Animal Protection League of NEW JERSEY

Promoting Respect | Ending Abuse
advocating for animals since 1983

What is TNR?

Trap-Neuter-Return, commonly referred to as "TNR", is the only method proven to be humane and effective at controlling community cat population growth. Using this technique, all cats in a colony are trapped, neutered and then returned to their territory where caregivers provide them with regular food, water and shelter. Young kittens who can still be socialized, as well as friendly adults, are wherever possible placed in foster care and adopted out to good homes.

TNR has many advantages. It immediately stabilizes the size of the colony by eliminating new litters of kittens. Nuisance behaviors are dramatically and immediately reduced such as fighting, yowling and odors associated with intact male cats spraying to mark their territory.

Another significant advantage to TNR is that, when practiced on a large scale, it lessens the number of kittens and cats flowing into local shelters. This results in lower euthanasia rates and the increased adoption of cats already in the shelters. This offers a tremendous benefit to townships and communities alike.

TNR is the only method of controlling community cat populations that actually works. Doing nothing, trap and remove or feeding bans have resulted in the current crisis where, in New Jersey, the community cat population is exacerbated by intact companion cats who roam outside as well. The number of cats roaming outside in a community can be as much as 6% of the human population.

Although ideal, trying to "rescue" the cats and find them all homes is utopian and unattainable given their numbers and the resources required - including the resources of time and space - it may take to socialize them all.

Trap and kill, the outdated technique previously exercised by animal control, is simply ineffective. If all the cats are not caught, then the ones left behind over breed until the former population level is reached. Even if all the cats are successfully removed, new unneutered cats tend to move in to take advantage of whatever food source there was, and the cycle starts again. This explains why more and more animal control agencies are evolving and moving towards the success that TNR can offer for community cat population control.

Finally, TNR is an idea and philosophy whose time has come. It recognizes there is a new balance in our urban and rural landscape, one that includes community cats. It seeks to manage this new population with enlightened techniques that allow the cats to live out their lives and fulfill their natures, while minimizing any possible negative impact. TNR is a movement that will continue to grow as more and more caring people see its potential and, in time, it will become the predominant method of community cat population control until such control is no longer necessary.

Developing and supporting community cat management in ways that reduce populations, costs and concerns in the most effective, humane and responsible manner.

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