



Alley Cat Rescue, Inc.

ALLEY CAT Mews

A Publication of Alley Cat Rescue. The National Cat Protection Association

Volume 15 - Issue 1 - February 2015

www.SaveACat.org

PO Box 585, Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20712
Ph: 301.277.5595 Fax: 301.277.5502

Community Cats 101

by Maggie Funkhouser



©Cara Frye

So you've noticed a neighbor has been putting food out for cats in your community. You smile and think, "Great! I'm not the only one caring for outdoor cats." And now that you've realized you have something in common, you might even strike up a conversation with the neighbor. You both agree it's unfortunate these cats are living outside - it would be great for all cats to live indoors - but you also acknowledge that some of the cats are truly feral and outdoors is their home.

For some of us this is where the conversation would end and that would be that. And as wonderful as it is to provide food/water, and maybe even a small shelter, if we genuinely want to improve the lives of community cats and help them become better neighbors, **the conversation also needs to include the benefits of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)**. We need to educate others on the importance of spaying and neutering outdoor cats and help them access available TNR resources.

To some of us TNR is common knowledge. If you start feeding community cats, you also start trapping and fixing them. But not everyone has heard of TNR, let alone aware of its life-saving benefits. Plus, most folks who feed community cats don't have the funds for sterilization nor do they know where to look for available resources.

There's a lot of kind-hearted folks out there who feed stray cats and find homes for the endless supply of kittens who are born in their yards and under their porches, but they are unaware that TNR programs exist and there's clinics in their area that can help. That's why it is very important for those of us with TNR experience to have this conversation with our neighbors.

First, let them know they are not alone in wanting to help community cats. Form that initial relationship, by letting them know that you also care for the cats. Thank them for being caretakers and share any DIY projects that make caring for outdoor cats easier (shelters, feeding stations, outdoor litter boxes).

Second, explain what TNR is and all of its associated benefits. Make sure to highlight the positive results the community will see:

- reduces colony size - no more kittens!
- eliminates spraying, yowling, and fighting
- reduces shelter euthanasia rates and costs
- creates a buffer between wildlife and humans - rabies vaccine
- ear-tipping identifies cats who are being cared for

And also explain how TNR improves the cats' lives:

- vaccinated against disease (distemper, rabies, leukemia)
- treated for parasites (fleas, ticks, ear mites, worms)
- stops breeding cycle - no more kittens!
- reduces injuries related to fighting and roaming

Third, provide your neighbors with local resources where TNR services are offered (search our directory of Cat Action Teams on our website, search Petfinder.com for rescues). Give them a list of rescues or veterinary practices that work with feral cats, and share what your experience has been with any particular rescue or vet. You may even want to offer to help with trapping or transporting.

Lastly, work together and devise a plan. Figure out *who* is willing to help and *how* each person can help. Who will trap the cats? Who will transport the cats? Who will help with fundraising? Talk with rescues and vet clinics to see if they are willing to work with you on the cost of TNR services. Most clinics offer reduced prices to those who care for community cats. And plan to fundraise on your own by hosting bake sales and yard sales, by using social media and fundraising sites (CrowdRise, GoFundMe, Razoo), and talk with local stores to see if they want to chip in. Make the work easier for everyone by working together; you'll be more effective as a team than if you all work individually.

Remember, education is just as vital to helping community cats as is spay/neuter. The more individuals who know about TNR translates into more individuals who are implementing TNR. Educational outreach is an important tool in saving cats' lives. Please talk with your neighbors and with local vets. For more information on proper Healthcare for Feral Cats, you may request our Factsheets: Guidelines for Colony Caretakers and Guidelines for Veterinarians.

FEATURES

Pg. 1 - President's Message
Pg. 2 - Feral Cat Spay Day
Pg. 3 - FCSD Registration Form
Pg. 4 - Dental Health

Pg. 5 - PG County Cats
Pg. 6 - Merchandise
Back Cover - Outdoor Cat Feeder

From the Desk of Louise Holton

Take Action to Give Outdoor Cats a Voice



Cats are the most popular companion animal in America. There are 95.6 million cats living in 46% of American homes. There are 83.3 million dogs living in U.S. homes. Cats are now more popular than dogs.¹

In contrast, we have a large number of environmental groups who have demonized cats and turned them into a scapegoat for our environmental ills. Every day I receive articles in my mailbox claiming what “killers” and “murderers” cats are. The anti-TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) groups label cats as “introduced animals,” “exotics,” and “aliens,” among others.

