



## FAQ's: Community Cats and TNR

### **Q: What are community cats?**

**A:** Community cats are unowned, free-roaming cats who live outdoors. These cats may be social with humans or feral. Social outdoor cats are not always abandoned or lost pets, although they can be. Sometimes the cats are social because they have had human caretakers throughout living their lives outdoors and have acclimated to being around people.

### **Q: What is a feral cat?**

**A:** A feral cat is a cat who has never had contact with people or whose contact with people has been extremely limited. They may be able to be touched by a regular caregiver but they have no interest in living inside or becoming someone's pet. While they may enjoy a free meal on your back porch they have adapted to life outside and will never be socialized.

Do **not** try to handle feral cats. Humane trapping is the safest and best way to contain these cats for any needed transportation and/or medical care.

### **Q: What is the difference between a feral cat and a stray cat?**

**A:** Both feral and stray cats are unowned free-roaming cats. A stray cat is not necessarily feral; it may be a reasonably social animal. Feral cats are truly unsocial, wild animals. Someone in your neighborhood may be feeding a free-roaming colony of both types of cats but most of these cats are still considered unowned.

#### **“A stray cat:**

- Is a cat who has been socialized to people at some point in her life, but has left or lost her indoor home, as well as most human contact and dependence.
- Can become feral as her contact with humans dwindles.
- Can under the right circumstances become a pet cat once again. Stray cats that are re-introduced to a home after living outdoors may require a period of time to re-acclimate; they may be frightened and wary after spending time outside away from people.

#### **A feral cat:**

- Is a cat who has either never had any contact with humans or her contact with humans has diminished over time. She is not socialized to people and survives on her own outdoors. Most feral cats are not likely to ever become lap cats or enjoy living indoors.
- Can have kittens who can be socialized at an early age and adopted into homes.

(from [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org) 2012)

**Q: Where do feral cats come from?**

**A:** Feral cats are cats that have been born to feral mothers and are subsequently not social with humans. They can also be cats that were once owned and have reverted to a feral nature because of their ongoing limited interactions with people.

**Q: What is TNR?**

**A:** “TNR” is an acronym for “Trap-Neuter-Return.” TNR programs are run all over the country as part of a humane solution to ending cat overpopulation in our communities. They are run by shelters, rescue groups and many full service veterinary clinics. In a TNR program cats are humanely trapped by concerned citizens and brought to a veterinary facility for spay/neuter, basic vaccination and ear tipping. After surgery they are transported back to where they were trapped and are released back to their outdoor home.

**Q: What is an ear tip?**

**A:** Cats that come through a TNR program have their left ear “tipped” as part of the normal surgical protocol. It involves removing a small portion of the tip of the left ear to serve as universal identification that the cat has been spayed/neutered. If the cat were to ever be trapped again the cat’s spay/neuter status can be easily identified. This avoids unnecessary stress, transport, and anesthesia of an already altered cat.

**Q: What are the benefits of TNR?**

**A:** There are many benefits to both cats and people from TNR. The primary benefits include smaller and healthier community cat colonies, decreased public nuisance complaints, lower animal control costs, and increased numbers of rabies vaccines administered.

**Q: Why can’t truly feral cats be socialized?**

**A:** Feral cats are cats that have never been around people or are cats that have had very little interaction with people. There is a small window of opportunity for the possible socialization of feral kittens. If kittens are less than 12 weeks of age, patient, slow efforts at socialization may result in a more social cat. Over 12 weeks of age attempts at true socialization are usually unsuccessful and are stressful and can be dangerous. Feral cats live happy, healthy lives outdoors and the best thing you can do for them is trap-neuter-return. Some cats prefer to live outdoors and that is absolutely okay.

**Q: Why doesn’t just removing problem cats work?**

**A:** Catch and kill programs are not an effective strategy to control populations of community cats. Cats live in a particular area because there is food available and some sort of shelter. When cats are removed from that area other cats will move in as long as there is a food source (intentional or other) and shelter. Those new cats will continue to reproduce and the cycle will continue.

**Q: How is TNR funded?**

**A:** Our TNR program is funded by the small co-pay that is paid at the time of surgery and by the generous donations of concerned citizens. Please help us help more cats by thoughtfully donating whatever you can afford.

**Q: Who qualifies for the TNR program?**

**A:** Anyone who has identified unowned community cats are eligible to participate. You do **NOT** need to live in Geauga County to use this program. Applications for the program are available and online at [www.rescuevillage.org](http://www.rescuevillage.org) under the programs and services tab. If you do not have an email address to submit an application, you may call us at (440) 338-4819 for assistance with submitting the application. A \$25 co-pay per cat is required at the time of surgery to help us offset the costs involved with running the program.

**Q: Are there other resources for information about TNR and humane trapping?**

**A:** There are numerous other resources for information on free-roaming cats, humane trapping and TNR. Two organizations that are particularly well respected and knowledgeable are:

Alley Cat Allies ---- [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)

Neighborhood Cats ---- [www.neighborhoodcats.org](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org)

**Please call Rescue Village at 440-338-4819 ext. 14 with any questions you may have about TNR. We also offer a trap rental program for a fully refundable security deposit when you return the borrowed trap on time and in good working condition. Trap rental deposit fees vary based on the type of trap being loaned out.**