

## Environmental Commission Meeting 2/01/07 Feral Cat Item Notes

### ISSUES:

- UNHEALTHFUL CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES – FLEAS, FECES.
- GUIDELINES FOR FEEDING (ALLEY CAT ALLIES) NOT FOLLOWED.
- WORKERS COMP
- NO ORGANIZED GROUP OF CAREGIVERS
- RESIDENT COMPLAINTS – CATS DEFECATING ON ADJOINING PROPERTIES
- BUSINESS COMPLAINTS
- LITTER – BAGS OF FOOD, PLATES LEFT OUT.
- FOOD ATTRACTS WILD ANIMALS
- ROAD KILL
- PROMOTES DUMPING OF ANIMALS
- LIABILITY CONCERNS FOR CITY
- AS LANDOWNERS WE CAN BE HELD LIABLE FOR CONDITIONS RESULTING FROM CATS.
- CATS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO STARVE
- MONITOR PEOPLE IN PARKS – NEEDS TO BE PART OF SOLUTION.
- FEEDING OF BIRDS
- SICK CATS INTO NEIGHBORHOOD IF NOT FED

- TNR
- FELIX
- CARE-TAKING WORKSHOPS
- SPRAY NEUTER ORDINANCE
- MICRO-CHIPPING-TRACK DUMPERS
- EDUCATION
- PENALTIES FOR DUMPING ANIMALS
- POOPER SCOOPER LAWS
- FUNDING



**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** Ron & Linda Jacobsen [ajacobsen2@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 06, 2007 11:49 PM  
**To:** lcessna@torrnet.com  
**Subject:** FW: Feeding Feral Cats in Torrance

Dear Linda Cessna,

Thank you for giving me your card and for trusting me with your email address. This email, which includes my previous letter to the Torrance City Council (see below) and the attachments are for your compilation of information about the feral cat issue. Please consider my input when making your decision. Thank you, also, for setting the tone of the February 1, 2007 Environmental Quality Committee's meeting. By your warm words and actions you set everyone's mind at rest that you would patiently listen to all the comments and seriously take them into consideration when you and the other Committee members and City Council members make your final decision.

After the meeting, I felt relieved that the objections to the feral cats seem easy to rectify. My summary of the meeting is that the pro-cat speakers illustrated how the cats were made victims (not villains) by some human deeds. Cats should not be blamed for the fecal droppings, because cats dig and bury their feces (like house-cats do in a litter-box). Many people who walk their dogs don't pick up their dog's "poop," and of course there are abandoned stray dogs searching for food in the parks. Neither dogs nor wild-life (like possums, skunks, and raccoons) cover their feces; therefore, these animals are most likely the culprits. I swear I have even seen children drop their pants and "move their bowels" behind bushes. Some of the people at the meeting said they would volunteer to pick up the fecal matter (even though it's probably not from the cats), to save the lives of these animals.

Man has built condos, shopping centers, and parking lots where wild-life use to live (taking away their habitat), and then some people have the audacity to blame these hungry, homeless animals for searching for food in the streets and parks. Wild animals die from being hit by cars, starvation, or from trappers taking them to pounds where they are euthanized. (If the wild-life problem gets out of hand, I know of a humane trapper who will relocate some of the animals, not kill them, and I can give you his number.)

To blame the cats as the sole reason the employees get flea bites is not fair. As it was pointed out the flea larvae can stay in the ground for a couple of years. There will always be animals drawn to parks. When a caretaker traps a cat to be spayed or neutered, the cat is treated with Advantage, Revolution or another flea treatment or Program is put in the food. During the meeting it was recommended to treat the floors in the buildings with a form of flea control, such as Flea-busters or Boric Acid. I just bought a flea control product that is reasonable and effective, called Demize Nylar. (You can call 1-800-476-3368 to order it or ask questions.)

The biggest problem, as I see it, is the large number of dumped cats and kittens, making it difficult for a few volunteers to keep up with the endless demands of spay/neuter and vet care. People know that many cats/dogs are euthanized in pounds, so they prefer to dump their no-longer-wanted pets, thinking they'll have a chance for survival in a park. However, if there are no dedicated volunteers to feed them, many of these animals will starve.

I wish the shelters were required by law to allow each healthy pet to live there longer (instead of the practice of euthanizing them so soon). This would give volunteers more time to "place" the cats and dogs in new homes. Then people would trust the shelters with their unwanted animals more readily, especially if "no-kill" shelters were built. Also, if more apartment owners allowed pets, more animals would have homes. Moving to a place that doesn't allow pets is a major reason why pets are abandoned.

I hope Torrance officials will pass and enforce a law that jails/fines people who dump their pets. Signs need to be posted, stating it is a crime to dump animals, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. I also hope they will pass spay/ neuter laws, fining people who don't comply. Many people from third world countries don't believe in neutering, since the men relate...not wanting to be castrated. Many other people would get their animals "fixed," but they don't want to spend the money; therefore, encouraging more free and low-cost spay/neuter

2/7/2007

programs would be very helpful.

The solution suggested by some Torrance officials of banning feeders and then trapping hungry cats and having them euthanized is inhumane, is much more expensive than "Trap, Neuter, and Release" (T.N.R.), and would create a major rodent problem. I hope and pray the City Council Members, you, and the other Environmental Quality Committee members reject that barbaric idea. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda Jacobsen

---

**From:** Ron & Linda Jacobsen [mailto:ajacobsen2@cox.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday December 19, 2006 2:07 AM

**To:** Torrance City Council members

**Subject:** Feeding Feral Cats in Torrance

Honorable Members of the Torrance City Council:

Before I moved to L. A. in 1979, I discovered that well-meaning women in PA would trap feral cats and have them euthanized, for fear the cats would starve (since they had no feeding program). When I arrived in L.A., I was horrified that a few so called "rescuers" did the same thing here. Fortunately for the cats, some truly "humane" workers at the S.P.C.A. did an investigation about feral cats and initiated the Litter Abatement Program in 1988. I have attached some of the excerpts from that program.

The bottom line is that the archaic way of trapping and euthanizing cats, besides being inhumane did not work. When a cat colony was removed a "vacuum effect" was created, and new cats (usually not spayed/neutered) filled the void, searching for any food sources, such as refuse in trash bins or rodents and insects. Before new cats fill the void, the locations are over-run with rodents. When the new unaltered cats breed, the overpopulation problem continues.

The compassionate, clever S.P.C.A. Humane workers of the Litter Abatement program were forerunners in the TNR method (Trap, Neuter, and Release). They gave volunteer cat-trappers the tasks of getting the stray cats trapped, spayed/ neutered, and administered vaccines and other necessary treatment at participating veterinarians. The trappers were also asked to organize volunteers to do community work and feed and care for these abandoned stray cats, because a well-fed cat that is neutered and has vaccines and vet care will obviously be healthier, won't spread disease or fight while mating. These spayed/neutered, fed cats won't breed and will chase away new intruder cats; thus both the cat and rodent populations are controlled.

In addition, I have a 1990 edition of a Cat Fancy Magazine with an article about feral cats by Ellen Perry Berkeley. She documents the efforts of people working to humanely control feral cat populations. The article has true stories to prove that this method of humanely controlling cat over-population (T.N.R.) truly works (link to order back copies: <http://www.shoanimalnetwork.com/product.aspx?pid=159>).

I have met a few elderly people from Torrance with very limited incomes who feed cats and give their time in all types of weather, even if their health is failing, believing they are doing a good deed, the will of a Higher Power. It gives them meaning, a reason to live. Please don't let some uninformed, uncompassionate people from the City of Torrance ruin the progress cat-lovers have made and return us to the 1980's.

Thank you,

Linda Jacobsen



## **LOS ANGELES SPCA LITTER ABATEMENT AND FERAL CAT PROGRAM**

Due to the severe problem of pet overpopulation, the Los Angeles SPCA developed its Litter Abatement and Feral Cat Programs. These programs offer financial assistance for spaying and neutering operations. We feel that by spaying and neutering, the number of animals brought into the shelter for euthanasia can be drastically reduced.

In our Litter Abatement Program, anyone bringing a litter of puppies or kittens into the shelter may have their pet altered at our expense. Also, anyone on public assistance within the cities we have animal control contracts with may have their pet altered at our expense.

Feral cats present a very difficult problem. These cats are not used to human contact, and basically survive without any human support. Many are fed by animal lovers who only take part-time responsibility for these animals. Without spaying and neutering these animals, their population has grown to tragic proportions. Trying to control the feral cat population by 'catching and killing' these animals simply has not worked. When a colony of cats is removed from a habitat a vacuum is created and new feral cats move in. The pattern repeats itself.

If the colony can be stabilized by spaying and neutering, they will defend their territory and prevent new cats from moving in. The population will not grow to the huge numbers that it otherwise would, and the animals are able to live out their natural lives. In addition, the presence of a colony of feral cats helps control rodent populations which pose a very real health threat to humans and other animals.

The Feral Cat Program is designed to offer assistance to people who trap feral cats, alter and re-release them into their original habitat. This program will also assist the LA County Health Department by keeping track of the colonies and assessing their general health. All ferals receive vaccinations to cover the major transmittable diseases and rabies. In addition, blood samples and leukemia tests are done on a portion of the cats to help assess their general health.

If any contagious disease is detected, and the attending veterinarian and the trapper feel it represents a serious threat to the other cats in the colony, the infected animal and others in its colony may have to be trapped and euthanized. Since feral cats are usually quite healthy, this is likely to be a rare occurrence.



## Feral Cat Information Sheet

### From the Los Angeles SPCA

#### What are feral cats?

Feral cats are animals that were born "wild" and must survive without human support. It is important to distinguish between feral cats and abandoned strays. As a general rule, if you can pick it up, it is a sociable stray. If you cannot get near the animal or must use a trap to catch it, it is probably feral.

#### What is a feral cat colony?

Groups of cats that no one claims ownership of are considered to be feral cat colonies. Both sociable strays and feral cats can be found in the colonies. The colonies are often located near office buildings, hospitals, apartment buildings, parks and alleys, basically, anyplace where there is a reliable food source. It is important to note that while the food source is often a person who provides food for the colonies, the cats may also be getting food from trash bins, foraging, and by hunting their natural prey.

#### The Problem:

Starvation, disease and injuries resulting in death are common among cats living on the streets. From a humane standpoint, the cats should not have been abandoned to the streets in the first place. Continued abandonment and ample food supplies, coupled with a cat's awesome breeding potential (one female cat may have three or four litters over the course of one summer), results in the population of feral cats skyrocketing. This means more animals must compete for already limited resources, resulting in even more starvation and disease.

#### THE LOS ANGELES SPCA's APPROACH

We feel that the cats should not be living on the streets. However, we also recognize that abandonment continues and that food for the cats is plentiful. To "Catch and Kill" the cats simply has not worked to eliminate the problem because new colonies become established where old colonies were. We also want to encourage people who are spending their time and money looking out for and giving basic care for unwanted animals to continue to show compassion for unwanted animals.

We have come to the conclusion that the most humane solution to the problem of feral cat colonies is to spay and neuter the cats, re-release them into their original colony, and allow them to live out the rest of their lives. With this in mind, we started our Litter Abatement Fund in 1988 to provide financial aid to people wishing to spay and neuter their pets and feral cats.

Responsibility for colonies of feral cats rests with people in the community. The people in the community must work together for any humane solution to work.

Because under current conditions the existence of feral cat colonies is unavoidable, we encourage communities dealing with a feral cat problem to work together in deciding upon an acceptable number of cats for the colony. Attempts should be made to find homes for any sociable strays in the colony. The remaining cats should then be trapped and altered. Any sick cats should be brought to the shelter for euthanasia (humane destruction). This plan will help a community maintain a manageable colony, which under current conditions, is unavoidable. In addition, by maintaining a manageable colony, nearby unaltered strays are less likely to move in, and any new abandonment can be noticed and placed into adoption programs.

## **WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?**

What follows is a list of different solutions to the feral cat problem.

### **STOP ABANDONMENT**

The feral cat problem is caused by people abandoning their pets. To stop the supply of feral cats, we must stop abandonment. Unfortunately, this is much easier said than done. The public's perception that cats can take care of themselves is not true and needs to be changed. Unfortunately, in dealing with an established colony, you must factor in the likelihood that more animals will be abandoned into the area. Most of these cats are sociable strays and finding them a new home is the best option.

### **ELIMINATE THE FOOD SOURCE:**

If you did manage to eliminate the food sources, most of the cats in the colony will starve to death. This is not a humane or feasible solution. Because of the vast number of food sources available to the cats, most attempts to eliminate the food source fail. Eliminating all of the food sources is an extremely daunting task.

### **FINDING NEW HOMES**

Sociable strays and newly abandoned animals are not used to living on the street, nor do they belong there. Finding new homes would be the best option for them. Attempts should be made to place these animals through adoption programs, either at the local shelter, or through an independent adoption program. Unfortunately, most cats in a colony are feral and have never been touched by a human and would not adjust to living in someone's home.

## Trap-Neuter-Release Program

Feral cats sleep in our parks, alleys, farmyards, barns, and abandoned buildings. Cast off by their families or lost during forays to seek mates, unsterilized housecats eventually form colonies. Mothers teach kittens to be wary of humans, to defend themselves, and they become feral. They make their homes wherever they can find food, near dumpsters, and behind restaurants. If only meager scraps can be found, the colony will grow, and that's the problem.

An estimated sixty million feral cats live in the United States today. Local animal control often tries to eliminate them by trapping and killing. This does not work! Instead of reducing their numbers, killing makes room for new cats to move in, and the breeding process begins all over again...so does the suffering. Half of all kittens born into these colonies die soon after birth. Their mothers spend most of their lives pregnant and hungry. Unneutered tom cats roam across busy roads seeking mates, getting into fights; untreated wounds can eventually kill them.

Modeled after successful programs in England, Alley Cat Allies advocates a trap-neuter-release program that stabilizes populations, reduces birth rates, and improves the over-all health of the colony, and it works. Populations stabilize, and with the support of neighborhood volunteers, the felines live safely and peacefully within their territory. Typical feral problems, such as yowling females and spraying toms, are practically eliminated. The incidence of disease and malnutrition are greatly reduced.

**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** Stacy Polk [Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2007 7:19 PM  
**To:** Nowatka, Paul M.  
**Cc:** mwilson@torrnet.com; Lcessna@torrnet.com; sbrinkerhoff@torrnet.com  
**Subject:** The First Meeting

Paul:

I am not an organized group, but a single independent feral cat caretaker with a lot of experience. I was there, along with another 100 people, for support. There should be several organized groups (Best Friends Catnippers and Stray Cat Alliance and Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition) working with Mary of T.L.C. who will supply the organizational end of this. The next meeting is March 1st, in a series of three meetings.

I am available to take a piece of the responsibility depending on how the efforts will be organized. I have ideas on how we should handle this, but I'm only one person.

