

# Feral Cats: How to be Part of the Solution



## What is a feral cat?

Feral cats are the 'wild' offspring of domestic cats and are primarily the result of pet owners' abandonment or failure to spay and neuter their animals, allowing them to breed uncontrolled.

## Why trapping and bringing feral cats to us doesn't work.

There is a reason for the ferals to be where they are whether it be a food source or shelter. If you trap and remove the cats you must get all of them. Otherwise the cats that remain behind will reproduce at a much higher rate to compensate for the missing cats. This is called the vacuum effect.

You also have to remove the food and shelter source or else you will get a new group of cats, or worse, rodents moving in. So instead of actually solving the problem, the problem becomes a vicious cycle and you get more kittens year after year.

Trap-neuter-return is the best way of controlling the population of feral cats in your neighborhood or community. Through this program cats are trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and then released back to their original location. The cats will not reproduce but will protect the food source, keeping other cats and rodents away. Over time the population of the colony will decrease because there will be no more kittens and the group will stabilize and die of natural causes.

## How do we know Trap, Neuter and Return works?

An independent study was recently done involving two different feral colony groups. In one group the ferals were trapped and taken to animal control where they were humanely euthanized. The second group instead was trapped, neutered, given shots and released back into the colony. Over time the second group's population numbers decreased while the first study group's population increased.

## What about kittens?

Kittens can be adopted out into homes but they must be socialized at an early age. There is a critical window, and if they aren't handled in time, they will remain feral. If you find kittens that appear to be weaned from their mother, take them into your home and try to socialize them or give us a call: 846-1438.