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Susana Martinez



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STATE OF NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

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September 16, 2013

Office of the Mayor
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department's Trap-Neuter-Return Policy

Dear Mayor Berry:

In 2012, Best Friends Animal Society partnered with Albuquerque (City) Animal Welfare Department to begin a three-year Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program, funded by a grant from PetSmart Charities. In addition, the City has worked with New Mexico Animal Friends to cover the cost of sterilizing street cats. The Department of Game and Fish (Department) encourages the City and the Animal Welfare Department to discontinue support for these programs.

The Department fully supports spay-neuter programs for responsible pet owners. However, feral and free-roaming cats are not companion animals. Supporters of TNR programs refer to them as "community cats" and advocate for their return to locations where they were originally trapped by stating that these cats are part of the community. In fact, these cats (*Felis catus*) are nonnative predators introduced by humans.

TNR programs have not been shown to stabilize feral cat populations (Castillo and Clarke 2003, Anderson et al. 2004, Barrows 2004, Natoil et al. 2006, Longcore et al. 2009). The only TNR programs reporting success have included the removal of significant numbers of animals for adoption (Centonze and Levy 2002, Hughes and Slater 2002, Levy et al. 2003). Removal of cats and feeding stations can eliminate local cat populations while allowing the return of native bird species (Winter 2004).

Feral and other free-roaming cats pose significant threat to native birds, herpetofauna and small mammals (Crooks and Soule 1999, Kays and DeWan 2004, Lepczyk et al. 2004, Baker et al. 2005). Studies show that, even when fed daily by humans, cats continue to hunt wildlife (Warner 1985, Churcher and Lawton 1987, Churcher and Lawton 1989, Mitchell and Beck 1992). In fact, supplemental feeding of free-roaming cat colonies may lead to hyperpredation and increased densities of cats (Courchamp et al. 2000, Woods et al. 2003). In addition, free-ranging cats compete with native predators (George 1974, Crooks and Soule 1999).

Both The Wildlife Society and the National Audubon society have published position statements on feral and free-ranging cats that the Department fully endorses. These statements are attached for your review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cal Baca". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Cal Baca, Chief
Wildlife Management Division