

**FOR ALL INTERESTED AND CONCERNED PERSONS**  
**REGARDING THE HOMELESS CATS AND KITTENS**  
**ALSO KNOWN AS FERAL CATS**

The LA Department of Animal Services estimates there are hundreds of thousands of feral cats and kittens in the Los Angeles area, with some estimates at one million. **Trap, neuter and return with managed care is endorsed by the City of Los Angeles and they are working closely with caretakers through education, financial assistance with feral vouchers as well as other venues for spay/neuter to reduce the population by implementing the successful humane methods of TNR.**

***Ed Boks, General Manager of Los Angeles Animal Services, LA, CA, Best Friends Catnippers LA, SPCALA, Actors and Others for Animals, California Veterinary Association and numerous other highly respected agencies and organization throughout the city and nation have endorsed TNR as the only proven, non-lethal, successful method of bringing the feral cat population under humane control. FCCC conducts in-depth ongoing Feral Cat Caretaking Workshops at the City Shelters.***

**History:**

***Feral cats (sometimes referred to as strays) are the sad result of irresponsible adults who have not spayed or neutered their domestic cats and have allowed them to roam freely or are abandoned in neighborhoods, resulting in unwanted kittens and homeless adults. Succeeding generations are born in our cities, under the most horrendous conditions. With little opportunity to bond with humans, they struggle to survive. Contrary to popular belief, without population control, feral cats suffer, starve and over populate their meager food supply, requiring human intervention for humane population control and managed care (TNR). We are their guardians.***

Random surveys in our cities, by recognized organizations, have concluded that in any given area, four to thirty feral cats or more live in close proximity throughout our neighborhoods, workplaces, public and industrial areas. Every possible inhumane way that man could devise has been tried to exterminate feral cats and kittens and all have failed miserably. Feral cats and kittens form colonies (families) near humans and raid garbage cans, eat discarded food, beg for food or prey on rodents. ***There is nothing more appalling than to see starving cats and kittens scavenging in garbage for food.***

**Rodent Control:**

***Since feral cats are present everywhere throughout our cities, many industrial businesses and other private companies want them to remain for rodent control. However, without humane population control or proper nourishment combined with long-term managed care, the cats and kittens become sick and die or wander the area in search of food. When the cats are present, rodents usually go elsewhere within a short time. Nourishing food must be available for the cats, under our guidelines for feeding and care. If rodent control is to be successful, the cats must remain healthy, be fed and provided with adequate shelter. See LA Times Article, December 29, 2007 "LAPD PUTS CATS ON PATROL."***

**Statistics:**

In a national survey by the Humane Society of the United States, there are an estimated 60-100 million feral cats in the U.S., with approximately 17 million people feeding about half of them. The remaining millions are left to suffer, reproduce, starve and be randomly destroyed in a desperate and inhumane attempt to reduce the population. Since feral cats and their offspring have had little opportunity to bond with humans, and are considered unadoptable, they are routinely euthanized in our city shelters.

***While most feral cats cannot be adopted “into our homes”, they can be adopted “into our hearts” and we can create homes for them where they live. Untold numbers of feral cats and most feral kittens can be domesticated. Any dedicated feral cat caretaker can attest to this! Each soul must be evaluated individually and not lumped into a negative image that is unfair and breeds public indifference, so that killing them in the shelters is OK and the only alternative they have.***

***The majority of feral cats may not be candidates for a loving indoor home, but those who are, should be acknowledged and not swept under the rug of expediency. The more one advocates that feral cats are disposable, the more likely they are to be disposed of! It is time we elevate them to the same level of value; respect and care we give to our domestic cats and those rescued from the shelters!***

**Trapping and killing feral cats does not work:**

***All too often, an uneducated attempt to “get rid of the cats”, results in trapping and killing. Since it is not possible to remove all cats from a territory, as there are no borders to free roaming felines, other cats in the immediate vicinity will claim the vacated territory. The surrounding areas are also home to feral cats and may include unaltered, owner-owned domestic outdoor cats and kittens that have not been spayed or neutered and are allowed to roam free and reproduce. Kittens can come “into heat” at five months. In a short period of time, with no humane population control in place, the area will be repopulated. This unsuccessful approach has resulted in the thousands of feral cats we now have in our communities, the associated problems and the needless suffering of cats and kittens. Feral cats will remain at the locations where they were born. They know no other home.***

