

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Animal Services and Assistance Programs, Inc. (ASAP) is an all volunteer, 501c3 organization founded in 2008.

“We do not euthanize any animal unless it is to relieve pain and suffering due untreatable health issues”.

- ASAP is funded 100% by donations.
- ASAP is the only shelter in McHenry County that takes in feral mothers with kittens and young feral kittens. If the mothers do not end up being social enough to be adopted they will be returned to their habitat when their kittens are weaned and provided there is a caretaker to insure that she is provided food and shelter.
- We provide Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) for free-roaming, feral and barn cats.
- We recognize the important role pets play in the lives of their families and ASAP will provide food and life-saving veterinary care for low-income qualified family pets provided we have funds available.
- ASAP does not accept owner relinquished cats or horses, except those that have been adopted from our programs. All cats and kittens in our programs come from our TNR program or from McHenry County Animal Control. We accept transfers from McHenry County Animal if no other shelter or rescue will accept them due to health or temperament and to insure that any and all cats get a chance at a new life.
- Cats and Kittens for adoption may be seen at our adoption events or by appointment.
- For more information on our TNR program please see the following TNR manual.

McHenry County

Trap Neuter Return

CARETAKER MANUAL



ANIMAL SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, INC.

815-568-2921



WHAT IS TNR ?

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are humanely trapped, then evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their familiar habitat under the lifelong care of volunteers or placed in a barn home.

In McHenry County, Illinois only County approved organizations are permitted to practice TNR.

2018 ASAP is the only organization approved to practice TNR in the County.

TNR PROGRAM

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are humanely trapped, then evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their familiar habitat under the lifelong care of volunteers or placed in a barn home.

ALL APPOINTMENTS FOR FERAL CATS MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO TRAPPING CATS. THERE IS A LIMITED NUMBER OF SPACES AVAILABLE EACH DAY.

SURGERIES ARE DONE MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY BASED ON AVAILABILITY

TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS CALL ASAP at 815-568-2921 BEFORE 6PM.

FEE SCHEDULE

Neuter/Spay fee for feral cats is \$35.00

Cats that are late term pregnancies will not be accepted (over 5 weeks)

Late term fee of \$5.00 will be assessed to cover cost of anesthetic and exam cats will be returned without surgery and vaccinations.

FeLV/FIV testing is optional at \$15.00/test.

ALL FEES MUST BE PAID BY CHECK AT TIME OF DROP OFF.

INSTRUCTIONS

- All cats must be trapped the night before and off food and water at 10pm
- **Do not trap after dark**
- Place newspaper in bottom of trap, small amount of canned food in back of trap
- Once cats are in trap place towel over trap to keep cats calm and move cats to a garage or out of the weather. **ONCE CATS ARE IN TRAPS DO NOT TRY TO TRANSFER CATS TO CARRIERS OR CRATES!!!!**
- **NEVER LEAVE TRAPS UNATTENDED OUTSIDE OVERNIGHT**
- **All cats must arrive at the clinic the morning of their surgery at your appointed time.**
- If you believe your cat is pregnant or nursing be sure to let us know and let the vet know when you drop off.
- If you need a trap you may call Pet Vet 847-669-6635. There is a \$50 refundable trap fee.
- You are responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged traps.
- All traps must have name and phone number where we can reach you if needed.
- All cats must remain in traps overnight post surgery.
- No food for any cats post surgery until the next morning. Water Only!

TNR PROTOCOL

- All cats will be ear-tipped to identify that they have been spayed or neutered, NO EXCEPTIONS.
- All cats will be vaccinated for rabies
- All cats will be vaccinated for DRC (Distemper, Rhino, Calici)
- All cats will be microchipped
- All cats will be checked and treated for earmites if needed
- All cats will be checked and treated for fleas if needed and sprayed with Frontline.
- All cats will receive an injection of antibiotics
- All spays are done with absorbable sutures.

MCHENRY COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

VI.6.14 Managed Feral Cat Colony:

It is unlawful for any person to intentionally provide food, water, or other forms of sustenance to a feral cat or feral cat colony unless the feral cat is maintained in an approved managed feral cat colony under a Department approved organization.

