

HFC Committee

From: Karen 'Kitty' Irene Tolson Carroll <hawkmom74@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 2:36 AM
To: HFC Committee
Cc: Karen 'Kitty' Irene Tolson Carroll
Subject: TNR
Attachments: SayNotoFeralCatColonies.docx

Karen 'Kitty' Irene Tolson Carroll
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www.birdsofprey.net

www.birdstrikeforce.com

Say NO!!! to Feral Cat Colonies:

I am responding to the proposal of feral cat colonies as a way to manage the excess populations of stray cats. As a licensed wildlife educator I always mention how the average housecat living free-range as a pet or as an un-owned feral is a really bad idea. Cats are an introduced species in this continent. They are lovely animals, but need to not be allowed to roam free. Studies have shown that outside cats and especially feral cats are highly destructive to our native wildlife. Cats kill over four BILLION birds a year in the United States alone. Our bird populations are down by 40 % in the past decade. Outside cats around human habitation and un-owned ferals are a major factor in this decline. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission supports the 'Cats Indoors' grass roots program started by the American Bird Conservancy (www.abcbirds.org/cats). Several threatened and endangered species are adversely affected by outside free-ranging cats or feral cat colonies. The cute and charming burrowing owl is one of several species that outside cats are a major factor in their decline. Does your community really want a bunch of stray cats running around? Would YOU as a business owner want cats hanging around your door, begging for food from outside dining patrons? Hilton Head is dealing with a lawsuit due to feral cats attacking visitors:

https://www.islandpacket.com/news/business/article229716834.html?fbclid=IwAR0Cv2SD9iDVjJa9lq_iCjBaEt2J2qj0qcMcrpVs1wiE_MF1vrV8HkAVFhU Do you want cats raiding your dumpsters and trashcans? Defecating, leaving feces around your business, fighting, spraying and stinking up the area? Toxoplasmosis that which is carried by cat feces is a major health threat. Any sandbox, mulched landscaping or sandy area becomes a litter box. **The food left out for the stray and feral cats also attracts other un-wanted vermin: pigeons, gulls, crows, rats, rodents, raccoons, skunks, opossums, stray dogs, coyotes, and creates nuisance bears. The cat feeders enable a huge disruptive factor. For the feeding unintentionally escalates AND supports higher populations of raccoons, opossums, rats, etc.. This makes the populations MUCH higher than the carrying capacity of the environment. A factor often overlooked. And is a disaster for other wildlife. The feeding stations become infection epicenters where the other wildlife feeds. Thus, spreading diseases to other wildlife, and consequently humans in the community.**

https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/cat-astrophe-west-virginia-city-faces-feline-flood/article_8cb5d605-1b42-5daf-b04b-d3e5cb7e6b66.html?fbclid=IwAR3EXoUU85Bm8yuv-EKJdzWZsjlrqslRMu1AE7eRIP1xnpkHwh2NPhVvDLg

Note: Example of the mentality of cat feeders: "Got mice, get more by leaving cat food out for your new cats". My neighbor "We have rats because we left cat food out so get more cats so more cat food so more rats so get more cats so more cat food so more rats so get even more cats so more cat food so more rats so get more cats so more cat food so more rats so get more cats so more cat food so more rats so get more cats...." DUH! isn't one definition of insanity is doing the same thing but expecting a different result? DUH!-----This is what can happen if cat leash laws are not enacted and enforced: https://www.clickorlando.com/news/brevard-county-deputy-wounded-in-shooting?fbclid=IwAR0AdbvMIIRKgR784UuOiUco9liEUdlwR6t7Mb_zWWhOR2gjBkKyyJvhRw4 Basically, TNR degrades community esthetics and standards. And is a HUGE imposition on public safety and health. And the poor police are caught in the middle: <http://www.brevardsheriff.com/home/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Trap-Neuter-Return.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ebLCjRWkAz3Lcx1U3ndq7MWMn-HwNhp1t2fWd0FziBZKgycoK73wqpc>

I think not. *It is a poor image for the community, reduces property values* for homeowners and a bad plan. Also, even well - fed cats **still hunt**. This is a fact of nature. The feeding will not stop the hunting and killing of our native songbirds and wildlife by the feral cat(s). *And feeding makes female cats more 'fertile' with larger and more frequent litters of more unwanted kittens*. Also, research has shown that feral colonies have the trend to become a dumping ground for un-wanted cats. Cat scratch fever is a real condition. Cat bites and scratches are highly septic. Even a minor injury to you can become a serious infection. <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/when-cats-bite-1-in-3-patients-bitten-in-hand-hospitalized-infections-common>. Even the smallest bite or scratch injuries to a wild bird by a cat will result in the death from infection of the bird within a day or two. These same well-fed cats climb trees, raid bird nests and decimate cottontail rabbit and quail populations. Not to mention that cats are a 4:1 ratio in the spread of rabies compared to dogs. And **cats** are now **the number one rabies vector** to humans per the CDC. In some states, such as Florida's mild winters where there is no winter die-off, the smell, odors, fighting, feces, spraying from TNR colonies have started to adversely affect property values. TNR colonies are now considered 'nuisances' and **real estate property values fall due to the presence of a stray/feral/TNR colony**. In several areas in Florida; there are new reports of feral cat colonies becoming such a problem that residents are moving away. One example is the Lee County (Ft. Myers) area. Residents are moving out of neighborhoods due to the presence of cat colonies and the resulting problems they cause. Link: <http://www.nbc-2.com/story/26804217/lee-county-program-inadvertently-floods-stella-street-neighborhood-with-cats#.V3caVJMrKRt.....Here> is another example: <https://keprtv.com/news/local/cat-colony-a-nuisance-richland-parks->

businesses-consider-relocating-feral-felines?fbclid=IwAR2YbxA4bWfSSgGds9x8xEsDLtJfJDdaaoVO5TyEHFa8PmO78Y-GUorRJsho

Here is an estimate of the costs of TNR to communities: This is a rough estimate based on census data and without looking at populations or other demographics and not taking too much of my time. There are approximately 19,500 incorporated towns/cities in the U.S. If each town/city were to TNR 1000 cats in one year, that would amount to 19,500,000 cats total. At an average cost of \$50 per cat (just neuter and RV) this would amount to \$975 million for the year per town or \$950 million nationwide. This would be easy for the few largest cities in the country but almost or completely impossible for smaller towns. There is not enough money or grant funding to accomplish this. And 19.5 million cats is still a long way from the estimated 90 million free-roaming. If somebody wants to crunch more numbers for a more accurate estimate and look at populations and area of towns, then estimate the numbers of cats in each town (90 million cats over 3.8 million square miles is 23 cats per sq mile - not evenly distributed of course - more in urban than wilderness areas or 1/4 free-roaming cat per person) perhaps we could have some theoretical data to present.

