Trap-Neuter-Return: A Humane and Effective Way to Help Feral Cats

Trap-Neuter-Return means fewer cats entering shelters, less euthanasia of healthy cats, and the humane management of outdoor cat populations. Feral cats live full, healthy lives in their outdoor homes.

What is a feral cat? Feral cats are regular domestic cats, just like our pets. The difference is that feral cats are not socialized to humans and make the outdoors their home. Feral cats are either born outside to feral mothers, or are previously owned cats who, over time, became fearful or wary of humans after being lost or discarded. Feral cats may bond to members of their colony as well as to their outdoor home territory.

Why not take them to a shelter or call animal control? Since feral cats are fearful of humans, they are not able to be adopted like socialized cats. That means they are almost always euthanized when they are taken to a shelter.

What is the alternative? AWA urges people to consider Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

What is TNR? Through TNR, feral cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated for rabies, ear tipped (for identification) and returned to their outdoor home.

How can I help feral cats?

AWA's Pet Clinic Supports Feral Caregivers in Several Ways:

- Renting traps - AWA has traps available for a $100 refundable cash deposit. The full deposit is returned when the trap is returned.
- Feral Fix-it Pet Clinic Services - For just $35, we will provide spay/neuter surgery, rabies and FVRCP vaccination, and ear tip. Slots are available by appointment only every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Additional services such as antibiotics and microchipping are available.
- Trapping Tips - Visit AWA's list of trapping tips at www.awanj.org/pet-clinic/trap-neuter-return

Facts about Feral Cats

- More than 70% of all U.S. cats entering animal shelters are killed. In fact, being killed at animal shelters is the number one documented cause of death for cats in this country.
- Virtually 100% of feral cats who enter animal shelters are euthanized because they are not socialized to people and cannot be adopted.
- Feral cats living in managed colonies can be just as healthy as pet cats— with equally low rates of disease and the same average life spans.
- The average lifespan of a feral cat brought to a shelter is just 3 days. Left outside without care, the average lifespan is 2 years. With a Colony Caretaker, lifespan increases to 12-15 years.

More Resources for Feral Cat Caregivers:

Alley Cat Allies: www.alleycat.org

Neighborhood Cats: www.neighborhoodcats.org