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Project TNR presents:

Nexus News

Connecting feral cat caregivers across New Jersey

a program of the Animal Protection League of NJ



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In The News—Cumberland County Voices

On March 4, Cumberland County Voices printed a misinformed letter claiming that managed cat colonies are not humane. The writer suggested fenced in colonies paid for by heavy abandonment fines—an idea which is completely unenforceable and unrealistic to achieve. Our Policy Specialist was quick to respond:

Dear Editor:

Downe should adopt a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) policy like many other NJ municipalities. TNR involves trapping the cats, adopting out the kittens and friendly adults, and neutering and vaccinating the untame adults before returning them for lifelong outdoor care. Neutered cats cannot reproduce so the population goes down as the cats die off naturally. Neutering also stops nuisance behaviors like fighting, screaming, spraying, roaming, etc. TNR can be done by volunteers, and low-cost clinics neuter cats for a fraction of what the town pays to kill them.

The National Animal Control Association (NACA) supports TNR. The NJ Department of Health and Senior Services calls it part of "the solution to the feral and free-roaming cat situation." The Governor's Task Force on Animal Welfare recommended an expansion of TNR programs, as did Governor Corzine's environmental policy transition team. Governor Christie recently signed new legislation encouraging veterinarians to donate medical services to municipally-approved managed cat colonies.

Letter-writer Liz Timkiw made various incorrect claims about TNR. In terms of TNR being humane, the Humane Society of the United States, the ASPCA, and the NJSPCA all endorse TNR as the only humane and effective means of reducing feral cat populations, as does practically every other animal protection group in the state and country. There are no laws prohibiting TNR, and in fact many NJ municipalities have ordinances specifically providing for it. Timkiw alleged that a court decision in California made TNR illegal, but all that decision said was that the city of Los Angeles needs to complete an environmental study before paying for TNR itself, under a California law mandating studies for projects funded by California towns and counties. There is still privately funded TNR in Los Angeles, and the city is completing its study to enable publicly funded TNR to resume. There is no equivalent law in NJ to pose even a procedural



More than 130 towns and cities in NJ have TNR programs or work with nonprofits that do. Morristown's TNR program has reduced their feral cat population by 76%, Englewood's by 72%, and Cape May's by about 80%. Other municipalities report similar results. Impoundment and euthanasia rates plummet and taxpayers save money. Numerous academic studies have documented that TNR, when done correctly, results in dramatic declines in the numbers of feral cats. A controlled study in CT (Staskopf and Nutter) demonstrated that in two years the TNR'd colonies decreased in size by an average of more than a third, and two went extinct, while every colony that was not TNR'd increased in size, by an average of 47%.



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In The News— Cumberland County Voices

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obstacle to publicly funded TNR, which a number of NJ towns engage in.

Trap and kill programs do not work. Animal control cannot trap all the cats on its own, so spends time and money trapping some while the rest reproduce and quickly replace them. The president of NACA called this "bailing the ocean with a thimble."

Email Michelle if you

need help composing

a letter for your local

newspaper!

tnrpolicy@aplNJ.org

Enclosed sanctuaries also are not a viable solution—feral cat sanctuaries are few and far between (there are none in NJ) and quickly fill up, and they are exponentially more expensive than TNR. Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society in MA does TNR and has a small sanctuary for cats who cannot be released for various reasons. While it costs them \$50/cat to do TNR, it costs them \$4,000 for every cat they put in the sanctuary. This is due to the costs of land, building maintenance, fencing, having to buy the food and products and veterinary care centrally themselves, (instead of spread out among many caregivers), and paying staff. Every sanctuary that cares for feral cats acknowledges that they can only care for a very few in that manner and at huge expense, while agreeing that TNR is the answer on a larger scale.

Concerns about feral cat interaction with sensitive wildlife populations has been addressed by the NJ Feral Cat and Wildlife Coalition, with input from NJ DEP and NJDHSS as well as NJ Audubon. This collaboration resulted in a model ordinance and protocols for TNR projects to follow when the feral cat location overlaps with cat-sensitive endangered or threatened wildlife. In such circumstances, which are rare, buffer zones, special fencing, and increased monitoring can resolve any concerns. You can learn more about TNR at www.ProjectTNR.com.



More news—Florida Keys

While APLNJ generally focuses exclusively on NJ issues, we sometimes take action on a federal issues that could have far-reaching effects and impact animals in NJ. For this reason, we recently submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protesting their proposed predator control plan on FWS land in the Florida Keys where endangered species are present.