In the book *Rat Island*, William Stolzenburg writes that the “warriors” of introduced animals “come armed with their own emotional terminology. Alien, plague, invader —these are the tags of the conservation community’s own choosing...”²

The anti-cat folks continue to blame feral animals for the decline of wildlife, even though some individuals in the scientific community, like New Zealand scientist George Thompson, stated way back in 1922, that the decline of some native species is due to multiple causes. Thompson wrote, “It is largely the direct disturbance of their hunts and breeding places, and the interference with their food supply, which has caused this destruction and diminution of native fauna...”³

In 2011, a consortium of conservation groups, lead by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), wrote a letter

to then Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar which “urge[d] the development of a Department-wide policy opposing Trap-Neuter-Release and the outdoor feeding of cats as a feral cat management option, coupled with a plan of action to address existing infestations affecting lands managed by the Department of the Interior.”⁴

And as Peter Wolf points out on his Vox Felina Blog: “ABC is not alone, of course. The Wildlife Society, which signed onto the DOI letter, in its position statement (issued in August 2011) on Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats, calls for ‘the humane elimination of feral cat populations,’ as well as ‘the passage and enforcement of local and state ordinances prohibiting the feeding of feral cats.’”⁵

The thing is, we all want a reduction in the outdoor cat population. We, TNR folks, have been spaying and neutering outdoor cats - thereby reducing colonies - for the past 24 years! What has the opposition done to improve the situation? Nothing...except spread misinformation and try to have TNR banned.

Please take action to help persuade these environmental groups to embrace the humane control of outdoor cat populations. If you receive mail from such groups, take a moment to send them feedback and ask what their position is on humane population control? Ask if they support sterilization over killing. Unfortunately, most conservation groups do use lethal methods to control animal populations. Take the opportunity to express your disagreement with this inhumane and cruel practice, and encourage them to support compassionate methods that preserve and protect life. And help give outdoor cats a louder voice by responding to newspaper articles and email campaigns that aim to smear cats and undermine TNR. Please speak up - the cats are counting on us!

¹ The Humane Society of the United States

^{2,3} Stolzenburg, William. *Rat Island: Predators in Paradise and the World's Greatest Wildlife Rescue*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2011.

^{4,5} “Impaired Vision” Vox Felina – Feral/Free-Roaming Cats and Trap-Neuter-return/TNR: Critiquing the Opposition.” Accessed December 15, 2014. <http://www.voxfelina.com/2012/01/tnr-opponents-offer-no-alternative/>.

Calling All Vets! Community Cats Need Your Help



Mark your calendars! May 27th signifies the sixth annual **National Feral Cat Spay Day** - our campaign to bring rescuers and veterinarians together in the fight against cat homelessness and ending the killing of healthy cats in shelters.

It truly does take a village to care for outdoor cats. Rescuers cannot tackle this problem on their own; they need support from the veterinary community. With more compassionate folks stepping up to help feral cats, we need more vets who are willing to provide medical treatment to these animals. And that's exactly what Feral Cat Spay Day aims to do.

This important day was created to encourage vets to offer free and low-cost Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) services to those who care for feral cats. We want to help caretakers and

veterinarians build strong relationships, so we can work together to end homelessness and stop the killing. Rescuers rely on vets who are compassionate towards feral cats, just as vets rely on rescuers for continued business. It's a win-win for everyone!

To date, over 700 veterinary hospitals from 45 U.S. states, Canada, and South Africa have spayed or neutered over 9,000 community cats. That's a lot of cats! Think of the lives we are saving. And think of how many more lives we can save when more vets get involved!

We ask that you please encourage your vet to participate on May 27th. They can find more information about the campaign at SaveACat.org and a registration form is printed on the reverse of this article. Vets may also register with us online, and a complete list of participating vets can be found on our website.



Feral Cat Spay Day - May 27th, 2015

Registration Form

Clinic Name: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email : _____ Website: _____

(Please check all that apply.)

YES! I am willing to participate in Feral Cat Spay Day!

___ I am a returning participant. Our clinic has contributed to previous FCSD events.

___ I already offer TNR and will also participate on this day with the colony caretakers I currently work with.

___ I would like to participate, but do not currently work with any colony caretakers or groups, please provide me with a list of rescue groups in my area, so I can contact them to arrange spays/neuters.

___ Please add my clinic's contact information to ACR's website list of participating vets.

___ Please send me a copy of ACR's Fact Sheet on Veterinary Care for Feral Cats.

I cannot participate at this time.

I cannot participate at this time, but I would like to send a tax-deductible donation towards the campaign.

I've enclosed a check for ___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$250 ___\$500

___ Would you prefer to communicate through email in the future?

Please return completed form to:

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

Or visit the Programs tab on our website to sign up online!

www.SaveACat.org

Please submit your response by April 30, 2015. Thank you!