In order to be an approved managed feral cat colony, the person caring for the cats must:

- A. Ensure that the colony is restricted to a well-defined safe area, and not on lands managed for wildlife or other natural resources (i.e. State parks, wildlife refuges, etc.) Written permission of the landowner shall be obtained and notarized when colony manager is not the property owner.
- B. Register the colony with a Department approved organization, licensed by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The approved organization must file reports including but not limited to location of colonies with Animal Control as requested.
- C. Provide adequate shelter, which provides protection from the elements, and have photographs available of the site upon request.
- D. Shall be required to humanely capture and provide for:
 - a. Health examination;
 - b. Serology screening test, for those being removed for adoption as a minimum and any ill cats or as deemed by veterinarian, for infectious diseases (Felv & FIV), and euthanasia or isolation indoors of those which test positive;
 - c. Maintenance of an ongoing health care program which provides vaccinations, medical and/or surgical care and parasite control;
 - d. Sterilization;
 - e. Removal of kittens and adoptable adult newcomers;
 - f. Left ear tipping and micro-chipping for those which have been spayed or neutered and returned to colony or placed in a barn home;
 - g. Removal from, return to the colony, or euthanasia of those cats that cannot be socialized, as determined by the approved organization responsible for the colony;
 - h. Rabies vaccination as recommended by vaccine manufacturer.

- E. Have an approved written program of educational training, which shall be provided for all caregivers. This shall include uniform standards and procedures for colony maintenance, as well as public health, occupational safety and environmental issues. Training is to be provided by the approved organization.
- F. Provide notification to Animal Control as requested the street a colony is located.
- G. All cages, traps and carriers used for colonies must be clearly marked with organization's name and phone number
- H. Remove nuisance cats from the colony and euthanize, isolate indoors or put in a barn cat program.
- I. Not relocate any cat to another colony within McHenry County

VI.6.15 Removal of Colony by Animal Control:

The Department has the right to seize and remove all, or parts of, any colony for any reason including but not limited to:

- A. Public health and public safety concerns including rabies, other epizootic and certain zoonoses identified by the Department.
- B. Animals creating a public nuisance or which are in violation of any section of this ordinance.
- C. In the event the caretaker and/or approved organization fails to comply with the requirements of this section.
- D. Any and all fines incurred as a result of the Department having to trap, remove, board or provide other services are the responsibility of the approved organization.

When feasible the colony manager and the approved organization will be notified by the Department at least 48 hours before removal of any animal from the colony.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

The feral cat population in this country has reached critical proportions and must be contained. The preferred way to do this is to trap, neuter and release these animals back into monitored colonies, and an increasing number of concerned people are doing just that. Before beginning feral cat care, you should be aware of both health concerns of the cats and potential hazards to humans, specifically, zoonotic diseases, which are diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans. While these hazards are few, you should take precautions when handling feral cats. Wear padded gloves, a shirt or jacket with long, thick sleeves, and perhaps most important, get a pre-exposure rabies vaccination.

Zoonoses

Rabies

Of all zoonotic diseases, the most feared is rabies. Although there is an extremely low incidence of humans contracting rabies, it still causes great panic. The primary carriers of rabies are raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks, although any unvaccinated domestic or non-domestic mammal can be a source of rabies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 1989 cats were responsible for only 0.4% of reported rabies cases to humans (contracted mostly from domestic cats). Any cat who bites a human should be quarantined for 10 days, examined by a veterinarian and then vaccinated prior to release. For cats one year old and older, a three year intramuscular vaccine should be given to provide the greatest protection.

Even though cats less than one year old may not receive the full three-year protection of this vaccine, it still provides the greatest protection for both future human contact and cat to cat contact.

For more information on rabies and how to fight it, see the ACA fact sheet, Rabies and Feral Cats: Facts and Control.

Bacterial Diseases

Bites

Bites are the most common human-health problem. Bacteria in the mouths of cats can cause infection, including swelling, inflammation and pain. All animal bites should be treated properly, by cleaning the wound immediately and visiting a doctor or emergency clinic for examination and treatment.

Cat-Scratch Fever

This pathogen can cause lymph node enlargement, fever, fatigue, sore throat and headaches. Although most patients do not become seriously ill and recover without complications, if you are scratched immediately wash the wound and contact your doctor if any symptoms occur.

Chlamydiosis

Felines who have this upper respiratory infection can pass it along to humans in the form of conjunctivitis.

Lyme Disease

Caused by the deer tick, this disease is not fatal, but can cause severe problems if not diagnosed and treated in its early stages.

