

# Together, We Can Reduce Cat Overpopulation

To end the tragic cycle of cat overpopulation, we must first become a nation of responsible pet owners and keep our cats indoors. Here are some things we can all do:

- ◆ Support local cat control and protection plans that remove feral cats from the environment. Contact your local Department of Animal Care/Control.
- ◆ Oppose legislation and local ordinances permitting Trap, Neuter, Release. Contact your local city or county council members.
- ◆ Support legislation requiring cat owners to register their cats, spay or neuter them, and prevent them from roaming free. Contact your local city or county council member.
- ◆ Do not feed unowned or feral cats without making a commitment to giving or finding them permanent, indoor homes.
- ◆ Never abandon unwanted cats. Instead, take them to your local animal shelter to give them the best possible chance of adoption into loving, lifelong homes.



Jake Berzon, Wikimedia.com

To find out more, visit [www.abcbirds.org/cats](http://www.abcbirds.org/cats)

## Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR):

### Bad for Birds, Bad for Cats



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### There is a Better Solution

TNR advocates are compassionate people, but they are not taking into account the welfare of birds and other wildlife or the true welfare of the cats. A better solution is to trap and neuter feral cats, then relocate them to enclosed cat sanctuaries or shelters, or to adopt them out to safe and comfortable homes. TNR should stand for Trap, Neuter, Remove!



Marge Gibson



*TNR Endangers Wildlife,  
Creates a Human Health Hazard,  
and Does Not Solve the Cat  
Overpopulation Problem*





## Cat Colonies are Hazardous Places

Feral cat colonies endanger human health from the spread of diseases such as rabies and toxoplasmosis, attract rats and raccoons, and threaten populations of birds and other wildlife.

The domestic cat (*Felis catus*) is one of the world's most harmful invasive predators. It is estimated that there are over 80 million feral cats in the United States, and each year, these cats kill billions of birds and small mammals.

Each year, millions of cats in colonies fall victim to horrible deaths as a result of being hit by cars, eaten by predators, or infected by disease.



## Trap, Neuter and Release: Not the Solution

A technique called Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) has been wrongly suggested by some as a solution to the feral cat problem, with disastrous consequences. Volunteers catch feral cats, sterilize them, and then release them into parks, neighborhoods, city streets, or even wild lands, lands, often accompanied by feeding. The idea is that by spaying and neutering all of the cats, the population of cats will diminish over time and eventually disappear.

Unfortunately, studies have repeatedly shown that this technique simply does not work. It is very difficult to trap and sterilize all the cats, and the colonies become an attractive dumping ground for people looking to abandon unwanted pets. As a result, the colonies persist and often grow larger.

TNR does not address the fundamental problem of cat predation on birds and other wildlife, nor the transmission of infectious parasites and diseases by feral cats. It is also inhumane. The lifespan of most feral cats is only two to five years, compared to up to 15 years for cats that are properly cared for indoors.

As a society we do not expect to solve dog overpopulation problems by turning unwanted dogs loose in the streets; the same should be true for cats. Ensuring responsible pet ownership is the key to any long-term solution to cat overpopulation.



## Human Impacts



Feral cat colonies are breeding grounds for disease that can spread to humans. Cat feces can carry toxoplasmosis, a parasite of particular concern to pregnant women, since it has

been linked to brain damage in children. Women who become infected with *Toxoplasma gondii* during their pregnancy can pass the disease-causing parasite to their unborn child.

Food at cat colonies attracts wild animals, exacerbating the spread of diseases such as rabies. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that cats are now the top source of rabies among domestic animals and disproportionately expose more people to the disease than wildlife. As a result of potential human health impacts from cats, the CDC recommends that all cats be kept indoors and routinely vaccinated. Neither of these conditions is met by TNR.

## What Are Government Scientists Saying about Roaming Cats?

Even well-fed cats continue to hunt and kill birds and other wildlife, and the impacts of such huge number of cats roaming outdoors on wildlife adds up. Around the world, cats have contributed to the extinction of 63 species and are a major threat to hundreds of vulnerable species. In the United States, for example, cats are actually the top source of direct, human-caused bird mortality and kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds every year.