

HFC Committee

From: Donya Izbicki <donyacat@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 12:02 PM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: Feral Animal Feeding Ben



*****Tiger Cat at Colony*****

I am contesting the proposed bill to ban feeding 'feral' animals.'

Before I begin my presentation, I want to tell you about me...

I have resided here in Hawaii since 1969!

My ex husband opened The Coffee Store in Kaahamanu Center. In 1984

I worked as Concierge at Maui Hill Resort.

I attended University of Hawaii at Manoa, and then Chaminade for MBA in '76...

I was raised in the Midwest, with fear of Rabies.

We had dogs, no cats....in fact I did not like cats!

I encountered my first cat, a pair of stray kittens, at our condo, and called the Humane Society to pick up...It was that employee who changed my thinking...whose response to my question of "What will become of this cat?", was..."oh. It will be euthanized probably...". So I kept them...and had to move due to rule on No Pets....

My cats were spoiled and picky, often leaving their food uneaten...I lived across the street from Ala Moana Ctr, and walked to Foodland for groceries....

And noticed hungry cats there in parking lot...so I started feeding my cats leftovers....and recall opening a box of dry food which they devoured all!

On Campus, and met my first 'caretaker', who lectured to me about 'fixing', not just 'feeding'!

She explained that each cat can produce kittens every 5 months, and then each kitten continues!

And so, I became a caretaker...although there was no official group yet, I contacted Honolulu Humane Society, and met Director Laura Thompson, a lovely Kamaaina, (mother of famed Hokulea navigator, Nainoa)....who was Influential in my path

I took cats to Blue Cross Animal Hospital, and Daryl Allison performed surgeries...

Management at Ala Moana Ctr approved!

My efforts to colonize the cats included TV coverage and a Board member meeting

When we moved to Maui in 1983, I observed cats in abundance, so my efforts continued.

I became a founding board member of Feline Foundation of Maui, and focused on fundraising as an educational tool...mostly garage sales. Key members with 10 year statistics of spay neuter are Terri Shishido and president, Jennifer Drout.

Historically, cats were valued and praised for rodent control. They came on ships along with other non natives and would be predators to birds & eggs...

I had a friend working in Photo archives at Bishop Museum, who printed photos of cats..one in particular was a Woody station wagon shipped from the Mainland. Upon arrival, it was discovered to have a stowaway cat who survived by eating the leather seats! It was valued as a rat catcher...

Specifically, Maui's free roaming cat population exists as a mixture of well cared for fixed Colony cats and the stray group who need to be fixed...After generations of attempts to end overpopulation, we have managed to stabilize cat numbers, rather than increase exponentially, because of spay neuter.

I no longer see very many dead in the road as I used to years ago...

People are aware of the frustrating situation and are personally involved.

Concerned citizens are trying to achieve the minimum cat population possible by continuous spay neuter, while others are just complaining.

It's time to organize and educate and produce the only humane solution:

TNRM. Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage

It is a problem when the cats are not fixed, just fed. Trapping is difficult if the cats are not hungry!

If we could fix all the cats, we would have no more.

But we will never catch them all!

People will continue to let cats have litters and contribute to the population.

We must aim for a balance to humanely manage Maui's free roaming cats.

There should be attention and public notice concerning allowing cat litters, and feeding cats not registered as 'colony'

Free roaming cats exist in both managed and unattended colonies, and have a dominant hierarchy that

allows them to live naturally in harmony among one another.

When cats are trapped and removed, others move in,

displacing established cats, causing territorial fighting and more breeding. This is known as the 'vacuum effect'.

There have been such attempts in various other places, all which backfired in repopulation beyond the initial numbers.

Cat colonies should be registered and adhere to the routine of TNRM, whereby all cats are 'fixed', and returned to their colonies, where they are fed by caretaker, as well as managed for any newcomers.

Caretakers are committed to distinguish the pet abandoned/lost cat from the 'community' colony cat and will remove tame cats for adoption or medical concerns.

It's a sad fact that people who don't like cats will trap and dump them elsewhere, where they find a food source in a colony. Tame pet cats may be lost or abandoned and enter feral colonies, and in time will revert to a wild state.

The routine procedures of feeding/ managing and trapping should be documented.

New 'caretakers' should be mentored by established 'caretakers', and be presented with guidelines as described in the caretaker agreement.

Caretakers are unfairly misjudged for their efforts that include the expenses of food and medical for colony cats.

If we fix all the cats but do not maintain the colonies, cats will revert to hunting and fighting for food or starve. The time and energy required to properly maintain a colony is not understood by outsiders.

In addition to free surgeries, there should be food & medical supply. We need to educate all involved on all aspects of the program.

The initial experience of feeding a stray for the first time is the emotional tie that the feeder will be exposed to: Take it home? Take it to Humane Society? Connect with seasoned caretaker to organize colony....?

The idea of trapping and euthanizing cats will not solve the problem and is cruel.

It is also not cost effective, considering the overhead costs of employees wages, traps, injection, and vehicle, fuel, and maintenance.

Blaming cats for their existence is not a solution.

Without cats, rodents will thrive, causing more bird kill

Understanding that there are other factors such as foraging animals and construction that impact the bird & marine habitats, is crucial to creating a harmonious master plan of sustainability

The solution to the problem:

(1) People should not feed cats unless they are feeding in a managed colony

(2) Designating approved colony locations & caretakers

(3) More surgery appointments available.

(4) Relocation areas (Sanctuaries?) for cats in areas with threatened species

Let's get going on this plan!

I would love to assist!

I can disclose my successful colonies With management endorsements, approval and funding.

I am attaching photos of a healthy colony cat and a stray cat and a trapped cat, and an approved visitor condo colony feeding station plus 2 posters of pertinent information.

For more information please visit www.alleycat.org

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Fast Facts

Feral Cats—An Important Part of

Cats are a part of our natural landscape. Science to remove cats could mean dire consequences



Healthy ear tipped colony cat



Stray unfixed roaming cat showing scars of fighting For food & mates




Trapped cat at colony



COMMUNITY CAT

ALSO KNOWN AS: Outdoor Cat, Stray Cat, Alley Cat, Feral Cat, Street Cat, Barn Cat, and Tomcat.



Outdoor community cats and pet cats are the same species—***Felis catus***—the domestic cat.

Studies show outdoor cats are as **healthy** as pet cats and can have the same life span.


"Feral" describes behavior—feral cats are wary of people and live on their own outdoors.

An **eartip** is the universal symbol to identify a neutered and vaccinated cat. The top $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the cat's left ear is removed during surgery.

Community cats are **not adoptable** because they are not socialized to humans.


More than **40%** of Americans have cared for an outdoor cat.

Cats live **everywhere**.



Cats have lived outdoors alongside humans since **before the pyramids**.

Outdoor cats live in family groups called **colonies**.




Cats are **bonded** to their environments and colonies.


Countless cats who go to shelters **are killed there**.

For community cats, that rises to **virtually 100%**.

Removing community cats doesn't work. Catching and killing is ineffective, outdated, and cruel.



Trap-Neuter-Return (**TNR**) is the only humane, effective approach to care for community cats. Cats are **spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped** and then returned to their outdoor home.

 **Alley Cat Allies** Learn more about community cats at alleycat.org/GetInformed.