



# ALLEY CAT RESCUE

## ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

*Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of cats everywhere.*

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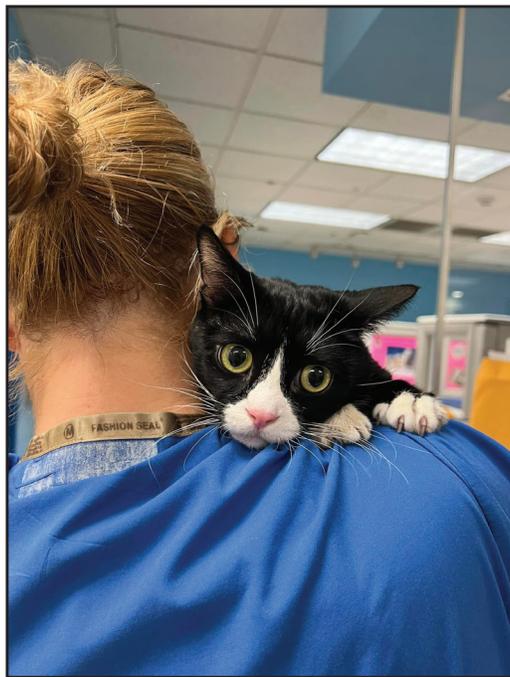
## REHOMING YOUR CAT - SKIP THE SHELTER!

Six year old Marge's world was turned upside down when she wound up in a New Jersey shelter after her human passed away. She went suddenly from her familiar, quiet home to a noisy environment filled with strangers and the smell of dogs and other cats everywhere. You can see such fear and sadness in her eyes.

Happily, Marge was adopted not long ago and will soon understand that she is safe in her new forever home. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of thousands of other beautiful little souls still struggling in shelters after losing their homes and families. Animal shelters are already stressful settings for any cat, but adult cats like Marge, who are used to the comfort of a home with human family members whom they love, truly suffer in shelters. Senior cats taken to shelters typically have an even harder time adjusting.

Relinquishing a cat to a shelter very often subjects her to much more than a relatively short, scary experience. City and county shelters are usually limited by the ratio of staff to animals. Animals in public shelters receive an average of 15 minutes per day of staff attention<sup>1</sup>. This includes time taken to clean their cages and administer any necessary medication. While many nonprofit shelters (often called rescues) have enough staff and volunteers combined to spend more time with each animal, they cannot provide the animals in their care with the same level of attention and affection as would a home and family.

Additionally, while nonprofit shelters may have advantages due to being smaller, there is simply no way for them to eliminate the physical factors that make shelters such stressful places for most relinquished cats. The presence of other animals surrounding them leaves cats feeling threatened. Cats coming from homes that had few or no other pets will be panicked.



When cats feel fearful and/or depressed, they adopt behaviors such as hiding, defensive aggression in some cases, as well as decreased grooming, eating, and playfulness. Adult and senior cats are already considered less desirable by potential adopters; unfriendly behavior and a scruffy appearance further lower their chances of being adopted. Naturally, the longer a cat languishes in a stressful environment, the more unhappy she becomes. In a shelter that euthanizes for space, this could be a death sentence. In a no-kill shelter, she will continue to have poor quality of life for an indefinitely long time unless the rare foster home can be found.

Shelter stress for these cats is not only emotional and psychological; when it comes to cats, stress can kill. This is apparent to many in the animal care and rescue community by personal observation alone. We often see otherwise healthy cats who are stressed in their new environment develop upper respiratory infections and other issues. This is because stress weakens the immune system, allowing for new diseases transmitted by surrounding cats to

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## From the Desk of Louise Holton

There's an army of outdoor community cat caretakers all across the world. The kind-hearted people who go out in all types of weather, rain, snow, ice and heat to feed and to monitor their colonies. I have been so fortunate over the years since I started this quest to advocate for humane, nonlethal treatment for feral cats to meet people in the United States, Greece, Italy, London, Portugal, South Africa and elsewhere.

These are unsung heroes. They form one of the most amazing groups of people out there, some using their own money to trap and sterilize outdoor cats. And to buy cat food, and build cat shelters so the cats have safe, warm, dry places to hunker down in.

Who are these cats and why are they living in alleyways behind restaurants, on college campuses, army barracks, and on the streets?