1) Ordinances for Microchipping and even mandatory spaying/neutering should be looked at. Just like L.A. City's Anti-Breeding Ordinance. (See Below for the ordinance). Make the pet owners responsible for their irresponsibility. There are some stats that show there might be problems with the Anti-Breeding ordinance in that people just stop registering their dogs in particular. But microchipping should become mandatory for Pet Stores and Rescue Groups if they aren't already doing that. I know the pet stores don't spay/neuter OR microchip. Some rescuers don't either and adopt out with a promise from the new owner that they are to get the animal fixed.

2) Perhaps Torrance could budget some money for low-income families to come and have their pets "fixed." Even if they can't, we could do some educational promotional days and advertisements.

3) **Set up secured bins** at Animal Control where people can "dump" their pets anonymously. (ex: like a newspaper stand - you open up the bin's lid and set a litter of kittens in it, or small puppy, and once the lid is closed it can't be open again. Like for babies.....)

They would be warm inside with food/water already in them and a litter box perhaps. It's can't be that hard to set up 4 bins.....1 large dog size, 1 Med. Dog size, 2 bins for cats.

Many people don't want their animals to be euthanized so they think dumping them is kinder. These people have to be educated somehow. We have the Latino men who feel spaying/neutering is not machismo. I'm dead serious here. Everyone who is involved in adoptions knows that the latino population is very uneducated about animals and the men refuse to get their animals fixed. They bring in momma cats with their new litters to our adoption days all the time to dump on the adoption groups. Go into Wilmington and see all the animals that are neglected and mistreated and UNNEUTERED. It's very sad.

4) **Decriminalize rescuers** who have more than the allotted number of cats. Many of us who rescue and show our kitties have to hide in the shadows as we look for good homes for the abandoned animals. We have sometimes 10 - 20 cats, all healthy and clean and our homes can be opened for inspections. Some of us even off-load kitties from the shelters or SPCA's so they aren't euthanized. In fact, many of us easily juggle the care of 20 cats without our homes becoming cesspools of filth like you see on the 10:00 news every now and then. Our cats are treated for fleas regularly, litter boxes cleaned daily (sometimes twice a day), they are not sick, and they aren't allowed outside. We show them on weekends and put potential pet owners through stringent background checks. We deliver the adopted pet to the home so we have a visual of where they are going. But.....we have more cats than is allowed by law. We live in fear that someone will "fink" on us and our kitties taken away before we've had a chance to place them in a "forever" home. We love them and take good care of them. I have the Vet

2/6/2007

bills to prove it too. The burn out rate is high, and the costs usually discourage more than a few years of service. But, we do not abandon our kitties until they are safe and happy in a new/responsible home.

Anyway, that's a few ideas. I didn't include the LA City Breeding Ordinance, but it can be found on the web. It's late here at work and I'm going home, but you can search for it easily enough. I tried and find it and forward it later.

Stacy

"Nowatka, Paul M." <PMNowatka@TORRNET.COM>

To Stacy Polk <Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com>

cc

02/05/2007 06:05 PM

Subject RE: Is This Being Discussed on Thursday?

Stacy, the Council can not be there because we are going to hear this issue at some point. I am glad you were able to bond with the group and work toward a sane solution. I do however very much need the folks who commit to help with this problem to stand by there commitments. Commitments have not been kept in the past thus we got to this point. You will be a strong enforcer of any agreement, right?

Paul

---

**From:** Stacy Polk [mailto:Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 02, 2007 9:05 AM  
**To:** Nowatka, Paul M.  
**Subject:** RE: Is This Being Discussed on Thursday?

Too late. It was at 7:00pm last night and I went and it was standing room only for the ferals WITH the support of the agency now in charge of this issue.

What a great comraderie with the Environmental Group!! They were very welcoming and will be holding two more meeting with us to discuss the solutions and what needs to be implemented to make this effort an on-going success.

Torrance didn't know it, but it has an army of people to help this situation get better for the good of the community, the local businesses and the cats. The expertise and experience in the room almost brought some of us to tears. I got up to speak and help educate the Agency, since they had no idea what this subject is even about, much less trap/neuter/return details.

We went there to "hunt bear" and came out committed to help the City, this Agency, the local businesses, Animal Control and, of course, the cats.

2/6/2007

Stacy Polk  
310-607-7662

The next meeting will be on March 1st. I recommend the Council being there to become educated about a HUGE issue within your City. There is too many myths that are being believe, and not enough facts about feral cats. We need you to UNDERSTAND THIS ISSUE.

Thanks.

"Nowatka, Paul M." <PMNowatka@TORRNET.COM>

02/02/2007 07:04 AM

To Stacy Polk <Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com>  
cc  
Subject RE: Is This Being Discussed on Thursday?

Stacy I have not heard of it, but I will pick up my agenda in a couple of hours and get back to you.

Paul

---

**From:** Stacy Polk [mailto:Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 30, 2007 6:55 PM  
**To:** Nowatka, Paul M.  
**Subject:** Is This Being Discussed on Thursday?

Mr. Nowatka:

The woman who sent her opinion (below) to you states this subject is coming up for discussion on Thursday? Is that correct? I think Susan (the letter writer below) may be mistaken about that, but wanted to check with you first.

Stacy Polk

----- Forwarded by Stacy Polk/US/Raytheon on 01/30/2007 06:53 PM -----

"Susan Trear"  
<STrear@jdtplaw.com>

01/30/2007 06:09 PM

To <PMNowatka@TORRNET.COM>  
cc "Stacy Polk" <Stacy\_Polk@raytheon.com>, "Linda Wilson Wyman" <lwcattmom@yahoo.com>, "JACQUELINE deHAVILAND" <jdh@sbcglobal.net>, "Elaine J Regan" <ejregan@sbcglobal.net>, "Karen Wood" <kwxena@lworld.net>, <fcotto@TORRNET.COM>, <TBrewer@TORRNET.COM>, <GDrevno@TORRNET.COM>, <pmcintyre@TORRNET.COM>, <BSutherland@TORRNET.COM>, <hwiitkowsky@TORRNET.COM>, <Meegen.Murray@sen.ca.gov>, <gbarnett@TORRNET.COM>, <governor@governor.ca.gov>, <mayordaniel@gmail.com>  
Subject A Rescuer's input on The Feeding of Feral Cats

2/6/2007

Dear Mr. Nowatka: I understand that this will be taken up on Thursday as a "will we or won't we" type of decision; please correct me if I am wrong. I will be away tomorrow and out of the City on Thursday, so this is my only opportunity to offer the knowledge I have gained over the years. I myself am a feral cat feeder/trapper in Orange County, and would like to offer input on this very cruel and terrible idea which, of course, punishes the cats instead of the people who allow them to breed endlessly and die terribly. In addition, any decision against the feeding of the cats is self-defeating, "spitting in the wind," so to speak. There are feral cats everywhere in the world. So Wilson Park in Torrance, with all due respect, is just a drop in the bucket. Do the authorities really think that these poor animals will starve themselves into oblivion just because a law is passed prohibiting feeding? It won't prohibit their frantic scrounging in trash, other neighborhoods, fast food restaurants and other venues. They will disperse, find some kind of food, some but not all will starve (a horrible and cruel death), they will become diseased, will not get the rabies shots we provide nor the flea treatments nor the spay/neuter that keeps their numbers from becoming exponentially unmanageable. It is always, always, always a mistake to think that one can legislate feral cats' existence, or that outright killing them will solve the problem. It will never happen. They are here and will always be here as long as humans get a cute little kitten, do not spay or neuter it, and turn it out in 5-6 months to fend for itself, often just moving away and leaving it. Then the exponential breeding begins. Torrance's problem, like thousands of other cities around the world, lies with humans, not with cats. It is only the rescuers, trappers and feeders who keep the cats free of disease, relatively healthy and non-proliferating. In addition, normal attrition will reduce the numbers of ferals cats in our care anyway. Where there is a void such as the removal of a feral colony en masse, other ferals will fill the void quickly but they will not be free of disease, spayed or neutered. Then you will just have to sit back and watch the numbers grow with every kitten season. You will be unable to call on the trappers and feeders; their services will be unlawful should this pass against the feeding. This idea was born of ignorance and fostered by someone who cannot possibly appreciate the suffering these animals endure in their short lifetimes. I am trying so hard to address this politely, but the sheer ignorance and cruelty of this idea is astounding. Torrance is shooting itself in the foot on this one, Mr. Nowatka and, with all due respect, it will actually make Torrance's "problem" with the feral cats worse than you can imagine. If it weren't so terribly sad and cruel, this venture would be laughable. Of course, there will always be the feeders and trappers who will risk everything to save these poor creatures or give them a mouthful of food on a hideously cold night when they are starving, in spite of these types of pointless legal acrobatics. I am one of them. Then you would cite or even lock up the only people who could help you; and the people who cause the problem will continue to get off scot free of responsibility for this huge problem. Thank you for your time and I would appreciate it if you would share this with those whose time will be cleanly misspent on this entire matter when the only program that works was already in place: TRAP, NEUTER, RETURN. There is no other humane or entirely effective way to deal with this problem unless you being to exact fines on the careless and ignorant owners who create these vast numbers of homeless animals. Animal Control knows this and should be working with us, not against. These aren't cockroaches, Mr. Nowatka, but sentient beings who feel hunger, pain, cold and fear just as we do, only they feel it 24/7. Let's not make it worse with an uninformed decision on this matter. Talk with the rescuers and trappers who attend. They can help a lot and the City of Torrance would do well to work with them.

**Susan A. Trear**

**Assistant to**

**A Law Firm**

**Irvine, CA 92614**

**Dir: 949.851.7466**

**Fax: 949.752.0597**

*email: [strear@jdtplaw.com](mailto:strear@jdtplaw.com)*

\*\*\*\*\*

This message is intended only for the designated recipient(s). It may contain confidential or proprietary information and may be subject to the attorney-client privilege or other confidentiality protections. If you are not

2/6/2007

a designated recipient, you may not review, copy or distribute this message. If you receive this in error, please notify the sender by reply e-mail and delete this message.

U.S. Treasury Circular 230 Notice

Any U.S. federal tax advice included in this communication (including any attachments) was not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of (i) avoiding U.S. federal tax-related penalties or (ii) promoting, marketing, or recommending to another party any tax related matter addressed herein.

\*\*\*\*\*

--

No virus found in this incoming message.  
Checked by AVG Free Edition.  
Version: 7.5.432 / Virus Database: 268.17.19/663 - Release Date: 2/1/2007 2:28 PM

--

No virus found in this outgoing message.  
Checked by AVG Free Edition.  
Version: 7.5.432 / Virus Database: 268.17.19/663 - Release Date: 2/1/2007 2:28 PM

--

No virus found in this incoming message.  
Checked by AVG Free Edition.  
Version: 7.5.432 / Virus Database: 268.17.26/670 - Release Date: 2/5/2007 2:04 PM

--

No virus found in this outgoing message.  
Checked by AVG Free Edition.  
Version: 7.5.432 / Virus Database: 268.17.26/670 - Release Date: 2/5/2007 2:04 PM

Jan. 5, 2007

Mayor and City Council,

I saw on TV the report on feral cats in Torrance. They represent God's workmanship.

I would hate to see people that feed them put in jail. There must be other options.

As one animal lover said, if the cats were trapped, neutered or spayed and then released this would not increase their population. Also, defecated at the same time, that could be a possibility right?

A charity fund raiser and nets in your city; (even outside your city) offering free services could defray city costs.

Please give this careful and humane thought. Starving to death must be very painful.

Sincerely,

Margaret Kecker  
3472 Roselawn Ave.  
Glendale, CA 91208

**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** Kity saver@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2007 11:34 PM  
**To:** torrnet.com@unqualified.domain  
**Subject:** From a local veterinarian re: feral cat issue

Hello Linda,

My name is Lisa Pierson and I am writing to you to introduce myself. I am a local veterinarian who is very involved in feral cat management in the city of Torrance and in the surrounding cities. I do a great deal of TNR work and have spayed and neutered many of the cats at Wilson Park which has provided me with the opportunity to examine these animals closely for any signs of ill health and to also evaluate them for fleas which were present in extremely small numbers.

I attended Thursday night's meeting with the Environmental Commission and was pleased to see, given the emotional nature of the subject matter, that the meeting went very well.

I would like to make myself available to the Environmental Commission members and the city council members in case they have any questions that I may be able to help them with. I wear two 'hats' - one as a veterinarian who is well-versed in medical issues and the second one as a proponent of TNR and. I graduated with a doctorate degree from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine in 1984 so I do have a few grey hairs to show for my experience in both the veterinary and practical/hands-on aspects of feral cat management and would love to avail the Commission members of my years of expertise should they need any further input on this pressing matter.

I can be reached either by email or by leaving a message on my voice mail.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Pierson, DVM  
PO Box 1296  
Lomita, CA 90717  
Voice Mail: (310) 375-2467 (Please push '1' for the voice mail.)  
Fax: (310) 833-9217  
E-mail: [kity saver@aol.com](mailto:kity saver@aol.com)

2/6/2007

Cessna, Linda

---

**From:** David Young [davidyoung@linkline.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 06, 2007 8:49 AM  
**Cc:** lisa\_holcombe@hotmail.com; doggilama@aol.com; bill@idausa.org; bberwald@jolmgt.com; FeralCatCr@aol.com; nancycarr@hallmarkchannel.com; newsroom@dailybreeze.com; phillip.sanfield@dailybreeze.com; frank.suraci@dailybreeze.com; ian.hanigan@dailybreeze.com; toni.sciacqua@dailybreeze.com; JFrohman@alleycat.org; jsalyer@amcastle.com; andycat3@myexcel.com; debCor@aol.com; ablessedevnt@earthlink.net; Cats; cats@purrfectpartners.com; jsalyer@amcastle.com; jillb@aspca.org; NPeterson@hsus.org; LCESSNA@torrnet.com  
**Subject:** Spay Day USA

-----Original Message-----

**From:** humanesociety@hsus.org [mailto:humanesociety@hsus.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2007 2:23 PM  
**To:** David Young  
**Subject:** Do it for love

Trouble with links or images? View this message online:

[https://community.hsus.org/humane/notice-description.tcl?newsletter\\_id=7090122](https://community.hsus.org/humane/notice-description.tcl?newsletter_id=7090122)



Dear David,

Would you do it for love?

**February 27 is Spay Day USA**, and The Humane Society of the United States is partnering with local groups to get tens of thousands of pets spayed and neutered.

Thousands of puppies and kittens are born every hour in the United States, and many will never find homes. Fortunately, spaying and neutering is a solution that we can all be a part of. It's simple, effective, and saves pets' lives for generations to come.

This year, The HSUS is thrilled to offer you fun and easy ways to get involved with **Spay Day USA** events throughout the country. Last year, 29,000 cats, dogs, and other animals were reported spayed or neutered at these events. I know that together we can make an even bigger impact this year.

**Get Involved!**  
 Spay Day USA is February 27.



**Find out what's happening**  
 in your own community.

Or, **set your own goal** to help  
 get pets spayed or neutered.

Here's how you can be a part of the solution:

- 1 **Set a goal to help pets in the community of your choice or nationwide.** Did you know that \$75 will spay/neuter one cat or dog?\* That might seem like a lot, but when you enlist your family and friends to help raise money for this worthy cause, you can set a goal to help spay or neuter five, ten, twenty, or more pets! It's easy to get started, and you can do it all online.
- 2 **Volunteer.** Check out the local events planned this month and volunteer to help. If you can't find an event in your community, then organize one!
- 3 **Spay or neuter your pet.** If you haven't done this already, please schedule an appointment now. And make sure your friends, family, and neighbors know why it's important to spay or neuter their pets, too. Our **downloadable brochure** can help.

