

For More Info Visit

[www.PompanoBeachFL.gov/CommunityCats](http://www.PompanoBeachFL.gov/CommunityCats)

## Sterilization Options

Broward County Animal Care and Adoption (954) 359-1313 [www.broward.org/animal](http://www.broward.org/animal)

Humane Society of Broward (954) 989-3977 [www.humanebroward.com](http://www.humanebroward.com)

Stray Aid and Rescue 954-816-0799 [www.strayaid.org](http://www.strayaid.org)

Cats Exclusive (954) 975-8349 [www.catsexclusive.org](http://www.catsexclusive.org)

Many other sterilization providers exist and can be found simply searching the internet.

### Providing Real Care for Cats

Better care than simply sterilizing and providing food must be provided. Cats deserve thorough and ongoing care. Public policy and those who have a heart for cats ought to go the distance by encouraging and providing for a level of care commensurate with the value of these animals.

#### Thought

**“It is impossible to expect the community at large to understand the importance of responsible pet ownership if the ... response to cat overpopulation is to simply dump them outside.” – AWAKE! Feral/ Stray Cat**

## Containment Options

Electric Fences can be purchased locally at any feed supply store. There are not too many in our area but the closet one can be found in Davie. A 5 acre fence kit can be purchased for approx. \$50.00. They can also be found utilizing an internet search for “electric fence”. Stay away from the radio frequency shock collar / invisible fences as they are not effective at containing cats.

Other cat fencing options are available too but tend to be more expensive. Feel free to call the Animal Control Division with any questions.

# Caring For Cats



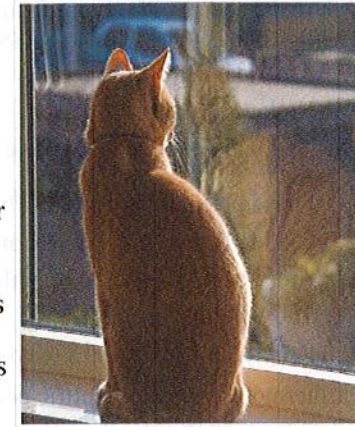
## Animal Control Division

954-786-4027



## A Purrfect Place

Cats are domestic animals that have been companions to people for thousands of years offering love and affection. In earlier years cats were used for their predatory nature as a help in eliminating rodents but in modern society, they have, just as their canine counterpart, become an addition to the family.



Society's view of domestic dogs and cats has shifted from viewing these animals as utilitarian to individual creatures worthy of respect and protection. Most people will agree, **the safest place for a cat is inside a home.** The practice of allowing dogs to free roam has all but disappeared and ideology for cats is catching up too. And why shouldn't it? Are cats not as worthy of respect, protection and of as much value as dogs?

## Outdoor Life

Outdoor life is a hard and dangerous life for cats. All too often cats end up killed or injured. They are struck by vehicles, caught up in car engines, attacked by dogs, shot or poisoned by people, suffer from fleas and other parasites, obtain festering wounds from fighting with other cats and end up with sickness or disease. **Sadly, many outdoor cats especially feral cats spend their final days in a severe state of suffering.**

## Feeding Stray and Feral Cats

The urge to provide food comes naturally. Most people want to provide care in some way but often, providing food does a lot more harm than good. A food source acts as an attraction point where cats congregate. This serves to promote undesired breeding due to the close proximity of the cats to one another. The close contact also allows for the spread of communicable disease between the cats. The food source usually attracts wildlife too. As more animals than would naturally occur congregate in one area, complaints of nuisance problems arise. Food should not be provided outdoors for a pet, but even if it is, the owner must ensure other animals are not allowed to eat it. Providing a food source for stray and feral cats does not help them. Cats are visually social animals. Just like a hunter placing a duck decoy to attract ducks, a food source encourages cats to hang around and essentially become a live decoy for other cats. When other unaltered cats are attracted to the food and company, unwanted reproduction occurs.

Most people don't realize that once they provide food there is too much guilt associated with stopping. The feeder finds themselves convinced the cat will suffer without their food source. Little did they realize that an innocent willingness to help turns into a cat overpopulation drawing the ire and criticism of neighbors.

**Caring for cats requires a much deeper commitment than simply leaving food.** A feeder must be very disciplined and committed to the cats. Feeding must be regimented with food provided at certain times and for only a brief period to prevent unwanted feeding of other cats and animals. In an uncontained environment, the food should be placed inside a humane trap that has been secured to stay open on both ends. This way, the cats are familiar with going into the trap and can be recaptured for ongoing vaccinations or care for sickness and injury. There is a lot more than warm fuzzies that come with providing food for cats. The feeder must be prepared for the inevitable. You will see cats suffer and die from disease, injury by cars, dogs, people and just plain curiosity.



