

# Get Informed: Discover the Truth about Feral Cats

(reprinted from Alley Cat Allies)



**Outdoor cats have existed alongside humans for 10,000 years.**

They are not a new phenomenon. Feral and stray cats live and thrive in every landscape, from the inner city to rural farmland.

**Feral cats are not socialized to people.**

And therefore, they are not adoptable. Feral cats don't belong indoors and are typically wary of us. However, as members of the domestic cat species (just like pet cats), they are protected under state anti-cruelty laws.

**Feral cats should not be taken to pounds and shelters.**

Feral cats' needs are not met by the current animal control and shelter system, where animals who are not adoptable are killed. Feral cats live full, healthy lives outdoors—but are killed in shelters. Even no-kill shelters can't place feral cats in homes.

**Feral kittens can be adopted.**

Feral kittens can often be adopted into homes, but they must be socialized at an early age. There is a crucial window, and if they aren't handled in time, they will remain feral and therefore unadoptable.

### **Feral cats live healthy lives in their outdoor homes.**

Feral cats are just as healthy as pet cats—with equally low rates of disease. They have the same lifespans, too.

### **People are the cause of wildlife depletion.**

Studies show that the overwhelming causes of wildlife and bird death are habitat loss, urbanization, pollution, and environmental degradation—all caused by humans, not feral cats.

### **Catch and kill doesn't work.**

Animal control's traditional approach for feral cats— catching and killing —is endless and cruel. Cats choose to reside in locations for two reasons: there is a food source (intended or not) and shelter. When cats are removed from a location, new cats move in or survivors breed to capacity. This vacuum-effect is well-documented.

### **Trap-Neuter-Return does work.**

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) benefits the cats and the community. Cats are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped (the universal symbol of a neutered and vaccinated cat), and then returned to their outdoor home. The colony's population stabilizes—no more kittens! Trap- Neuter-Return improves their lives and improves their relations with the community—the behaviors and stresses associated with mating stop. Trap-Neuter-Return is the humane, effective approach for feral cats.

### **You can make a difference and save lives.**

Together, we can educate people about feral cats and the fact that they don't belong in pounds and shelters, and spread the word that TNR is the humane approach for them