

Alley Cat Allies' Resources

ACA is an informational clearinghouse, publishing literature on all aspects of care and nonlethal control of feral cats. Alley Cat Allies also publishes two newsletters, *Alley Cat Action* and *Feral Cat Activist*. For a complete list of our resources, please write to Alley Cat Allies or email alleycat@alleycat.org, subject: complete list of ACA resources.

ACA's video, *The Humane Solution: Reducing Feral Cat Populations with Trap-Neuter-Return*, \$13.00 (9:56)—This video educates policy makers about the benefits of trap-neuter-return (TNR), and demonstrates that nonlethal methods are by far the best path to take in controlling feral cat populations.

ACA's training video, *Trap-Neuter-Return: A Humane Approach to Feral Cat Control*, \$13.00 (42:00)—This comprehensive video provides step-by-step instructions on how to safely trap, return, and care for feral cats.

Please log on to Alley Cat Allies' website at www.alleycat.org.

Alley Cat Allies

As the foremost experts on outdoor cats, Alley Cat Allies is part of an international campaign working to humanely reduce the number of domestic and feral cats through nonlethal population control methods.



Alley Cat Allies

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To locate veterinarians in your area, call Alley Cat Allies or log onto our web site and go to Links, under Info Center.

In California, call the California Veterinary Medical Association at 916.649.0599 for a veterinarian.

CATS ON CAMPUS

Compassionate Population Control

Myths and Facts about Feral Cats and TNR

MYTH: It is easier to eradicate a colony by trapping and killing.

FACT: Eradication has never been an effective way to control any animal population. When animals are removed, new ones move in to take advantage of the food source—this is called the “vacuum effect.”

MYTH: Feral cats present a high risk of spreading rabies to humans and domestic animals.

FACT: The primary vector species for rabies are raccoons, foxes, and other wild animals. According to CDC statistics for 2000, only five people died in the U.S. from rabies that year, and none of them contracted the disease from cats.

MYTH: Feral cats have a high rate of feline diseases.

FACT: Cats in managed colonies are health checked and vaccinated by veterinarians. Statistics show that feral cats are no more likely to acquire viruses than house cats.

MYTH: Feral cats cause a significant decrease in bird and wildlife populations.

FACT: While cats are predators, responsibility for the decline in bird and wildlife populations falls squarely on the shoulders of the human species. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service reports that humans have overtaken vast amounts of natural habitat, forcing nesting birds and other forms of wildlife onto the endangered species lists.

A Few Words of Encouragement

START SMALL AND BE REALISTIC. You will build a movement when people see what excellent and effective work you are doing and they will join you in your endeavors.

TAKE HEART FROM BATTLES THAT HAVE BEEN WON on the campuses of Stanford University, Texas A&M (at College Station), and University of Florida at Gainesville. Ask us for news clippings about these and other successful efforts.

STATE YOUR CASE FOR TNR FIRMLY but civilly with unknowing administrators. You can win them over with the strength of your case and with the success stories of others.

Domino and Blacky's eartips identify them as feral, fixed, and fed by a caretaker.

Campus Cats and Nonlethal Control

AMID THE STUDENTS, PROFESSORS, AND college administrators, there is another community of residents on campus—feral cats—the stray and abandoned cats that have reverted to a wild state, and of course their offspring. You may not see them at first, but as their numbers increase, the cats become more visible and their presence becomes more obvious.

Cats are scavengers and seek out food from readily-available sources such as the dumpsters of cafeterias and fast food restaurants—anywhere that food is regularly discarded. Sexually intact, the cats congregate where the food is, reproduce and form colonies. Despite the fact that more than half of the kittens die soon after birth, the size of the colony grows and the number of colonies increases.

Well-meaning, concerned individuals provide the cats with food but—lacking resources or information—don't have them spayed or neutered. As a result, the cats engage in mating behaviors that can annoy residents, students, and workers. After receiving complaints, administrators try to eliminate the cats by trapping them and taking them to animal shelters.

Unfortunately, attempts to eradicate the campus cat population do not solve the problem. Removing cats may temporarily reduce the numbers, but other cats move into the vacated area—a situation referred to by the term “vacuum effect.” The new cats, also unsterilized, will reproduce and start the cycle anew. Because feral cats are shy, suspicious, and wild natured, they typically do not make suitable companions for humans. At the shelter, most will be killed rather than adopted.

There is a humane and effective solution. Nonlethal control programs known as trap-neuter-return (TNR) have been successfully implemented on campuses across the nation, including Stanford, the University of Central Florida in Orlando, the University of Florida at Gainesville, Texas A&M (at College Station), and the University of California at Davis.

Trap-neuter-return involves 100 percent sterilization of the cats, and the adoptive placement of tame stray cats and kittens. TNR reduces populations, eliminates birth rates, and improves the overall health of the colony. Through continued managed care, volunteers regularly feed and monitor the cats' health.

Implementing Trap-Neuter-Return:

- Prevents the colony from growing and allows the feral cat population to diminish through natural attrition.
- Prevents the birth of new litters and reduces the feline population immediately by placing adoptable cats and kittens in homes.
- Eliminates annoying mating behaviors in cats, such as fighting, roaming, urinating, and yowling.
- Is more effective and less costly than repeated attempts at eradication. In Orange County, Florida, sterilization costs 47 percent less than euthanasia.
- Fosters compassion and cooperation in campus communities through the use of ethical and humane population control of cats.

TNR Works!

When California Polytechnic State University (at San Luis Obispo) began its trap-neuter-return program in the spring of 1992, it noticed a high incidence of skin cancer and upper respiratory infections among the cats living on the campus.

By the end of 1993, caretakers noticed fewer health problems among the feral cat colonies, and in the following years the incidence of disease continued to fall. In addition to having a healthier population, the number of cats fell from over four hundred to fewer than one hundred as of August 2000.

How You Can Benefit from TNR Immediately

Campuses that use the trap-neuter-return method insure a comprehensive long-term solution to feral cat overpopulation. Alley Cat Allies (ACA) can put you in touch with campuses that have implemented TNR programs. And we can provide you with information on the steps you need to take to control feral and stray cat populations:

- Identify all cats on campus and the individuals currently caring for the cats. Track where the cats are eating and living, and how many cats are in each colony.

- If your campus is already trapping and removing cats, ask your school's administration or physical plant to discontinue this ineffective method and to implement TNR. The cats being trapped and removed are probably being euthanized and the administration should be educated on the humane alternatives available.
- Organize volunteers to coordinate a comprehensive control TNR scheme. This includes trapping the cats and having them sterilized, setting up controlled feeding stations and shelters, and monitoring the cats. Contact ACA for guidelines.
- Contact ACA for veterinarians in your area who belong to ACA's Feral Friends Network. Ask local veterinarians to donate or discount their services. Contact your university's veterinary school for assistance, if one exists. A TNR program provides veterinary students with invaluable hands-on experience.
- Involve students, professors, neighboring residents, rescue groups, and local humane societies in the process. People want to be part of a humane solution as long as they are given guidance and structure.
- To stop the flow of cats onto campus, educate students on the companion animal overpopulation issue and encourage them not to adopt a companion animal until they are fully prepared and able to commit for the life of the animal.
- Encourage students who already have companion animals, or plan to adopt, to have the animals spayed or neutered.

