

NOTE: This sample Letter to the Editor is only a model. Please modify as necessary to suit your needs. Thank you for your commitment to bird conservation and the Cats Indoors Program!

This letter addresses feral cats and TNR programs.

Dear Editor,

I **(or insert the name of your organization)** applaud(s) the efforts of concerned citizens working to reduce the feral cat overpopulation, but Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) programs are an entirely inappropriate strategy.

The presence of feral cats is a human-caused tragedy that negatively affects cats, wildlife, and people and deserves an evidence-based management plan. Unfortunately, the science on TNR programs overwhelmingly concludes that they are insufficient to reduce feral cat populations and contribute to the many problems associated with feral cats roaming our streets, parks, and neighborhoods.

TNR is not humane. Cats maintained outdoors are at a much higher risk of injuries, parasites, and diseases. They are exposed to the elements and human cruelty, and feral cats suffer a severely reduced life span.

Feral cats are also a threat to birds and other wildlife. Cats can cause local extinctions of wildlife and have contributed to 33 global extinctions. In the United States, outdoor cats have been estimated to kill over 1 billion birds and mammals every year. Feeding these cats does not eliminate their instinctive predatory behavior and may only increase negative interactions with wildlife.

TNR programs and the feral cat colonies they maintain are a recognized risk to public health. Cats are consistently the number one source of rabies among domestic animals in the United States, disproportionately expose a greater number of people to rabies than wildlife species, and contaminate the environment with an infectious parasite excreted in cat feces that causes toxoplasmosis. This disease can cause miscarriages, blindness, memory loss, and even death.

People concerned about the welfare of feral cats should instead work to find them loving “forever” homes and help educate pet owners about spaying and neutering their pets, keeping their cats indoors, reuniting lost cats with their owners, and the ethical and wildlife implications of cat abandonment.

For more information, please visit American Bird Conservancy’s Cats Indoors campaign at www.abcbirds.org/cats.

Sign name

City and contact information