FWS proposes to remove all of the cats by trapping and deposit them at a kill shelter. FWS decided on this plan with very little study or analysis, ignoring studies showing that complete removal of feral cats can wreak havoc on native wildlife if invasive rodents are also present (as they are in the Keys) and studies showing TNR is very effective as a way of gradually reducing feral cat populations. While the plan is only for the Florida Keys, it indicates that FWS does not understand feral cat population dynamics or the effects of different management strategies.

If you would like a copy of APLNJ's comments, visit www.ProjectTNR.com. For a list and summary of relevant studies, email us at TNRPolicy@aplNJ.org.

Lining Up To Be Counted!

Project TNR urges you to continue, or begin, tracking every cat you TNR!

To help us build a better picture of TNR in NJ please send us copies of your tracking sheets—all identifying information will be kept strictly confidential.

Contact us at 732-446-6808 or feralcats@aplNJ.org if you would like copies of our recommended tracking system.



TNR Group Spotlight—Communities Altering the Strays (CATS)

In each issue we like to highlight a group engaged in TNR, hoping to inspire others to promote TNR in their town using ideas from successful groups!

Q1 Nexus News: What was your first step to getting started as a group?

CATS: I volunteered at a "no-kill" (hmmm!) shelter for over 10 years and was unhappy with the constant, never-ending in-the door, out-the-door (in one way or another) system. Too many animals, not enough homes. Shelter volunteers, friends, and I felt it best to snip the problem in the bud (so to speak) and focus on promoting spaying and neutering of feral and stray cats, and family pets (cats and dogs).

Like you, we are just a few people who are willing to put ourselves out there for people that are overwhelmed and feel hopeless.

Q2 Nexus News: How does working as a group make you more effective than working independently?

CATS: Actually we do both. As a small group we work together to resolve issues in our immediate areas, and yet also continue to work independently on TNR projects in our own neighborhoods, places of employment, etc. To the best of our ability, we respond to long-distance inquiries regardless of region (whether through a volunteer, referrals through animal control, networking with other rescue groups, shelters, or telephone and email).

Q3 Nexus News: How have you built resources for TNR?

CATS: We use any resources that we can to resolve, or assist anyone that seeks help. The internet affords valuable contacts for situations that we can't handle personally, and so we reach out to fellow animal lovers.

Q4 Nexus News: How many cats have you TNR'd in the past 12 months?

CATS: It's difficult to say. In some shape or form, we would estimate at least 200 in the last 12 months. We encourage people to TNR their

ferals or strays themselves and when we loan or rent out traps, we do our best to keep records of the estimated number of cats to be trapped at a particular location (at least according to what we are told by the caregiver). With instruction, advice, verbal and "emotional" support, people realize that they can get to work on their colonies immediately. Rather than compound the problem by delaying, and waiting or hoping to find a rescue or someone to do the TNR for them, people can learn TNR through us, and then can pass on their knowledge.

In my personal 15 years of active TNR, I realized that if I can do TNR, anyone can. It's not rocket-science.

Some people, like senior citizens, or the disabled, are limited and we will try to accommodate those caring people. We do ask that caregivers sign an agreement stating how many cats are estimated to be TNR'd and that it is agreed that those cats are to be returned to the trapping site.

Q5 Nexus News: How do you fund your TNR?

CATS: We do not provide funds for veterinary or clinic services. Caregivers are encouraged to utilize the low-cost spay/neuter clinics posted on our website and distributed in flyer format. All funds are used to purchase Tru-Catch traps, and equipment that can be loaned out. Our

contact information is also on the flyer.

Funds are also used for the care of some of our rescued, adoptable cats, and also our special needs, disabled, or what we call our "lifers." Funds are limited but come from community events, bake sales, donations. We loan out traps and our drop trap for short periods, but ask for a donation for trap loans for extensive periods.