We hope you'll participate in Spay Day USA this year and **help us reach our goal of getting 35,000 pets spayed or neutered nationwide.** With your help, I know we can make Spay Day USA 2007 a howling success!

Sincerely,



Wayne Pacelle  
President & CEO  
The Humane Society of the United States



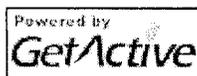
P.S. Let others know that you are "Doing It for Love" with every letter you send. [Click here.](#)

*\*It costs an average of \$75 to spay or neuter a cat or dog through our national program that provides low-cost spay and neuter services to geographically isolated areas, called Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS). Costs vary greatly from community to community, and the high cost of services in some areas makes it difficult for many to afford. That's why your help is so important.*



Copyright © 2007 The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) | All Rights Reserved.  
The Humane Society of the United States | 2100 L Street, NW | Washington, DC 20037  
[info@spaydayusa.org](mailto:info@spaydayusa.org) | 202-452-1100 | [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)

We are committed to protecting your privacy, so your email address will NEVER be sold, rented, or exchanged. This message was sent to [davidryoung@linkline.com](mailto:davidryoung@linkline.com). Visit your [subscription management page](#) to modify your email communication preferences or update your personal profile. To stop ALL email from The Humane Society of the United States, click to remove yourself from our lists (or reply via email with "remove" in the subject line).





**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** Werner, Margie  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2007 11:32 AM  
**To:** COUNCIL2  
**Cc:** Fellows, John; Herbers, Sue; Wren, Patrick; Cessna, Linda  
**Subject:** Feral Cats

Margaret Becker from Glendale, 818-248-8327, phoned to give her comments regarding the feral cats issue:

- Neuter the cats and release.
- No fee or crime charged for feeding the cats.
- Owners who abandoned their cats should be fined.

**Margie Werner**

Assistant to the Mayor and City Council  
City of Torrance  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503  
**PH: 310-618-2801**  
**FAX: 310-618-5841**  
E-mail Address: mwerner@torrnet.com

Cessna, Linda

---

**From:** Citygram  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2007 11:32 AM  
**To:** Cessna, Linda  
**Subject:** FW: Citygram

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jennifer Hudson  
**To:** Citygram  
**Sent:** 02/01/2007 11:27 PM  
**Subject:** Citygram

**Date:** 2/1/2007 11:27:27 PM  
Please note the following comments left on CITYGRAM:

Reply By: E-Mail

**Name:** Jennifer Hudson  
**Address:** 2325 Superior Ave  
**Address2:** Venice, CA 90291  
**Phone:** 310-463-0506  
**Email:** hudsonhounds@msn.com

**Comment:** TO Whom it May Concern; I am appauld by the idea that you may BAN the feeding of stray cats in your City. Make Spaying and Neutering a LAW and perhaps this problem would never have existed. Be it a cat, a dog, or a human being...there are too many, so we should allow them to starve? Why are we (humans) so special? We`re what`s destroying this planet. I am a Los Angeles Business owner who is contemplating taking her business to another State. Get this issue under control in a HUMAIN way. Prove that we (humans) ARE superior by showing respect for ALL LIVING CREATURES. Trap, Spay/Neuter, release, and allow those who care to feed. Afterall, they are taking time and money out of thei

-----  
Remote host:71.105.82.171  
Remote IP address:71.105.82.171

**Cessna, Linda**

---

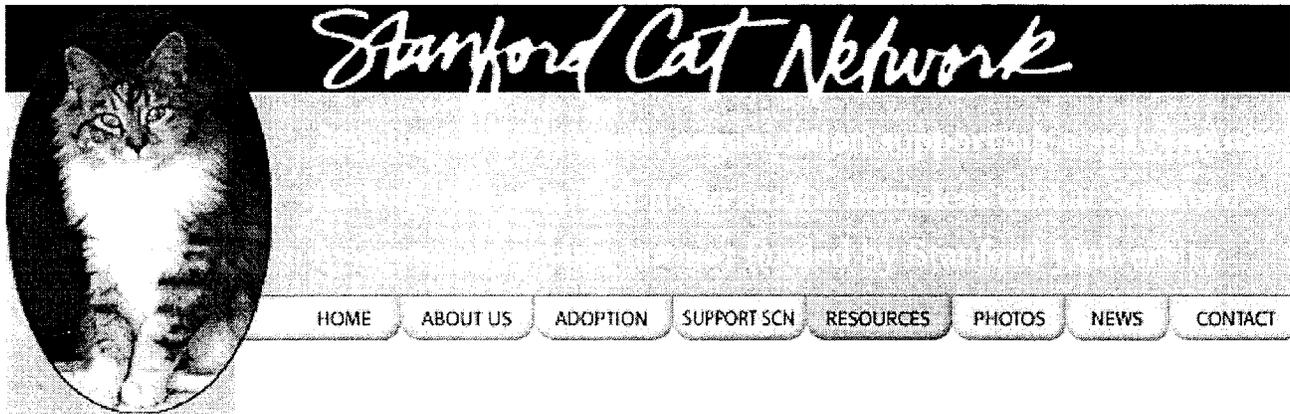
**From:** David Young [davidyoung@linkline.com]

**Sent:** Sunday, February 04, 2007 12:27 AM

**Cc:** newsroom@dailybreeze.com; phillip.sanfield@dailybreeze.com; frank.suraci@dailybreeze.com; ian.hanigan@dailybreeze.com; toni.sciacqua@dailybreeze.com; JFrohman@alleycat.org; jsalyer@amcastle.com; andycat3@myexcel.com; debCor@aol.com; ablessedevnt@earthlink.net; Cats; cats@purrfectpartners.com; jsalyer@amcastle.com; jillb@aspca.org; NPeterson@hsus.org; LCESSNA@torrnet.com

**Subject:** Stanford University Feral Cat Program

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/CATNET/resources.html>



RESOURCES

ARTICLES LINKS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Resource Categories:

1. [Stanford Cat Network Info Sheets](#)
2. [Feral and Homeless Cats](#)
3. [Spay and Neuter Advocacy, Free Spay/Neuter Clinics](#)
4. [Resources for Adoption and Rescue Organizations](#)
5. [Cat Health and Care](#)
6. [Pet-Friendly Housing](#)
7. [Other Adoption and Rescue Organizations](#)

### Stanford Cat Network Info Sheets

-  [Living with Allergies to Your Cat](#)
-  [Introducing a New Cat to Resident Pets](#)
-  [Bringing Home a New Companion: Cat-Proofing Your Home](#)
-  [Keeping Cats Indoors-Only](#)
-  [Solving Your Cat's Litterbox Problems](#)
-  [Solving Your Cat's Furniture-Scratching Problems](#)
-  [Tips for Taming Feral Cats and Kittens](#)
-  [Stanford Cat Network Cat Care Guide](#)

### Feral and Homeless Cats

#### Articles:

[Stanford Cat Network Agreement with the University](#)  
Document outlining the agreement between SCN and Stanford regarding homeless cats on campus.

[Stanford Cat Network Feeding Guidelines](#)  
Document outlining the positioning and issues related to cat feeding stations on campus.

[Socializing Feral Cats and Kittens](#)

Tips from Stanford Cat Network

[A Model for Humane Reduction of Feral Cat Populations](#)

By Michelle S. Chappell, DVM

[A Report on Trap/Alter/Release Programs](#)

By Karen Johnson

 [Caring for Feral Cats](#)

A guide to starting a feral cat care program of any scale, by Best Friends.

 [9 Lives Video Series from San Francisco SPCA](#)

Instructional videos on feral cat management, featuring footage from the Stanford Cat Network.

[Kill the Problem, Not the Cats](#)

By Sherrie Walker

[Understanding Cats and Predation](#)

From Alley Cat Allies website

[Creating a No-Kill Community](#)

How to bring the no-kill approach to any shelter big or small.

*Links:*

[Alley Cat Allies](#)

An organization in support of feral cats, providing a wealth of articles and resources.

[Feral Cat Coalition \(San Diego\)](#)

An organization promoting the practice of spay/neuter and release to manage feral cat populations.

[Silicon Valley Friends of Ferals](#)

TTVAR assistance for feral cat colonies.

[Cat Fancier's Association - Guidance Statement on Feral Cats](#)

Establishes CFA's position regarding the care and treatment of unowned/feral cats.

## **Spay and Neuter Advocacy, Pet Overpopulation**

*Articles:*

[The Facts About Cat Overpopulation](#)

 [Cat Overpopulation Facts from Spay USA](#)  
A great flier with all the reasons for spay/neuter.

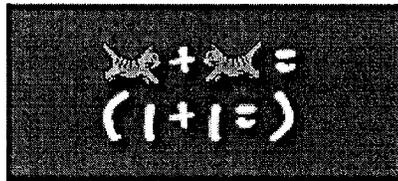
*Links:*

[Spay USA](#)  
Find low cost or free spay and neuter services in your area.

[Fix Our Ferals](#)  
Free spay and neuter or feral cats in Alameda & Contra Costa Counties, information support and advice for spay/neutering, borrow human traps.

[Free and Low Cost Spay and Neuter Clinics](#)  
A listing of free and low-cost spay and neuter clinics across the USA

[San Francisco SPCA Free and Low Cost Spay and Neuter](#)  
Free spay or neuter for homeless San Francisco cats.  
Low cost (\$35) spay/neuter for other cats.



## Resources for Adoption and Rescue Organizations

*Links:*

[PetFinder](#)  
A database of adoptable pets with photos and profiles, rescue listings, resources and more.

[Rescuers.com](#)  
Resource for rescue organizations, shelter directory.

## Cat Health and Care

*Articles:*

[Stanford Cat Network Adoption Guide](#)  
Guide to caring for cats and kittens, distributed to adopters of SCN cats. (Also available as  PDF)

### Cat Nutrition

Make an informed decision on how to feed your cat.

### Introducing a New Cat to Resident Pets

Step-by-step guide to successful introductions for multi-pet homes.

### Allowing Your Cat Outdoors?

A safe way to give your indoor cat a taste of the great outdoors, or provide a safe place for a cat used to being outdoors.

### Preparing Your Home for Your New Feline Companion

Guide to cat-proofing your home, plus a shopping list of items to get before you bring home the new pet.

### Pets Help Prevent Allergies in Children (CNN Report)

New studies show that children who grow up with pets in the home have a reduced risk of developing common allergies and asthma.

### Living with Allergies to Your Cat

It is possible to keep your cats and avoid misery, even if you become allergic to your pet!

### Facts on De-Clawing

By the Center for Feline Education

### Moving by Car With Your Cat

Tips for how to make your move go safely and smoothly.

### *Links:*

#### Soft Paws

Vinyl claw covers are a humane and 100% effective solution to problem clawing

#### PetEducation.com

A site featuring articles written by veterinarians for pet caretakers.

#### Choosing the Best Food for Your Cat

An article by veterinarians

#### Early-Age Neutering

An instructional videotape encouraging veterinarians to perform early sterilization on animals.

Building Cat Trees and Scratching Posts  
Complete instructions and materials lists for several styles, from simple to advanced!

De-Clawing Cats: Issues and Alternatives  
A collection of articles on the issue of de-clawing cats.

Indoors Only - Some Things to Think About  
A set of excellent articles about the debate about cats being indoor only pets.

Build a Safe Cat Enclosure in Your Yard  
Do you have an indoor-outdoor cat? Keep your cat safe from harm by building an enclosure.

C&D Cat Enclosures  
These modular enclosures are perfect for yard or balconies.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus - a Bad Case of Rumors!  
An excellent article by Best Friends Sanctuary on the plight of FIV+ cats.

Finding Pet Friendly Housing  
How to find pet friendly housing, pet resumes, negotiating with your landlord.

The Purrfect Post  
We have used this post and found it to be the most attractive to cats - even those who don't like other posts - and very durable and attractive.

Boomerang Tags  
High quality engraved color-filled metal and plastic tags. We recommend having the back engraved to read "indoor cat - if I am outside I am lost. Reward!"

## **Pet-Friendly Housing**

### *Articles:*

Student Pet Owners - Help Finding Pet-Friendly Housing  
How SCN can help you find housing for you and your pet!

### *Links:*

San Francisco SPCA Open Door Program  
The Open Door Program encourages property owners to rent to responsible pet owners, and supports the efforts of tenants

searching for pet-friendly housing.

### **Other Rescue and Adoption Organizations**

#### *Links:*

##### Virtual Pet Adoptions

Online pet search in the San Francisco Bay area.

##### Best Friends Animal Sanctuary

A no-kill animal sanctuary, caring for all species.

##### Hugs for Homeless Animals

A nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to homeless and displaced animals.

##### Partnership for Animal Welfare (Maryland)

Animal rescue and adoption organization.

##### Pet Rescue (Florida)

Working together to help Homeless Animals

##### Homeless Pet Placement League (Texas)

To rehabilitate and provide foster care for stray or abandoned dogs and cats.

##### The Second Chance Adoption Center (North Carolina)

An All Volunteer, Nonprofit, Organization Dedicated to Helping Homeless Animals.

##### The Cat Site

List of links and rescue organizations.

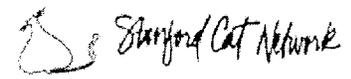
##### Feline Rescue

Worldwide directory of feline rescue groups.



The  symbol means you need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the article. Adobe Acrobat comes built in to most web browsers but you can download it free [here](#).

This is a collection of articles and links related to feral cats, cat rescue, welfare, care, and health. If you administer a relevant site or have an article, please email [us](#).



**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** David Young [davidyoung@linkline.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 03, 2007 2:48 AM  
**Cc:** lisa\_holcombe@hotmail.com; doggilama@aol.com; bill@idausa.org; bberwald@jolmgt.com; FeralCatCr@aol.com; nancycarr@hallmarkchannel.com; newsroom@dailybreeze.com; phillip.sanfield@dailybreeze.com; frank.suraci@dailybreeze.com; ian.hanigan@dailybreeze.com; toni.sciacqua@dailybreeze.com; JFrohman@alleycat.org; jsalyer@amcastle.com; andycat3@myexcel.com; debCor@aol.com; ablessedevnt@earthlink.net; Cats; cats@purrfectpartners.com; jsalyer@amcastle.com; jillb@aspca.org; NPeterson@hsus.org; LCESSNA@torrnet.com  
**Subject:** More useful Feral Cat Info

How about Torrance City Government working with PetsMart?  
<http://www.feralcatproject.org/>

Feral Cats Risk to Health?