I am calling out to community leaders and commissioners: You are failing your community and residents. Trap-neuter-release (**really Trap Neuter Re-Abandon**) is a failure everywhere it has been implemented. Usually started by an over-emotional, highly vocal, zealous, and strident minority of people that pressures a community to adopt TNR. Shelters are under great pressure to reduce the euthanasia rate and TNR is a poor way to deal with it. It is unusual for a city to call for volunteers to deal with this issue. If large, corporate pet store chains are funding TNR, they need to be told to get lost. **Explosions of feral cat populations follow them everywhere they go.** In addition explosions of pest wildlife that feed at the feeding stations as well. Rats, raccoons, opossums, skunks all eat at feeding stations. In two years that's what will happen in your town, and there will be calls to "adopt" un-adoptable cats. These super-sized corporate run pet stores, are determined to fill our nation with dumped, abandoned cats in order to fatten their bottom line, it is a HUGE money train for them to supply cat supplies, vet care and food. There are certain reasonable speculations and studies about the effects of toxoplasmosis on the human brain that add an extremely disturbing element to the nature of their actions. FYI: Toxoplasmosis is in the syphilis family of diseases and follows the same morphology, and is explained here: <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2017/06/21/do-feral-cats-have-special-needs-or-is-their-plight-all-in-our-heads/> TNR advocates are acting like Big Tobacco of the 60's and 70's. TNR advocates ignore the science of the damage that TNR cat colonies do to wildlife, humans, neighborhood esthetics, quality of life, property values, and even the quality of life of the cats themselves. TNR needs to STOP before it is too late for our communities and wildlife.

Example: ONE cat destroyed an entire colony of Terns..... <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/9/7/445>

Rabies: <https://www.jdnews.com/news/20190813/update-father-says-son-has-begun-treatment-cautions-against-feeding-feral-cats?fbclid=IwAR1w80WJfZNIinCCIQ4cJ9hIhD08Nj0f0gwPywVEp99zUVWa4tVmNpO3SgPA>

Just do some research and see how bad an idea that feral cat colonies really are. The American Bird Conservancy, (abcbirds.org) National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, National Geographic Society, Smithsonian, Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, Florida Wildlife Federation, Florida Audubon, Florida Wildlife Rehabilitators, and many other well-respected wildlife groups are against feral cat colonies. There are also laws being enacted across the US to stop the spread of this ill-conceived idea. The idea of having feral cat colonies just 'kicks the can down the road', delaying the real core problem: Too many cats and not enough homes or resources to keep them out of the ecosystem. **Cat colonies 'community cats' and their feeders (who's food dumping practices at colonies also end up feeding nuisance wildlife) are basically "hoarders without borders". Not wanting or to deal with or ignoring the un-intended (yet known) consequences to their community and others of their ill-conceived, yet well meaning position. All at the expense of our native wildlife populations, public health, community esthetics and property values.** Unfortunately, the sad, difficult decision to euthanize has to be done. And feral cats become vectors to several diseases: Rabies, distemper, Typhus: <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Public-Health-Reports-Several-Cases-of-Typhus-495197621.html>

Do some research, then I think you will also say NO to Feral Cat Colonies.

Instead, encourage and pass leash laws (and enforce) with stiff fines and mandatory micro-chipping, cat owners to keep cats indoors, leashed when outside or in a 'catio'; an enclosed outside area to allow cats to be outside without entering

the ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Kitty Tolson Carroll

Live Oak, Florida

Links: www.abcbirds.org cats indoors <http://www.tnrfactcheck.org> www.birdsofprey.net links page

Nature Magazine:

https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380?fbclid=IwAR2a5nT5F9i4EOp2D444z3fHvU6lulHwXZ1sR2-1Fai_bpVgxeHPogpz0No

<http://www.merrittherald.com/feral-cat-program-nixed/>

<http://wildlife.org/jwm-study-domestic-cat-attacks-cause-variety-of-wildlife-deaths/> Video of feral cat eating baby

birds: https://www.facebook.com/bpctnz/?hc_ref=NEWSFEED&fref=nf

[Video of CDC recommendations rabies vaccinations.](#)

<https://www.adn.com/opinions/2017/06/21/do-feral-cats-have-special-needs-or-is-their-plight-all-in-our-heads/>

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Public-Health-Reports-Several-Cases-of-Typhus-495197621.html>

www.stoptoxoplasmosis.com

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1261521/uptown-residents-sue-city-over-cat-program.html?fbclid=IwAR1Eu6vTuiqrXXedXJEKJ6NCrAAOW5DoNqxcHy1pW4J41gz6ZdoMrK5Tnc>

<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/when-cats-bite-1-in-3-patients-bitten-in-hand-hospitalized-infections-common>.

: <http://www.nbc-2.com/story/26804217/lee-county-program-inadvertently-floods-stella-street-neighborhood-with-cats#.V3caVJMrKrt.....> Here is another example: <https://keprtv.com/news/local/cat-colony-a-nuisance-richland-parks-businesses-consider-relocating-feral-felines?fbclid=IwAR2YbxA4bWfSSgGds9x8xEsDLtfdJdDaaVO5TyEHFa8PmO78Y-GUorRjsho>

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Public-Health-Reports-Several-Cases-of-Typhus-495197621.html>

https://www.islandpacket.com/news/business/article229716834.html?fbclid=IwAR0Cv2SD9iDVjJa9lq_iCjBaEt2J2qj0qcMcrpVs1wiE_MF1vrV8HkAVFhU

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/philadelphias-stray-cat-population>

<http://extensionpubs.unl.edu/publication/9000016367320/feral-cats-and-their-management/?fbclid=IwAR0ljRuAkHozQgpmeoDgDJRCHrpZ2wmAU8frJ0ZLuGJ-Wnoo33sP2NaSmIg>

[Sea Otters dying from toxoplasmosis from cat feces:](#)

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/28/science/california-sea-otters-cats.html?fallback=0&recId=1Q3PsaA7VMlzAl2siERhvrgHsDf&locked=0&geoContinent=NA&geoRegion=NY&recAlloc=control&geoCountry=US&blockId=home-discovery-vi-prg&imp_id=945680853&action=click&module=Discovery&pgtype=Homepage&fbclid=IwAR1BZ4XFVSppic9xB2-zBoin3UXsLFaccz48tbjJkMa0OanHxrEu4sg5YVg

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/02/03/breaking-news/sick-monk-seal-picked-up-from-kolina-diagnosed-with-infection-spread-by-cats/?fbclid=IwAR0mnBHeLdeBDN1QiaMOKzCmWxlz_gGbKxB3BeVWtdEL_N2jWNLC1qjUQWM

To: Editor, Kingston Daily Freeman

From: Annie Mardiney

April 26, 2017

Dear Editor:

The Town of Ulster Board is considering a cat control ordinance. I have urged them to vote "yes". Cats should be legally treated the same as dogs: be up to date on vaccinations, never allowed to roam free outside, be licensed, and owners held legally and financially accountable for any property damage they cause. Feeding "cat communities" should be illegal, and backed by a hefty fine.

I am baffled why the Town of Ulster Board, prior to this hearing, in a private conversation, agreed to allow the UC-SPCA to go ahead and trap, neuter and release feral cats, AND pay them \$40/cat. The UC-SPCA plans to keep friendly cats for adoption (good) and return the feral cats where they were found (wrong on SO many levels!). From the Freeman's own report: " "We've already tried this two or three times in this neighborhood and had it fail," Supervisor James Quigley said." And yet, here we go again! Even PETA confirms that TNR does not work in the long term, does not protect wildlife and dooms unowned cats to the cruelest, and shortest, existence.

Just in the past 10 days, I took in the following cat-injured wildlife: 2 nestling mourning doves (one died, one had to be euthanized), a crow (maimed so bad it had to be euthanized), a baby rabbit (died after 3 days of treatment), a woodpecker (still alive and slowly recovering, which is simply a miracle given the very deep gash in his neck). The phone calls from people who allow their cats outside are flooding in now. When your cat brings in one baby rabbit or bird after another, but you refuse to keep the cat inside, why are you calling me? So you feel you did the "right thing?" Seriously?!

