Animal Protection League of NEW JERSEY

Promoting Respect | Ending Abuse
advocating for animals since 1983

Best Practices for TNR

The following are very basic guidelines for TNR as advocated by Animal Protection League of NJ.

1) Post-surgery recovery time
Recommended post-surgery recovery time is 24 hours for males and females. All cats should be checked prior to release to make sure they are alert and that there are no medical conditions requiring further veterinary treatment, such as severe upper respiratory infection, bleeding or excessive lethargy.

2) Holding/recovery space
Space in which the cats are held during the trapping and for post-surgery recovery should be warm, dry and secure. "Warm" meaning at least 65 to 70 degrees (especially post-surgery when the cats' body temperatures may be lower than normal), "dry" meaning protected from the elements, and "secure" meaning the cats are not accessible to other animals or anyone not associated with the project.

3) Trapping
To be effective, 100% of the cats in a colony must be TNR'ed or placed up for adoption. Mass trapping should take place whenever possible. For net positive effect on population reduction at least 75% of the population must be TNR'd at any point in time. To achieve 100% management of a colony, all kittens over 8 weeks AND weighing at least 2lbs are also to be spayed/neutered or held in a foster situation until they are spayed/neutered and NOT left outside in the colony. All kittens under 8 weeks of age but weaned are to be held in foster situation. All kittens not yet weaned are to be held in foster situation ALONG with the mother until they can be spayed/neutered.
Traps should never be left set and unattended for more than 15 minutes at a time in cold months and 30 minutes in warmer months at the maximum. As such they should never be left set overnight unless they are being monitored all night. Digital monitoring with a camera is strongly recommended.

4) FIV/FeLV testing
FIV/FeLV testing is not recommended except when test results would be useful in diagnosing the condition of a symptomatic cat, or when a cat is being considered for adoption.

5) Vaccinations
It is strongly recommended that rabies vaccinations be administered.

6) Eartipping
Returned cats should be eartipped in accordance with the universal symbol of an altered feral cat - 1/4 inch off the tip of the left ear in a straight line cut.

7) Long-term colony care
Cats and their colonies who are TNR'ed should be provided with long-term care, including the provision of adequate food, shelter and medical care. Consistent monitoring by a designated caregiver should include regular tracking updates as well as taking reasonable efforts to ensure rabies vaccination are kept up to date.

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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