Note: Entries after this date will still be accepted.

The Importance of Proper Dental Health: Stomatitis in Cats

by Joe Zimmermann



Keeping our teeth healthy is important, but it isn't exactly easy. Trips to the dentist are not the most comfortable experiences, and it can often be difficult just remembering to floss. For people, dental health is hard enough, but with cats it's just as critical and probably even more difficult to remember.

Though cats don't brush their teeth every day or visit the dentist every few months, it's still vital that their teeth are taken care of. Cats may work to keep themselves clean, but that doesn't mean they won't need some assistance, especially when it comes to their teeth.

There are a number of ways you can ensure your cat has healthy teeth and gums. One of the surest methods is to bring this topic up in conversation when taking your cat to a veterinary checkup. Vets consider many health topics during routine visits, but it's important for caretakers to talk about dental health specifically and ask your vet to look at your cat's teeth.

Aside from checkups and recommendations from your vet, there are a few key signs that you can watch out for at home that can point to an unhealthy mouth. For instance, if your cat's breath smells especially bad, or if your cat has bleeding or discolored gums, these can be an indication of poor dental health. Excessive drooling, pawing at the mouth, and weight loss can also suggest possible dental issues.

Think Preventative Rather than Reactive

As your cat ages, tartar and plaque begin to buildup on her teeth. If left untreated, the buildup can cause inflammation of the gums and result in tooth decay and other serious health concerns including periodontal disease. It's very important to consider having your cat's teeth cleaned at least one or two times in her life to prevent these potentially serious health concerns. It's also helpful to have her teeth cleaned before she becomes too old, for senior cats can experience kidney problems and any procedure requiring anesthesia can be especially risky if the cat's kidneys are not working properly.

One disease in particular that affects cats' mouths is stomatitis, also known as gingivostomatitis. This is a serious and potentially life-threatening condition involving severe inflammation of the gums and surrounding tissue. It results from an immune response to the bacteria in plaque, and has been linked to other diseases, such as feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

Stomatitis is very painful for cats, and can make it difficult for them to eat or chew. If you notice your cat has heavily inflamed gums or wails when eating or stops eating, you should take the cat to a veterinarian promptly.

In some cases, a treatment of steroids and use of wet food will be enough to get the cat to eat again. However, if the disease has progressed enough, removal of some or all of the teeth may be necessary. After removal, cats can still eat wet foods and a majority of them will need no further treatment.

Dental Care Tips for Community Cats

For individuals caring for community cats, it's important to watch for signs of dental issues: excessive drooling, not eating, yowling or pawing at the mouth while eating. If any of these symptoms are noticed, the cat should be trapped as soon as possible, so a vet can examine her teeth and mouth.

In the case of stomatitis, removing some or all of the cat's teeth can provide helpful treatment. ACR has cared for several feral cats diagnosed with stomatitis, and upon removing some or all of their teeth, pain was greatly reduced and the cats' health quickly improved. A wet food only diet was also implemented and if necessary, steroids can be administered by crushing pills into wet food.

Before serious conditions such as stomatitis arise, you may want to consider brushing your cat's teeth to help remove tartar buildup. Do NOT use human toothpaste - this can be toxic for cats. Or you may want to consider giving your cat a vitamin supplement to help fight tartar; additives can be dropped into your cat's water to help promote proper dental health.

For the most part, cats just need a variety of foods, both wet and dry, and a vet's attention and their teeth should remain healthy. While it might be overlooked, dental health is vital to the overall health of cats and must be taken into consideration, even with simple actions like brushing your cat's teeth at home. And remember, March is dental health month and many vets offer discounted prices for teeth cleaning, so take advantage of these sales and stay ahead of tartar and plaque buildup to prevent dental disease and other serious health conditions.



Six-year-old cat with periodontal disease and stomatitis.
Photo courtesy of MyPetDentist.com

The Cats of Prince George's County Shelter

by Julie Cannon

In April of 2014, Alley Cat Rescue started to be more aggressive in pulling cats from the Prince George's County Animal Shelter in Upper Marlboro, Maryland and from other local shelters in Montgomery County and Baltimore County. Since April, ACR has rescued more than 136 cats and kittens from shelters alone, making up more than half of the kitties adopted out by ACR this year.

Prince George's is one of the poorest counties in the state of Maryland, and the shelter has one of the highest euthanasia rates in the D.C. Metro area. Mia, one of the cats who came from the PG County shelter, recently found her forever home thanks to our actions. Mia now has both a human sister to snuggle with and a new kitty sister named Rocket to play with. Mia is a big, beautiful dilute calico whose behavior is more dog-like than cat-like.

