

What is TNR?

TNR or *trap-neuter-return* is a humane and effective program for managing outdoor, free-roaming cat populations. Community cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped for identification and returned to their outdoor home. This program compassionately manages community cats through non-lethal means.

Benefits of TNR

- *Stabilizes populations:* TNR reduces the population of cats over time through sterilization. A study of a two year TNR program in North Carolina found that the TNR treated cat colonies declined 36% while unsterilized cat colonies increased 47%.
- *Increases public health:* TNR programs vaccinate cats for rabies, FIV and feline distemper. Community cats also minimize the spread of disease by controlling the rodent population.
- *Leads to higher animal welfare:* TNR provides community cats with veterinary care and vaccinations to ensure they live a happy life outside. Unlike eradication programs, TNR humanely handles the cats without killing them.
- *Decreases the number of cats brought into shelters:* A two year study of a TNR program in a Florida community found that the TNR program led to a 66% reduction of impounded cats at a shelter and a 95% reduction in shelter euthanasia.
- *Increases community appeal:* Many people value their community cats and help in TNR efforts. TNR helps community cats coexist better with people by stopping yowling behavior, providing veterinary care for unhealthy cats and preventing spraying. One study found TNR reduced nuisance behaviors by 61%.

Debunking myths about TNR

Anti-cat groups will often push myths about community cats to encourage eradication. Below are some of the truths about community cats:

- *There are few studies on the effects of cat predation on prey populations:* The studies that are conducted on this topic are in isolated islands with closed ecosystems. Bird populations in these areas have not adapted to predators and results from these ecosystems cannot be generalized.
- *Decline in bird populations is largely due to human factors:* Decline in bird populations is an important issue but human factors such as habitat degradation, climate change and pollution should be the focus, not community cats. Bird populations are declining in rural areas, not the urban areas community cats usually live in.
- *TNR is more effective than eradication:* Killing community cats does not prevent continued reproduction. Eradication programs also remove members of the

population without removing resources. Therefore, the population can simply regrow to its carrying capacity after the eradication program is done.

How you can help

- *Begin your own TNR program in your community:* Alley Cat Rescue provides many resources to help people plan and implement their own TNR and feeding programs for community cats.
- *Call your local representatives:* Tell your representative that you want government funds being used for TNR programs.
- *Call anti-cat environmental groups:* Tell them that eradication is inhumane and ineffective. Ask them to help birds by addressing human caused factors such as habitat degradation.
- *Donate to cat advocacy groups working on TNR programs*