



How You can help the Feral cats in your Neighborhood!

YOU too, can join this exciting and effective movement and improve the lives of the cats in your area. The first step is to attend a three-hour training workshop, instructed twice a month by Initiative staff. Afterwards, you'll be a certified feral cat caretaker with access to all the services and guidance offered by the Initiative, including free spay/neuter, use of equipment, and expert assistance.

For a schedule of times and locations of training workshops, to make a donation to help fund TNR programs, or to learn more about the NYC Feral Cat Initiative, go to www.nycferalcat.org or call 212-330-0033.



Mayor's Alliance
for NYC's Animals®

The New York City Feral Cat Initiative



And it's working! In early 2006, the NYC Feral Cat Initiative launched its innovative, online database and currently has hundreds of feral cat colonies registered. The data collected show that, on average, these colonies are already showing substantial declines in size! In addition, thousands of cats and kittens have been rescued and placed in homes from these same colonies. Entire neighborhoods, such as the Upper West Side of Manhattan, are virtually kitten-free, and other landmark areas like Rikers Island and the Fresh Kills Landfill have shown reductions by more than half in the numbers of cats.



All photos provided courtesy of
Meredith Weiss of Neighborhood Cats.

www.NYC FeralCat.org



Mayor's Alliance
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Working to Save the Lives of NYC's
Feral & Stray cats

Tens of thousands of homeless cats roam the streets, back alleys, and parks of New York City, struggling desperately on a daily basis to survive. They originate from lost or abandoned cats and many have grown wild, or “feral,” and shy away from people. Others, like young kittens and tame adults (known as “strays”), would make suitable pets, but instead must fend for themselves as best they can.



Left unmanaged and uncared for, the cats are prone to disease, and often have inadequate food and shelter. They band together, living in groups called colonies, and face the dangers of traffic, construction, and ill-intentioned people. One study found the average life span of an unneutered feral cat is only two years, while kitten mortality rates run as high as 75 percent.

Not only the cats suffer. The noise from fighting and mating, the smell from the spraying of unneutered male cats, and the sight of injured and dead animals can have a profound negative impact on a neighborhood’s quality of life.

For the city as a whole, the street cats mean more animals entering shelters, higher costs for animal control, public health concerns and, in some locations, wildlife predation.

Past efforts to remove the cats have failed. There are too many cats and not enough resources to catch enough of them to make a difference. Any captured are usually killed in shelters because they are not adoptable, and there is no other choice. They end up being quickly replaced from wherever they were taken by new cats and the cycle of suffering and reproduction continues unabated.

But now there is hope! In neighborhoods throughout New York City, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) has proven effective in humanely managing feral and stray cats, while at the same time reducing their numbers. With TNR, the cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, ear-tipped and, if they’re feral, returned to their original territories. A trained caretaker then provides food and shelter, and watches for problems or newcomers. Cats young or tame enough to be adopted out are removed and placed into responsible homes.



After being sterilized and returned to their territory, feral cats no longer reproduce, make dramatically less noise and odor, and roam far less, making them less visible. Rodent control, often a community benefit provided by the cats, is maintained. Someone is there – the caretakers – to monitor and care for the cats. Over time, provided a high enough percentage of the colony is neutered, their numbers gradually dwindle.

The New York City Feral Cat Initiative, a program funded by the Mayor’s Alliance for NYC’s Animals®, is making TNR a reality for street cats throughout the five boroughs. For anyone interested in helping the cats by using TNR, the Initiative offers training, hands-on support by expert coaches, equipment, advice, food donations, and referrals to free or low-cost spay/neuter resources. The Initiative also helps coordinate the many services offered by the members of the New York City Feral Cat Council, a coalition of animal organizations in New York City that support TNR.