

FERAL CATS :- A MAN-MADE PROBLEM

“You are forever responsible for what you have tamed.”

- A feral cat is the result of a domestic cat that has been abandoned by its owners and left to fend for itself. Left to its own devices, nature takes its toll and the cat starts to breed. Soon that one cat has produced kittens and they in turn have offspring; very soon you have a colony of feral cats (wild cats that have never had human contact). If a well intentioned human intervenes and starts to feed the colony they unknowingly make the problem even bigger. The colony becomes healthier with the help of the good food and the breeding increases. Very soon the kind human panics when he realizes he has got a real problem on his hands; with the soaring numbers, the cute kitties have now become pests. At this point we at The Shelter usually get the frantic phone call, “We have been feeding some wild cats at our office, we started off with four and there are now 60 and the boss is threatening to kill them because they are climbing on his new Merc, please come collect them, they are so cute and so beautiful.” This is when we need to explain that there is unfortunately no ‘quick fix’.

These are the facts:-

- Removing the cats will not help, as soon as they are gone, new cats will start filtering through sensing the food source which originally attracted the cats. Very soon you will be stuck with the very same problem.
- Keeping the colony in its original territory is the ideal solution, in order to do this we believe in the trap/ sterilize/release approach. This may be accomplished with the help of professional trappers who carry out the entire process, or by renting traps and carrying out the process yourself. If you take the approach of trapping the cats slowly and methodically, eventually they will all be sorted and the breeding will have stopped. Your vet will clip the ears of the sterilized cats. You will be rewarded with a small, healthy colony who takes it upon themselves to keep your area free of rats. It is recommended that you still continue feeding at least 3 times a week. A roster can be drawn up where all the animal lovers take turn feeding the cats. Always feed in a quiet place, so that the cats don't disturb anyone.
- If any kittens are found before you sterilize; take them to your nearest shelter or try finding homes for them amongst friends or colleagues, Remember this should be done when the kittens are about 5 to 6 weeks old. Any older and you are dealing with very scared kittens that will tame, but, not enough to be re-homed to a family who wants a confident problem-free kitten. If newborn kittens are found; try find the mom, their best chance at life is with her. Make sure they have shelter and the mom is fed. Don't forget to sterilize the mom once her kittens have found homes. She could be pregnant again within 2 months!
- We believe that if each company/family/ home deals with their own problem; there is hope. The problem is too big for any single organisation to deal with, if we work together an agreeable solution can be reached; for both cats and humans.

REMEMBER YOU CAN'T CAGE AN ADULT FERAL CAT HE IS
HAPPIEST LEFT IN HIS OWN ENVIROMENT. ONCE YOU START
FEEDING, THE RESPOISIBILITY OF STERILIZATION FALLS ON
YOU.

THANK-YOU,

KITTY SHELTER