Cat owners: keep your cats inside, on leash, or purchase a "catio" which will allow your cat to be safe outside without hurting wildlife. Look on-line, there are many affordable catios. Perhaps the SPCA could help with funding by giving \$40, or more, to cat owners who agree to do the right thing and keep their cats under control and safe.

Town of Ulster residents, I urge you to write to Supervisor Quigley immediately, and ask that the Board vote YES to their proposed cat control ordinance.

Annie Mardiney

NOTE TO THE EDITOR: PLEASE DO NOT PUBLISH MY CONTACT INFO.

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<https://www.facebook.com/sal.grey.9/videos/o.36144203115/1825947610993242/?type=2&theater>



Take Action: Florida's Native Birds and Wildlife Need Your Voice

Urge members of the Florida House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to vote NO on SB 1320.

SECURE3.CONVIO.NET

I'm sending the following letter to our local paper re a proposal to make people who capture and vet feral/outside cats to register with the Town first. For what it's worth. Long, I know.

December 22nd, 2016

Dear New Patlz Times Editor:

I just read your latest edition, which included a rather slanted article about a cat rescuer registry proposal, recently presented to the Town and Village Boards of New Paltz. I am against any proposed laws that support TNR programs, the care of feral cat communities, or that require professionals who capture/rescue outside cats to register with area governments.

How about some couple completely different cat proposals? Pet cats should be licensed and vaccinated. Pet cats should be required to have an ID chip in their body, just like responsible dog owners do with their dogs, so that lost pet cats can be quickly re-connected to their owners. TNR programs do not work, and should not be publicly funded. Feral cats should be humanely caught. Those that might make good pets should be put up for adoption. Those that are too

sick or feral, should be humanely euthanized. Plain and simple, pet cats should be monitored and controlled just like dogs.

I think it is important, especially when writing about lightening-rod subjects such as outdoor cats, to look at facts. Cats are not a native species. They are not part of a healthy, native environment. They are an extremely destructive invasive species. TNR programs do not stop cats from killing. Feeding feral cats does not stop them from killing. 5.4 million cats are hit by cars each year in the U.S., according to the National Traffic Safety Administration. Picture a pile of dead kittens. Feel sick? I do. If you let your cats wander, you are contributing to that pile.

The leading cause of death in cats is Feline Leukemia, which is picked up outside from cats getting scratched or bitten by infected strays.

America's estimated 150 million outdoor cats kill up to 3.7 billion wild birds per year, according to a 2015 report from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center. A University of Nebraska study from 2010 states that cats have been responsible for the extinction of 33 wild bird species worldwide.

In a "kitty cam" study by the University of Georgia and National Geographic Society, tiny video cameras were attached to people who owned pet cats but let them roam outside. The footage revealed 44 % of their pets were cutthroats, averaging one kill every 17 hours. They only brought 23% of their kills back home.

In 2015, NY Governor Cuomo vetoed legislation that would have used public funds to support statewide TNR programs. The governor called the proposed bill "problematic" for many reasons, including evidence that shows TNR does not reduce feral cat populations and that feral cats have a major negative impact on wildlife, "including threatened and endangered species, habitats, and food sources for native predators."

Based on all this evidence, the logical and humane conclusion is that cats should NEVER be allowed outside, for their own safety (from vehicles, coyotes, fishers, dogs, toxoplasmosis, ticks, lice, mites, untreated wounds, rabies, etc.) and for the protection of native wildlife.

Little by little, many towns and states (Delaware) now have laws against letting cats run loose. Eliminating feral cat populations is extremely important, as is keeping pet cats inside. It's the safest and kindest position to take if you are a cat owner, for the sake of the cat and of wildlife.

Annie Mardiney

PO Box 65

Rosendale, NY 12472

cell: 845 943 8098 (please do not publish)

NYS DEC Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit #1043

NYS Permit to Possess (wild bird for education purposes) #755

USFWS Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permit #MR191121-0

USFWS Permit to Possess (wild birds for education purposes) #MB 18982-8

I have been volunteer wildlife rehabilitator and wild bird educator for over ten years

WARNING: This is a long post. [Gail](#), this is the letter I just sent Mr. Quigley.

Dear Mr. James Quigley,

As per our conversation yesterday, I have included some information with sources below that may assist you with the feral cat issue you are experiencing in Ulster County. Aside from the known negative effects feral and outdoor cats have on wildlife, which we discussed, there are significant human health concerns and property rights considerations that must be taken into account when developing strategies to mitigate damages caused by feral and outdoor cats.

Ultimately, the only way to immediately and permanently remove the multiple threats feral and outdoor cats pose to wildlife, the physical environment, property, and people is to physically remove the cats. This removal can take place in three different ways, involving first the capture of these cats, and then the adoption of friendly cats, containment in fenced sanctuaries of social or truly feral animals, and/or euthanasia of unadoptable cats.

It's important to recognize that the main argument against trapping and removing cats is not really a cat issue. It's part of the broader No-Kill, anti-euthanasia movement, and we see the same mentality among those who advocate for other feral domesticated animals, especially horses out west. Unfortunately this is not a subject which has middle ground for No-Kill advocates, and makes removal of unwanted cats especially difficult as local shelters are under constant pressure to become No-Kill, to the detriment of the communities they serve. No-Kill shelters by default can no longer be open admission shelters as cages fill up quickly and remain full until contained animals are adopted out, and thus people attempting to trap and remove problem animals on their property are either forced to take matters into their own hands, or the animals are taken by the shelter and either put back onto the landowner's property via a Trap-Neuter-Return (hereafter TNR) program, or taken to a feral cat colony that is often run by volunteers on property that is not their own (colonies are often located on commercial property and sometimes exist without the knowledge of the business owner).

I do not know what the eventual goals are of the Kingston SPCA. I have been out of touch with the policies of this shelter for a while. However, the vast majority of SPCAs across the country openly support TNR and are moving towards No-Kill. The law governing Animal Control in Ulster County (Chapter 75) looks like it needs to be updated to give Animal Control the legal authority to remove cats. Currently, Chapter 75 only discusses cats during rabies requirements, which unfortunately do not currently apply to feral and unowned cats in New York State law. In fact, state law specifically

excludes property owners from ownership of feral animals and thus rabies vaccine requirements (Title 4, Article 21: https://www.health.ny.gov/.../com.../zoonoses/rabies/title_4.htm). Inevitably, Animal Control will be the service responsible for managing stray cats, just as they currently do with dogs. I'll discuss this more below when I propose short- and long-term solutions to your feral cat issue.

I will not focus on the impacts wildlife populations here aside from discussing disease concerns, but instead will focus on the human health aspect of feral and outdoor cats and why these free-roaming domesticated animals should be contained and/or removed. I grew up in Hurley but have spent the majority of my professional career in Georgia. We have similar issues with feral and free roaming pet cats here in Georgia, and thus some of my documentation will be Georgia related.

There are two main diseases (although others also exist) that are deeply concerning that can be transmitted from feral and outdoor cats to humans: rabies and toxoplasmosis. Rabies is a fatal disease in mammals. To date, rabies is the only documented virus that causes nearly 100% fatality in humans after neurological symptoms have developed, and less than 10 humans in all of history have survived a rabies infection. Vaccinating domesticated animals against rabies is thus of utmost importance to protecting humans from this deadly disease. Although people who promote TNR may claim that a single rabies vaccine can provide lifetime immunity to trapped feral cats, this is summarily untrue. I have been in contact with my colleagues in Columbus, Georgia, who are currently fighting TNR legislation (I misspoke yesterday, I believed they defeated a bill, when in actuality they've been fighting legislation that was passed years ago). I believe they have sent you letters from the Center for Disease Control, the National Association of the State Public Health Veterinarians' Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevent and Control, and the Georgia Department of Public Health stating that all felines are required to have a booster vaccination one year after the initial rabies vaccine, regardless of the age of the animal at initial vaccination. If for some reason you did not receive this documentation please let me know, I can send it your way. You can also call Sal Grey directly (number removed for privacy). She's been working very closely with the commission in Columbus and knows far more about their successes than I do.