**Just stop feeding?**

***Anyone, who is under the impression that there will be no more cats and kittens if the feeding stops, is in for a stark reality check! National statistics bear out that one in five households feed stray cats (HSUS) and that people cannot be forbidden to feed feral cats and kittens and will do so under the most extreme conditions and threats to their well being. Feral cats and kittens are fed by homeless people, people who drive by at night and leave food, lunchtime handouts and anyone who sees a stray/feral cat and feels it should have food. The more you try to mandate a no feeding edict, the more food is left around for the cats, but not in designated places, so cat food is scattered all around the area in places that are unsanitary and not familiar to the cats. The cats begin to wander around the areas looking for food. They are hit by automobiles, become sickly and kittens begin to appear. People in the vicinity do not like to see this type of abuse and suffering in a previously well cared for colony and complaints are made. The area becomes out of control as there is no oversight or caretaker present. The cats will remain, as this is their home!***

***Debilitated and hungry cats will continue to reproduce, as will humans under similar circumstances. This becomes a no-win situation!***

***While implementing successful TNR projects or caring for cats, caretakers have been threatened with job loss and other types of intimidation, including bodily harm, personal threats and destruction of their private property. We have laws in California to protect these types of abusive situations and many caretakers are filing lawsuits against such actions and winning.***

**A No Win Situation:**

***A well managed approved TNR project is in place and the caretaker has spent much effort, time and personal resources to bring the project to success. Without any explanation, an edict is given to the caretaker that the feral cats are no longer wanted on the property. Their lives and existence are being threatened with extinction. They have been responsibly cared for, trapped, spayed, neutered, vaccinated, fed, kittens taken out and provided with nourishing food and shelter.***

***The caretaker is now in a most vulnerable position, along with the feral cats she has chosen to protect and care for. She will try to find out the reason for this decision and work to resolve any concerns, but is met with deception and misinformation. When an attempt is made to mediate, she***

*is not allowed to plead her case nor is not taken seriously. It does not matter the cats lives are at stake and hers is about to become unbearable at the thought of what will happen. The caretaker has cared for and is emotionally bonded with her beloved charges. Few people understand or are aware of the impact such a decision will have on many lives. Whatever agreement she had when TNR was begun, it now seems to be null and void!*

**HELP is needed right away - Reaching out to the media, high profile persons, advocates, animal welfare organizations and the rescue community is imperative!**

*In a desperate attempt to salvage a humane situation that has required much financial, physical and emotional effort, the caretaker urgently reaches out to the rescue community, the media and high profile persons to mediate a situation that has spiraled out of control. The devastation of discontinuing a managed TNR program impacts the entire community. As the area reverts to an uncontrolled situation with much suffering for the feral cats and kittens and the emotional abuse and distress for the caretaker, it then becomes a no win situation with a vicious cycle of hostility and misunderstanding, instead of a well thought out humane program with a history of success.*

*The negative impact of these situations on the businesses, corporations, people involved in the decisions and others cannot be measured. It is so far reaching it permeates into soul of our communities. Abandonment & abuse of cats or any animal is illegal and punishable! Cats that have been lovingly and responsibly cared for under a successful TNR program, that will now be left to starve or be exterminated is unconscionable. The full force of advocates and others will be required to direct their efforts to educate and negotiate with the persons who have made these morally objectionable decisions. Advocating and fighting for the rights of feral cats to exist and be cared for under TNR guidelines has become a growing significant national movement. The public needs to know this can happen anywhere and under untold circumstances!*

**Educate yourself:**

*Without adequate managed humane population control, as is presently the case in our cities, we now have hundreds of thousands of homeless, neglected, suffering feral cats and kittens trying to survive in our storm drains, alleys, yards, under houses, apartment buildings, industrial and public areas and workplaces, with concerned neighbors attempting to alleviate the suffering in whatever manner they can. They can be seen in our neighborhoods feeding cats and doing their best to save the kittens. It is all they can do under the difficult conditions before them. They need our compassion and help!*