These are cats who have been abandoned by humans, cats who find themselves living on the streets through no fault of their own. Alley Cat Rescue shows you why catch-and-kill, advocated by some environmentalists, simply does not work. And we share with you our many years of experience helping these cats.

We have developed resources on our website to help others help cats. We have spent time and energy building a directory of low – cost spay/neuter clinics, and CAT groups across the country who can lend you a trap or offer other resources to help people help cats.

These are the people in the trenches actually putting into place programs that decrease numbers of outdoor cats by stopping the breeding, and not turning cats into scapegoats, blaming them for bird and wildlife extinctions. Some environmentalists concentrate on cat predation, turning cats into scapegoats, and ignore the real reasons for animal extinctions: Habitat loss, which poses the greatest threat to wild species. Our forests, plains and lakes are cleared to make way for agriculture. Mainly animal agriculture but also for industrial development, road building as well as building houses and shopping malls.

In a recent paper Driscoll, Macdonald and O'Brien wrote: "The world's species are going extinct at a rate 100–1,000 times faster than the historic "background" rate, primarily as a result of habitat loss, which is itself overwhelmingly driven by conversion of natural habitats to agriculture. The consequences for the planet (as well as for humanity and its domesticates) have been profound, and have included the complete transformation of almost every natural ecosystem on Earth."

Dr. Julie Levy from the University of Florida's Veterinary School and co-founder of Operation Catnip was quoted in *Best Friends* magazine (2013) as stating, "There are much more important pressures on bird populations [than cats] - primarily pollution and habitat destruction. And those are harder areas for bird groups to be effective in." Levy said:

The problem is that part of the campaign is an attack on humane control of homeless or feral cats. Most of us love song-birds as much as we love cats, so we are not trying to choose one species over another. We're trying to come up with a solution that benefits everybody in the picture.

Levy concludes that the goal is to reduce the feral cat population saying, "we can do it in a humane way that respects the animals rather than in a 50-year-old vision of animal control, in which the only way you can help animals is by killing them" (*Best Friends*, 2003).

Eradication of all cats will not save humanity. Only facing our real problem, habitat loss, will save the world and the birds and other wildlife. And in the meanwhile, instead of ranting against cats, please help those of us on every continent to sterilize more cats: pet cats and feral cats. That would be the most sensible thing to do!



*Louise*

Louise Holton  
President/Founder

# RESCUE STORIES



**Sky** - Little Sky had a tough start to life. He was rescued with a degloved chin and upper respiratory infection. During surgery to fix his chin, it was discovered he also had an inward deviation of the sternum called pectus excavatum, which caused him to have breathing issues while under anesthesia. After healing from his chin surgery and URI, Sky wanted to bounce around and play, but couldn't because of his breathing trouble.

He underwent an intense, complicated surgery to treat his pectus excavatum. The recovery period involved six weeks of check ups at the vet and frequent bandage changes to clean the surgery site and plate that was attached to his chest.

**Blossom** - Blossom was discovered inside of a building, after suffering from a car accident. She was emaciated, walking in circles, she had broken teeth, missing patches of fur and was so weak that we were able to grab her easily. We immediately took her to the vet and she got fluids and medication, and they cleaned up her infected sores under her chin. They prescribed strong antibiotics and ear drops, and we put her on a high protein diet.

Within a week, Blossom looked healthier. Her head tilt, however, remained so we took her to a specialist who concluded the tilt was likely due to a traumatic injury and would most likely be permanent. Blossom continued to perk up, but she remained quite thin. Another trip to the vet revealed that her gums and teeth were infected from her injuries and she would need many teeth extracted.

Following the dental surgery, Blossom was able to eat without pain and quickly reached a healthy weight. She is now a playful, super-affectionate young cat.



*Blossom*



*Panther*

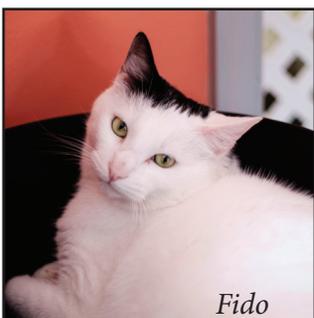
**Panther** - Panther was abandoned by his former family outside a Maryland apartment complex and struggled to survive. When Alley Cat Rescue rescued him, he was in poor shape - underweight with a serious ear infection and a viral infection. After a lot of TLC in our care and time in the animal hospital, he has fully recovered.