Feeding feral and outdoor cats poses tremendous risk to people due to possible rabies transmission. Unlike a sickened wild animal, people are less likely to acknowledge danger when a free-roaming cat approaches them outdoors, increasing the risk of rabies transmission from cats to people. Additionally, leaving food out for feral and outdoor cats attract animals that can carry rabies (skunks, foxes, raccoons, etc.) and can thus expose cats, people, livestock, and companion animals to rabies. Most recently on December 23, 2016, a resident who was feeding a stray cat in Watertown, New York, had to undergo post-exposure rabies shots after the cat got into a fight with a skunk and contracted rabies (source: <http://www.wwnytv.com/.../341232.../rabid-cat-found-in-watertown>). In fact, the most expensive rabies event in North American history occurred in New Hampshire in 1994 when a rabid kitten of unknown origin was sold by a pet shop. The kitten was infected with a rabies variant usually associated with raccoons. Approximately 665 people received rabies post-exposure prophylaxis at a cost of \$2 million (source: <https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/m0038110/m0038110.asp>). A rabid feral cat in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, exposed multiple persons to rabies in October, 2016 (source: <http://www.wpxi.com/.../allegheny-county-health-dep.../458506568>), and I fear it is only a matter of time before we begin seeing cases of human rabies exposure due to feral and outdoor cats in the Hudson Valley. As the vast majority of my family and friends still live in Ulster County, the avoidable transmission of rabies and other diseases transmitted by feral and free-roaming cats to humans is of great concern to me.

It's also important to note that feral cats are contracting rabies even in areas with extensive TNR programs (Sacramento, California, source: <http://www.sacbee.com/entertai.../pets/article121737573.html>), likely due to inadequate vaccinations. Thus, the Center for Disease Control recommends the enforcement of existing appropriate animal control laws that include the removal of stray or unwanted cats rather than relying on indirect population management strategies such as TNR (article attached, see "Rabies Prevention and Management of Cats in the Context of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release Programmes"). I have also attached a map of all incidents of rabies in domesticated cats in the United States in 2014. As you can see from the figure, the northeast is a hotspot of cats contracting rabies, due to a combination of factors. These data highlight the short- and long-term importance of giving Animal Control the authority (and funding) to deal with feral and stray cats, if they don't already have this authority.

Toxoplasmosis is the second disease I will focus on in this email. Toxoplasmosis is a parasitic disease caused by *Toxoplasma gondii*. Although many people who become infected with this parasite may never exhibit symptoms, damage to the brain, eyes (blindness can occur, and has happened to children on playgrounds if infected sand gets in their eyes), and other organs can occur in susceptible individuals. In humans the illness can also cause miscarriages, and the disease has been linked to mental health disorders such as schizophrenia (CDC publication: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/9/11/03-0143_article). The parasite can only complete its life cycle and reproduce in the gut of a cat. Toxoplasmosis can be transmitted by eating raw or undercooked contaminated meat, drinking infected water, receiving an infected organ transplant or blood transfusion, or by coming in contact with infected soil through gardening or sandboxes at playgrounds. It's important to note that all of these transmission sources begin with cat feces, typically deposited in the environment by feral and outdoor cats. While wild felids such as bobcats can shed *T. gondii* oocytes, native predators occur at such low densities and occur in relatively remote areas away from people that they rarely cause infection in people and livestock. It is the domestic cat that is responsible for the prevalence of toxoplasmosis infections in people. The Center for Disease Control discusses toxoplasmosis, and ultimately

recommends to keep cats indoors and not to adopt or handle stray cats, especially kittens (source: https://www.cdc.gov/parasi.../toxoplasmosis/gen_info/faqs.html).

In summary, problem cats must be removed, adopted, contained, and/or euthanized to remove threats to people, pets, and property. The long-term solution requires a different, multi-staged strategy. I've attached a letter from Dr. Jonathan Ambrose, Chief of the Nongame Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, who discusses this strategy on the last page.

In short, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources recommends:

- Control populations of feral cats through humane capture, medical evaluation, neutering, vaccination, and adoption, if possible. Humane euthanasia of diseased or otherwise unadoptable cats will be a necessary component of this program.
- Cats and dogs should have similar laws regarding containment (enclosure and leash laws), vaccination schedules, and fines for violating these laws.
- Existing laws that protect human health, livestock, and property from feral and free-roaming domesticated animals, cats included, should be enforced.
- Require that cats trapped, neutered, vaccinated, and adopted by individuals or organizations be kept indoors or in an enclosed or fenced facility that prevents cats from roaming.
- Support the American Bird Conservancy's "Cats Indoors" educational program.
- Encourage microchipping of all pet cats, including cats sold commercially, adopted through animal welfare or control facilities, or released into managed enclosures or fenced areas. This will help identify owners of lost cats or the facilities from which the stray cats came.

I have also attached a draft ordinance written by the commission of Winter Park, Florida, who had similar issues of people feeding feral cats in the park, in case this may be of assistance to you.

It was a pleasure speaking with you yesterday. If I can do anything more to assist you please don't hesitate to ask.

Final Alaska Letter:

My proposal to the Alaska Board of Game for revising language in AAC 5 Chapt. 92.029 (submitted 05/01/17):

Thank you for submitting a proposal to Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Boards Division.

Please save the Log Number below for future reference.

LOG NUMBER: EG-F17-067

DETAILS:

Management Unit or Area (if applicable):

Topic (if applicable):

Additional Topics (if applicable): Prohibit Feral Animal Release

Meeting Name: Statewide Regulations

AAC: 5 AAC Chapt. 92.029

Issue:

Respectful Greetings to members of the Alaska Board of Game:

My proposal is to add language to 5 AAC Ch. 92.029 specifically prohibiting release of feral or stray domesticated cats (*Felis catus*) into the outdoors, or maintaining them unconfined anywhere in the state of Alaska, as part of any so-called "no-kill" management scheme touted to be a "viable alternative" to euthanasia or other lethal means of animal control currently provided for by existing State regulation.

Such schemes are identified under various acronyms such as: TNR--"Trap, Neuter, Release"; TVNR--"Trap, Vaccinate, Neuter, Release"; RTF--"Return-to-Field", etc. Proponents' claims to the contrary notwithstanding, these programs have proved utterly worthless for control or reduction of feral cat populations, and they pose a growing public health threat to our citizens, zoonotic disease threat to our valuable native wild mammals (terrestrial and marine, game and non-game), and a egregious threat by direct depredation to Alaska's smaller native mammal and bird populations.

I submit this proposal because misguided "animal welfare activists" in Alaska have proposed to this Board that exemptions be made to the existing language of 5 AAC 92.029 prohibiting release of domesticated animals into the wild, and which prohibits maintaining feral domesticated animals as defined per AS.16.05.940 "...if the animal is not under direct control of an owner, including being confined in a cage or other physical structure, or being restrained on a leash."

