

THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

FOUNDED SEPTEMBER 28, 1883

CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF FERAL AND FREE-RANGING CATS

WHEREAS free-ranging pet cats and feral domestic cats (Felis catus) are non-native predators in all habitats in which they occur; and

WHEREAS feral and free-ranging domestic cats exist in significant densities throughout most areas populated by humans, with reliable estimates in the millions for the U.S. and in the billions globally; and

WHEREAS feral and free-ranging domestic cats are exceptional and prolific predators of small mammals, song birds, small reptiles, large amphibians and large insects; and

WHEREAS feral and free-ranging domestic cats are estimated to kill hundreds of millions of native birds and other small animals annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS birds represent 20-30% of the prey of free-ranging pet cats and feral domestic cats; and

WHEREAS feral cat colony programs, wherein feral cats are captured, trapped, vaccinated, neutered, released and fed, do not eliminate predation on native wildlife or reduce the size of feral cat colonies; and

WHEREAS bites, scratches, and fecal contamination from free-ranging pet cats and feral domestic cats pose a risk to the general public through transmission of diseases such as toxoplasmosis, roundworm, and rabies; and

WHEREAS government wildlife agencies are charged with the management, conservation and preservation of native fauna, but few governments have regulations or public policies that restrict or control feral and free-ranging domestic cats; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Ornithologists' Union supports programs to neuter and license pet cats and encourage owners to keep pet cats indoors, and strongly opposes programs to maintain feral cat colonies; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the American Ornithologists' Union urges local, state, and federal wildlife agencies, public health organizations, and legislative bodies to entities to:

- (1) prohibit the feeding and caring of feral cats and their colonies; and
- (2) ban and eliminate feral cat colonies through humane capture of feral cats, particularly the members of feral cat colonies, by animal control officers, humane societies and others; and
- (3) restrict and regulate the range of movement of domestic cats out of doors, and
- (4) work with the ornithological and bird conservation communities to educate the public about the dangers that cats pose to birds and other native wildlife.

Adopted August 1997, Minneapolis, MN