Campylobacter

Campylobacter jejuni is a normal gut flora in many cats that can proliferate when intestinal parasites are present, especially in kittens. The main source of contamination to both humans and cats is ingesting undercooked poultry. Though rarely serious in humans it poses a greater danger to children, the elderly and immunocompromised people. Symptoms are diarrhea (always); fever, aches, chills, and vomiting can occur. Prevention is accomplished by wearing gloves when handling cat feces or cat, and preventing contact with suspect kittens near the facial area. Treatment is seldom necessary, but if you experience symptoms you should contact your physician.

Salmonella

Salmonella is another food-borne pathogen with causes and symptoms similar to Campylobacter. The main source of contamination is undercooked or raw eggs. Though less common, Salmonella can be contracted in the same manner as Campylobacter. Call your physician if you experience diarrheal disease after contacting diarrheal cats.

Fungal diseases

Ringworm

Ringworm is most commonly transmitted by domestic cats. While examining anesthetized feral cats for wounds, any suspicious lesions can be checked for this fungus. When handling a cat suspected of having this fungus, you should wear gloves.

Parasites:

Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasma gondii is an intestinal parasite that is a human health concern primarily for pregnant women. The main source of contamination to humans is eating or handling undercooked or raw meat. However, an infected cat may pass the oocyst of Toxoplasma in feces. Therefore, pregnant women should avoid handling cat feces from domestic or feral cats and may want to avoid handling feral cats as they may be a source of fecal contamination.

Conclusion

Although there are potential hazards for acquiring some diseases from feral cats the incidence is rare, and if common sense and good hygiene are combined when working with colonies, transmission of infectious diseases from colonies to humans can be minimized. Contact with other humans is more likely to be a source of contracting infectious diseases.

Prevention Tips

To minimize health hazards when dealing with feral cat colonies:

- **Clean up left-over food**
- **Spray for flea infestations**
- **Clean up cat feces areas**
- **Sterilize colonies to reduce populations**
- **Vaccinate colony members against rabies**



GLOSSARY OF FERAL CAT ADVOCACY TERMS

ALLEY CAT ALLIES (ACA) – The national information clearinghouse and advocacy organization working to establish effective nonlethal programs, including Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), as the standard method of reducing feral cat populations. ACA functions through print, video, and web-based information; workshops and conferences; and by consulting with individuals, groups, agencies, and institutions that work directly with feral cats. ACA is 501(c)3 non-profit association based in Bethesda, MD, and is supported by 95,000 donors and activists. For more information, go to www.alleycat.org.

FERAL CAT – Literally “gone wild,” a domestic cat that was lost or abandoned and has reverted to a wild state, or a cat that was born to a stray or feral mother and had little or no human contact. Adult feral cats are usually impossible to tame and are not suited to cohabiting with people. They live in family groups called colonies that form near a source of food and shelter. Feral cats can survive almost anywhere and are found worldwide.

STRAY CAT – A domestic cat that strayed from home and became lost or was abandoned. Because a stray cat was once a companion animal, he or she can usually be re-socialized and placed in an adoptive home.

FERAL CAT COLONY – A group of free-roaming cats living in a specific geographic area. Prior to the implementation of Trap-Neuter-Return, feral cat colonies consist of both stray (tame) and feral (wild) cats of all ages, from kittens through adults. After Trap-Neuter-Return is completed, a feral cat colony consists exclusively of feral adults.

ADVOCACY – “The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.” (American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition) Feral cat caregivers, both individuals and groups, are advocating for nonlethal feral cat reduction in communities throughout the nation.

ADOPTION – Feral kittens up to eight to ten weeks of age can usually be socialized and adopted into

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR) – A nonlethal sterilization method to reduce the numbers of feral cats in the environment both immediately and for the long-term. A comprehensive, ongoing program in which stray and feral cats already living outdoors in cities, towns, and rural areas are humanely trapped, then evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized by veterinarians. Kittens and tame (stray) cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats too wild (feral) to be adopted are returned to their familiar habitat under the lifelong care of volunteers. Cats that are ill or injured beyond recovery are not returned to the environment.

TNR was brought to the U.S. from Europe and the U.K. in the late '80s. The practice of TNR grew rapidly in the '90s when Alley Cat Allies began providing information and assistance to people caring for feral cats who recognized that their numbers must be controlled and reduced through sterilization. In communities where TNR is widely embraced, feral cat numbers have dropped.