Another PG County alum is Johna. Johna came to ACR labeled as a "feral" with an ear-tip and all, but she turned out to be incredibly sweet and snuggly. She recently went to her forever home as well.

Pulling cats like Johna and Mia, and Sockie - one of the first cats pulled from the PG shelter in April and who currently resides at our headquarters - helps reduce shelter costs and lowers the number of cats who are euthanized. We are grateful for the partnership we've built with local shelters, especially PG County shelter, who's made great strides in working with rescues. Together, we can continue to save more lives.



Mission Statement:

Alley Cat Rescue (ACR) works to protect cats on several levels: locally through rescue, rehabilitation and adoption of cats and nationally through a network of Cat Action Teams. ACR is dedicated to the health, well-being and welfare of all cats: domestic, stray, abandoned and feral. ACR also assists the international animal community.

Alley Cat Rescue Staff:

Louise Holton - *Founder and President* - Denise Hilton - *Director of Operations*
Maggie Funkhouser - *Director of Communications and Development*
Tom Ragusa - *Finance Associate* - Joe Zimmermann - *Research Intern*

Visit Us Online!

SaveACat.org

Sign up for our Enews!

[Facebook.com/AlleyCatRescueInc](https://www.facebook.com/AlleyCatRescueInc)

Join the conversation!

[Twitter.com/saveacatorg](https://twitter.com/saveacatorg)

Follow us!

[Instagram.com/AlleyCatRescue](https://www.instagram.com/AlleyCatRescue)

Check us out!

AlleyCatRescue.Blogspot.com

Stay in the know with trending hot topics!

Ways You Can Help!

CFC#10472

Give through your workplace's Combined Federal Campaign!

GivingWorks.EBay.com

Sell items on EBay, with proceeds to benefit ACR!

Smile.Amazon.com

Buy items on Amazon, with proceeds to benefit cats!

V-DAC.com

Donate your old vehicle!

Advocate for community cats everywhere you go!

Wearing ACR gear can help spark great conversation. Why not talk about cats while waiting in line at the grocery store or the bank? It's the perfect opportunity to educate others on the importance of TNR and the humane option for managing outdoor cats.

Cotton t-shirts and long-sleeve shirts are available in sizes **small, medium, large, XL, 2XL, and 3XL**. T-shirt has a v-neck. Shirt color is black with white text.

Polyester tote bag measures 14" wide by 12" tall. Bag is hunter green with black handles.

BPA-free stainless steel water bottle holds 20oz of liquid. Color is blue.



V-Neck T-Shirt \$18 each

MD residents please add \$1.08 sales tax.



Long-Sleeve Shirt \$20 each

MD residents please add \$1.20 sales tax.



Tote Bag \$15 each

MD residents add \$0.90 sales tax.



Water Bottle \$10 each

MD residents please add \$0.96 sales tax.

Order Form

Name: _____ Order Total \$: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Item	Size(s) (S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL)	Price	No. of Items	Total
V-Neck T-Shirt		\$18		\$
Long-Sleeve Shirt		\$20		\$
Tote Bag	NA	\$15		\$
Water Bottle	NA	\$10		\$

*Maryland residents please remember to add the appropriate sales tax for each item.

Checks payable to Alley Cat Rescue or provide your credit card information.

Visa MasterCard Discover American Express

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

Order total	\$
Sales tax (6%)*	\$
Total with tax	\$

Send orders to P. O. Box 585 Mt. Rainier, MD 20712

Feeding Community Cats Made Easy!

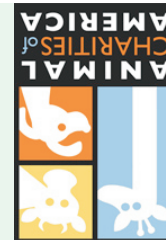
Whether you're feeding a few outdoor cats or caring for a large colony, the **Outdoor Pet Feeder from Carter Pets** is a must have! The revolutionary design saves food, time, and money.

The covered design and light-weight door flap keeps food dry and protected from birds, while the unique water moat keeps ants and other crawling bugs out of the food. Comes with two bowls that hold up to 12 cups of dry food each.

ACR has been using these feeders for awhile and we love them so much, we've partnered with Carter Pets. **For every feeder purchased, a donation will be made to ACR.** That's right! Upon check out online, simply add "Alley Cat Rescue" in the special instructions to the seller or mention our name when ordering by phone. It's that easy! Order online at **OutdoorPetFeeder.com** or by phone at 602-245-4247.



More Helpful Info on Caring for Community Cats Inside!



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 114
Langhorne, PA.

Alley Cat Rescue
PO Box 585,
Mt. Rainier,
Maryland 20712

