TNR and Campus Cat Organizations
CampusCats
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
1 March 2013
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CampusCats is a registered student organization at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) since Fall 2012 and aims to reduce the outdoor feline population of ULL and Lafayette, through trap-neuter-return (TNR), colony management, community education, and facilitating foster and adoption networks.

**TNR**

Trap, neuter, and return (TNR) is a non-lethal process for reducing and monitoring feral cat populations through non-lethal trapping, sterilization (i.e. spaying and neutering), vaccinations, medical care, ear-tipping, and colony management. After being sterilized, vaccinated, treated, and ear-tipped, feral cats are returned to the area they were trapped and maintained through colony care while stray cats are placed into foster or adoptive homes.

Ear-tipping nicks off a piece of the ear to show that a cat has been fixed.

CampusCats colony care includes:
- feeding cats once a day
- providing a clean water source
- maintaining a clean feeding area
- monitoring members of the colony and providing ongoing medical care
- managing (i.e. trapping, vaccinating, treating, and neutering) unaltered feral newcomers
- managing stray newcomers and placing them in a foster program or adoptive home
Stray Cats

CampusCats removes stray cats from campus by placing them in foster programs and adoptive homes

Stray cats include
- domestic cats that have been abandoned or lost but can be successfully placed back in a home due to their friendly, trusting, or tame behavior.

Stray cats, not feral cats, beg at doors for food and allow themselves to be touched.

Stray cats do not have adequate survival skills to live outside and can be a nuisance to passersby and residents since they are not afraid to approach humans. This is why CampusCats offers to facilitate foster and adoptive networks for ULL stray cats to remove them from campus and into caring homes.

In Spring 2012, Family Housing at ULL received a complaint about a cat who was approaching children and begging at doors. This cat was a stray kitten, later named Catniss. Within approximately a week, she was successfully adopted and removed from campus by the founders of CampusCats.

Since CampusCats’s formation, no new kittens have been born on campus. However, some feral and stray cats and kittens have wandered onto campus. Since Spring 2012, eight cats and kittens have been adopted off campus, the most recent being 31 January 2013.
Feral Cats

CampusCats provides long-term maintenance of feral cats through colony care.

Feral cats include
- un-owned domestic cats that have reverted to a “wild” state after being abandoned or lost
- cats that were born on the streets or in the wild and never socialized to humans.

It is not in the nature of a feral cat to injure (bite or attack) people. All feral cats are fearful and distrustful of humans and will run away if approached.

Barb Ryan, the Chief Trapper at Tulane University, New Orleans, since 2008 observes:
[Tulane University has] never had any incident of a feral cat harming anyone. A cat is feral because it is afraid of people. They will always run away. I have never seen a cat attack anyone. [email correspondence, 6 December 2012]

Ana Zorilla, the Chief Executive Officer of the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (LASPCA) since 2007, explains:
Never [have I heard of an incident where a feral cat harmed anyone on a campus]. By nature, feral cats are unsocialized cats and avoid people. The only time they would be aggressive is if someone was threatening them (cornering them, trying to grab at them, etc) or if they were injured/in pain and you were trying to move them. [email correspondence, 7 December 2012]

Campus cat organizations are especially necessary because campuses are hotspots for feral cats.

Feral cats are opportunists and form colonies where food and shelter are available. Dumpsters and crawl space under buildings alone attract cats to the ULL campus.

However, campus communities that have not been exposed to animal welfare education tend to generate large outdoor feline populations.

According to the Austin Campus Cat Coalition (ACCC) at the University of Texas, Austin, and the Aggie Feral Cat Alliance of Texas (AFCAT) at Texas A&M University, College Station, campuses see large feral cat populations due to:
- pet abandonment by students and campus neighbors
- students and campus neighbors letting loose unaltered pets who then rapidly reproduce

As Karen Johnson’s “A Report on Trap/Alter/Release Programs” explains, “one unspayed female, with all her unspayed female offspring, reasonably can be expected to be responsible for over 3200 kittens [over 12 years] if there is no human intervention.” This is after having calculated for average birth rates, survival rates, and life expectancy.
Thus, pet abandonment and neglect by students and campus neighbors of even just a handful of unsprayed females will exponentially fuel outdoor feline populations until addressed with TNR and community education.

