

COMMUNITY CATS

What are Community Cats?

“Community cats are un-owned cats that live outdoors in the community. They may be feral or friendly, born into the wild, or may be lost or abandoned pets.” It is the mission of the Animal Welfare League of the Northern Neck, Inc. to humanely reduce community cat colonies. Care includes feeding, medicating and neutering/spaying these cats. Community cats need food, medical care, and shelter during extremely cold weather.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the best approach to dealing with community cats

TNR is a non-lethal 3-step method to reduce the number of feral or stray cats, both immediately and in the long term.

Step 1:

Feral or stray cats are trapped using a safe, humane, live trap.

Step 2:

Trapped cats are tested for FIV/FelV. They are then spayed or neutered by a veterinarian. They also receive a health check, rabies shot, and ear tip (to identify them as sterilized). Additional treatments may include a distemper shot and medications for fleas, worms, ticks, and/or ear mites. Injuries are also addressed.

Step 3:

Cats are returned to their colony after recovery from surgery. Socialized cats and kittens may be brought into foster care and advertised for adoption.

TNR works because it:

- Addresses community concerns about humane treatment of cats
- Stops the breeding cycle
- Reduces and stabilizes populations of community cats
- Improves the health of community cats
- Allows a colony to gradually diminish in size over time
- Reduces or eliminates fighting and wandering
- Reduces complaints about cats killing wildlife
- Helps protect the environment

Once a colony is stabilized through TRN, it will defend its food source. Killing cats or removing them from an area allows other cats to move in to take advantage of the food source. This is known as the “Vacuum Effect”. Nature abhors a vacuum!