**Summer** - Zoe and her newborn kitten, Summer, both came to Alley Cat Rescue needing special care. Summer inherited his mommy's extra front toes! However he also had Swimmer Syndrome, meaning his back legs were splayed out and he struggled to walk. We worked with a veterinarian and got him to be able to support his body and walk again. We

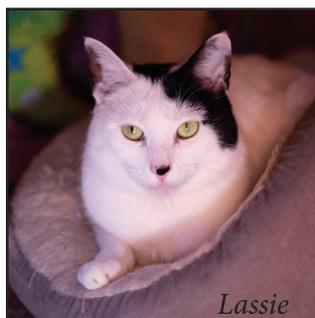
corrected his legs by doing several weeks of physical therapy consisting of taping sessions, exercising his back legs to get his muscles strong so he could walk with his feet underneath his body. We also did water therapy, as the water helped support his weight while he exercised his legs and built up muscle strength. Summer can now walk, run, and climb up cat trees!



*Summer*



*Fido*



*Lassie*

**Fido & Lassie** - These two sweet cats were dumped at ACR by their adopter's family members when their adopter became too ill to care for them. Both kitties spent a couple of weeks hiding. We gave them the time they needed to decompress while they suffered from being separated from their original caretaker, and finally they learned to trust us. They slowly came around and understood that they were safe.

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# POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE CLASSIFIES CATS AS "INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES"

The government-funded Polish Academy of Sciences has classified domestic cats (*Felis catus*) as an “invasive alien species.” The institute has said that the label is purely scientific and not a call to action against cats. They say that the number of birds and other small native animals cats kill per year qualifies them to be listed this way in their national database.

In response to public concern, the institute put out a statement saying it is “opposed to any cruelty towards animals.” There is no reason to doubt the Academy’s sincerity, but it is fair to question their judgment. Given the deadly persecution that cats face in places such as Australia and, sadly, Alaska and Hawaii in the name of environmental protection, attaching such stigmatic terminology to cats in Europe could give rise to culls there as well.

Beyond the Academy’s moral responsibility to avoid putting cat lives in danger, the classification is based on shaky science. There simply is not sufficient information available to determine if cat predation has



any detrimental effects on the overall populations of prey animals, including birds; yet environmental and bird groups to push for the eradication of feral cats, claiming cats are contributing to the decline of bird species and wildlife. The few studies that have been conducted on cat predation are from remote islands with closed ecosystems, where local bird populations have

not evolved with predators. Because cat predation on continents is very different from island environments, it is inaccurate and inappropriate to extrapolate data from these particular studies to predict predation on continents.

Like any predator, cats tend to feed on the young or old and those who are sick or in a weakened state because they are the easiest to catch. And the UK’s Royal

Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) states, “It is likely that most of the birds killed by cats would have died anyway from other causes before the next breeding season, so cats are unlikely to have a major impact on

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## SUPPORT OUR WORK SAVING LIVES

### Planned Giving - Annuities

Annuities can help you reach your personal financial goals while serving your commitment to our work helping cats. Enjoy tax-saving and turn appreciated assets into income for yourself. Charitable gift annuities allow you to make a gift of \$10,000 or more and receive fixed interest payments for life, as well as tax deductions. For more information, contact your financial planner or get in touch with us:

Alley Cat Rescue  
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Mail: PO Box 585, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712

### Wills and Bequests

You can support our work for cats far into the future by including Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. in your estate plans. This will ensure that your love and care for cats continues on and provides you with the peace of mind that your legacy will continue to help cats in need. Contact your financial planner to determine the best way to support Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. in your estate plan.

Suggested bequest language: “I give (specific dollar amount or property) to Alley Cat Rescue, Inc., having its principal office at 3906 Rhode Island Ave., Brentwood, MD 20722, for its general-purpose to help stray, abandoned, and feral cats and kittens. Tax ID: 52-2279100.”