**Feral cats moved onto the University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus before caregivers existed. However, with TNR and community education, the outdoor feline population can be successfully reduced.**

A common concern with TNR programs is that they “encourage” or “establish” feral cat colonies. However, the cats are already here. TNR does not create the cats. It manages and reduces the number of feral and stray cats.


*Austin Campus Cat Coalition.* [http://www.ae.utexas.edu/cats/what_we_do.html](http://www.ae.utexas.edu/cats/what_we_do.html)

TNR benefits both cats and communities

1. Spaying/neutering humanely, effectively, and significantly reduces the feline population and the problems associated with feline overpopulation (e.g. threat to terrestrial vertebrate conservation)

2. Spaying/neutering reduces unwanted behaviors associated with mating, e.g. yowling, fighting, and spraying.

3. Returned cats continue to manage rodent, snake, and roach populations.

4. Returned cats guard their territories from newcomers.

5. TNR reduces the amount of feral cats submitted to animal shelters, which in turn allows shelters to focus on tame cats that are adoptable, reduces the overall use of euthanasia in animal shelters, and reduces the costs borne by taxpayers to euthanize animals at shelters.

6. Spaying/neutering improves the overall health in feral and stray cats which has the effect of uplifting a community’s sense of accomplishment and reducing behaviors (e.g. fighting) which are typically labeled a nuisance.

7. TNR enables suffering cats with fatal, contagious diseases, such as Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Feline Leukemia, to be identified and mercifully euthanized, ending their pain and eliminating the chance that the cat will spread diseases to other owned and unowned cats.

8. TNR is less expensive for the community than euthanasia; TNR at a low-cost neuter facility costs on average $40-$50 while euthanasia costs on average $70-$100.


Humane Society http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/feral_cats/qa/feral_cat_FAQs.html


Trap-and-Remove methods are insufficient

Removing a cat colony (i.e. killing or relocating) creates a “vacuum” effect which only results in more unaltered cats moving into the area.

The fact that feral cats inhabit a certain area indicates there is an ecological niche that is capable of supporting up to a certain number of feral cats. Removing those cats without significantly changing the environment makes room for more unaltered cats to move in and take advantage of the available food and shelter resources.

Alley Cat Allies. [http://www.alleycat.org/vacuumeffect](http://www.alleycat.org/vacuumeffect)

Killing cats provides a short term solution but over the long term is ineffective at reducing the feline population.

In “Feral Cats—Extermination is not the Answer” (1994, 1995, 2000, 2002), Sarah Hartwell examines a case on a small “inhospitable” island off the coast of South Africa, where scientists dropped off five unsterilized cats. After twenty-six years, there were 2,200-2,500 cats on the island. It took sixteen years, deliberate infection with feline enteritis, predation by Jack Russell terrier dogs, hunting, and poisoning to finally eradicate the cat population on the island. Not only does the study show the difficulty in reducing a feline population through killing, it shows that only “rapid” methods of removal were wholly successful. However, these methods cannot be safely implemented in populated areas.

In populated areas, like Boreham, England, Hartwell reveals that attempts to kill off feral cats not only fail but allow even larger feral cat populations to establish themselves.

TNR is effective

TNR has been proven worldwide to be effective at significantly reducing feline populations.

The Feral Cat Coalition reports that within five years of implementing TNR in 1992, the San Diego Department of Animal Control reported an almost 50% decrease in cats impounded and killed. This is in contrast to their situation before implementing TNR, when San Diego was experiencing a 10-15% per year increase in cats impounded and killed.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Adopted</th>
<th>Euthanized</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988-99</td>
<td>13929</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2130</td>
<td>10976</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>15394</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>2224</td>
<td>12349</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>16849</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2426</td>
<td>13561</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>19077</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>2577</td>
<td>15525</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>14143</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2297</td>
<td>11121</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>12446</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2386</td>
<td>9269</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other includes: returned to the wild, transferred to correct jurisdiction, wildlife rehabilitation, stolen, escaped, DOA, died in kennel, died in truck, died at contract vet, misc.


TNR has been successful at significantly reducing feline populations at campuses nationwide.