This report from Berkley and Stanford University says no. Also please see the link about Voucher Program

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/animalservices/feralpubsafety.html>

Burlington County Feral Cat Initiative

<http://www.njferals.org>

David Young

**Cessna, Linda**

---

**From:** David Young [davidyoung@linkline.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 02, 2007 11:36 AM  
**Cc:** lisa\_holcombe@hotmail.com; doggilama@aol.com; bill@idausa.org; bberwald@jolmgt.com; FeralCatCr@aol.com; nancycarr@hallmarkchannel.com; newsroom@dailybreeze.com; phillip.sanfield@dailybreeze.com; frank.suraci@dailybreeze.com; ian.hanigan@dailybreeze.com; toni.sciacqua@dailybreeze.com; JFrohman@alleycat.org; jsalyer@amcastle.com; andycat3@myexcel.com; debCor@aol.com; ablessedevnt@earthlink.net; Cats; cats@purrfectpartners.com; jsalyer@amcastle.com; jillb@aspca.org; NPeterson@hsus.org; LCESSNA@torrnet.com  
**Subject:** Torrance Meeting Last Night on Feral Cats

Hello Everyone,

I wanted to thank everyone for their participation in last nights meeting. For those of you who weren't able to attend the next meeting is March 1<sup>st</sup> and your participation will be appreciated.

The first group of speakers from the City voiced their concerns and even the Supervisor of the Torrance parks Department (who is one of the primary complainants who started this entire action) supported the acceptance of an ORGANIZED and diligent TNR (Trap Neuter Return) policy. In speaking with him after the meeting he was VERY encouraged at the turn-out, professionalism and knowledge of those who spoke defending the animals side.

Speaking of those who spoke on the animals side, the first several speakers represented various groups of well-informed, articulate and passionate animal groups. All informed the panel of the success of an organized TNR program as well as flea control measures. I wish that I could name all the speakers and groups but I'm afraid that I would miss many. I was impressed that when Ed Boks of LA Animal Services he informed the group that it was Mayor Scotto that asked him to attend.

I also want to note that Linda Cessna and the entire board of commissioners of the Torrance Environmental Quality & Energy Conservation Commission seemed very open to finding a solution to the concerns and learning from "the experts".

Please forward this to anyone who attended and is not on this list.

Stay tuned.

David Young

**ANIMAL ISSUES MOVEMENT**

420 N. Bonnie Brae Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90026-4925  
(213) 413-6428/413-SPAY(PH/FAX)

The greater thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are going. – O.W. Holmes

February 1, 2007

Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

RE: TRAP / NEUTER / RE-ABANDON (The Cruelty of TNR)

This is to support your wise decision to end or regulate TNR (Trap/Neuter/Re-abandonment) of feral cats.

There is no current policy regarding animals that is more cruel than to re-abandon cats that have already been released by owners to fend for themselves and live from garbage and catching rodents, both of which result in disease and injuries to the former pets and their offspring. Feral cats are regularly the victims of shooting, beating, poisoning in neighborhoods where they are considered a nuisance.

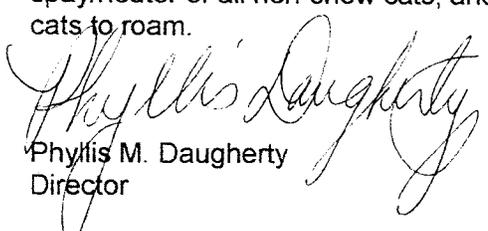
Feeding locations where food is scattered and left for cats also attract other animals and birds, which themselves often become the prey of the cats or can contract and spread disease to/from the feral felines.

Additionally, there are the issues of zoonotic diseases and sanitation that result from large colonies of wild cats. The waste that is deposited in public areas is absorbed into the groundwater or is washed into our sewer systems.

There is no evidence that TNR policies in fact decrease feral cat populations on a permanent basis. Statistics indicate that, until 70% of ALL feral cats in an area are spayed or neutered, it is impossible to keep up with the continued reproduction of the unsterilized cats in such colonies (see attached article, The 70% Rule).

The plight of feral cats is truly sad, but re-abandoning them and leaving them to survive in the streets and to attempt to survive after a colony caretaker has made them dependent but may not be able to continue feeding them, certainly is far sadder.

The true answer to the problem of feral cats is establishing stringent City laws regarding ownership that strictly limits number of cats per household, requires registration/microchipping/licensing, spay/neuter of all non-show cats, and imposes substantial fines on owners who allow their unaltered cats to roam.

  
Phyllis M. Daugherty  
Director

ANIMAL ISSUES MOVEMENT  
420 N. Bonnie Brae Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90026-4207  
(213) 413-0428 / 413-SPAY (777-7269)

The greater thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are going. -- O.W. Holmes

February 1, 2006

Torrance Environmental Quality Commission

RE: TRAP / NEUTER / RE-ABANDON (The Cruelty of TNR)

This is to support your wise decision to end or regulate TNR (Trap/Neuter/Re-abandonment) of feral cats.

There is no current policy regarding animals that is more cruel than to re-abandon cats that have already been released by owners to fend for themselves and live from garbage and catching rodents, both of which result in disease and injuries to the former pets and their offspring. Feral cats are regularly the victims of shooting, beating, poisoning in neighborhoods where they are considered a nuisance.

Feeding locations where food is scattered and left for cats also attract other animals and birds, which themselves often become the prey of the cats or can contract and spread disease to/from the feral felines.

Additionally, there are the issues of zoonotic diseases and sanitation that result from large colonies of wild cats. The waste that is deposited in public areas is absorbed into the groundwater or is washed into our sewer systems.

There is no evidence that TNR policies in fact decrease feral cat populations on a permanent basis. Statistics indicate that, until 70% of ALL feral cats in an area are spayed or neutered, it is impossible to keep up with the continued reproduction of the unsterilized cats in such colonies (see attached article, The 70% Rule).

The plight of feral cats is truly sad, but re-abandoning them and leaving them to survive in the streets and to attempt to survive after a colony caretaker has made them dependent but may not be able to continue feeding them, certainly is far sadder.

The true answer to the problem of feral cats is establishing stringent City laws regarding ownership that strictly limits number of cats per household, requires registration/microchipping/licensing, spay/neuter of all non-show cats, and imposes substantial fines on owners who allow their unaltered cats to roam.

Phyllis M. Daugherty  
Director

### Pet Overpopulation and the 70% Rule

W. Martin Mackie, D.V.M.

March 2011

In a front-page article of *Animal People*, October 2007, editor Merritt Clifton mentioned the Fibonacci 70% rule. His writing piqued my interest to the point that I asked him for further clarification, and then conducted some research of my own. This concept is amazingly insightful into success or failure as it relates to ultimate pet overpopulation and deserves to be understood by all who are decision makers in the effort to bring it under control. Leonardo Fibonacci, a preeminent mathematician of his time, created a formula (model) in the early 1200's relating to agriculture productivity. Six centuries later, Louis Pasteur, while working on an early vaccine for disease prevention, used the model to predict that 70% of a susceptible population would have to be vaccinated in order to prevent an epidemic of almost any contagious disease. Fibonacci's 70% model is still recognized as valid by leading public health authorities such as the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control.

It is not a great leap to advance to the notion that pet sterilization is in effect "vaccinating" against the disease of overpopulation. Using this premise, we can say that 70% of the susceptible population (animals with outside privileges) in a defined demographic area must be sterile in order to affect the decrease in over-birthing that will result in a population decrease within that area. The outcome at this 70% sterilization level is that the transmission odds (successful breeding encounters) of the remaining 30% are reduced to the point that births then occur at a rate only great enough to replace normal attrition.

Mr. Clifton cites data from two separate street dog sterilization programs in India. One program saw a drop in animal population at 64% sterilized and the second at 68%. In November 1998, I took part in a massive sterilization effort on the Native American land called the Flathead Nation in western Montana. It was a weeklong three-town effort in which we volunteer veterinarians sterilized 1336 dogs and cats in six days. Actual census numbers are probably unknown but the following years' drop in shelter turn-ins was profound. Clifton also reported that in the U.S., animal control agencies reported a marked drop in the number of dog euthanasias in the late 1980s, soon after the sterilization percentage of owned pet dogs reached 67%. A rapid drop in cat euthanasias was noted when sterilization of owned pet cats reached 85%. The "X" factor with cats lies in the number of local ferals (street cats). Feral dogs are not nearly as plentiful and therefore do not significantly impact the statistics.

If we follow the logical conclusions of the 70% rule, which is broadly accepted by those who work in epidemiology, we arrive at some interesting answers. For instance, those working so diligently to control pet overpopulation in the greater Los Angeles and Orange county areas are confounded by the fact that, in spite of their tireless efforts, they have not seen the hoped for reduction in euthanasias. Unfortunately, the fertile pet population was so large at the onset and the densely populated two-county area was so great that they were unable to sterilize the numbers required to reach the 70% mark. Mr. Clifton states emphatically that you must reach 70% or FLUNK – there is no progress made with a "B" or "C" grade. Quoting Mr. Clifton, "Fall short of 70%... and a sterilization... project will get a big "F" for fecund animals, fearful people fleeing dog packs, feline feces in gardens and children's sandboxes and frothing-at-the-mouth critics flinging allegations of fraud."

Nearly, the 70% rule applies to any circumscribed area. It can be an isolated town or community (e.g. the Native American communities of the Flathead Nation) or the mere acreage of a feral cat colony. Generally, more affluent areas can and do reach 70% (or better) per sterilization and the over-birthing problem ends in those areas. The more impoverished areas don't come close to 70% and the shelters serving those communities are the recipients of the hapless victims of too many births and too few homes. This plight is the major theme of Bob Christianson's book, *Save Our Strays*. CLC Publishing, 1996.

All too often, enthusiastic humane activists campaigning for pet control projects inadvertently over-promise results to those who are providing funding. When the government sources that provide "start up" funds as a result of these promises, cannot be shown any statistical improvement, they therefore conclude that their funding is not producing the desired results. What can truly make an impact on reduced birthing is to target a reasonable area and within a short period of time massively sterilize within it to achieve the 70% goal. If the sterilization is accomplished within one breeding cycle, the result will be immediate measurable results. The money saved in reduced animal control and shelter overhead could easily support the major funding needed for the initial sterilization effort. When the 70% sterilization goal is attained, both the funding and effort could be reduced to a maintenance-only level. A mobile spay/neuter unit visiting multiple sites one day each month is good for public relations, raises awareness in the community and is certainly 100% helpful to the individual family and their pet, but it cannot achieve the number of sterilizations required in any one area to significantly reduce over-birthing.

The standard mantra, or battle cry, in the fight to curb overpopulation has been "Spay or neuter your pet and save the lives of hundreds of innocent animals." Perhaps a more acceptable and understandable approach would be to educate the pet owner to the fact that in addition to the health and behavioral benefits, sterilization for their pet is quite analogous to a vaccination for the unwanted pregnancies that contribute to over production and unintended deaths by euthanasia. Spay/neuter saves lives by eliminating killing.

I have presented this article on the Fibonacci 70% rule in order to broaden your understanding of the task we face and to present a tangible way to evaluate our efforts toward our goal. Because there are so many variables in getting an accurate census of a given area, it may seem that 70% is difficult to determine. For additional reading, I suggest the *Animal People News* website, <http://www.apnews.com>, where you can benefit from Merritt Clifton's excellent editorials, and the Best Friends Question and Answer forum, <http://www.bestfriends.org>.

<http://www.bestfriends.org>, where Mr. Clifton succinctly and completely covers the issue in an answer to another interested reader.

Reprint from *The Pet Press, Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 4, Issue 6, Mar-April, 2003.*

Dr. Mackie, the owner/director of two **Animal Birth Control** clinics in Los Angeles, has been a spay/neuter specialist since 1976 and is nationally recognized for his work in early age sterilization. He offers an extensive surgical training program and a widely distributed video on his procedure. E-mail: [Spaydvm@aol.com](mailto:Spaydvm@aol.com).

Search AVMA

Search AVMA



Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association

September 15, 2002

Feb 1  
Go

Dec 15  
Go

AVMA

### Pros, cons of feral and free-ranging cat management debated

Dec 15  
Go

Dec 15  
Go

As the popularity of trap-neuter-and-release programs grows, more veterinarians are being asked to contribute their services and expertise to these controversial endeavors. But before getting involved, veterinarians should educate and prepare themselves, their staff, and their clients, according to Dr. Margaret Slater, a professor at Texas A&M University.

Dec 15  
Go

Dr. Slater, who participates in a TNR program on the Texas A&M campus, gave two presentations on TNR programs July 15 in Nashville. She said the programs can be successfully used to reduce free-ranging and feral cat populations, as long as they are a part of a multifaceted approach. Her presentations were part of a day-long series of sessions on the issue titled, "Free-roaming and feral cats and the public."

Dec 15  
Go

Dec 15  
Go

Dr. Slater said veterinarians can help reduce the free-ranging and feral cat population—which is estimated to be in the millions—by advocating keeping cats indoors, educating owners about their pets to prevent relinquishment, facilitating adoptions, and controlling reproduction.

Dec 15  
Go

She advocated that veterinarians be more proactive in helping their clients build strong relationships with their pets by offering clients advice on selecting appropriate cats as pets, educating pet owners about normal cat behavior, and offering mini-courses on cat training and socialization.

Dec 15  
Go

But the key is controlling cat fertility by neutering, she said. Veterinarians can help by working with shelters and TNR programs and by promoting sterilization of clients' cats.

"Veterinarians hold the key in terms of controlling fertility," Dr. Slater said.

Dec 15  
Go

Before getting involved with TNR programs, however, veterinarians must prepare themselves by developing their personal and practice guidelines, discussing the program with staff and the TNR organization, and determining what services to provide and when, Dr. Slater said.

Dec 15  
Go

"If you've thought about it ahead of time, it'll be a lot easier," she said.

She warned that feral and free-ranging cat caretakers are very passionate about the animals they care for, but they may not be very educated about cats' needs.

"That doesn't always make them easy to deal with," Dr. Slater said, adding that it helps to discuss issues such as when an animal must be euthanized and what is expected of the caretaker before beginning.

Dr. Slater said that once an animal has been sterilized, it should be marked by ear tipping or notching to identify it as such. Microchipping can also help in identifying animals after surgery.

She explained that although not all programs are run the same, an ideal program would include the following measures:

- Finding homes for tame adult cats and kittens in the colony
- Testing for feline immunodeficiency virus infection, feline leukemia, and other diseases
- Vaccinating for rabies and other diseases
- Providing food, shelter, and protection for the cats
- Monitoring the colony for new members or unhealthy animals

Finally, Dr. Slater talked about cat population management programs that have had success. She noted the creative approaches of the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The San Francisco SPCA sterilizes cats for free and pays people who bring in cats to be neutered \$5 per animal, in addition to providing adoption and education programs.

She also talked about the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society in Newburyport, Mass., which, over the course of 10 years, has reduced its local feral cat population from about 200 to roughly 20 animals by opening a cats-only shelter, promoting adoption of socialized cats, and trapping, neutering, and releasing unsocialized cats.

Conservationists and some veterinarians are becoming increasingly concerned that trap-neuter-and-release programs used to manage feral and free-ranging cat colonies are unethical and damage the environment.

A group of concerned veterinarians and biologists presented their objections to TNR programs during a series of sessions titled "Feral and free-roaming cats: the flip side of the coin," July 14 at the AVMA Annual Convention.

