

**AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY † AMERICAN  
ORNTHOLOGISTS UNION † ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND  
AQUARIUMS † CORNELL LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY †  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY † NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
REHABILITATORS ASSOCIATION † PRBO CONSERVATION  
SCIENCE † THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

April 12, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

The undersigned conservation organizations and scientific societies want to call your attention to the threat being posed to wildlife by feral cats. Given the well-documented impacts of cat predation on wildlife, we urge the development of a Department-wide policy opposing Trap-Neuter-Release and the outdoor feeding of cats as a feral cat management option, coupled with a plan of action to address existing infestations affecting lands managed by the Department of the Interior. We would like to request a meeting to discuss this with you at your earliest convenience.

The estimated 80 million feral cats and 40 million free-ranging pet cats in the U.S. kill hundreds of millions of birds each year including endangered species. Multiple studies (Soulé et al. 1988, Hawkins 1998, Crooks & Soulé 1999, see reviews in Jessup 2004, Nogales et al. 2004, Dauphiné and Cooper 2009) have found that roaming cats spread harmful diseases to other wildlife and to humans, reduce wildlife abundance and diversity, cause extinctions and dramatic reductions of native wildlife populations (Donlan et al. 2000, Veitch 2001, Tershy et al. 2002, Calver et al. 2007), and kill as many as one billion birds per year in the United States (Stallcup 1991, Gill 1995, Dauphiné and Cooper 2009).

The U.S. does not, however, have a comprehensive policy addressing the feral cat problem. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act to conserve threatened and endangered species and migratory birds. We believe the agency needs to act on these responsibilities and clearly articulate a policy that protects native wildlife and is founded on the conclusions of peer-reviewed science.

We applaud the efforts of a number of regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in addressing local problems that have arisen, as well as the efforts of agency staff who have

worked diligently to develop a sound policy to address the problem. The agency has developed an effective policy framework reflected in the Florida Keys Refuges Predator Management Plan and letters sent by a regional office to conserve at-risk endangered species in New Jersey that address the issue and could serve as a model for a department-wide policy.

We therefore urge you to issue a directive establishing consistent department-wide policy to address the problem of feral cats and opposing TNR management, and to develop a plan of action addressing infestations on federal lands managed by the Interior Department.

We look forward to discussing the feral cat issue with you further. Please call Steve Holmer at, 202/234-7181, or email [sholmer@abcbirds.org](mailto:sholmer@abcbirds.org) to respond to this meeting request.

Sincerely,

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