Contact CATS:

Mail: PO Box 344, Belvidere, NJ 07823

Email: catsincorporated@comcast.net; Phone: 908-453-0082

Web: catsincorporated.org



The resources provided by CATS are the following:

- Clinics: Peaceable Kingdom in Allentown PA, \$35, ph 610-432-2532
- No Nonsense Neutering in Allentown PA, \$35, ph 866-820-2510
- Center For Health and Welfare in Easton PA, \$35, ph 610-252-7722 ext 8

Possible Funding Assistance: SpayUSA, ph 800-248-7729; NoKill Lehigh Valley, ph 484-695-6829; Lehigh Valley ARK, ph 610-435-0207

For more spay/neuter options please go to: ProjectTNR.com (Look under Resources)

SpayNJ.com (Look under Why Spay/Neuter. Many clinics require Spay NJ referral for low cost rate)

Don't forget to search in neighboring States for resources—there are many clinics in PA, NY and at least one in DE we know of. (Forgotten Cats.org)

Trap Covers!

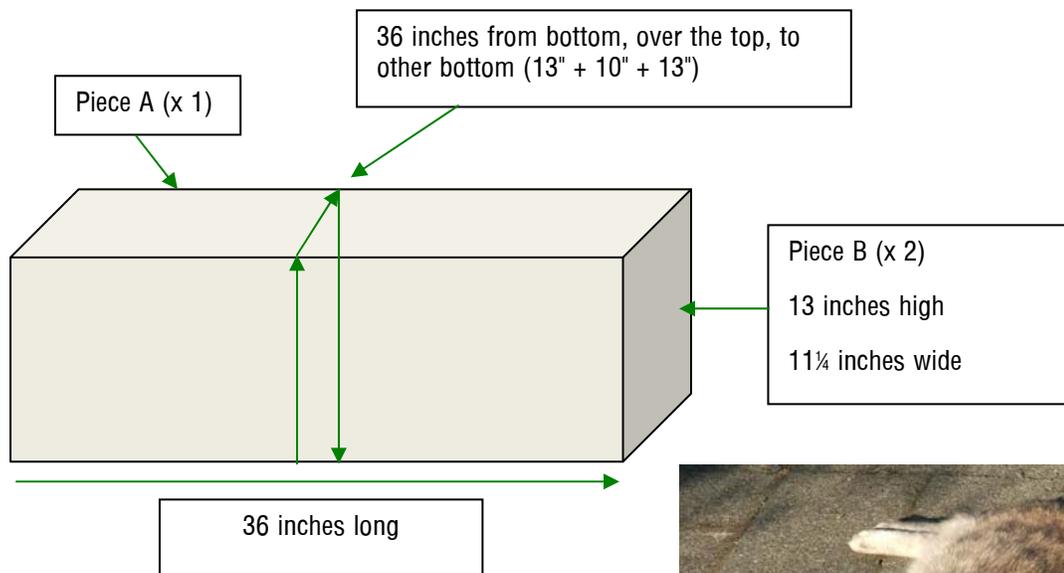
A lot of people were interested in instructions for making trap covers as discussed last issue, so here are some ideas and basic instructions. Material ideas: from thrift stores or dollar stores—pick up shower curtains or drapes, sheets (flat or fitted), fleece blankets to cut to size and drape over traps or sew to fit. You can also sew pillow cases together. For all weather covers you might like landscape tarps from a home improvement or garden store. You can use bungee cords to keep in place.

Basic directions for a 36" trap: Courtesy of Sue Pontani from Stray Katz

- 1/ Wash fabric in hot water and dry it on high heat to shrink it before cutting.
- 2/ Cut the fabric 36" x 36" for the piece that goes over the top and sides of the trap. (Piece A)
- 3/ Cut two pieces 13" x 11¼" for the front and back of the trap. (Piece B)

Sew the front and back pieces on to opposite ends of the fabric. (three sides only)

Put the cover on the trap and cut a slit for the handle. Then take it off, turn it around, put it back on and cut again. The handle of the trap is usually not centered so cut the hole to fit the handle no matter what way you put the cover on. This means the slit is longer than it needs to be but you don't have to worry about turning the cover to go on correctly, it fits either way.



To make your cover more versatile:

* Rather than sewing all 3 sides of one (Piece B) end, just sew the top part creating a sort of flap at one end. The flap will rest up on the door when the trap is set, and fall down with the door when the trap is tripped, instantly covering the trap. Some people have added ties or Velcro strips to secure the flap in place when the cat is inside. They work great!

* Another great idea is to sew a plastic sleeve, large enough to hold an index card, on top of the trap so when it is time to go to clinic, you have a handy place to insert relevant information needed by the clinic!



Caution—Spring Ahead!