Such "humane" activists--specifically the Anchorage-based group "Mojo's Hope" and Wasilla-based group "Clear Creek Cat Rescue" desire exemptions to 5 AAC 92.029 so they can feed and maintain unconfined feral cat colonies in our environment. These groups already maintain such colonies in Anchorage and in the Matsu Valley illegally--they have admitted this on their websites and I've obtained screenshots of said admissions, which I will print and provide upon request during the period for public input or as the Board directs.

Last May an Anchorage Animal Control Officer verbally acknowledged to me that at least two illegal feral cat colonies in Anchorage were "managed" or otherwise cared for by members of "Mojo's Hope". The group's president Shannon Basner volunteers at the Anchorage animal shelter. One of her online statements suggest the illegal cat colonies may have been moved to locations which are being kept secret.

The irresponsible practice of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and then returning feral cats where they were trapped represents egregious threats to public health and wildlife conservation, and does nothing whatsoever to reduce feral cat presence in our environment--quite the opposite. The following examples constitute some of the reasons for my proposal and opposition to Ms. Basner's proposal which she unsuccessfully attempted to submit to the Board last year. Please be advised that I can provide peer-reviewed scientific reports substantiating every example listed below, and again, will provide said documentation on Board request:

(1) Since the advent of "no-kill" feral cat programs, cats have become the primary domesticated rabies vector in the US. Nearly one-third of human rabies exposures--about 13,000 annually--are cat-vectored. This has been the case for nearly three decades.

(2) One reason for this is that TNR colony "care-takers" only give the initial rabies shot when they trap a cat. The required annual rabies booster is never given, because once trapped the cats become wary and difficult to re-trap (so the caretakers simply don't bother).

(3) The worst incidence of human rabies exposure in US history was due to a TNR feral cat colony in one New Hampshire town in 1994. A rabid raccoon attracted to food left out for the cats transmitted the virus to four feral kittens. The colony "caretakers" subsequently gave (or sold) these kittens to a local pet store, which distributed them to the public. 665 individuals had to receive post-exposure prophylactic inoculations for rabies. It cost that municipality nearly \$2 million to treat them. Rabies is nearly always fatal.

(4) Cats are also the definitive host of a highly dangerous pathogen--*Toxoplasma gondii*--which reproduces exclusively in feline digestive tracts. In the US between 40% and 70% of free-roaming cats are infected with it, usually throughout their lives. The pathogen's oocysts are its infectious agents, and infected cats shed hundreds of millions of them with their feces. The oocysts persist and remain infectious for up to 4.5 years, and--again thanks to "no-kill" programs like TNR and the resulting proliferation of feral cats--they now occur in our environment at densities of from three to 434 per square foot.

(5) Although it's almost certain *T. gondii* oocyst density in Alaska is less than in the lower '48--if for no other reason than because of our colder climate and smaller feral cat population--a pregnant woman in Anchorage consumed toxoplasmosis-infected flesh from a moose which her husband shot in October 2013, and passed the oocysts she ingested with her meal to her unborn child, who nearly died. The child recovered thanks to heroic measures, but may still lose his eyesight to ocular lesions caused by toxoplasmosis. He will in any event be infected for life.

(6) Per the CDC toxoplasmosis is the leading cause of pathogenic blindness--mostly but by no means exclusively in children--and the second-leading cause of fatal food-borne illness, surpassed only by Salmonella. 4,500 Americans are hospitalized with toxoplasmosis-related food-borne illness each year. Nearly 10% of them die.

(7) The incidence is far greater in areas where there are large populations of free-roaming cats: 50% of Ohio's white-tailed deer population is now infected with toxoplasmosis. It's now unsafe to eat venison from these animals unless it's cooked to a core temperature of at least 157 degrees F, or frozen to at least -21 degrees F for at least two weeks to destroy the infectious oocysts.

(8) In British Columbia some Inuit mothers have been afflicted with chronic miscarriages and birth defects after consuming toxoplasmosis-infected beluga meat. The prevalence of infection in belugas is such that Canadian health agencies now attempt to screen beluga for toxoplasmosis before allowing its consumption.

(9) Toxoplasmosis causes up to 5,000 stillbirths, blind, hydrocephalic, microcephalic, severely deformed and mentally debilitated infants in the US each year.

(10) *T. gondii* oocysts survive in seawater, which they enter with runoff into the nearshore marine environment, where they are taken up into the tissues of oysters, mussels, anchovies and sardines. Cetaceans, pinnipeds and otters from Arctic Canada to New Zealand and from the US Pacific Coast to the United Kingdom consume these contaminated organisms and die from it--by the thousands. Apparently all species of terrestrial mammals--and several bird species--are just as susceptible to toxoplasmosis as marine mammals.

(11) *T. gondii* oocysts contaminate above-ground rural and/or urban drinking water supplies if they're inadequately filtered--chlorination does not kill them. This has caused toxoplasmosis outbreaks in several regions.

(12) The oocysts can and do aerosolize. Inhalation or ingestion of one oocyst is sufficient to blind, permanently debilitate or kill a child, elderly or immuno-compromised person. Possibly one-fifth of the US population is infected with toxoplasmosis. A healthy immune system suppresses its symptoms. However, everyone's immune system will degrade with age, and the oocysts will still be present--toxoplasmosis infection is for life--there is no cure.

(13) I have mentioned only two of the more than three dozen deleterious and/or potentially fatal zoonotic diseases which cats carry--some others are bartonellosis, tularemia, leishmaniasis, MRSA, toxocariasis and plague. These diseases are more prevalent and infectious in regions with large stray and feral cat populations. My purpose in submitting this proposal in opposition to legalizing TNR or other worthless "no-kill" programs in my state is to prevent Alaska from becoming like those regions.

(14) Describing TNR as "worthless" is by no means an overly harsh assessment. Since the advent of this program in the US, two- and three-decades old feral colonies have become commonplace, for example in Washington DC and Disneyland (Anaheim). Even more telling, TNR was first practiced in the UK. Despite a half-century of TNR, the British stray and feral cat population has more than doubled--from 4.1 million in 1965 to 9.1 million today.

Solution:

Put simply, to specifically and by name outlaw TNR and all other "no-kill" programs predicated on trapping and treating feral domesticated cats and then returning them to the wild, or feeding and maintaining colonies of such cats unconfined, anywhere in the state of Alaska. An example of my proposed textual additions are given below in bold, italicized, underlined font:

Example: AAC 92.029 Permit for Possessing Live Game(d) Under this section, and in accordance with the definition of "game" as in AS. 69.05.940 (which includes feral domestic animals), a game animal defined as deleterious exotic wildlife or nonindigenous gallinaceous bird is feral if the animal is not under direct control of the owner, including being confined in a cage or other physical structure, or being restrained on a leash; feral animals shall not be maintained unconfined in Alaska under the aegis of "no-kill" management programs such as TNR, TVNR, RTF or any other such program not providing for secure and continuous confinement of such animals at all times. Owners of such animals shall apply for permits issued by the department for all animals in their care, and shall abide by all conditions required by said permits.

In support of the above I include text from AAC 92.029 Permit for Possessing Live Game (h): "Upon application" (for temporary release for hunting...field trials, etc) the board will add a species to the list in (b) of this section if there is clear and convincing evidence that the species is (1) not capable of surviving in the wild in Alaska; (2) is not capable of causing a genetic alteration of a species that is indigenous to Alaska; (3) is not capable of causing a significant reduction in the population of a species that is indigenous to Alaska; (4) is not capable of transmitting a disease to a species that is indigenous to Alaska; (5) does not otherwise present a threat to the health or population of a species that is indigenous to Alaska; (6) is not captured from the wild for use as a pet; (7) does not present a conservation concern to the species' native habitat outside of this state; (8) can reasonably be maintained in good health in private ownership; and (9) does not present a likelihood that concerns about, or threats to human health and safety will lead to adverse consequences for captive animals.