A long-term study conducted by Drs. Julie Levy and David Gale at the University of Central Florida campus found that TNR, combined with community education, renders cat colonies stable and healthy year after year. The 11-year study observed the feline population on campus decline by 66%, with no new litters born on campus after the first four years. At the end of the study, 83% of the cats had been part of the program for more than 6 years, as opposed to the typical 2-3 years expected of feral cats, indicating a healthy lifespan with the implementation of TNR.


Campuses that have implemented an official TNR program report reduced feline populations on campus.

The Stanford Cat Network of Stanford University, California, formed in 1989, became the first major campus cat organization in the U.S. and serves as a model for campuses nationwide, including UT and A&M. The Stanford Cat Network is supported by students, staff, faculty, and community volunteers who TNR cats, manage cat colonies, foster/adopt cats, and educate the
community. The campus estimated having 500 cats on campus at the start of their program. However, through TNR, they put a stop to feline growth. By 1994, only 4 new litters were discovered. Today, Stanford sees zero population growth and a significantly reduced feline population of 300 cats.


Austin Campus Cat Coalition at the University of Texas, Austin, is a registered UT staff organization, sanctioned by the university but supported by contributions alone. They operate under the Animal Make Safe Program of UT’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety in order to TNR cats, manage cat colonies, foster/adopt cats, and educate the community. By 2010 (fifteen years after implementing their TNR program) no new litters of kittens had been born in ten years and 15 neutered cats remained on campus to be managed in small colonies.

| Overall Cat Count (including Main Campus and the Pickle Research Center) |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 116 kittens (under 3 months) | Adopted |
| 44 friendly strays | adopted or reunited with caretaker |
| 115 adult feral cats | trapped, neutered, and returned to campus |
| 13 cats | euthanized (serious injury or illness) |
| 288 TOTAL |

Austin Campus Cat Coalition. [http://www.ae.utexas.edu/cats/index.html](http://www.ae.utexas.edu/cats/index.html)

The Aggie Feral Cat Alliance of Texas (AFCAT) at the Texas A&M University (TAMU), College Station, started in 1998 and has conducted thorough studies observing the success of TNR on the College Station campus. During the first year of TNR implementation, Mr. Bill Shepard, Texas A&M’s Physical Plant Pest Control Supervisor, reported that his office received significantly fewer cat-related calls and reported a decrease in overall cat sightings on campus. Drs. Margaret Slater, Kathy Hughes, Fradkin, Clark Adams, Sara Ash, Lisa Howe, Alice Wolf, and Deb Zoran, of the Departments Veterinary Anatomy and Public Health, Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Small Animal Medicine and Surgery, surmise this may be due to available food supplies by AFCAT feeders, reduced roaming due to sterilization, or population stabilization. Detailed reports show the “first 18 months or so was the most active [TNR] time, with the majority of cats being feral. In years 2 and 3, an increasing number of cats on campus were kittens or tame adults, with relatively few new feral cats caught. In year 3, trapping frequency on campus was reduced to every 2 or 3 months as part of the ongoing maintenance of the campus colonies. [...] The program has been considered a success with fewer cats trapped or found, a decrease in complaints related to cats on campus and a positive view of the program in general.” The table below charts the first five years of the program’s activities. Year 1 trapped 158 cats while Years 2-5 trapped 68 cats.

AFCAT—First Five Years
AFCAT. [http://vetmed.tamu.edu/afcat](http://vetmed.tamu.edu/afcat)

The Cat Poly Cat Program (CPCP) at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, started in 1992 as a Trap-and-Remove program facilitated by the local Department of Animal Regulations, but the feline population continued to be a problem. CPCP then adopted a TNR and manage approach. Students operated senior projects with the goal of socializing feral cats and finding homes for them. They were joined by volunteer staff. Over nine years, the program has decreased the outdoor feline population on campus from 400 to 60 while the adoption program has placed more than 450 cats and kittens in caring homes.

CPCP. [http://afd.calpoly.edu/facilities/cats/index.html](http://afd.calpoly.edu/facilities/cats/index.html)

Friends of Campus Cats at the University of Washington, Seattle, is a registered 501(c)(3) organization listed with GuideStar, one of the online standards for nonprofit accountability. Volunteers starting in 1988 have TNR’ed, managed colonies, facilitated fosters/adoptions, and educated the community, resulting in over 500 cats neutered and treated and a 90% decrease in the feral cat population.