If you are involved in a lot of trapping you will know that the majority of females currently being trapped and vetted are ALREADY pregnant or in heat. This presents additional issues that need to be carefully considered when trapping in Springtime. Careful planning is VITAL before trapping begins during official 'kitten season' - typically March through October.

Nursing Mothers

- * The possibility of nursing mothers means that you must only trap close to your clinic appointment date. You do not want to find out after holding a cat for 3 days that she is a nursing mother.
- * If the clinic spays a nursing mother, do not panic! She will still be able to nurse her babies.
- * First try to locate the babies. If they have been away from Mama for a whole day, they will be making noise. Call to them like Mama would. If you can locate them, great! Scoop them up and bring them inside where you can keep them with Mama in a large dog crate until they can be weaned, and Mama can be returned.
- * If you cannot locate the kittens, return Mama 24 hours after her spay so she can go back to her kittens. Do not release much earlier than that because she has pain medicine and sedatives in her system still.
- * Keep an eye out for her after release, and know that you will need to find and trap those kittens when they are 5 to 6 weeks old.



Orphan Kittens

- * If you find kittens who appear to have been abandoned or you cannot locate the mother, you will need to act quickly.
- * Always have on hand some kitten milk replacer (KMR), some bottles and a heating pad for emergencies.
- * Kittens under 4 weeks old will need to be bottle fed and will need to be placed on a heating pad. Make sure you know the basics of bottle feeding just in case—empty them out before you fill them up! Email us if you would like a general guide to young kitten care.
- * Kittens 4—6 weeks old can be slowly weaned by mixing KMR with wet kitten food, then with puree food such as baby food, and then kitten wet and dry food.
- * Another option for orphaned kittens is to place them with a surrogate nursing Mother cat.

They will need to be watched carefully because some mothers will not accept new kittens and will be aggressive towards them. Many, however, will immediately accept additional offspring as their own. Take care placing tiny babies with older nursing kittens. The tiny babies may be sucking, but not receiving any milk because the bigger kittens have quickly finished off all available milk! You may still need to supplement nursing with bottle feeds.

* www.kittenbaby.com is a good guide! Also alleycat.org/Kittens.



More Trapping Tips!

For mass trap planning—the number of cats you trap in the first few hours is most likely about a third of the total number of cats you need to trap. Also, you need to trap for three days straight without trapping any more cats before you can assess the project as complete. (from Felicia C, Forgotten Cats President)

For a really hard to catch cat – I put a plate of canned food next to the trap, then inside trap – line with newspaper, and sprinkle catnip & treats (Temptations brand treats I find they all love) and on trigger plate put a big plate of catnip & treats. This has worked twice for me with hard to catch cats. (from Cami D, South River)

Mackerel works for me every time! I line the trap with paper (weighted down with stones if it is windy) and then dribble the mackerel juice from the front of the trap all the way to the back. I put a couple of tiny morsels of food in a trail leading to the back, another morsel right on the trip plate and then the cornucopia in back. (from Richard K, Trenton)

Tie a KFC original recipe drumstick to top of trap, just past the trip plate. Remove it when the cat is trapped (because of the bone). Leave an almost empty large (soup) size mackerel can, behind trip plate, for those cats who go in the traps but know not to step on them. They get mesmerized by the can! (from Mary P, East Windsor)

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*Connecting feral cat
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our newsletter, let us know.
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SOS program update—limited funds available!

Thank you so very much to these generous donors for showing your support for the Sponsor Our Spays program: Celeste, Kathy, Shirley, Donna and Consuelo. With their help, 12 more cats will be spayed or neutered! If you would like to help fund more TNR, as little as \$30 will get one cat sterilized and vaccinated. Make check payable to APLNJ and mark Project TNR—SOS in the check's memo. Trappers are welcome to apply for these subsidy funds. Email us for details.

Have a business* you would like to promote?
Contact us about appearing in our next issue!

AD SPACE AVAILABLE!

Currently circulating to over 700 members!

*Subject to approval - all advertisements must not conflict with APLNJ's cruelty-free philosophy. Fees collected will be used for TNR projects.

In our last issue we told you the story of Kaz, the fortunate feral. We neglected to mention the wonderful vet who provided Kaz with such loving care and refused to give up on him. If you are in Mercer County and looking for a feral friendly vet, you may want to visit with Dr. Kazmierczak ("Dr K"). Now you know where Kaz got his name!

West Trenton Veterinary Hospital
568 Grand Avenue, West Trenton, 08628
WestTrentonAnimalHospital.com
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