Left to roam, free-ranging cats can be formidable predators—bagging an estimated 7.8 million birds a year in rural Wisconsin, according to Stanley Temple, PhD, a professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin who has studied the predatory behavior of free-ranging and feral cats in rural Wisconsin.

Unlike wild predators whose populations are kept in check by the availability of prey, cats are considered "subsidized" predators because they receive food and other help



[E-mail This Page](#)

[Print](#)



## Feral cats: Problems extend to wildlife species, ecologists say

Go

Pages 7-13 | [View](#)

- Small Animal News
- Dentistry
- Dermatology
- Diagnoses
- Pediatric/Geriatric Protocol
- ACVS Surgery STAT
- Telemedicine
- Other Medical Topics
- Equine News
- Practice Management
- Other Medical Topics
- Food Animal News
- Economics
- Stampede
- Practice Management
- Other Medical Topics
- DVM InFocus
- Best Practices
- Your DVM Career
- Staff Training Series
- Health Hazard Series
- Career Opportunities
- Products and Services
- Classifieds Search
- Contact Sales



Feral cat numbers now rival the entire human populations in both Texas and California. Ecologists and wildlife advocates say this burgeoning population is challenging wildlife. They want cats back indoors.

opposed to the program largely because cats are released back into the environment. In short, they want them out of parks and other habitats simply because of their impact on the area's ecosystem.

The argument goes: This is a man-made problem because these animals are not indigenous to the area, therefore, man has a responsibility to solve it.

Dr. Julie Levy, DVM, dipl. ACVIM of the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, says, "Veterinarians are increasingly asked to participate in solving the cat and dog overpopulation problem, often by providing discounted health care for homeless animals for rescue groups or animals shelters," she says.

Veterinarians typically fall on the other side of the argument by endorsing trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs as a start to controlling this population glut. CVMA's feral cat program, sponsored by Maddie's Fund, was created to help reduce the population of these cats in the state.

While CVMA officials are touting its successes, critics are blasting the ethics of "re-abandoning" these animals.

Beginning in 1999, the program spayed and neutered about 20,000 feral cats each year. To date, a total of about 140,000 surgeries have been performed in the state. The program helped subsidize the costs to the surgeries for 1,100 practicing veterinarians.

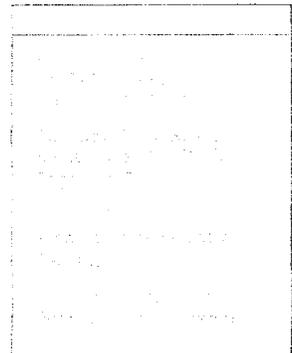
Nashville—About 70 million cats are estimated as feral or free-roaming in the United States, and it is putting pressure on wildlife species and resources to solve the problem.

The result: the fight is on, and it is squarely focused on how to solve this population boom which now rivals the numbers of "owned" cats.

Ecologists and wildlife advocates want domestic cats out of native environments, because of their destruction to other native wildlife including birds, rodents, small mammals, lizards and other creatures. With the popularity of trap-neuter-release programs increasing, like one administered by the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), these groups are



Dr. Julie Levy



Veterinary Economics  
 Veterinary Medicine  
 Firstline  
 Central Veterinary Conference  
 Hospital Design  
 vetguide.com  
 Student Information  
 Veterinary Healthcare  
 Communications

Editorial Team  
 Disclaimer  
 Author Index

Sales Team  
 Media Kit  
 Marketing Services  
 Digital Ad Specs

Archives  
 Subscribe/Renew



Ads by Google 

All models on sale now with Free Shipping to your door

The entire debate aired at the American Veterinary Medical Association's annual meeting here.

The issues surrounding feline abandonment are global in its impact. In public health circles there is a major concern about zoonotic disease spread like rabies, toxoplasmosis, ringworm or bartonellosis while veterinary medicine is more closely focused on FeLV and FIV risks.

"The control of feral cats is rapidly becoming one of the most popular and controversial topics in animal control and welfare," Levy says.

She adds that small animal practitioners working with these unowned cats are developing a sort of "herd health" program in contrast to individual patient care. Levy also founded Operation Catnip in 1996, which is credited with sterilizing more than 14,000 cats at monthly clinics.

Ultimately, officials agree the problem could be better controlled if people stopped dumping litters of kittens in parks, or leaving unwanted cats to fend for themselves. But even if that societal ailment were cured today, which is obviously unlikely, what do you do with the millions of free-roaming cats all over the United States?

TNR programs were born and are increasingly popular.

Alley Cat Allies, which is a national resource organization for these programs, estimates that 2,000 groups and 6,000 people are doing TNR, Levy reports.

There's not much arguing about the extent of the feral cat problem in this country; the bickering is about how to solve the issue, and the devil's always in the details.

**Not a solution** What has been the impact of TNR programs like CVMA's feral cat altering program?

If you ask Dr. David Jessup, a senior wildlife veterinarian for the state of California and critic of the effort, TNR is not a viable long-term solution.



"As the public has grown more attached to companion animals and there has been recognition of the fact that animal's feel pain and distress, the welfare of free-roaming cats becomes an issue," says Dr. Margaret R. Slater of Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

In fact, he believes these programs are just inviting litigation, especially considering endangered species laws, laws governing conservation lands and animal protection laws.

He says that the animals are being "re-abandoned" and under California penal code if an owner allows an animal to go without "proper care and attention is guilty of a misdemeanor". What if a feral cat is responsible for killing an endangered species and was recently neutered and released as part of a TNR program? "Cats are an aggressive, invasive, nonnative, subsidized predatory species whose presence results in loss of wildlife," he contends.

Jessup believes that officials need to shift emphasis toward prevention of abandonment, provision of homes and sanctuaries for abandoned cats and elimination of feral cat colonies on all wildlife lands.

He also says there is a real need for an inexpensive oral contraceptive for cats, as well as recognizing that re-abandonment of cats is generally not a humane, professional or legal way of handling this enormous problem.

He calls on veterinarians to support programs like "Cats indoors," which help make feral cats adoptable; and support "closed" sanctuaries as an environmentally friendly alternative to feral cat colonies. Cats at these sanctuaries would be treated humanely, yet confined indoors.

He also says that officials need to recognize that the elimination of large and "open" feral cat colonies from wildlife lands may not be possible without euthanasia, given current technology.

**TNR works** Proponents of TNR programs counter they are a viable way to reduce feline populations.

Dr. Margaret Slater, DVM, Ph.D., at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, believes TNR reduces the numbers of animals.

Ads by Google 

Detect a Urinary Infection by using the UTI Home Screening Test

Tested Vet Formula Works Great. Eliminates Chronic Infections

What Your Doctor Doesn't Know About Curing Diabetes! 100% Guaranteed

Veterinary jobs - Veterinarian, Veterinary Tech, Groomer, Pet Care

Natural remedy for dog fatty tumors Canine fatty tumor treatment

Only trap, neuter and return of feral cats has been shown to stabilize and decrease the numbers of cats. fewer cats means less predation.

Pages 1 | 1

---

### Dan Verdon

Executive Editor

About Dan Verdon

email: [dverdon@advanstar.com](mailto:dverdon@advanstar.com)

See more articles by Dan Verdon



February 7, 2007

Commissioners Chim, Griffiths, McCabe, Minter, Reilly and Watson  
City of Torrance Environmental Quality Commission  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance , CA 90503

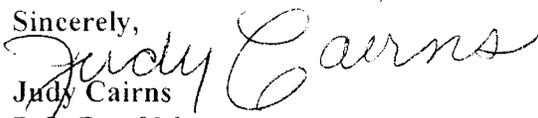
Dear Commissioners:

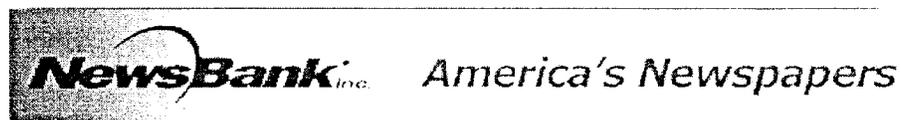
The increasing feral cat problems in Los Angeles can largely be attributed to a policy adopted by Los Angeles City Animal Regulation Dept. (now LA Animal Services) in 1993, which denies residents the right to obtain a (taxpayer-funded) humane trap without a cumbersome process. After filling out a detailed application at the shelter, the resident must wait ten to thirty days for a decision. If the permit to trap a nuisance (sick, injured, threatening, breeding, pregnant, etc.) cat is granted, the permittee must then post his/her personal address and post this for neighbors within 300 feet. Otherwise, the shelter will confiscate the trap in which a cat is brought to the shelter and may cite the individual attempting to help the animal and/or rid the community of a nuisance or health/safety threat. No cat may be trapped because it is feral.

Many low-income residents cannot afford the deposit for a City trap, and it is these neighborhoods in which pets are most likely to be abandoned or dumped. Non-english speaking residents are reluctant to disclose personal information. Thus, the feral cat population increases unimpeded. Feral cat volunteers are often reluctant to enter these communities, especially at night when trapping is usually successful. Thus, private residents obtain traps from pet equipment suppliers, trap cats and dump them in locations in the city of Los Angeles and also throughout adjacent communities.

Although numerous groups of "feral cat" rescuers claim that they will assist a city in ending the feral cat proliferation, as well as the problems of wildlife, sanitation, fleas, disease, etc., in reality many who have called for assistance report that their phone calls were unanswered or no one responded as promised. It is obvious that a small number of "trappers" cannot overcome the problems of several million feral cats that are estimated to exist within the City of L.A. alone. Since cats do not respect political boundaries, it is impossible to know how many ferals actually exist within any geographic area.

We have attached the Daily Breeze article from December 28 2003 which reviews the previous feral cat problems at Wilson Park. Please note that the individuals who represented the Wilson Park feral cats removed some of the colony cats and placed them in other South Bay feral cat colonies! This is illegal. It does nothing to resolve the problem. We hope that the cities of Torrance and Los Angeles will stop this misguided effort of passing the buck by dumping their feral cat problems on others!

Sincerely,  
  
Judy Cairns  
P.O. Box 826  
San Pedro , CA 90733  
(310) 668-9888



Paper: Daily Breeze (Torrance, CA)  
 Title: City takes steps to rid cats from Wilson Park  
 Date: December 28, 2003

City takes steps to rid cats from Wilson Park

TORRANCE:

Animals in South Bay colonies who roam areas populated by humans pose dilemma.

By Doug Irving

The **cats** make their homes in the dark corners of **Wilson Park**, slinking through the tall grass and bolting at the sound of footsteps.

They use a dusty storage room for their litter box, and **park** workers complain they bring clouds of fleas in with them. But the **feral cats** have friends as well, who stash trays of soft turkey **cat** food around the **park**.

Colonies of wild **cats** have been a sensitive political issue in the South Bay, frustrating both their critics and their advocates. Some of the highest-profile **cat** landlords - Torrance, ExxonMobil and El Camino College - have begun looking for some kind of answer.

All three say they are taking pains to ensure the well-being of the **cats**.

"Nobody wants to do harm to the **cats**," said Carolin Keith, an ExxonMobil spokeswoman at the Torrance refinery. "But it was a really tough situation. We had to do something."

**Feral cats** thrive at the edges of society, often living off the kindness of people while flinching at their approach. Some are abandoned housecats; many others are the offspring of fast-breeding **cats** already living wild.

People who work with the **cats** say thousands live in small colonies spread throughout the South Bay. As many as 70 live in Torrance's **Wilson Park**; ExxonMobil estimates that at least 300 prowl its Torrance refinery.

The **cats** rarely confront people, although some have startled truck drivers at the refinery by climbing into their cabs. Rather, those who complain about the **cats** cite fleas, waste and the danger that they might get into machinery.

"These aren't the **cats** that walk up to you when you're walking down the street," said Joni Gang, president of Friends of Torrance Animals. "These are the **cats** you usually never see."

The **feral cats** also have dedicated caretakers who feed them and often arrange to spay or neuter them. Plans to trap and kill **feral cats** have met with loud protests.

So Torrance police paired with a loose association of **cat** advocates when they began relocating the **feral cats** from **Wilson Park** a few weeks ago. They have begun setting traps baited with tuna, then handing the **cats** over to the Serengeti Group.

The group places the **cats** with existing colonies elsewhere in the South Bay; Jim Archer, the group's director, released few other details out of concern for the **cats'** safety. The group has looked into sending **cats** to farms or ranches, where they would help keep rodents under control, but hasn't found a suitable place.

Police have removed five **cats** from the **park** in the past month, said Lt. David Smith. A new animal-control office will open at **Wilson Park** early next year and officials will help keep an eye on the **cats** there.

ExxonMobil has struggled for years with the **cats** that roam its Torrance refinery. Officials there fear a **cat** seeking warmth might climb into machinery, forcing an emergency shutdown. The refinery touched off an angry debate earlier this year when it decided to turn **cats** over to Los Angeles Animal Control, where they could be killed.

A well-connected **cat** advocate has stepped forward since then and offered to place any **cats** trapped at the refinery with other colonies. The anonymous advocate has even returned nursing **cats** to the refinery so they could care for their kittens, Keith said.

**Feral cats** also have flourished on the leafy campus of El Camino College, under the care of a retired employee. The college asked the employee earlier this year to stop leaving food out for the **cats**, worried that it would attract other animals.

The employee instead agreed to pick up the food dishes a few hours after leaving them out, giving the **cats** just enough time to eat. The college's maintenance crews still pick up dishes left out too long, spokeswoman Ann Garten said; but the uneasy truce has allowed the **cat** colony to stay.

Even Torrance and ExxonMobil say they don't expect to drive all the **feral cats** from their property. They hope to reach a balance, with fewer **cats** leaving fewer signs that they're still around.

"We'll never have zero **cats**," ExxonMobil's Keith said. "There'll always be new **cats** coming in."

In late afternoon a fat tabby lounges on its side on a concrete platform at the back of **Wilson Park**. It springs to its feet as people approach, then scurries low to the ground into the nearby bushes.

It re-emerges a few minutes later, jogging across a field and back into the **park**.

CLAN ARCHIVE 00671 122903 174840%WEBCOPY%**Feral cats** A3 SUN BLN

Caption:

1) **Feral cats** such as this one at **Wilson Park** have sparked a debate in the South Bay over how to control their spread. The **cats** typically avoid humans, but they also can bring fleas and waste to public and private areas. The Torrance **park** is home to as many as 70 of the felines. 2-3) **Cat** food is left open at **Wilson Park**, above, to help feed the scores of **feral cats**. Torrance police and **cat** advocates have begun trapping the **cats** in order to relocate them to other South Bay colonies.

Copyright (c) 2003, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved

*Author: Doug Irving*

*Section: LOCAL*

*Page: A3*

*Copyright (c) 2003, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved*

Print | Close Window  
California

Abandonment of Animal

Statute Details

[Printable Version](#)

Citation: Cal Pen Code §597s

Citation: Cal Pen Code §597s

Summary: This statute makes it a misdemeanor to willfully abandon an animal, but does not apply to the release or rehabilitation and release of native California wildlife pursuant to statute or regulations of the California Department of Fish and Game.