The underlined, italicized font in items (1), (3)-(5) and (9) clearly disqualifies feral cats from being considered as a species suitable for even temporary release into the wild.

The alternative solution I propose would be to reclassify feral cats as "vermin" and allow unlimited take, year-round.

Name: Frederick H Minshall
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Return to Boards Process Home

There's good reason for people to be cautious around cats. It's well known that pregnant woman should never clean a cat's litterbox. Cats are vectors for a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*.

Cats play an important role in the spread of toxoplasmosis. When allowed outdoors, they become infected by eating infected rodents, birds, or other small animals. The parasite is then passed in the cat's feces in an oocyst form, which is microscopic.

Kittens and cats can shed millions of oocysts in their feces for as long as 3 weeks after infection. A Toxoplasma-infected cat that is shedding the parasite in its feces contaminates the litter box. If the cat is allowed outside, it can contaminate the soil or water in the environment as well.

Eating vegetables from a garden in which a cat has urinated or defecated can spread the parasite to you. Aquatic life is threatened by runoff and sewage. (In Hawaii, for example, cats are responsible for the deaths of animals 50 times their size; the endangered monk seal.) On farms, barn cats' excrement can infect livestock. Consuming meat from animals exposed to barn cats can cause latent infections within us... It's estimated 30- 80 million Americans are already infected.

Next, consider the safety of your cat.

Cats should be kept indoors and never allowed to roam outdoors. Outside, cats are at risk for a plethora of dangers. Being run over by a vehicle, being harmed by malicious people, getting injured in fights with other cats, being bitten and infected with feline HIV (among other diseases), being harmed by another animal such as a dog or-unlikely, but entirely possible- being captured by a hawk or coyote; being bitten by a snake, falling into a hole or sewer system, stepping on glass shards or nails or glue traps or into oil, ingesting poisonous or toxic substances such as antifreeze, being burned by vehicle exhaust pipes or a hot engine... the list goes on. Your cat is best cared for when kept within the safety of your home.

Finally, understand that domestic cats are not "natural". Cats don't belong on every continent upon our earth or upon any islands.

Why indeed ARE they everywhere, then? Put simply, we created them and we carried them to every corner of the globe. Just as we manipulated the evolution of wolves to create the abomination known as a poodle (heh, you know it's funny), we humans took the larger, wild, natural ancestors of cats and manipulated their descendants into smaller, more manageable companions.

As we spread across the world, we brought our cats with us. Cats bred and multiplied. We created distinct breeds for our own enjoyment. We didn't stop to think that we were introducing an apex predator into ecosystems which didn't evolve to cope with the specific danger known as cats. We upset the balance, literally. Annually billions of songbirds, chipmunks, baby bunnies, lizards, toads, frogs, baby squirrels, prairie dogs, and even insects like our beautiful butterflies are destroyed- just in Northern America alone. On islands, cats have wiped out entire species.

Consider the magnitude of this problem. We all adore cats. Almost everyone you know has at least one cat. Usually we have multiple cats. And out of everyone you know, most of those who own cats allow them time outdoors. There are millions of cats on this earth, and we humans have the ability to control where most of them roam because most of them belong to us. If we each took just one simple step for the betterment of life on earth by keeping the cats we own inside our own homes, think of the animals we'd save.

It's been estimated that any single cat kills up to 60 other creatures within a single night of being allowed outdoors. This has been estimated from hard data- attaching cameras to cats' collars for weeks and recording the results. Our cats are by nature hunters. We haven't bred that out of them. They hunt even if they aren't hungry; cats hunt for amusement. The small animals and birds they target can't typically recover from the piercing, puncturing sharp teeth and claws of our cats, even if the cats decide not to actively kill the animal. Our beloved kitties maim or kill each time they are allowed outside. Multiply this by home after home after home of cat owners, and you can begin to envision the scale of the harm we humans are causing with our affinity for felines.

Let's all keep our cats indoors. Let's invest in their lives. Purchase more climbing trees. Buy more toys. Spend time with your cat playing every day. Make sure you take the time and initiative to enrich your cat's life personally- instead of putting them out the door to ease boredom.

Let's not be lazy any longer; and let's not be apathetic. Native wildlife is in danger. If we all put forth a little effort, we can begin to turn the tide of damage.

Let's do it before it's too late.

Additional information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis/epi.html>

http://www.vet.cornell.edu/.../Health_Infor.../brochure_toxo.cfm

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../another-black-mark-agains.../>

Terrible, clickbait- style title. Fascinating story of a toddler who became infected with Toxoplasmosis gondii. <https://youtu.be/DuGsc6FkyTY>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380>

<http://www.conservationmagazine.org/.../pet-owners-wont-admi.../>

Now for some real numbers. Cats are to blame for the extinction of at least 33 species across the globe thus far, with more recent studies (2016) showing 63 species driven to extinction by domestic cats.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/113/40/11261.abstract><http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-21236690>

From RAC:

Dear Mayor Carnrike , Honorable Members of the Norwich Common Council, and Supervisors McNeil and Jeffrey:

I am writing on behalf of Responsible Animal Care USA, LLC, an organization based in Rensselaer County, New York. Our membership is comprised of retired law enforcement, animal control, animal lawyers, professors, seasoned liaisons to the New York State legislature, as well as experts in wildlife, the ecosystem, and the species felis catus.

You are faced with a highly emotional, controversial issue: how to handle feral cats in your city. We are faced with the same issues, as is the rest of the country. It is epidemic.

Organizations such as Alley Cat Allies, and even the Humane Society of the United States (in this issue) are persuasive, and garner much support from those who do not understand the implications and consequences of feeding outdoor cats, including but [not] limited to the ramifications for wildlife, the threats of rabies, toxoplasmosis, the unnatural attraction of wildlife to such feeding areas, and the degradation of property values.

Responsible Animal Care USA, LLC addressed the issue of free roaming cats from a factual, legal and scientific standpoint at the annual meeting of the New York State Association of Towns in New York City, in February. You are not alone: in fact, as a result of the free roaming cat crisis, many New York State and United States municipalities are considering or have instituted animal control and cat licensing.

Please, before you make a decision, we respectfully ask you to consider the facts of the feral cat problem plaguing the nation. No kill and TNR are not the solution and the science proves this fact.

Our website is currently under revision, and thus, in addition to the site in progress, <https://racusa.net/cats/> I must refer you to a site I have compiled over the years as a professor of animal law. Here you will find numerous fact based materials on the feral cat crisis and what we can do about it. This includes the legal aspect of the presentation I did in New York City for the Association of Towns ("Key Animals Laws in New York State Pertaining to Cats"). <https://libguides.hvcc.edu/animalstudies/cats>

An ordinance to ban the feeding of free roaming cats is not cruel: it is a step of kindness toward what needs to be a systemic reform. Norwich has the opportunity to take a situation presently or soon to be out of control, and make a solution.

The members of Responsible Animal Care USA, LLC love cats. It is for this reason that we have assembled a library of credible, time-tested research and individuals thoroughly knowledgeable about the subject area. It is unfortunate that lawmakers will likely hear mainly from opponents of this proposed ban.

