



COMMUNITY CATS FAQ

1. Are all cats you see roaming outside unowned community cats?

No. About half of all owned family cats have indoor-outdoor access. Some pet owners believe it is more natural for cats to be able to roam freely outdoors. Other pet owners do not want their cats in the house for numerous reasons. If you have an indoor-outdoor cat, microchipping it will help your cat to find its way back to you if it is picked up by animal control.

2. I have seen a cat roaming around and no one is claiming it.

Cats venture MUCH further than most people realize! Cats roam through back yards, not on streets and sidewalks as humans do. A cat in your neighborhood may be from outside your area. In addition, to people who let their cats roam, their cats are not missing. They are still returning daily for food!

3. How do I know a cat is being cared for?

If the cat appears healthy and has a good body condition, then it probably has a food source and shelter. If the cat appears unhealthy or injured, contact your local animal control agency.

4. How do I get cats to leave my yard?

Food and water attract animals, so do not leave these in your yard.

You can also use the following deterrents to assist in keeping them out of your yard.

- **Digging:** Most cats have an instinct to cover their feces in sand or dirt. You can try covering the area with citrus smells or coffee grounds to deter the cats. Laying lattice fencing on the ground can also help to stop digging.
- **Trash Cans:** Use bungee cords to secure the lids of garbage cans, so if they get knocked over, the lids stay on.
- **Scratching:** Place double sided tape on places cats are scratching. They do not like the stickiness.
- **Fighting with Other Cats:** Spaying and Neutering will help to stop the fighting over mates.

5. What exactly is Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)?

Simply removing cats from an area will not solve the problem! When you remove cats from one area, more will come from another. The safest and most efficient way to decrease this population is Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). This is when cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, ear-

tipped and returned to the location they were trapped to live the rest of their lives. Community cats are very resilient and smart— they will find food, water, and shelter.

6. Do outdoor cats kill wildlife?

Although community cats do often hunt to survive, spaying/neutering of Community Cats will reduce the impact on birds and wildlife because it reduces the number of cats living outside. This takes time, determination, patience, and collaboration. Simply removing cats from an environment is not effective or humane.

7. I am feeding community cats. How can I keep wildlife and rodents off the food?

This is more likely to occur when food is left outside for too long and/or after dark. You can prevent this by creating a raised feeding station to keep insects away from the food. Additionally, set a feeding time for cats and only leave food out for 30 minutes at a time, or until they have finished eating. Community cats will learn to adjust to the schedule that you set for them!

8. I found an ear-tipped cat. What should I do?

Ear tipping involves surgically removing a small portion of one of a cat's ears while the cat is under anesthesia for spay or neuter surgery. A tipped ear indicates that the cat has already been spayed or neutered and vaccinated, so you can simply leave that cat alone. Ear-tipped cats that are surrendered will be returned to the community. If no ear tip is present, this cat is most likely not spayed or neutered.

9. Why do you return feral cats to the community?

Removing these cats from the community does not eliminate the nuisances they could create and actually encourages cat populations to steadily grow. When you return cats that have been spayed/neutered, they continue to use resources but are unable to reproduce, decreasing the free-roaming cat population over time.

Sterilization also reduces problematic behaviors like fighting and spraying. Usually within a month, the sexual hormones are completely gone, and the desire to mate is no longer there. You can also try using vinegar or citrus peels to deter cats, while also masking the smell of cat urine.

Euthanizing healthy, community cats is not an option.

10. How can I help Community Cats?

Donations assist with Community Cat program expenses for supplies, surgeries, food, etc. We appreciate your help in our goal to save more lives!

11. How to get involved or get more information on helping Community Cats in your area?

If you would like to learn how you can help community cats in your area, email us at shelter@vvapl.org or call us at (760) 247-2102. We would love to guide you through the steps of TNR and help you save more kitty lives!