Statute in Full:

(a) Every person who willfully abandons any animal is guilty of a misdemeanor. (b) This section shall not apply to the release or rehabilitation and release of native California wildlife pursuant to statute or regulations of the California Department of Fish and Game. [Top of Page](#)

**Available from our  
Bookstore:**  
"Animal Law: Welfare,  
Interests and Rights"  
By Professor David Favre  
(2003) **Available from our  
Bookstore:**  
"Animal Law: Welfare,  
Interests and Rights"  
By Professor David Favre  
(2003)

February 1, 2007

Commissioners Chim, Griffiths, McCabe, Minter, Reilly and Watson  
City of Torrance Environmental Quality Commission  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90503

Dear Commissioners:

We ask that you consider the negative thresholds of significance that relate to the feral and stray cats in Torrance. We have included material related to the outbreak of murine typhus in Huntington Beach and the recent destruction of local marine life by domoic acid – both conditions directly related to feral and stray cats. We are also concerned about the sanitary issues involving the feral cat colonies.

We also ask that you consider the ordinance adopted by Ormond Beach, Florida to ban the feeding of stray and feral cats. They have created a significant program that embraces TNR, and strict enforcement with the cooperation of the community.

Please let us know if you have any questions, or if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Judy Cairns

P.O. Box 826  
San Pedro, CA 90733  
(310) 668-9888

P.S.: In 1993, the city of Torrance contacted the city of Los Angeles' Department of Animal Regulation regarding the feral cat problem at Wilson Park. I was asked LA AnReg to represent the city by having a joint on-site meeting with the Wilson Park feral cat feeders and Torrance city representatives. As we walked the area to observe the feeding areas, I asked for the city's concerns and those of the feeders. Based on some inappropriate feeding sites and several messy areas, I told them that feeding stations MUST be kept debris-free...no paper plates, no cat food cans, etc. I also told the feeders that if the feral colony EVER BECAME A HEALTH ISSUE the cats would be the losers. I told both the city and the feeders that "no animal abandonment..." signage must be posted throughout the park. I also strongly urged the feeders to work in full cooperation with the city to create a city wide spay/neuter program to reduce the number of unwanted pets. Without a S/N Program Torrance's feral cat problem would not be resolved.

*Animal ownership is a lifetime commitment.* You can look forward to many years of companionship with your four-footed friend if you realize the responsibilities associated with ownership. Remember that your pet depends on you for care, love and companionship from the day he arrives until the day he dies. It is up to you to provide your animal with the lifetime of care and love.

*City Ordinances are unlawfully violated quite frequently.* Some of the most commonly violated ordinances are "Animal constituting a nuisance prohibited", "license required", "collar required: duty to display tag," and "running at large prohibited."

**Section 5-10 Animals Constituting a Nuisance Prohibited:** It shall be unlawful for any person to own or keep any animal that becomes a nuisance in the community. A nuisance for the purpose of this chapter shall include, but is expressly not restricted to the following:

- 1) Frequent barking, howling or making noise;
- 2) Frequent and repeated barking, howling, or making noise for two or more continuous intervals of at least thirty seconds during any period of ten consecutive minutes or more at a time;
- 3) Barking, howling, or making noise for a continuous period of one minute or more at any time;
- 4) Frequent digging into, breaking or otherwise injuring or damaging public or private property not belonging to the owner or custodian of the animal;
- 5) Frequent or habitual depositing of excreta on property not belonging to the owner or custodian of the animal.

**Section 5-60 License Required:** All dogs and cats six weeks and older, kept, harbored, or maintained by their owners in the city shall be licensed in accordance with this article.

**Section 5-66 Collar Required: Duty to display tag:** Every owner shall be required to provide each dog or cat with a collar to which the license tag must be affixed, and shall see that the collar and tag are constantly worn.

**Section 5-69 Running at Large Prohibited:** No owner or keeper of any dog or cat shall knowingly and intentionally permit such dog or cat to run at large at any time, whether licensed or unlicensed. Dogs shall be on a leash not to exceed eight feet in length at all times when off the owner's property. Evidence that such owner or keeper has made an attempt to preclude the animal from running at large shall be considered by the code enforcement board in its determination as to whether or not a violation of this section has occurred.

**Ormond Beach  
Police Department  
Animal Services**



Historically, the Animal Services Division has taken a reactive approach to the feral cat problem. When a complaint is reported, Animal Services responds, sets traps and transports the captured animals to the Halifax Humane Society. Feral cats are held for a three-day period and adopted out if possible. However, due to the disposition of feral cats, they are typically put to sleep after the holding period.

The Ormond Beach City Commission has selected a TNR (trap, neuter, release) program combined with managed public education. Ormond Beach Animal Services will partner with area citizens, grass root organizations and local veterinarians to trap, neuter, and release these cats back into their colonies. Animal Services will supervise any alternate solutions should a situation arise where the TNR program will not be effective. Any reports of feral cat colonies within the City of Ormond Beach should be directed to Animal Services at (386) 676-3262.

*Spaying or neutering your animals is a onetime surgery that generates a lifetime of benefits.* To spay a female dog or cat is to have her ovaries and uterus surgically removed. To neuter a male dog or cat is to have his testicles removed. The result of both operations is that your companion will no longer be able to bring more homeless animals into the world. This is an important consideration since nearly eight million animals must be humanely destroyed each year due to the lack of homes for all of them. Other benefits include the improvement of overall health, animals are less likely to bite

or get into fights, and will live much longer. Spaying or neutering is a onetime surgery with a onetime cost. If you cannot afford to spay or neuter your pet, you subsequently cannot afford to own a pet.

*Protect your pets by obeying the law.* No matter how careful most animal owners are, there is always a chance their companions may become lost. An animal that is not protected by a license, collar and identification tags may be transported to the local humane society for safekeeping. The City of Ormond Beach requires each dog or cat to wear a current rabies vaccination tag and be licensed with Animal Services. Both tags are to be displayed on a collar at all times. To purchase a city license, bring a current rabies vaccination certificate to the Ormond Beach Police Department, located at 170 West Granada Boulevard. The fee for the city license will be \$3 for a spayed or neutered animal and \$5 for non-altered animals. What pet owners must realize is that an identification tag, a rabies vaccination tag or a city license could be a lost animal's ticket home. Regular checkups by your veterinarian can keep your pet healthy. Good health care means that pets stay up-to-date on shots and have any illnesses or injuries promptly treated.

*Do not allow your dog to become a neighborhood menace.* A dog that roams the neighborhood, chases vehicles, bicycles and joggers, soils in the yards of your neighbors, knocks over trash cans or barks incessantly is a dog with an irresponsible owner. An essential rule to follow is when your pet is off of your

property, it must be on a leash. When animal is contained inside your home or in secure, fenced yard, your dog must be under control.

*Keep your cat indoors to prevent them from becoming a neighborhood menace.* Dogs are most often thought of when the word nuisance is suggested but cats are often just as bad. When allowed to roam, they can get in garbage cans, defecate in flowerbeds and sandboxes, cause traffic accidents and contribute to pet overpopulation. In addition they can have a devastating effect on local wildlife; killing dozens, even hundreds of songbirds and small mammals every year. Of course, the most important reason to keep your cat inside is for its own safety. Unlike dog cats do not need much space to exercise and litter box will meet all of their needs. In other words, cats do not need to go out and face disease, catfights, dog fights, poisons, parasites, cruel people and traffic. Cats who live indoors from the start will never have the urge to roam around outside. Keeping cats happy inside is simply a matter of creating a healthy and stimulating indoor environment. Some good ideas are providing him with a scratching post at least two feet high, planting pots of indoor greens for him to chew on, adopting another animal to keep them company and spending time with them. If cats have their owners love and attention and a lot of things to do inside the home, they will not miss the great outdoors, which, after close examination, is not so great for cats after all.



### VFW donates flag to Senior Center

Commander Bob Byle (left) and Service Officer John Beres, of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4319, raise a new American flag – donated by the VFW – during a ceremony at the Ormond Beach Senior Center just before Veteran's Day.

### Family's grief leads to "Keep Kids Alive" program

Marie Anderson lost her five-year-old son, Nicolas, on Aug. 23 when he was killed by a speeding van on Linda Ave. in Ormond Beach. Anderson and her family are dealing with their grief by trying to keep a similar tragedy from happening to other families.

Anderson has partnered with the nationwide program, "Keep Kids Alive - Drive 25," which strives to save lives by offering safety tips and by urging drivers to slow down while traveling through residential neighborhoods.

Marie Anderson has already spoken to many homeowners associations and other groups about the program. For more information, call her at 671-0460 or visit: [www.slowdownfornicolas.com](http://www.slowdownfornicolas.com).

### COMMUNITY UPDATE

City of Ormond Beach  
City Hall, 22 S. Beach Street  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
Mayor Fred Costello

City Commissioners:  
Jeff Boyle, Zone 1; Jim Privett, Zone 2;  
Scott Selis, Zone 3; & Joyce High, Zone 4

City Manager Isaac Turner  
Assistant City Manager Ted MacLeod  
City Attorney Randal Hayes

Editor & Public Information Officer Joe Radcliffe

## Volunteers needed for new water conservation program

The City of Ormond Beach Neighborhood Improvement Division is looking for volunteers to educate citizens about the importance of water conservation. These volunteers will watch for illegal watering within assigned areas.

When illegal watering is observed, the volunteer will mail a courtesy notice. Volunteers will make no personal contacts.

Anyone interested should please contact Joanne Naumann, Neighborhood Improvement Manager, at 676-3352.

## City urges responsible cat care

During the past two years, the City Commission has asked for public input concerning the best ways to reduce the number of feral cats.

Addressing the many points of view while solving the problem in the most humane way possible has been the biggest challenge, according to Police Chief Larry Mathieson. One main issue has been people trespassing on private property to feed large numbers of feral cats.

In response to this concern, the City Commission recently passed an ordinance banning the feeding of feral cats or other stray animals. Violators could be fined \$50 for the first offense.

Homeowners who feed one-or-two stray cats on their own property are not targeted by this ordinance. The focus of this effort is to encourage citizens who wish to feed on their own property to take ownership of the cats, have them licensed, vaccinated and spayed or neutered.

Police Animal Control officers urge people to never abandon cats, and never feed feral cats unless they are part of the city's authorized Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) Program. Random feeding attracts other cats, which quickly breed and multiply.

The city's TNR option is coordinated with volunteers who supervise cat colonies with the approval of nearby residents or businesses. The feral cats are humanely trapped, vaccinated, neutered and released back to the colony to live out their lives, which is usually about three years. Currently, the city has one registered cat colony.

For more information about the city's TNR program, call the Police Animal Control Unit at 676-3262.

## Quilt reflects the history of Ormond

History can be seen through a 25-square-foot historical quilt, hand sewn by 10 members of The Casements Guild, that is now on permanent display at The Casements, 25 Riverside Dr.

The quilt depicts a variety of colorful scenes from Ormond Beach's past and present. A total of 24 individual pieces were hand sewn onto squares, which were then sewn together. The Casements Quilters were: Irmal Byam, Gertrude Worthington, Frances Hopper, Diane Volkhardt, Honey Childs, June Fouch, Laura Gunnison, Joyce White, Lorraine Hulst, Barbara Linde, Trudi Hippie and Margaret Horvath. The quilt was the vision of Lorraine Hulst in 1996 when she was president of The Casements Guild.

Los Angeles Times  
**latimes.com**

## Master of Arts in Education

- ▶ Administration and Supervision
- ▶ Curriculum and Instruction
- ▶ Computer Education
- ▶ English as a Second Language
- ▶ Early Childhood Education
- ▶ Elementary Teacher Education
- ▶ Secondary Teacher Education
- ▶ Special Education



<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/orange/la-me-rbriefs13.1jan13.1.7328724.story?coll=la-editions-orange>

IN BRIEF THE REGION / ORANGE COUNTY

### Two recovering from rare form of typhus

From Times Staff and Wire Reports

January 13, 2007

Two Orange County residents who contracted what is believed to be a rare disease spread by fleas are recovering at home, health officials said Friday.

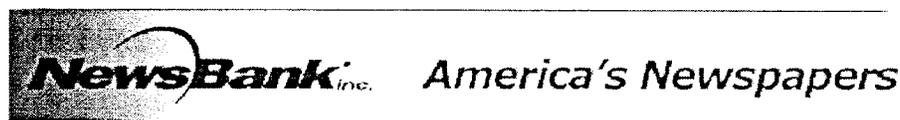
They would not identify the victims, but said one lives in Los Alamitos and the other in Huntington Beach.

Both were hospitalized last month for treatment of murine typhus. The disease is transmitted by fleas generally carried by opossums, rodents and feral cats, said Deanne Thompson, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Care Agency. The disease, which can be fatal, had not been seen in Orange County since 1993, she said.

Copyright 2007 Los Angeles Times | Privacy Policy | Terms of Service  
Home Delivery | Advertise | Archives | Contact | Site Map | Help

PARTNERS:





Paper: Daily Breeze (Torrance, CA)  
 Title: Area pelicans are afflicted with toxic algae poisoning  
 Date: April 13, 2006

Pelicans are falling from the sky in the South Bay and Harbor Area, victims of the same toxic bloom of ocean algae that's sickening sea lions and also making shellfish unfit for human consumption, wildlife rescuers said Wednesday.

More than three-dozen endangered California brown pelicans have been taken to the International Bird Rescue Research Center in San Pedro in the past week, 18 of those dead on arrival and the rest receiving treatment.

Many more are dying in the wild, either at sea or on inaccessible jetties, center officials said.

A neurotoxin produced by the algae makes its way up the food chain to the pelicans and marine mammals and can result in seizures and death for the wildlife. Meanwhile, the state Department of Health Services recently issued a warning against the consumption of certain sport-harvested mussels, and parts of anchovies, sardines, lobsters and crabs. The shellfish and fish are unfit for people and their pets due to the toxic algae bloom.

The poisoning has misdirected some pelicans to places like Commerce and Hollywood, farther inland than they would normally go. Others are just dropping from the sky. On the ground, they may suddenly flip on their backs and kick at the air.

"They become very disoriented, they fly in different directions, they even fall out of the sky," said IBRRC Executive Director Jay Holcomb. "Yesterday we got one out of a parking lot in San Pedro."

The first signs of "**domoic acid**" poisoning started showing up in February among sea lions. Where possible, the animals are taken to the Marine Mammal Care Center in San Pedro.

Now that center's next-door neighbor at Fort MacArthur, the bird center, is starting to take in sick pelicans exhibiting the head-bobbing, shaking symptoms characteristic of **domoic acid** poisoning.

Many of the pelicans are taken to the center by the Whale Rescue Team's Peter Wallerstein, who also rescues marine mammals from the coastline.

Wallerstein, extremely busy with wayward elephant seals and **domoic**-sickened sea lions -- already rounding up and transporting 83 of the marine mammals so far this year -- has put out the call for volunteers to be trained to help with the sick pelicans. "I've seen them land on houses, we are getting them out of yards," Wallerstein said. "They drop wherever they have their seizure."

Wallerstein said so many birds have been injured that the state Department of Fish and Game should treat the toxic algae bloom like an oil spill.

