

Discover the Truth about Feral Cats and the Vacuum Effect

Feral cats live outdoors.

Feral cats have been living outside in close proximity to humans for over 10,000 years. Feral cats choose to reside in locations for two reasons: one, there is a food source—intended or not—and two, there is shelter. Feral cats are members of the domestic cat species, but are not socialized to humans and are therefore unadoptable. Feral cats lead healthy, natural lives on their own, content in their outdoor home.

Removing animals from an area creates a vacuum.

Catching and killing feral cats is animal control's traditional approach for feral cats. Catch and kill attempts may temporarily reduce the number of feral cats in a given area, but two things happen: intact survivors continue to breed, and other cats move in to the now-available territory. This is a phenomenon known as the vacuum effect, and it is documented worldwide.



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Catch and kill doesn't work, yet it continues.

Animal control agencies have been catching and killing cats for decades in a misguided attempt to reduce the number of feral cats in a given area. Animal control continues to practice catch and kill even though the number of outdoor cats does not decrease, proving the futility of these practices. This endless, cruel cycle is not supported by the public and is a gross misuse of tax dollars. The vacuum effect is just one reason catch and kill is so ineffective.

Trap-Neuter-Return does work.

This program involves humanely trapping, spaying or neutering, vaccinating, and returning cats to their outdoor homes. There are no more kittens; the population stabilizes. And the returned neutered cats' lives are improved. Behaviors and stresses associated with pregnancy and mating, such as yowling or fighting, stop. Not only does Trap-Neuter-Return make good sense, it is also a responsible, humane method of care for outdoor cats.

You can make a difference and save lives.

Together, we can stand up and take action to stop the current animal control policies that don't address the needs of the cats or our communities. To learn more or to find tools to help you educate people in your area, go to alleycat.org.



**Join our movement
to protect cats.**

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