**A win-win situation:**

Michelle S. Chappell, DVM, wrote A Model for Humane Reduction of Feral Cat Populations, as published in California Veterinarian September/October 1999 "The Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) in San Diego is a prime example of one of these types of programs. Founded in 1992 by Dr. Rochelle Brinton and feral cat caretakers, the FCC has since sterilized over 10,300 unowned cats. ***Euthanasia of cats at the county shelters was at an all time high at the inception of this program, with each feline internment costing an estimated \$121.*** After just two short years, and with no other explanation, the total number of cats brought in dropped by over 35%, and euthanasias dropped 40%, instead of the usual 10% increase. ***The estimated tax savings for fewer cats euthanized was calculated to \$795,976.00.*** These numbers clearly indicate the positive impact a trap, alter and release program can have on feline euthanasias and tax dollars. It is the opinion of the author that similar programs are needed and would be successful in any community"" The **majority of kittens are born of feral mothers and only 2% of cats who enter shelters are reclaimed by their owners.**

**Trap, neuter and return – how does it work?**

If required, a permit to trap can be obtained from the shelter. Follow the guidelines for posting and also inform your neighbors you will be trapping and to keep their cats inside. ***Before trapping begins, go to our website under Instructions for Trapping. It must also be agreed that the cats will be returned to the home site.*** See our website [www.feralcatcaretakers.org](http://www.feralcatcaretakers.org) under Feral Cat Caretaking agreements.

**Long-Term Managed Care: Refer to our website under Feral Cat Caretaking:**

***Engage those persons who have cared enough about the cats to feed them, to become involved in care and maintenance.*** Once the trapping is accomplished, the cats are taken to a veterinarian for spay, neuter, immunization against disease and a Rabies vaccination. They are given a physical examination and treated for ear mites, worms and fleas. The right or left ear is nipped off 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch for identification purposes as being sterilized and vaccinated. ***Feral cats that have the required Rabies vaccination create a barrier against Rabies from wildlife to domestic life.*** Ear-tipping is a well-known identification for animal control agencies and veterinarians. After the cats have recovered from surgery, which can take one to two days for males and three to seven days for females, they are returned to their home site for long-term managed care by caretakers.

This will include, nourishing food, fresh water, medical care, if needed, maintenance of shelters and feeding stations and overseeing a clean area. We have specific guidelines for long-term managed care of feral colonies and it is important that those responsible are instructed properly. ***Scheduled trapping continues throughout the life span of the colony to insure humane population control.***

**Following surgery - the adults will be returned to the original home site that is safe and managed.** Feral cat colonies can have as few as 3-10 cats in the backyard or workplaces to 10-100 plus in public and industrial areas. When the colony remains intact, the cats being very territorial, usually discourage newcomers from entering. Feral cat colonies are families. They look out for each other, play together and form close bonds. Shelter is important, especially in cold and rainy weather. It will keep the cats warm and discourage them from gravitating to unsafe places. ***If kittens are present, arrangements should be made for their welfare, such as foster homes, permanent placement, adoption, etc. We recommend that any kitten trapped or rescued should not be returned back to the home site and every effort should be made to domesticate and adopt them into forever homes.***

**Sheltering - Simple to make discrete small shelters can be constructed with materials, off the shelf,** and tucked in out of the way areas to provide the cats with warm, dry shelter to keep them safe and healthy. This type of shelter can be used in backyards, in large feral colonies, warehouse areas, sheds, garages and other types of buildings where the cats will reside. Neutered feral cats rarely wander very far from their shelter and feeding areas. Refer to [www.feralcatcaretakers.org](http://www.feralcatcaretakers.org) under Sheltering.

***Neutered males*** stay closer to home, spraying is reduced or ceases and confrontations are few. The females no longer come "in heat", which discourages other males from entering the area. There are less unwanted kittens being born and the atmosphere becomes one of humane control, compassion and responsible management. It is quite apparent that the cats are healthier and their good behavior and overall presence adds beauty to any home they occupy which is usually rodent free! ***Through attrition and aging, feral colonies gradually reduce over time. However, every effort should be made to ensure their safety and well being and care throughout their lifetime individually and as a family.***

*Countless persons are interested in this proven, successful, humane method of population control with long-term managed care and are willing to assist and support this very important endeavor, Eventually even the most skeptical individual will see the positive results. An intelligent, humane solution is at hand for feral cats and kittens.*

**YOUR SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS MOST IMPORTANT ENDEAVOR. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION about TNR OR TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP. PLEASE CALL US AT (310) 820-4122 OR EMAIL US AT FeralCatCenter@aol.com.**

***Dona Cosgrove Baker  
President and Founder***

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