"These are protected animals. This is a crisis. Many more pelicans would have been able to be rescued if we had more resources down here," Wallerstein said.

At the bird center, the pelicans are treated first with intravenous fluids because they are so dehydrated. Often within 48 hours, Holcomb said they will improve and they can be released to the wild after about a week.

The **domoic acid** effect forced record numbers of sea lions to the beach last year, but was not that bad for pelicans.

Caption:

Erin Kellogg, assistant manager of the International Bird Rescue Research Center, and veterinarian intern Jose Maria Barredo examine a pelican sickened by **domoic acid** poisoning. Dozens of birds have been sickened and 18 have died in a week. Three young pelicans are on the mend at the International Bird Rescue Research Center in San Pedro.

Copyright (c) 2006, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved

Author: Lee Peterson DAILY BREEZE

Page: A1

Copyright (c) 2006, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved



Paper: Daily Breeze (Torrance, CA)  
 Title: Sick sea lions beaching selves early  
 Date: February 26, 2006

On the heels of the busiest year ever for local caretakers of ailing marine mammals, sea lions sickened by the effects of a natural algae bloom are starting to seek refuge on local beaches.

It's earlier than normal for the beaching of injured sea lions, coming at a time of year when those who care for the animals usually enjoy a breather before an annual springtime deluge of struggling elephant seal pups on the shoreline in need of attention.

The suspected culprit in the sea lion sickenings is **domoic acid**, the product of a natural ocean diatom -- a type of algae -- that in recent years has regularly wreaked havoc on sea lions and dolphins. When the algae blooms, the **domoic acid** reaches dangerous levels.

"Yes, **domoic** is back and it's early," said Peter Wallerstein of the Whale Rescue Team, a nonprofit outfit that is called in when sea lions and other marine mammals run into trouble locally.

"It's a bloom, we just don't know how severe," Wallerstein said.

Wallerstein rescued a sea lion in San Pedro on Tuesday and another in Manhattan Beach on Friday.

Sea lions exhibiting the signs of **domoic acid** poisoning, such as seizures and extreme distress brought on by dehydration, are markers of a harmful algae bloom.

The state Department of Health Services' biotoxin monitoring program checks coastal waters for **domoic acid** in the interest of knowing when shellfish might become unfit for human consumption. But the blooms can happen far away from where these monitors are established; mussels and clams for harvesting are not affected, but the anchovies and other foods eaten by the sea lions are contaminated.

The Marine Mammal Care Center in San Pedro is the local hospital for sea lions poisoned by **domoic acid**, as well as the seal pups that get separated from their mothers.

Director Jackie Jaakola said the facility in recent weeks has been taking in animals obviously dealing with **domoic acid**, but not an overwhelming number yet.

The center has received nearly 30 animals so far this year; most of the recent ones probably due to **domoic acid**.

Last year the **domoic acid** strandings hit hardest in June. Wallerstein picked up 89 animals that month.

The current **domoic** situation is not approaching that level, but the difficulty could be that it peaks at the same time as the seal pup season.

"What makes it so difficult is we have such an overlap," &Jaakola said. "We have about (four) weeks until the seals hit the fan."

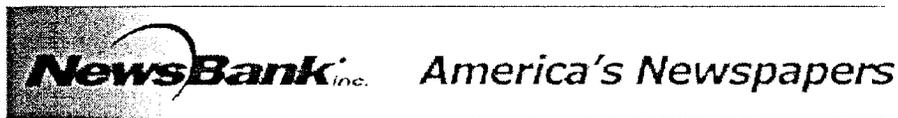
Samples taken off the Palos Verdes Peninsula revealed the presence of the microscopic &diatom that produces **domoic acid**, but not at levels associated with a bloom, said Gregg &Langlois, director of the &state's biotoxin monitoring program. It's possible that the bloom is farther out. Last year large, long-lasting **domoic**-&related algae blooms occurred offshore and were never transported onshore -- but hundreds of marine mammals were &affected.

Summerlike weather in &Southern California in early February might have contributed to a bloom. An algae bloom that produces **domoic acid** can happen any time of year, Langlois said.

"Predominantly we see a spring/early summer peak, and we've seen a smaller episode in the fall," he said.

Wallerstein believes there is a fresh bloom, but animals injured by the substance in the past can have relapses that leave them on the beach in need of medical attention.

Caption:  
 Marine mammals, such as this seal rescued from Point Fermin, have been beaching themselves much earlier than they have



Paper: Daily Breeze (Torrance, CA)  
 Title: 'Red tide' is hitting hard  
 Date: June 5, 2005

One of the worst "red tides" to hit the Los Angeles County coastline in recent years has left boat cleaners without work, swimmers stranded on beaches and scads of fish dead.

Red tide, a naturally occurring ocean phenomenon, is caused by excessive growth of algae, which turns the water brownish-red about once a year. Since it showed up May 28, red tide has kept many beachgoers confined to the sand and made it impossible for divers who clean the underside of boats to see through the murky waters.

The overabundance of algae also contributed to the deaths of hundreds of fish in King Harbor Marina in Redondo Beach on Wednesday. The fish, starved of oxygen, floated to the surface and left a rancid smell in the air for days.

"The smell was so bad that I had to stay inside," said Frankie Greco, 29, of Lomita, who spent Wednesday night in his boat docked at the marina. "I shut all the windows and doors and lit some candles."

The rapid growth of red algae in recent weeks has caused ocean bacteria, which feed on the tiny plants as they die, to multiply exponentially. As the bacteria use up limited supplies of oxygen in shallow waters such as King Harbor Marina's, many smaller fish such as garibaldi and red sea bass suffocate.

"If you're a fish living in the harbor, you're out of luck," said Giancarlo Cetrulo, director of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps' S.E.A. Lab in Redondo Beach.

Although the dead fish -- easy prey for seagulls and crabs -- were all eaten by Friday, the red tide might not clear for weeks.

Michael Aaker, dockmaster at King Harbor Marina, said this year's red tides were among the worst he has ever seen.

"This is the first time I've seen it kill so many fish," said Aaker, who has worked at the marina for 15 years.

Despite the off-putting color of the ocean water, the algae are not dangerous to humans.

"It doesn't look too appetizing, but it's not a concern to swim in it," said Bob Mosby of the Los Angeles County Public Health Department. "Someone would have to drink so much seawater to be poisoned (by the red algae) that they would die from drinking the seawater first."

Still, the murky color has many would-be swimmers assuming they should stay on dry ground.

"It freaks people out," said beach lifeguard A.J. Lester. "Everyone thinks the water is polluted."

The most severe red tide on record occurred last year, when algae "bloom" -- the term for a sudden surge in algae growth caused by favorable weather and ocean conditions -- tainted ocean water for more than a month, Cetrulo said.

The red tide phenomenon also has been implicated in the recent deaths of beached sea lions, but experts say a separate act of nature is at work.

At least eight sea lions have been poisoned by a brain toxin -- **domoic acid** -- produced by algae; these algae, however, are different from those that cause red tide, said Peter Wallerstein, a marine rescuer for the Whale Rescue Team.

The algae killing the sea lions are eaten by fish, which pass the poison up the food chain to the sea lions. The toxin leads to seizures and paralysis in sea lions, while the fish are unaffected.

The simultaneous appearance of the red algae and the sea lion-killing algae is coincidental.

Despite the headaches caused by algae proliferation, it is a way of life for ocean lovers like John Gusstafson, who visits King Harbor Marina regularly.

"You have to deal with it," said Gusstafson, 29, of Redondo Beach. "It's part of nature."

Copyright (c) 2005, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved



Paper: Daily Breeze (Torrance, CA)  
 Title: More beached sea lions raise fears about 'red tide' bloom  
 Date: May 31, 2005

Three dead sea lions washed ashore in San Pedro early Monday, prompting fears that deadly algae blooms could be the cause.

One sea lion washed up on the outer beach at Cabrillo Beach and two others were found farther north at White Point. They were found between 7 and 8 a.m.

Peter Wallerstein of the Whale Rescue Team said the cause of death is not confirmed, but added that the description of the animals is consistent with poisoning from a neurotoxin that enters the food chain when higher ocean temperatures trigger the seasonal algae blooms.

"These were big, healthy-looking animals and that kind of describes a sea lion that might have died of domoic acid poisoning," he said.

At least eight sea lions have washed ashore on area beaches over the past few days, Wallerstein said.

"It's a red flag and we need to be prepared," he said.

The beachings coincide with algae blooms in area ocean waters, known as a "red tide" due to its rusty coloration. The algae contains domoic acid, which is eaten by fish and passed along up the food chain to sea lions.

Five other sea lions, some of them pregnant, were beached earlier this week and removed to undergo treatment at the Marine Mammal Care Center in San Pedro. There they will either recover or be destroyed. Those sea lions were found at Dockweiler State Beach near Playa Del Rey, Venice Beach, Santa Monica Beach and Will Rogers State Beach.

"In 20 years, this is the hardest thing I've seen and I've seen a lot," Wallerstein said. "The look in the eyes of these sea lions while those neurotoxins are exploding in their brains."

Wallerstein cautioned beachgoers to beware if they see a sea lion in distress since state law only allows rescuers to assist sea animals that make it to shore, he said.

Some animals cannot be rescued due to large crowds that gather around them, he said. The sea lions often become frightened and retreat to the ocean, where they can drown due to seizures caused by the poisoning.

"People should keep their distance from these animals because they can cause severe injury," he said. "They bite."

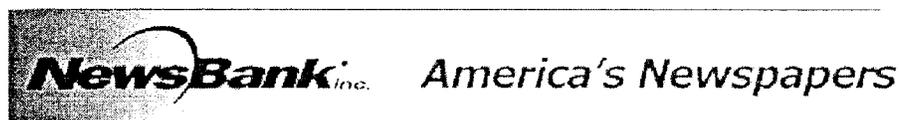
Under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act, it is illegal to interfere with a marine animal, Wallerstein said. Violators face a fine up to a \$10,000 and up to a year in jail.

People should not try to help sea mammals that beach themselves, but should call lifeguards or the Whale Rescue Team at (800) 39-WHALE, he said.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Copyright (c) 2005, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved

Author: Donna Littlejohn DAILY BREEZE  
 Page: A4  
 Copyright (c) 2005, Daily Breeze, All Rights Reserved



Paper: More San Pedro (Torrance, CA)

Title: Cabrillo's inner beach appears in poor health, according &to some experts

Date: July 22, 2006

Every week for the past three years, Roberto Bautista has tested the water quality at **Cabrillo Beach**.

On a recent Friday, the lab technician from the Los Angeles Department of Sanitation walked up to the calm shoreline at **Cabrillo Beach** and, using a plastic container, scooped up a sample from the inner harbor's murky water.

Looking through the clear container, he could tell it would not turn out well. A thick, brown liquid swirled inside with the harbor water. Bits of debris floated inside the mix. He pulled out water samples from other **beaches** for comparison.

"Look -- see the difference between this water and this one," Bautista said as he held up a container filled with clean water except for some sand swishing about its bottom. "This is what it should look like. Even though they haven't done any tests, I can tell."

Later that day, lab tests on the inner **beach's** water determined Bautista's hunch to be half true. The water was cleared to swim in, but it did not receive an A grade. Instead, it received a B.

Bautista tests the water for three "indicator" bacteria strains, which in a large enough quantity tell of other pollutants in the water such as sewage, oil or fecal matter.

In 2005, the inner **beach** was closed for 75 days of the year. So far, the **beach** has been shut down 36 days in 2006, according to the City of Los Angeles Environmental Monitoring Division.

At **Cabrillo's** inner **beach**, fecal matter from the thriving bird population and **feral cats** that live in the breakwall are the main culprits, according to City of Los Angeles Lifeguard Lt. Rick Pena.

City of Los Angeles lifeguards patrol the inner **beach** while Los Angeles County lifeguards oversee the outer **beach**.

Pollution from the port and air particulates that settle on the **beach's** calm water don't help, Bautista said. Neither does the breakwall that keeps fresh water from flowing onto the **beach's** shore.

The main problem with **Cabrillo Beach's** inner water is the fact that it sits still most of the time, according to James Alamillo, a spokesman for the environmental group Heal the Bay.

Any pollution that comes into the water then settles onto the sand, where it is difficult to remove because of the lack of waves. Bacteria that can form as a result also have proved difficult to remove.

What makes the inner harbor particularly dangerous is the high number of young children who recreate in its calm waters, Alamillo said. With less-developed immune systems, they are more susceptible to illnesses.

Alamillo said those who are exposed to the inner **beach** on its worst days commonly report upper respiratory, stomach and gastrointestinal problems.

"The inside harbor has continually been a problem," Alamillo said. "At times it will be alright. Other times it will be closed. The problem is the uncertainty. It's not like the outer **beach**, where 99 percent of the time it is fine. When you want to visit the inner **beach**, you just don't know if the water will be safe or not unless you call ahead of time."

The Port of Los Angeles owns and operates the inner **beach**.

#### Tale of two **beaches**

As a yang to the inner **beach's** yin, **Cabrillo's** outer **beach** is one of the cleanest **beaches** in Southern California, according to Los Angeles County Lifeguard Capt. Kris Linkletter.

The lack of storm drains keeps most pollutants out, Linkletter said.

Regular, strong gusts of wind and underwater currents swish the water and sand around, preventing any pollution or bacteria from settling in, Alamillo added.

"If we have one closure a year, it's been a bad year for us," Link-letter said. "But despite that great record, we pretty often get unfairly lumped in with inner **beach** as being polluted."

Despite its poor reputation, **Cabrillo's** inner **beach** has not been closed for months, Pena said.

On June 30, the water was closed to the public because of high bacteria levels but has otherwise stayed clean, according to the Los Angeles Department of Health Services.

According to Pena, the **beach's** poor reputation is somewhat deserved, but not to the extent he has seen it.

"We're not the cleanest **beach** around, I understand that," Pena said. "But I've had friends swim in Santa Monica or Venice and get sick. Our guards regularly go in the water. None of us, to my knowledge, has ever gotten sick from the water. It's as safe as any **beach** around."

**Cabrillo's** inner **beach** will receive a much-needed improvement after Labor Day. Its sand will be removed and replaced, according to Pena, Linkletter and Deanne Dedmon, senior recreation director at the **Cabrillo Beach** Bathhouse. Theresa Adams Lopez, a spokeswoman with the Port of Los Angeles, said the work would be done after Labor Day to allow people to still use the **beach** during the summer.

Alamillio remained skeptical over whether the move would result in a permanently clean **beach**. He instead suggested opening the breakwall to allow a greater flow of water

"If you don't clean up the port and you put in this new sand, what will happen a few months from now?" Alamillio asked. "Will it become just as polluted as it was before?"moreLOCAL NEWS

Copyright (c) 2006, More San Pedro, All Rights Reserved

*Author: Dennis Lim MORE SAN PEDRO*

*Page: M3*

*Copyright (c) 2006, More San Pedro, All Rights Reserved*

## Sentinels of the seas

### Marine mammals provide insight into the health of oceans

**By Bruce Lieberman**  
 UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

February 19, 2006

ST. LOUIS – Toxic algal blooms, animal waste and chemical pollution are making coastal waters an increasingly dangerous place for marine mammals and other animals that feed on them – including humans.

