors were asked to donate expired or soon-to-expire foods – both wet and dry. They were assured that these foods would not be stored for a long period but would be used up almost immediately by colony caretakers.

Veterinary clinics were asked to donate expired or soon-to-expire foods as well as returned food and food in damaged bags.

Our outreach document offered to pick up donations at a time convenient to the donor, and our existing volunteer drivers were asked to assist by making pick-ups and delivering the donated food to our storage space.

Food was distributed at our regular biweekly shelter-building workshops during our fall/winter season, and at regular intervals off-season. Distributions were advertised on our website and our Facebook page, and the group decided – based on available food – how much would be distributed to each colony caretaker.



Feral Cat Advocacy

Educating Your Municipality

If you're already doing TNR, you may have experienced some resistance about caring for feral cats from your community. Quite often people do not understand TNR and the benefits that come from these efforts, not only for the cats but for the community as well. Your Coalition should seek resolutions to such conflict and should educate your municipal leaders and area residents about the benefits of TNR.

Many communities do not have provisions for owned cats, let alone ferals. So it is imperative for the success of your Coalition to seek legislative support for TNR from your local municipality because the municipality will benefit from the dedicated volunteers who care for the cats in these communities.

Finding By-Laws

Some municipalities make by-laws available online. Google “[town name] animal bylaw”. If you cannot find anything online, email or call your Town Clerk and ask for a copy of any animal care and control bylaws.

It does not take long to read a bylaw to know if owned or feral cats are addressed. The word “cat” should be in the definitions section,

perhaps included in the definition of “domestic pet” or “owned pet”.

Determining if a bylaw is good for ferals, or cats in general, is usually apparent from the language used.

If you're having trouble, the person for more information on this aspect of our work is Lia Laskaris (lia@animalalliance.ca).

Approaching Council

If your town has an existing bylaw but it needs improvement, you will need to seek by-law amendments. You can use examples from other municipalities to prepare a submission to Council with clearly defined recommendations.

If your town has no bylaw, you will need to request that Council create two bylaws to address thoroughly the issue of feral cats: one to address owned, socialized cats; one to address un-owned, un-socialized cats. What you may see in the definitions is “feral” cats being lumped in with “stray” cats. Bylaws normally contain a provision for impoundment. But without a general cat by-law, your town, most likely, does not have the authority to impound and hold a feral/stray cat. Should your town decide to implement a cat care and control program, it needs to

develop a by-law for that purpose.

For an example of a submission to Council, download the following Animal Alliance submission: www.animalalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/letter-BlueMountains-feral_cat_TNR_final2.pdf

After putting together your recommendations, the best way to begin is to contact your local representative and request a meeting. If you can get your representative to agree with your recommendations, he/she may be able to sway fellow councillors.

Depending on how your municipality is structured, you may need to address the entire Council at a council meeting. To address Council, you can contact your town clerk and request to make a deputation at the next council meeting.

The Solution

Council needs to understand that a non-lethal approach is the only solution for feral cats in the community.

Eradication, by whatever method has been sanctioned, almost always leads to the vacuum effect, small islands excepted. “New” cats flock to the vacated area to exploit whatever food source attracted the original inhabitants or survivors breed and their descendants are

more cautious or more disease resistant. “Eradication” is only a temporary fix. What is needed is a humane, long-term approach to feral control. (<http://www.feralcat.com/sarah2.html>)

Decision-makers need to see TNR as an important contribution to the community and be thankful for residents volunteering time, energy and money to TNR. Legislative support is just one aspect to make TNR in your community a success and perhaps even a model for neighbouring communities.

Perhaps the best Canadian example of TNR is the Parliament Hill colony, first established in the 1920s to mitigate the rodent population. The cats were put outside once the rats and mice dwindled, where the colony grew since the cats were unsterilized. The colony cats were spayed and neutered and maintained by volunteer caretakers. In 2013 the last four cats were adopted into homes and the program ended.

For a more comprehensive program, we'll use Toronto as an example.

Case Study: Toronto Feral Cat Coalition

In Toronto the estimated feral cat population is 100,000. In 2010 a coalition of municipal animal services, humane organizations, and rescue groups, was formed to

work collectively to improve the lives of feral cats through strategic and coordinated TNR programs. In four years, the Coalition sterilized over 6,000 feral cats.

At Toronto Animal Services between 2010 and 2013, euthanasia of feral cats dropped by 88% and stray intake by 45%. We believe that with Toronto's implementation of additional progressive policies and partnerships, summarized in brief below, these numbers will continue to drop.

In 2014, Toronto's municipal animal by-law, Chapter 349 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.

Also in 2014, a new partnership with Toronto Animal Services and Toronto Cat Rescue (TCR) saw an additional 1,200 cats transferred out of city shelters and adopted.

In TCR's 2014 Annual Report, 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.

A third significant change in 2014 was an amendment to Toronto's municipal licensing by-law, Chapter 545-260.1 as it pertains to pet shops. The by-law was updated to include the following provision:

545-260.1 Retailers to obtain animals from specified sources.

[Added 2011-09-22 by By-law No. 1163-2011]

Every retailer, including any person or business that sells more than 10 dogs per year, must obtain animals from one of the following sources only:

- A. municipal animal shelters;
- B. registered humane societies;
- C. registered shelters or rescue groups; or
- D. from people who have surrendered their pets to them at no charge

The demands of each community will differ; although, we know from extensive work throughout the United States that TNR appears to be a useful tool for municipalities. Until hard data is available, we can only assume that equal success can be achieved in Canada with the implementation of similar policies and TNR best practices.



Documents that may be of use to new groups:

Constitution:

<https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/constitution-and-bylaws-tfcc-sep2012.pdf>

Water Bowl Warmer:

https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/waterbowlwarmer_diyproject.pdf

Shelter Instructions:

https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/tsc_catshelter_build.pdf

Drop Trap:

https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/tsc_droptrap_build.pdf

Shelter Sign for lid:

https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/tsc-shelter_lid_sign.pdf

Shelter Tips:

https://torontostreetcats.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/tsc_shelter_tips.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This manual was prepared with the assistance of the following members of Toronto Street Cats:

Dr. Johanna Booth – general information and clinic information.

Kali Hewitt-Blackie – editing and shelter-building information.

Bill Howes – compilation of the manual, shelter-building and food procurement & distribution information.

Carol Hroncek – general information.

Lia Laskaris – general information.

Karen Wigg – clinic information.

David Jang – graphic design.

EK Park & Greg Mount – video production & photography

Elizabeth Lang – editing

*** Compiled 24 January 2016.



**Thank you for your interest in
helping the feral cats
who share our city.**

For more information
on other ways you can help,
visit TorontoFeralCatCoalition.ca

Toronto Feral Cat TNR Coalition members