Friends of Campus Cats. [http://campuscats.org/](http://campuscats.org/)

The Feral Cat Program of the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, is a volunteer program founded in 2005. Due to their TNR efforts, their latest census in 2009 registers approximately 50 cats as opposed to the 62 they started with. Their goal is to manage the population through TNR and colony management.
The Feral Cat Program. [http://www.smu.edu/orgs/cats](http://www.smu.edu/orgs/cats)

MildCats of Arizona State University, Metro Phoenix, strives to provide humane means of controlling feral and stray cat populations via TNR, colony management, adoption, and community education. In their first four years, between 2002 and 2005, they neutered and treated approximately 180 cats, with only six in 2005.


Campus Cats at Tulane University, New Orleans, works with the Tulane Green Club and Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to TNR cats, manage cat colonies, and educate the community. Their campus has seen a significant decrease in cats trapped since implementing a TNR program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Cats neutered and treated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>35-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4 litters of kittens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2012</td>
<td>1-3 cats per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Barb Ryan, Chief Trapper of Tulane University, email correspondence, 6 December 2012*

The Feral Cat Rescue Group of the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas facilitates TNR, colony management, fostering/adopting cats, and community education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cats</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trapped, Neutered, Released</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to Another Group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euthanized</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently In Foster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cats Helped</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>231</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dogs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to Another Group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently In Foster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Dogs Helped</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Birds Helped</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Animals Helped</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>259</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Feral Cat Rescue Group. [http://orgs.unt.edu/feralcat/index.htm](http://orgs.unt.edu/feralcat/index.htm)*

The Campus Cat Coalition at the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas, started in 2006 and is an approved charity included in the State Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign. They
consist of student, staff, and faculty members who TNR cats, manage cat colonies, and educate the community on TNR and feral cats. The organization’s statistics are not yet available.

_Campus Cat Coalition._ [http://www.uta.edu/campuscats/](http://www.uta.edu/campuscats/)

Operation Catnip of North Carolina State University, Raleigh, is an all-volunteer organization founded in 1997 dedicated to reducing feral and stray cat populations through sterilization. Their statistics are not yet available.

Community Reaction to TNR

A majority of people oppose euthanasia.

Of 1,025 adults interviewed in a study conducted by Harris Interactive, 81% reported that they would rather leave a cat outside than euthanize it. When asked if their position would change if they knew the cat would die two years later when hit by a car, still 71% reported they would prefer to leave the cat outside rather than euthanize it.


This majority opposition to euthanasia is evident on ULL campus.

When the Cajun Village resident who submitted a complaint about Catniss in Spring 2012 discovered that all of the feral cats in the area may be killed, she went out of her way to locate prospective members of CampusCats and expressed regret explaining she is afraid of cats but still did not want them harmed.

Members of the ULL campus community support TNR efforts.

Many passersby ask questions when CampusCats trappers and caregivers are spotted on campus. However, each passerby, ranging from residents to janitors, teachers, and campus policemen, has responded positively to CampusCats’s efforts upon hearing the goals and methods.

Campus support has expressed itself in private, at events, and online. The CampusCats Facebook page received 178 “likes” in its first semester and has continued to gain more each day. In just one semester, over half of CampusCats’s income came from monetary donations, totaling approximately $300. This also does not include the many sheets, towels, food, and litter donations that show community support for CampusCats’s first semester as a registered student organization.

Campus support for TNR programs is not uncommon among other campuses. Barb Ryan, Chief Trapper at Tulane University, exclaims, “The faculty, staff and students love the cats. Visiting parents like them too!” [email correspondence, 6 December 2012].

Some places have even made cat colonies into an attraction, such as the Torre Argentina Cat Sanctuary situated in a square of ancient ruins in Rome, Italy, and housing approximately 250 cats.

Torre Argentina Roman Cat Sanctuary. http://www.romancats.com/index_eng.php

As long as feral and stray cats are being responsibly managed with TNR, medical care, colony care, foster/adoptive networks, and community education, the feral and stray feline population will be controlled and humans and cats can peacefully cohabitate the same space.