### Stock Donations

Donating stocks offers great benefits; not only are stock donations income tax-deductible, they also enable donors to save on capital gains taxes. To request a Stock Donation Form, Email [debbie@saveecat.org](mailto:debbie@saveecat.org) or download it from our website at [saveecat.org/donate.html](http://saveecat.org/donate.html).



## REHOMING YOUR CAT - SKIP THE SHELTER! *Continued from page 1*

develop, and latent viral diseases to resurface. A study of cats of various ages relinquished the Solano County and Fairfield County shelters in California showed that the many cats contracted or had a break out of feline herpesvirus (FHV) and feline enteric coronavirus (FECV). Upon entering the shelter, 4% of the cats were shedding FHV and 33% (mainly older kittens and young cats) were shedding FECV. After just one week, 52% of the cats were shedding FHV and 60% were shedding FECV.<sup>2</sup>

Circumstances beyond one's control can make rehoming necessary. Should this ever be the case for you or a loved one, it will undoubtedly be painful for all family members, including your cat. However, you can make it as painless as possible by finding her a good new home yourself instead of taking her to a shelter. Bypassing shelters with a home-to-home adoption is the absolute best, safest option for her as it will keep her from the trauma of entering a shelter environment, as well as allow you to meet and vet potential adopters.

There are several free, user-friendly websites through which pet parents can post their adoptable pets and receive and manage adoption applications. Three of the most popular are Rehome by Adopt-A-Pet, GetYourPet.com, and Home To Home (links to all three are on the ACR website at [saveacat.org/rehoming.html](https://www.saveacat.org/rehoming.html)). Other steps you can take include asking your local veterinarian, shelter, or rescue group if you can post an adoption flier at their premises and/or on their websites if they have a virtual community board; hanging flyers in public spaces such as churches and schools; advertising with a local newspaper; and posting your kitty to social media platforms such as Nextdoor and local Facebook groups.

If all else fails, you can try a cat sanctuary, but these

are usually full and have a waiting list. ACR keeps a directory of known sanctuaries at [saveacat.org/cat-sanctuaries.html](https://www.saveacat.org/cat-sanctuaries.html), but you may also wish to ask your local veterinarians or shelters for recommendations. You should offer the sanctuary a generous donation to help cover her lifelong care.

We can only imagine how Marge's late guardian would have felt, seeing her close companion terrified at a shelter. We encourage all cat parents to establish a Pet Protection Agreement, which assigns funds and a trusted caretaker for pets in the event that you pass away or become incapacitated. When establishing a Pet Protection Agreement, consult with the loved one(s) to whom you want to leave your cat. Let them know you do not want your cat surrendered to a shelter, and make sure they agree to keep that from happening before making it official.

In the end, finding your cat a new permanent home directly may require some extra work, but it is totally achievable and it is the right thing to do for a beloved companion animal.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Vojtkovská, Veronika, et al. "Methods of Assessment of the Welfare of Shelter Cats: A Review." *Animals*, vol. 10, no. 9, Aug. 2020, p. 1527. *Crossref*, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10091527>.

<sup>2</sup>Pedersen, N. C., et al. "Common Virus Infections in Cats, Before and After Being Placed in Shelters, With Emphasis on Feline Enteric Coronavirus." *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, vol. 6, no. 2, SAGE Publications, Apr. 2004, pp. 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfms.2003.08.008>.



## RESCUE STORIES

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**Mama Gypsy & Moon** - Gypsy was a stray kitten who became pregnant at *four months of age*. Naturally, her tiny body had a difficult time handling the pregnancy. Alley Cat Rescue found her and her three kittens malnourished and suffering from a viral infection. Two of the babies did not make it. Luckily, little Moon did and is thriving! Gypsy, now 10 months old, is quite small, which is no surprise given what she went through as a kitten. Sadly, many stray and feral cats have their first litters when they are just kittens themselves.

# HIGH-INTENSITY TNR SAVES MORE LIVES AND REDUCES POPULATIONS OVER TIME MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN CULLING OR REMOVAL

A ground-breaking study, published in 2019, used a simulation method to estimate the success (as defined by cat and kitten survival rates as well as decrease in overall population) of TNR in comparison with other population control methods over a 10-year period. Although many previous studies have evaluated the effectiveness of population control projects by tracking changes in population size over time, this is the first to use computer-generated modeling in order to be able to compare different population management methods on a single population of cats.

