

## TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN

Taken from: <http://njspca.org/awareness-animal-faq.htm#Q15>

### How many feral or abandoned animals are wandering the streets in New Jersey?

There are many hundreds if not thousands of feral and abandoned animals roaming the streets of New Jersey. Trap-Spay-Neuter-Release programs are invaluable in helping to get these numbers down to a manageable amount.

### I have a problem with cats in my neighborhood. I'm not sure if they're stray or pet cats. How do I tell?

Understanding the differences between a feral, stray and pet cat will help you determine the cat's classification. There are three types of roaming cats:

A feral cat is one that has "gone wild," a domestic cat that was lost or abandoned and has reverted to a wild state, or a cat that was born outside to a stray mother and had little or no human contact. Adult feral cats usually cannot be tamed and are not suited to living indoors with people. They live outside in family groups called colonies that form near a source of food and shelter. Feral cats can survive almost anywhere and are found worldwide.

A stray cat is a domestic cat that strayed from home and became lost or was abandoned. Depending on the circumstances and how long the cat has been on its' own, he or she could be feral or quite social. Since a stray cat was once a companion animal, if they are feral, he or she can usually be re-socialized and placed in an adoptive home. All cats roaming at large are strays if you do not know who the owner is.

A pet cat is an owned cat that is permitted to roam the neighborhood. By law, owned cats must be sterilized and remain on the owner's property. Pet cats are usually lovable and can be touched by most people. If you know who the owner is, the cat is not a stray.

Generally, neighborhood problems revolve around a person feeding cats that continue to breed and produce kittens, ultimately forming a colony of free-roaming cats.

### I feel terrible that wild cats might be euthanized, but there are too many in my neighborhood. Is there anything else I can do?

It is unfortunate that there are so many feral cats roaming the state. Spay-neuter release programs are a good first step to help control the population.

### Can I trap a cat myself?

Absolutely! There are many animal-loving citizens doing TNR through their own veterinarians. You can purchase a trap at a local store. If you purchase a trap, it's important that you learn how to humanely use it as cats can easily die if left unattended.

- Trap in dry weather only; never in a rainstorm or in freezing temperatures.
- Do not feed the cats a full 8 hours before trapping as they must be hungry to enter the trap.
- If you'll be trapping in an area where pet cats are roaming, please inform your neighbors that you will be trapping. Most cat owners do not think to contact the SPCA when their cat is missing.
- Transport the trapped cat to your participating veterinarian, immediately upon its capture. Place a towel over the trap so the cat feels secure; it reduces anxiety. Do NOT transport the animal in the trunk of your vehicle.



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- Tuna and canned cat food work well in traps. Place the food inside the release bar at the back of the trap so the cat is sure to step on the trigger plate when eating.
- The trap should be monitored once an hour while set. With the added stress, cats can easily die if left in the trap for many hours. If you're trapping overnight, the cat will be fine until you wake up in the morning. Add a small bowl of water.
- Always place the trap in a shady spot unless it is continually observed. Place the trap near the cat's feeding location.
- Once trapped, move the animal to a secure shaded area until it is transported.
- You may accidentally trap the wrong animal such as an opossum, squirrel, or previously trapped cat. If so, put on heavy-duty gloves before approaching the trap so the frightened animal does not bite you. You can then safely open the trap to release the animal.

### **What can you do about feral cats?**

Trap-Neuter-Return. TNR is a non-lethal form of animal control that proactively addresses the overpopulation of cats through sterilization. The goal of TNR, a comprehensive, ongoing program, in which feral cats already living outdoors are humanely trapped, evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians, is to return the cats to the area from which they were taken. The evaluation determines whether these cats will be returned to their familiar habitat under the lifelong care of volunteers, placed up for adoption, or, in the case of cats that are ill or injured beyond recovery, humanely euthanized.