



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FERAL AND STRAY CATS

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. Feral cat 'colonies' can be found behind shopping areas or businesses, in alleys, parks, abandoned buildings, and rural areas. They are elusive and do not trust humans.

Many people assume their animals will survive when they move away and leave them behind. Contrary to popular belief, domestic animals do not automatically return to their "natural" instincts and cannot fend for themselves! Already, U.S. animal shelters are forced to kill an estimated 15 million homeless cats and dogs annually. The alternative to humane euthanasia for almost every stray is a violent end or slow, painful death. Many "throwaways" die mercilessly outdoors from starvation, disease, abuse --- or as food to a predator.

A pair of breeding cats, which can have two or more litters per year, can exponentially produce 420,000 offspring over a seven-year period, and the overpopulation problem carries a hefty price tag. Statewide, more than \$50 million (largely from taxes) is spent by animal control agencies and shelters for cat-related expenses.

Studies have proven that TNR or trapping-neutering-and releasing is the single most successful method of stabilizing and maintaining healthy feral cat colonies with the least possible cost to local governments and residents, while providing the best life for the animals themselves.

A STRAY CAT IS NOT A FERAL CAT...A stray is a cat who has been abandoned or who has strayed from home and become lost...Stray cats can usually be re-socialized and adopted...A feral cat is an un-socialized cat...Either he was born outside and never lived with humans, or he is a house cat who has strayed from home and over time has thrown off the effects of domestication and reverted to a wild state...They should not be taken to local shelters to be adopted...Feral kittens can be adopted if tamed and placed in homes...First they must be socialized in their first weeks of life...If they aren't handled in time, they will remain feral and un-adoptable.

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