



WHAT ARE FERAL CATS AND HOW CAN I HELP?

Cats that have been abandoned, lost or neglected, without an opportunity to bond with humans are referred to as feral cats. Succeeding generations struggle for survival in storm drains, under structures, at our workplaces or anywhere they can find shelter and meager food. They form groups called colonies by restaurants foraging for food in dumpsters and places where discarded food can be found. You may see them scurrying down alleys, hiding under cars, under houses, in backyards, warehouses or other places struggling to **survive under the most inhumane** conditions. You may see them starving with their kittens! You may see them being harmed and neglected.

How did this happen? Feral cats did not take a bus to your neighborhood to create a problem. They are the result of owner owned cats not being spayed or neutered and allowed to roam freely throughout our cities most often abandoned and neglected. This suffering and inhumane result took place right where you find them. *FERAL CATS AND KITTENS ARE A HUMAN MADE PROBLEM AND IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS HUMANS TO MAKE WISE AND COMPASSIONATE CHOICES for their welfare. If you don't do it, who will?*

What can I do? When you see a cat, or cats or kittens in your neighborhood running around loose make an inquiry to determine if they are owner owned or just "neighborhood cats". Have they been spayed or neutered? Is someone caring for them or are they abandoned? If you have determined that no one "owns them" and they are only being randomly fed, then you need to make *a humane choice to help or just ignore them thinking someone else will.*

If you chose not to help – Initially, what might have been an easy task to inquire in the neighborhood for information and what needs to be done before it escalates into *an unmanaged population of feral cats and kittens.* If a TNR program is organized with the help of the residents, it can be a win win situation. See Attention Neighbors Flyer to begin the process and make visits to the neighborhood community centers, etc. The cats will need to be trapped, taken to the vet, spayed and neutered, microchipped, treated for fleas and long-term managed care implemented by responsible persons, neighbors, etc. Without this program, the endless cycle of birth and death continues until the cat's lives are in jeopardy and their suffering becomes almost unbearable. This suffering could have been prevented if someone cared.

Feral cat colonies are being successfully cared for in our communities by implementing TNR and long-term managed care. There are FCCC Community workshops. Check our site for the next date. There are also many rescue groups in the city and financial help with spay and neuter and clinics that provide free spay and neuter. *Check your local areas for resources, form a dedicated group of people in your community and reach out. Distribute the Attention Neighbors Flyer*

Feral cats and kittens have a right to exist and a right to a quality of life, wherever they are living. Once the cats have been spayed and neutered, it is necessary to provide them with a safe and secure environment. Living out of doors is the only life they know, although it may not have been their choice generations back. *So, it is up to us, as caring individuals to take all the necessary steps for their survival.*

Please visit our website www.feralcatcaretakers.org for more information about successful, responsible and compassionate TNR or email feralcatcr@aol.com.

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