Please do not hesitate to consult us as you encounter the obstacles that are inevitable. We commend you for taking a step in the right direction for your community. Again, we are here to support you. Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,

Valerie Lang Waldin, J.D., M.L.S.
Vice President, Responsible Animal Care USA, LLC

TNR advocates:

Why do so many TNR advocates seem to have such a severe aversion to data and facts? We publish links to peer-reviewed research and cite sources such as the CDC, The American Medical Veterinary Association, The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, The Mayo Clinic, universities, medical professionals, environmentalists, conservation organizations, and wildlife professionals. We also publish news articles from reputable sources about issues relating to TNR and free-roaming cats. We also publish screen-shots of feral cat hobbyists discussing issues with their cats on social media pages. So many TNR advocates seem to think there is some huge conspiracy between scientists and researchers and medical professionals and universities and public health organizations and wildlife professionals and on and on to "demonize" free-roaming cats. Do you think they all meet at some secret location every year to plan out ways to make cats look bad? Nobody is "demonizing" free-roaming cats. They are just presenting facts about these issues because they are serious issues that need to be addressed in a serious way that actually works to mitigate the problem.

We know it's not the cat's "fault". It is the fault of humans who don't spay/neuter and who allow cats to free-roam, including those who re-dump cats into the environment through TNR. It isn't the cat's fault. Cats don't have "fault". They are animals. They just do what they are programmed instinctually to do. But we don't base our solutions on who is at fault. Pythons and feral hogs and lionfish and nutria aren't at fault either. But we remove them. We don't TNR them. We base our solutions on what will work. Both science and real-world experience have shown us that TNR does not work to reduce feral cat populations.

Why do you think it is that you have to sneak around at night to feed your cat colonies? Why do you think it is that sometimes when you do get caught feeding feral cats, the person is upset with you and berates you? Why do you think it is that you have to hide the colonies and be careful not to mention their location in public? It is because the vast majority of people know that feeding and sustaining feral cats in the environment is, at best, a nuisance, and at worst, a public health and environmental threat. No one wants these cat colonies near their home. No one, not even most of the TNR feeders. Most of their colonies are on someone else's property. It's mostly "other people" who have to put up with the stench of urine and feces. It's mostly "other people" who have to put up with cat hair and fleas on their patio furniture. It's mostly "other people" whose gardens and flower beds are ruined by free-roaming cats. It's mostly "other people" who have to risk toxoplasmosis, hookworm, ringworm, bartonella, rabies, and more. It's mostly "other people" who have to find the native birds and rabbits and chipmunks and other critters that bring them joy in their yards, dead in their yard.

None of the people providing these facts about free-roaming cats are opposed to you "saving" cats. None of the people who don't want cats in their yards killing birds or damaging property or risking their health are opposed to you "saving" cats. Just do it in a responsible way. Do it in enclosures on your own property. Clean up and properly dispose of the feces. Don't keep more than you can manage. If every TNR advocate did this a great many cats could be saved. Don't feed feral cats. Find indoor homes for all the friendly strays that you can. That's great. But realize that not every cat can or should be saved. If you have a cat in a trap and you can't find an enclosed space for that cat, then that cat should be euthanized. Not every cat must be saved. Not every cat can be saved. To the cat, euthanasia starts out in exactly the same way that the neutering process does -- the cat is sedated. The difference is that the cat never wakes up. The cat doesn't know any difference in the process. Humane euthanasia is just that - humane. There is nothing "cruel" about it. It is unfortunate. It is sad. But it is humane. And sometimes it is necessary.

Create Date: 8/19/2019 3:44:58 PM

Reference # W102181-081919

Customer: HajjFHM@aol.com Al-Hajji Frederick Minshall

Category: Other

Description: "Gotta say I'm less than impressed with FWC asking for sightings of possibly FIV-debilitated native felines, selling license plates, etc.--basically anything except what NEEDS to be done to address the increasing occurrence of FIV in FL panthers and bobcats. Specifically, what is required is sustained lethal removal of unconfined Felis catus from Florida's environment, just like you're doing with Burmese pythons and lionfish. NOTHING ELSE WILL WORK.

OUTLAW TNR and all other imbecilic, worthless, so-called "humane" methods of stray/feral cat control. THEY.DON'T.WORK. The only impact they've had on stray/feral cat populations is to ACCELERATE their growth, because the "no-kill" nitwits invariably FEED the bloody things. Population growth of ANY population is predicated on FOOD-- doesn't matter whether you're talking yeast or elephants.

OUTLAW unconfined cats PERIOD. Follow Australia's example. They have culled 844,000 feral cats since 2015. How many more public health debacles--like your nearly DAILY rabies alerts, and beach closures from cat-vectored roundworms boring into beach-goers' flesh--and ecological catastrophes will it TAKE for the FWC to stand UP to the bloody cat-ladies and DO WHAT'S NECESSARY?

In terms of ecological policy, the only differences between Python bivittatus and F. catus is that the former doesn't spread nearly as many zoonotic diseases as the latter, and it only kills when it's hungry. Grow some BALLS, stand up to the cat-nutters and eradicate the bloody cats while you have any wildlife left!"

PS: And in case anyone doubts my previous claims that I'm not a cat-hater, I'll close by mentioning I'm caring for my Mom's SEVEN indoor-only cats while she's recovering from surgery, and I haven't killed any of 'em yet. However, by the time I'm through this ordeal I don't think I'll be able to honestly claim any longer that I'm not a cat hater--pretty much hate seven of 'em right now, at any rate, and it only gets worse every time I clean the cat boxes, or the puked-up hair balls. Wouldn't do this for anyone else but my Mom.

PPS: to finish on a positive note, I have seen Blanchard's cricket frogs (*Acris blanchardii*), an unusual southern leopard frog (*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*) WITHOUT spots, ornate box turtles (*Terrapene ornata*) and snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) despite having had almost no time to go out looking for herps so far.

MaSalaam, Fred. Will write again when I can...

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND for 2 28 2020 meeting on spay neuter

Progressive, Compassionate Solution

The progressive solution to overpopulation embraced by science, responsible animal and cat lovers, conservationists, credible vets, animal welfare experts, and those of us pressing for the most humane, effective and rational solution is 3 pronged:

- Consistent messaging and public education regarding responsible pet ownership including criticality of spay neuter of all OWNED PETS and keeping pets indoors;
- In the interests of feral cats, dogs, birds and wildlife, public health and to avoid discord among citizens of Tulsa, ban outdoor feeding and promote and support enclosed cat sanctuaries and individual enclosed catios for backyards;
- Implement, support and enforce a state-of-the-art spay neuter program of all owned pets.

Specific to TNR:

TNR is an avoidance scheme of death by euthanasia (which is humane), that perpetuates cats in the environment and an absolute certainty of violent or painful death for these cats with marginal, insecure lives until that occurs. Outdoor cats do not die peacefully.

We cannot ignore the humane and compassionate perspective; it's understandable why people have a strong emotional attachment towards outside cats. Cats are popular domestic pets--and internet stars. We don't want them to be cold and hungry. If these same people thoughtfully considered the inevitable

fear, suffering and inevitable death on the streets of the cats, how many would re-think TNR? And what about wildlife such as birds and lizards? How can you justify the predation by cats on these living creatures? Many people feel the same way towards them and agonize over the inevitable injuries and deaths to every small animal, bird and creature unlucky enough to be in the path of one of these predators.