The seven different management methods explored in this study were (1) taking no action, (2) low-intensity removal\*, (3) high-intensity removal, (4) low-intensity episodic culling, (5) high-intensity episodic culling, (6) low-intensity trap-neuter-return (TNR), and (7) high-intensity TNR. For each method, the computer program accounted for probable birth and death rates related to the age of the individual cats within the simulated group. Probable numbers of new cats joining the population from surrounding areas, as well as cats leaving the group, were factored into the model as well.

**The results showed that high-intensity TNR results in the lowest number of “preventable deaths” over 10 years** while taking no action (the control scenario) resulted in the most. The study’s authors define preventable deaths as “those that could likely be

reduced or eliminated using an alternative population management approach, specifically the deaths of kittens under 6 months old that fail to reach adulthood, and the deaths of any cats due to lethal management.”

Both low-intensity and high-intensity culling methods, as well as low-intensity removal, resulted in what the study’s authors call “moderate” reduction in preventable deaths. Low-intensity TNR (sterilization of 25% of the population) and high-intensity removal resulted in a higher reduction of preventable deaths, and high-intensity TNR (sterilization of 50% of the population) resulted the largest reduction of preventable deaths. **In fact, high-intensity TNR “resulted in 31 times fewer preventable deaths than the no action scenario.”** This is mainly due to the large difference in kitten deaths between the two scenarios.

*\*“Removal” refers to trapping and removing a percentage of the population every six months. It does not exclude the possibility of the removed cats being euthanized. “Culling,” in contrast, refers to euthanizing a percentage of the population, allowing it to recover to its carrying capacity, and then culling the same percentage in repetition over the 10 year time period.*

Source: Boone JD, Miller PS, Briggs JR, Benka VAW, Lawler DF, Slater M, Levy JK and Zawistowski S (2019) A Long-Term Lens: Cumulative Impacts of Free-Roaming Cat Management Strategy and Intensity on Preventable Cat Mortalities. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 6:238. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2019.00238



## CALL TO ACTION!

### PUSH FOR PROGRESS IN COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE

**HR9072** - “To amend the Public Health Service Act to ensure that healthy research common companion animals are adopted into suitable homes.”

**Status:** (9/29/22) This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

**S5002** - “A bill to allow for alternatives to animal testing for purposes of drug and biological product applications.”

**Status:** This bill was introduced to the Senate on September 29th, 2022 and unanimously approved. The next step for the bill is to pass in the House of Representatives.

**HRes1418** - “Expressing support for the designation of October 1, 2022, as ‘National Animal Rescue Day’ to create awareness of the importance of animal adoption, to educate on the importance of spaying and neutering animals, and to encourage animal adoptions throughout the United States.”

**Status:** (9/30/22) This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform

**What can you do?** Contact your House representatives and tell them to vote YES on these measures. To maximize the impact of your message, please urge their support for each measure separately. You can find your representative’s name and link to their contact information at [www.house.gov/representatives](http://www.house.gov/representatives).



These items and MORE can also be purchased through our online store:  
<http://www.saveacat.org/store.html>

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5	ACR Cat Silhouette T-Shirt	\$25	S M L XL 2XL	lilac, teal, white, storm		
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11	Cat Rescue's Guide to Managing Community Cats Paperback	\$6				

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## POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE CLASSIFIES CATS AS "INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES"

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populations.” Every year, many millions of birds die naturally due to starvation, disease, or other forms of predation. And most of the millions of baby birds hatched each year will die before they reach breeding age, (RSPB, 2014).

One truth that is incontestable, however, is that cats are easy scapegoats for governments and institutions that can't or won't address much larger environmental hazards. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), agriculture is the primary danger to nature in Europe. Per the EEA's website, "Pollution by pesticides used in agriculture is the main cause of the worrying decline in the number of insect-eating birds and farmland birds." \* The site also names habitat loss and damage, unsustainable forestry, hunting, and overfishing as greater threats to wildlife than "alien invasive species."

The more one looks into it, the less wise it seems to officially label cats as a danger to the natural environment in Europe. Even if there is any truth to the claim, nothing has been accomplished but to spark or fuel animosity toward cats.

\*State of nature in the EU, EEA Report No 10/2020

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