

Community Cat Resources, Questions and Answers

A colony of unaltered community//feral cats can cause a number of problems, including a continually growing number of cats, noise from fighting and mating behaviors, odors from unneutered male cats spraying to mark their territory, and the suffering of sick and dying kittens and adult cats.

The most effective way of dealing with community//feral cats is through a process called **TNR** or **Trap - Neuter - Return**.

Cats in a colony are trapped in a humane trap, taken to a clinic where they are spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and then returned to their colony. This process improves the quality of life for community//feral cats, reduces their numbers, and reduces the nuisance behaviors associated with mating. Very young kittens that have been trapped may often be removed, tamed and adopted into homes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Community/Feral Cat?

A community//feral cat is any cat that is too poorly socialized to be handled and cannot be placed into a typical home. Most community//feral cats live in groups, known as colonies, near homes or businesses where people feed them.

Where do feral cats come from?

Community//feral cats are the offspring of lost or abandoned pet cats or other community//feral cats who are not spayed or neutered.

Females can reproduce two to three times a year. Their kittens, if they survive, will become feral without early contact with people. Cats can become pregnant as early as 4-5 months of age and the number of cats in a colony rapidly increases unless the cats are spayed and neutered.

What is a managed colony?

Community/feral cat colonies require ongoing care. A community/feral colony *caregiver* monitors the colony for newcomers who are either born into the colony, abandoned at the colony site or wander in from nearby. The newcomers and any unsterilized cats are then **TNR'd**. The caregiver also provides continued food, water and shelter to all colony cats.

Why shouldn't I just trap and remove the cats from an area?

Trapping and removing cats rarely works to reduce a feral cat population. Community/feral cats live in a certain location because they have found the food and shelter they need. If community/feral cats are removed from the area, cats from surrounding colonies move in to take advantage of the newly available resources and start the cycle of reproducing and nuisance behavior all over again. In addition, if any of the cats in a colony are left behind, they tend to have more kittens that survive to adulthood because of the reduced competition, and the population rapidly regains its former size.

Can't I just move the cats to a different location?

Relocating community/feral cats is a difficult and time-consuming process. Moving cats from one colony to another is very stressful to the cats and is rarely successful. Allowing the cats to remain in their "home" colony through a TNR program is the most humane and simple, and cares for the largest number of cats with the fewest resources.