There is no justification to ignore the public health risks. Feral cats are the definitive host for toxoplasma gondii. Rabies and other zoonotic diseases are spread by feral cats. Playgrounds, parks, backyards, schoolyards are all at risk through the feces and urine left by these cats.

It's also fair to say the majority of Tulsa citizens would not favor roaming cats regularly at large. We introduce neighbors' divisiveness and discord if we encourage this practice.

It's staggering to consider the amount of City resources required to try to manage cat clowders. Proven and effective solutions and alternatives must be embraced if the City is going to be prudent and exercise fiscal responsibility. The City must understand it's irresponsible to send mixed messages to the public about responsible pet ownership. It makes no sense for the shelter to regularly post messages to bring animals inside when it's freezing or during extreme heat, then allow programs where it's ok to leave other animals outside. Such a policy would be confusing at best, hypocritical at worst. The public won't be able to distinguish feral cats vs ones being fed by feeders. This would also directly lead to abandonment. Every city that has adopted TNR regularly faces the problem of abandonment of cats no longer wanted by people who assume someone else will take care of them.

TNR is not a 'best practice' as claimed by TNR activists. TNR has now been employed for **over a decade** in major U.S. cities and is a proven failure. After all these years, no one can name **one** town, city, or country anywhere in the world that has "reduced" its feral cat population through TNR. You hear time and time again these cities are still overrun with roaming cats.

Reputable, credible, science-based experts are gaining traction with a progressive educational focused approach aimed at Keeping Cats Indoors and discouraging outdoor feeding, which is truly the rational and compassionate approach to solving our overpopulation issues, together with robust enforcement of affordable spay/neuter programs. We need to focus on spay neuter centric solutions that are sensible, prudent and that do not bear a host of negative consequences to cats, dogs, other animals, wildlife, human health and public property rights.

Additional TNR opposition points:

Efficacy/Empirical Data: The gold standard of efficacy is hard data. Metrics have to start with an accurate count: Unless the fertile population in any location is counted prior to TNR and then after implementation, empirical evidence does not exist, and anecdotal evidence is meaningless. It's disingenuous to measure success by reduced euthanasia rates when this only means the shelter avoids euthanasia, choosing to leave cats on the streets to appease TNR activists.

Feeding and Breeding and Predation Enhancement:

Well-fed animals breed more prolifically. Leaving food out will also be consumed by the surrounding large-scale population of cats better able to reproduce and survive as a result. Uncontrolled immigration of sexually intact animals from surrounding areas is a proven fact. Skittish strays on the perimeter will feed and breed. The food will also strengthen and enable both sterilized and unsterilized cats' abilities to predate on birds and wildlife.

Abandonment: TNR facilitates abandonment. People can justify to themselves dumping unwanted cats or kittens knowing they will be fed.

No Population Reduction

Even if eventually trapped and sterilized, cats are prolific breeders and can have several litters leading to the births of hundreds of additional kittens. For TNR to reduce the overall population of homeless cats, more than 75% of the fertile population must be fixed EVERY year - not simply 75% of a colony here or there, but more than 75% of the fertile population within the entire geographical area (such as a city or county). If that mark is not met, you are spinning your wheels. The current mark for even the 'best' TNR program is not even 10%. Colony reductions are not population reductions.

Millions of dollars have already been expended on TNR over three decades, yet we have no reduction in the population, but what we do have are increased risks to public health and degradation of the environment through predation and disease transmission and increased divisiveness and discord among citizens.

If all else fails, doing nothing is better than TNR.

TNR is actually worse than doing nothing and allow for natural attrition. If those who think a marginal, insecure life with an inevitable violent or painful death of these cats is preferable to a peaceful, humane euthanasia, at all costs, then at the very least, stop the feeding and leave them be. Any help they get from humans gives them a greater advantage to kill more native birds and animals. You may think letting a cat survive on its own is cruel but consider the cruelty to birds and other animals. If we cannot remove cats from the wild, we should have a ban on outdoor feeding. Providing outside cats with more advantages stacks the deck against our helpless native wildlife, infringes on property rights, increases risks to public health.

and contributes to divisiveness, pitting neighbor against neighbor.



The Scissortail

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President's Message, Winter 2019

The problem posed by the retirement of the Membership Chair, Linda Adams, and the lack of a member willing to replace her and Bill for the quarterly mailing task has been solved by hiring a mail service provider (MSP). Sooner Mail Service mailed the issue you are now reading. Its presence in your hands is evidence of the success we hoped for with this approach. There will be a nominal increase in annual mailing cost, about \$1 per member as shown below.

Previous Annualized Cost for 200 mailings per quarter:

Annual Bulk Mail Fee: \$235
Postage for 800: \$380 (.475/ea)
Total: \$615

Cost Projected with SMSI for 200 mailings per quarter:

Annual Bulk Mail Fee: None
Labor charge: \$600
Postage for 800: \$208 (.26/ea)
Total: \$808

Annual Increase in Cost = \$808 - \$615 = \$193

Other than hiring an MSP, the other approach we researched and considered for making the Membership Chair position easier to manage was electronic delivery to as many people as would accept it. If you read last quarter's message, you may remember that our postage would increase from the bulk mailing rate to the regular first class rate if we go below 200 mail pieces. There would be a cost increase if the elimination of printing and mailing expense for members accepting exclusive electronic delivery didn't offset the increase to first class postage on the remaining snail mail. One idea to offset an increase in postage cost would be to decrease the size of the bulletin by ¼ inch in width so that it would fit in a 6-inch wide letter-size envelope along with a folded newsletter. This idea was strongly opposed by some board members, and fortunately it's not relevant if we get good performance from Sooner Mail.

On another subject, research published in the October 4 issue of *Science* by Rosenberg et. al. puts the decline in North American avifauna at 2.9 billion birds or 29% since 1970. The research did not specifically address causation, but it is noted that anthropogenic effects correlate with losses in grasslands and agricultural areas. An article in *Science News* (available on line) on the research which contains interview material from Rosenberg and others cites studies showing cat predation and building collisions. The ongoing public controversy over free roaming cats illustrates how the public's values influence acceptance of scientific reporting and reactions by policy makers. The research pub-

lished by Loss et. al. in 2013 put the number of annual bird kills by cats in the range of 1.4-4.0 billion, a number of the same magnitude as the population loss reported by Rosenberg et. al. Advocates of TNR (Trap/Neuter/Return) and other supporters of free roaming cats do not believe that kills by cats, whatever the actual number, have a significant effect on the populations of birds and other wildlife. The people on the other side of the issue do believe that cat predation is significant and serious. What is noteworthy about this controversy is that both sides have as personal values empathy for animals and concern for their protection. Most cat advocates will admit that cats kill birds. Their value system just doesn't rate that killing as high in importance as the happiness and welfare of cats. The magnitude of the number of birds killed is almost immaterial in the debate between the two opposing groups because the effect on bird populations is obscure. As far as human values go, killing is widely accepted as necessary or natural for defense of the country, for the table, for preventing overpopulation by wildlife, for sport and for controlling damage by rodents and insects. It is only when a population suffers severe decline that the public becomes concerned enough to act in a significant way in the policy realm. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the DDT ban are two examples of such significant policy actions. What may be lacking in the case of the cat issue is the absence of evidence that cat predation actually threatens the survival of a species in the way that DDT threatened the survival of Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and Ospreys. A way to resolve the issue, one way or the other, would be to publish well-researched population models for individual species which take into account not only cat predation but also habitat change and loss, weather and climate effects, building collisions, disease, natural predators, pesticides and changes in insect populations, etc.

Bill Diffen

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