

WHY NOT TNR?

Unattainable Goals

(TNR stands for Trap-Neuter-Release or Trap-Neuter-Return. TNR is also referred to as *feral cat colony management*).

TNR is a method in which feral (unsocialized) cats are trapped, altered and released to the wild and then fed indefinitely. The stated goal of TNR is to reduce the numbers of feral cats and eventually eliminate colonies through natural attrition. HOWEVER, THIS HAS **NOT** BEEN PROVEN AND OFTEN IS NOT THE CASE. TNR is based on *perpetual colony maintenance*.

TNR advocates will cite reduced euthanasia rates at shelters as proof that TNR works. **This is not scientific proof that indicates a reduction in their actual numbers.**

Colonies often *grow* in size due to the attraction of neighborhood cats to the artificial food source and the dumping of cats by irresponsible pet owners.

Not every cat in a colony can be trapped. Those that remain are artificially sustained by the food provided and are better able to breed.

TNR only APPEARS to solve the problem of feral cat overpopulation. This method comes at the EXPENSE OF NATIVE WILDLIFE and poses risks to public health and is inhumane for the cats.

Wildlife Mortality

Well-fed cats hunt. The hunting instinct is separate from the urge to eat. Animals caught by cats usually die regardless of treatment, *including endangered species*.

Domestic cats are an introduced predator species not part of the ecosystem. The outdoors is **not** their natural habitat and they upset the balance of nature.

Habitat loss is the primary challenge wildlife faces, but cat predation is **a significant factor** in the decline of wildlife that should NOT be ignored.

Cats affect the rodent supply for our majestic birds of prey and some mammals.

No environmental impact studies are done before a colony is supported. Some areas designated as critical habitat are home to many endemic species that will be further strained by cat colonies.

Inhumane Outcome for Cats

Cats often live miserable lives in colonies. They are hit by cars, attacked by dogs and wildlife, plagued by disease, and abused by people. This is no life (or death) for a companion animal.

Colonies may consist of 5, 10, or 20 cats or number into the hundreds. Caregivers cannot ensure that every cat gets food and water daily.

Feral cats are difficult to re-trap for subsequent care and therefore do not usually receive regular veterinary care.

Risks to Public Health

Cats carry many harmful bacteria. They transmit diseases to other animals and zoonotic diseases to humans. Colonies can pose a serious risk to public health.

Transmission of disease can occur through bites, scratches or fecal contamination.

Cats are the only species to shed the parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*, in their feces. Cats may defecate in the sand on beaches, in children's sandboxes, in vegetable gardens and flowerbeds. This parasite can live for many months in the environment and causes toxoplasmosis. TNR advocates will cite that humans have a better chance of acquiring toxoplasmosis from raw or undercooked meat than from cats. However, contaminated meat also can be traced back to domestic cats. **Please take one of the brochures** provided by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** on this subject or visit the CDC on line at:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/toxoplasmosis/toxoplasmosis_brochure_8.2004.pdf

This parasite recently has been linked to schizophrenia in humans. See the 9/30/05 issue of the journal *Veterinary Parasitology*.

Cats that remain untrapped are not vaccinated for rabies. Raccoons and other rabies vector species often feed alongside cats in colonies. Those cats that *are* trapped and vaccinated usually are not retrapped and revaccinated when the initial vaccine expires.

Colony cats could potentially be at higher risk for contracting Avian Influenza A H5N1.

In Conclusion

TNR enables abandonment. Education is the key to reducing the feral cat population. TNR undermines efforts to educate folks about responsible pet ownership.

TNR sends wrong and mixed messages. **No** domestic cat should be outdoors. TNR advocates say they respect the rights of feral cats to live outside. What about the rights of wildlife that truly has nowhere else to go? What about the rights of the public who may not want cats in backyards?

IF these cats are *not* trapped and removed, which has been proven to work, cats can suffer, wildlife can be decimated, public health can be at risk.

IF municipalities legalize feral cat colony management, citizens often have little recourse when these cats become a nuisance.

Many wildlife veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators, environmentalists, ecologists, biologists, and conservation groups strongly oppose TNR. The entities listed below oppose TNR and/or acknowledge the negative impact feral and free-roaming cats have on native wildlife and/or acknowledge the risks posed to human health:

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, American Bird Conservancy, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Ornithologists' Union, the Association of Avian Veterinarians, the National Audubon Society, the Cooper Ornithological Society, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, the New Jersey Audubon Society, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Wildlife Disease Association, and the Wildlife Society.