## Reproduction

Cats are highly reproductive. Kittens reach sexual maturity before 6 months of age and cats can have three litters each year. Even while still nursing, female cats have become pregnant again. Some estimations conclude that an unaltered female cat has the potential to produce hundreds if not thousands of offspring. This only highlights the importance of ensuring cats are not permitted to continue this breeding cycle. Sterilization is a key component to eliminating the problem of pet overpopulation. Sterilization of one's pets is of highest priority. Numerous low cost sterilization opportunities exist. **If we are going to turn the tide on pet overpopulation, then every pet owner needs to sterilize their pet before it has opportunity to reproduce and feral and stray cats must not be enabled to breed.**

## Trap-Neuter-Return

The concept of Trap-Neuter-Return is sometimes employed in an attempt to reduce the free roaming cat population. The idea is to trap the cat, have it sterilized and then released back into the area. While at first glance, the practice seems humane because it essentially preserves the cat from immediate euthanasia, in doing so **it presents a great many other concerns that become very difficult to resolve.** These include:

- Recapture of the cat for ongoing vaccines or treatment when sick or injured is almost impossible
- Birds and other wildlife remains at risk from the free roaming returned cat
- Cats remain at risk of injury, disease, suffering and death
- Nuisance complaints are left unresolved. People take matters into their own hands resulting in poisoning and other cruel deaths.
- It remains a highly controversial approach and peer reviewed scientific studies find it ineffective
- Not all cats can be caught and sterilized so breeding continues
- Without containment, there is no control. TNR does not stop reproduction when there is no containment
- An ongoing food source attracts more cats and wildlife

## Cats Deserve Better

Due to the shortcomings and failures associated with TNR, several organizations do not support the practice.

- American Bird Conservancy
- National Audubon Society
- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
- Florida Department of Health
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians
- The Wildlife Society
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Furthermore, several scientific peer reviewed studies do not Support TNR. Simply put:

***"Claims that TNR colonies are effective in reducing cat populations, and therefore, wildlife mortality, are not supported by peer reviewed scientific studies"*** — *The Impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States Nature Communications 2013*

Trap, Neuter and Return does not go far enough. Goals of any sterilization program must include:

- Providing good quality of life
- Protecting the cats
- Protecting wildlife
- Complying with state law
- Resolving complaints
- Reducing the number of outdoor cats
- Changing the public mindset to elevate the value of cats

A thorough sterilization model should include Trap, Evaluate, Neuter, Vaccinate, Adopt, and Contain.. After capture, the cat must be evaluated as to its health and adoptability. In addition to sterilization, fully vaccinating the cat will provide for better health. Placing cats that can be socialized into homes is the better alternative to releasing back outdoors. Containing any outdoor cats to a safe area will provide for their continued safety, protect wildlife and prevent complaints.

## Responsible TNR Ordinance

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Although TNR does not go far enough to provide help for outdoor cats, the City recognizes there are still people practicing it. In 2015, Broward County passed an ordinance that simply sterilizes and returns all outdoor cats without any consideration for the cat's welfare or for resident's wishes. **ALL** cats brought in to the County shelter get "Returned To Field". **Cats deserve better!** The City has crafted its own TNR ordinance to promote a better quality of life for outdoor cats and resolution of complaints for residents impacted by the continued presence of outdoor cats. The City ordinance is designed to provide balance in this highly controversial area.

- Allows responsible cat caregivers to provide care as long as no complaints are generated
- Regulates feeding which is the biggest problem with TNR
- Requires evaluation of cat's health and full vaccinations as recommended by AVMA
- No return to field of sick, injured or friendly cats
- Provides for the lowest form of containment
- Allows cat advocates to have first opportunity to resolve cat complaints
- Allows cat advocates the opportunity to take possession of and re-home City held unwanted cats as an alternative to euthanasia.
- Encourages the average resident to participate in reducing the cat population by simply taking responsibility for the few that may be observed around their own home.

## Containment is Still Critical

Although not mandated, containment is encouraged. It is the means by which cats can be safely cared for. Without containment, a cat has the ability to get into trouble. It could walk in front of traffic, end up mauled by a dog when it enters that yard, become injured in territorial fights, be exposed to other unhealthy animals with communicable disease, or simply be exposed to human aggression. After expending the effort to sterilize and vaccinate the cat, it only makes sense to also provide for its safety too.

Containment also protects birds and other wildlife. It prevents spread of zoonotic disease and soundly eliminates nuisance problems.

Some complain that containment is too difficult or expensive but that is not the case. Electric fence kits can be purchased for under \$100 and are a safe and effective means of containment when installed properly. In addition, there are several cat fence manufacturers that can easily be found on the internet. The Animal Control Division can be con-

## Protecting other animals

The domestic cat is not native to North America and is a skilled hunter. The Smithsonian Institute conducted a study released in 2013 which found



that domestic cats are responsible for the killing of between 1.4 and 3.7 billion birds each year in the US. Clearly the number of outdoor cats is devastating the wild bird populations. **Often, the emphasis is placed on providing care for outdoor, homeless and feral cats but it is important to consider how that can be done while not at the expense of other creatures.** If cats are contained to one area, birds and squirrels will be protected because they will nest elsewhere. Also, the concentration of cats confined to a yard could even act as a barrier keeping rats away.

## Protecting People

There are numerous public health concerns pertaining to free roaming cats. A significant amount of bacteria is carried in the cats mouth and claws. Cats, on occasion, do bite and scratch people causing severe lacerations and infections resulting in hospitalization and unrecoverable expenses to the victim. Rabies is of special concern as rabid cats have been found more frequently each year and the CDC stated three times more rabid cats were reported than rabid dogs. Other diseases such as toxoplasmosis, hookworm, ringworm and others are spread to humans. In order to protect people from these disease concerns, **cats should be contained to the owner's property or feeding location.**