TNR programs operate largely or entirely through the dedicated efforts of committed volunteers. TNR works because it breaks the cycle of reproduction. In general, the cost of sterilizing and return-ing a feral cat is less than half the cost of trapping, holding, killing, and disposing of a feral cat. TNR protects public health and advances the goal of reducing the numbers of feral cats in the environment. The public supports humane, nonlethal TNR as the long-term solution to feral cat overpopulation. ■

homes. Adult feral cats, on the other hand, are wild animals unsuited to cohabiting with humans. There are tens of millions of feral cats in the U.S., and although individual adult feral cats can sometimes be tamed, the time (usually many months) and resources required are exorbitant and means that many more feral cats may go without basic necessities—sterilization, vaccination, food, and shelter.

EARTIPPING – A technique of painlessly removing a quarter inch off the top of a feral cat's left ear while the cat is anesthetized for spay/neutering. Eartipping is the universal symbol of and only proven way to permanently identify (both close up and from a distance) a feral cat that has been evaluated, vaccinated, and sterilized. Eartipping ensures that a sterile cat will not undergo unnecessary repeat trapping and surgery.

ESTABLISHING COLONIES – This refers to the *myth* that feral cat caregivers establish new cat colonies, often by rescuing cats scheduled to be killed in shelters and putting them outside. The *truth* is that feral cat colonies already exist in abundance in the U.S. (see **Feral Cat Colony**). Feral cat advocates and caregivers who practice TNR as recommended by Alley Cat Allies humanely trap, sterilize, and vaccinate stray and feral cats already living in colonies, find homes for the kittens and stray cats, and return healthy adult feral cats to their outdoor homes, thereby reducing the population both immediately and in the long-term (see **Trap-Neuter-Return**). Feral cat caregivers do not establish new colonies.

EUTHANASIA – “The act or practice of ending the life of an individual suffering from a terminal illness or an incurable condition, as by lethal injection or the suspension of extraordinary medical treatment.” (American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition) The term “euthanasia” does not apply to killing healthy companion animals and/or feral cats because there are too many of them.

FELV, FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS – A retrovirus specific to cats, FeLV causes an immune system breakdown making the cat susceptible to diseases which it might otherwise be able to fight off. FeLV cannot be transmitted to humans nor can it be transmitted to other species. FeLV+ cats may remain asymptomatic (although contagious – they are shedding the virus, primarily in saliva) for many years. With supportive care and symptomatic treatments, many FeLV+ cats live a high-quality life for months to years, while others may succumb quickly. FeLV is spread primarily from mother to kitten.

FERAL CAT CAREGIVER – A compassionate human who feeds feral cats, performs Trap-Neuter-Return, and provides long-term care and monitoring for adult feral cats that are returned. Caregivers are men

and women of all ages from all walks of life. Most of the leading feral cat organizations were founded by caregivers whose commitment to feral cats grew to encompass entire communities.

FERAL KITTEN – Any kitten born outdoors to a stray or feral mother. Most feral kittens can be socialized if the process is begun when they are only a few weeks old. Socialization requires that the kittens be confined for a short period of time during which they are talked to and gently held and petted for increasing periods until they come to trust the human-animal bond. Usually, the younger the kitten, the easier socialization will be.

FIV, FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS – Also a retrovirus specific to cats, FIV is transmitted from cat to cat primarily by deep bites, as the virus is shed in the saliva. Perhaps the most prevalent method of transmission is bite wounds in fighting cats, especially roaming males. Intimate contact through grooming, sharing food, etc., does not spread the virus. Overall, FIV is less common than FeLV. FIV positive cats often live long, symptom-free lives.

GOAL – Responsible feral cat advocates and practitioners of TNR share one goal with wildlife and environmental groups, animal control agencies, and public health officials: to reduce the number of feral cats in the environment in the long-term. We strive to demonstrate to these groups that TNR coupled with other nonlethal practices is showing results and should become the standard method of feral cat control everywhere.

Groups that advocate adoption for feral cats are ignoring the documented wild nature of feral cats and their fate when adoption proves impossible, which is death in a shelter or animal control facility.

HUMANE BOX TRAP – A metal wire box rigged so that when an animal steps into it, the door closes, preventing the animal from leaving. These traps do not cause the animal any pain and are the only type of trap to be used for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

MANAGED FERAL CAT COLONY – A group of feral cats living together and having strong blood ties in which all cats have been sterilized and vaccinated and are provided daily food and shelter by a volunteer caregiver. The caregiver regularly monitors cats and captures any who need veterinary care, in addi-