Marine mammals, as a consequence, have become sentinels of ocean health, signaling various kinds of naturally occurring and man-made environmental threats, said scientists gathered last week in St. Louis for the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The conference ends today.

“I believe that these sea lions that are washing up along the coast are actually acting as important canaries in the coal mine, warning us of some ocean changes that contribute in fact to human health,” said Frances Gulland, a researcher at the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito in Northern California.

Gulland has studied how domoic acid – a toxin produced by some algae that proliferate in algal blooms along the coast – threatens the health of sea lions. Algal blooms, which occur worldwide, are sometimes known as red tides and are common off San Diego County beaches.

Some types of blooms are toxic, others are harmless. But all types of algal blooms have appeared more frequently in recent years, and scientists don't know why. River runoff polluted with fertilizers may be one cause, and global warming may contribute, but there are no conclusive answers, scientists said.

Domoic acid spreads in the food chain when it's eaten by sardines, anchovies and other fish that larger predators then eat. Sea lions with the toxin can develop brain damage that causes seizures and comas. The toxin may cause females to spontaneously abort pregnancies.

The toxin can sicken and even kill humans. The first known case of domoic acid poisoning in humans was in 1987, when 150 people were reported ill with neurological and gastrointestinal problems after ingesting farmed blue mussels.

In 1991, the first evidence of domoic acid on the West Coast was found when a large number of pelicans and cormorants died in Monterey. Then, between May 15, 1998, and June 19, 1998, 70 California sea lions were stranded along the Central California coast from San Luis Obispo and Santa Cruz. Of the 70 sea lions, 57 died. Since then, toxic algal blooms have occurred off the California coast every summer.

Because marine mammals become sick when they eat fish, commercial catches of fish are screened for the toxin before they can be sold. But sport fishermen who eat their own catch could be at risk of ingesting the toxin, scientists said.

In the Gulf of Mexico off Florida, toxic algal blooms that produce a chemical called brevetoxin have hit manatees hard in recent years, said Gregory Bossart, with the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in Ft. Pierce, Fla.

Brevetoxin can be found in the air above the surface of the water, so that manatees who breathe in the contaminated air are gassed to death, Bossart said.

Toxins found in the air just above coastal waters in the Gulf can apparently make people ill. Bossart and his colleagues have associated incidents of algal blooms with an upsurge in the number of people reporting to nearby emergency rooms with bronchitis, asthma flare-ups and other respiratory problems.

Studies in mice, meanwhile, have shown that exposure to brevetoxin can cause long-term damage to the animal's immune system, Bossart said.

"We really need to understand the mechanisms of these toxins, how they cause disease," he said. "We need to understand the chronic effect of these toxins and we need to understand why red tides are apparently increasing in number."

Some diseases originate on land. Off California, brain damage in sea otters who swim near major water outflows along the coast of urban areas has been linked to a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*. The parasite is commonly found in the feces of cats that washes down storm drains and into the ocean, said Patricia Conrad, a scientist at the University of California Davis.

Between 1998 and 2004, a survey of 257 live sea otters off California found that 38 percent of them were infected with the parasite, Conrad said. Of 305 dead otters found during that same period, 52 percent of them had been infected.

The problem is likely to get worse as the huge population of domesticated and feral cats in the United States – estimated at about 150 million – rises, Conrad said.

A cat owner herself, Conrad has urged people to keep their cats indoors to prevent them from eating the birds and rodents that often carry the parasite. She recommends bagging cat litter for disposal at sanitary landfills.

"What the sea otters are trying to tell us about this land-sea connection is a very important message," she said. "Not only what we do, but what our pets do on the land, can actually affect not only us but the animals in the sea, like sea otters."

Man-made pollution that finds its way into the ocean, meanwhile, has reached even Arctic lands, where dangerous chemicals have accumulated in the tissues of killer whales, seals, polar bears and other animals that feed on fish and other sea life.

Todd O'Hara of the University of Fairbanks has cataloged several toxins in the animals, including pesticides, flame retardants, stain repellents and heavy metals such as cadmium and mercury.

Humans who live in the Arctic and hunt in the sea for subsistence are also exposed to such chemicals, and O'Hara is studying the health risks they face.

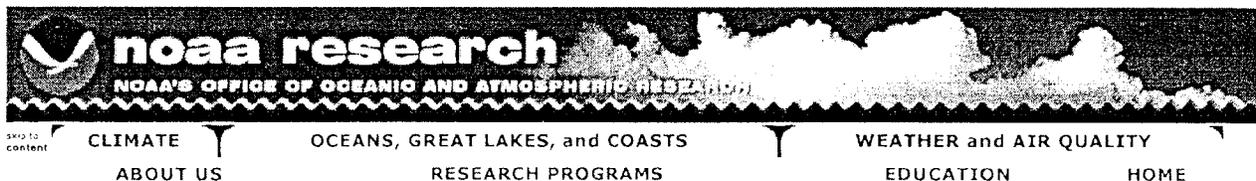
"There's a clear connection with polar bears and the Arctic fox as indicators of ocean health," he said. "These animals feed on similar species as humans. We share resources with these animals."

---

■ Bruce Lieberman: (619) 293-2836; [bruce.lieberman@uniontrib.com](mailto:bruce.lieberman@uniontrib.com)

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/science/20060219-9999-1n19marine.html>



## Archive of Spotlight Feature Articles



# Parasite in Cats Killing Sea Otters

By Christina S. Johnson,  
Science Writer, California Sea Grant

Offering a partial explanation to a mysterious decline in southern sea otter population, scientists have established a strong body of circumstantial evidence linking cats to a lethal otter disease.

University of California at Davis professor Patricia Conrad and her doctoral student Melissa Miller, both in the School of Veterinary Medicine, have shown that otters near heavy freshwater flows are three times more likely to have been infected by *Toxoplasma gondii* - a potentially lethal parasitic protozoan that causes brain infections in otters and brain cysts in humans - than otters from areas where runoff is light.

In a survey of 233 live and dead otters from Santa Barbara to Half Moon Bay, a staggering 76 percent of those near heavy freshwater outflows - storm drains and river mouths - had antibodies to *Toxoplasma gondii*. There was also a surprisingly high rate of infection in the general otter population. Forty-two percent of live otters had antibodies to the parasite, an almost certain sign of infection. The research was funded by the National Sea Grant College Program and was conducted in collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the U.S. Geological Survey.



University of California sea otter researchers Pat Conrad, left, and Melissa Miller examine a lung scan of a dead sea otter. Photo Credit: University of California.

The scientists' best guess is that parasite eggs in cat droppings are being washed by sprinklers and rains into coastal-bound storm drains and creeks. Although many different kinds of animals, such as birds and rodents, can serve as intermediate hosts for *Toxoplasma gondii*, cats are the only animals known to shed the parasite's eggs in their droppings. This cat-parasite link is the reason pregnant women are advised against cleaning cat litter boxes.

Otters may be acquiring parasites directly through water contact, or they may be eating infected mussels or other bivalves. Parasite eggs however, have not yet been found in wild bivalves, but they

are logically suspect since they filter huge amounts of water feeding on plankton and thus trap pollutants in their tissues. Otters also feed voraciously on shellfish.



Hunted to near extinction for their lush fur, sea otters are now protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. Their recovery, however, is being hampered by disease-causing agents spread in runoff. Photo Credit: University of California.

Southern sea otters are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. Once numbering more than 300,000, there were fewer than 1,500 otters in 1982. For more than a decade, otter numbers rose, hitting a peak in the spring of 1995, when there were an estimated 2,377 individuals. The recovery, for reasons that are still unexplained, appears to have stagnated or slid backward. There were an estimated 2,100 otters off California in the spring of 2002.

While the scientists are not certain how much of this decline can be attributed to *Toxoplasma gondii* infections, Miller's Sea Grant research suggests that about 60 percent of dead otters in her survey had been infected by the parasite. New research led by a graduate student at the University of California at Davis suggests that many of these otters likely died of toxoplasma encephalitis.

Not just otters but also people are potentially at risk from the parasite. People eat many of the same shellfish as otters. There has also been a documented outbreak of human toxoplasmosis in British Columbia, shown later to have been caused by contaminated drinking water, presumably from cat droppings.

Though a potentially serious human health threat, *Toxoplasma gondii* is only one of many waterborne protozoans that may be entering beach waters via runoff. A new California Sea Grant study is looking at one of the more worrisome of these, *Cryptosporidium*, widely regarded as one of the most significant causes of diarrhea in humans.

Leading the project are Rob Atwill, also at the School of Veterinary Medicine at Davis, and Conrad. Taking cues from sea otters, Atwill and Conrad are measuring pathogen levels in bivalves near outfalls of human and agricultural runoff, to track the upstream sources of pollution. Genetic tests are also being used to identify which animal species are the main sources of pathogen pollution. Wildlife, cattle, pets and people can spread *Cryptosporidium*.

The scientists are also working with dairies along the coast to test the degree to which management practices, such as planting vegetative buffer strips, can reduce pathogen pollution.

The California Sea Grant College Program (<http://www-csgc.ucsd.edu>) is the largest of a national network of 31 university-based programs, dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the nation's coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources. This network is a partnership of participating coastal states, private industry, and the National Sea Grant College Program, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

[12/2/02]

TIME ARCHIVE



AVAILABLE FOR FREE

[Back to Article](#)
 [Click to Print](#)


Sunday, Sep. 24, 2006

## What's Killing the Sea Otters

By Dan Cray

Los Angeles They're cute, furry, and when they're not chasing each other around kelp forests, they're floating on their backs like miniature teddy bears. Hunted nearly to extinction for their luxuriant fur--the thickest of any mammal's--the sea otters of California were making a comeback until they started mysteriously dying off. State wildlife officials recovered a record 281 dead otters last year, and this year looks to be even worse. Five or six wash up on California's beaches and rocks each week. In August alone, 28 dead otters were cast ashore, including an alarming number of full-grown females. "When we start losing breeding females," says veterinarian Mike Murray at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, "that's not a healthy population."

What's killing the sea otters? Sometimes the cause is clear: a shark bite, a bullet, an outboard motor. But about one-quarter of last year's fatalities have been traced to a pair of protozoan parasites, *Toxoplasma gondii* and *Sarcocystis neurona*, that are known to breed in cats and opossums. Could sea otters be dying because California cat owners are flushing used litter down the toilet?

State legislators were sufficiently convinced of the threat to pass a bill--signed into law last week by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger--that raises the maximum fine for harming a sea otter to \$25,000 and requires that all cat litter sold in California carry a warning label advising cat owners not to dump their pet's droppings into toilets or storm drains.

But cat litter is only a small part of the problem. Thorny-headed worms dropped into the ocean by seabirds are known to be killing otters, as are toxic algae blooms triggered by urea, a key ingredient in fertilizer. And sea otters, because they feed on shellfish that tend to accumulate whatever floats their

way, are particularly susceptible to PCBS and other man-made pollutants.

Sea otters are not the only species harmed by ocean pollution, of course, but they are easier than most to study. They sit at the top of a food chain that may extend less than half a mile from shore. "The sea otter is the canary in the coal mine for the coastal ecosystem," says Monterey's Murray.

Right now, Murray contends, that mine is looking pretty dark. While the state's otter population is holding steady at nearly 2,700, projections show that number should already have reached at least 13,000. The next step, say scientists, is to pinpoint--then shut down--the sources of runoff that are pouring toxins into the otters' playgrounds.

In this effort, the charismatic sea otter may be its own best friend. Marine mammal experts aren't always as sentimental about the sharp-toothed creatures as the public is--one expert referred to otters eating shellfish on their tummies as "buzz saws in a fur coat"--but no one doubts the value of the "aww" factor. "When you've been bitten by one, you don't think they're so cute," says Michelle Staedler, the Monterey Aquarium's sea otter research coordinator, "but then you look, and they're a big ball of fluff." [This article contains a complex diagram. Please see hardcopy or pdf.] Hunted Nearly To Extinction Russia's Peter the Great declared a monopoly on sable in 1697 and sent hunter to find sea routes to America. When Vitus Bering's expedition was shipwrecked in 1741, his crew killed sea otters instead. They returned with 900 luxuriant pelts, setting off the Great Hunt. When the otters were depleted, Russia sold Alaska to the U.S. SEA OTTER FUR Built for warmth 1 million hairs per sq. in. Guard Hair Underfur Trapped Air HUMAN SCALP 150,000 hairs total Before 1741, there were as many as 300,000 sea otters on the Pacific Coast. By 1900 only a few colonies remained

Historic range

Remnant colonies Now New Threats Emerge Industrial chemicals, algae blooms and other toxins linked to coastal pollution are among the sea otter's new enemies. The threat from feline-borne toxoplasmosis, a common danger to pregnant women, helped trigger California's new law

1 Cat eats rodent or bird infected with *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite

2 Parasite develops in cat's gut and its eggs are released in scat

3 Eggs travel through runoff or are flushed into sewers

4 Eggs end up in the ocean and are ingested by mussels, clams and oysters

5 Otter eats shellfish; eggs infect the otter's brain and organs and kill it

Sources: Sea Otter Alliance; David Jessup, California Department of Fish and Game

 Click to Print

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1538645,00.html>

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Add TIME Headlines to your Site](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Customer Service](#)



## Feral cats: Problems extend to wildlife species, ecologists say

Sep 1, 2002

By: Dan Verdon

DVM Newsmagazine



Feral cat numbers now rival the entire human populations in both Texas and California. Ecologists and wildlife advocates say this burgeoning population is challenging wildlife. They want cats back indoors.

Nashville-About 70 million cats are estimated as feral or free-roaming in the United States, and it is putting pressure on wildlife species and resources to solve the problem.

The result: the fight is on, and it is squarely focused on how to solve this population boom which now rivals the numbers of "owned" cats.

Ecologists and wildlife advocates want domestic cats out of native environments, because of their destruction to other native wildlife including birds, rodents, small mammals, lizards and other creatures. With the popularity of trap-neuter-release programs increasing, like one administered by the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), these groups are opposed to the program largely because cats are released back into the environment. In short, they want them out of parks and other habitats simply because of their impact on the area's ecosystem.

The argument goes: This is a man-made problem because these animals are not indigenous to the area; therefore, man has a responsibility to solve it.

Dr. Julie Levy, DVM, dipl. ACVIM of the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, says, "Veterinarians are increasingly asked to participate in solving the cat and dog overpopulation problem, often by providing discounted health care for homeless animals for rescue groups or animals shelters," she says.



Dr. Julie Levy

Veterinarians typically fall on the other side of the argument by endorsing trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs as a start to controlling this population glut. CVMA's feral cat program, sponsored by Maddie's Fund, was created to help reduce the population of these cats in the state.

While CVMA officials are touting its successes; critics are blasting the ethics of "re-abandoning" these animals.

Beginning in 1999, the program spayed and neutered about 20,000 feral cats each year. To date, a total of about 140,000 surgeries have been performed in the state. The program helped subsidize the costs to the surgeries for 1,100 practicing veterinarians.

The entire debate aired at the American Veterinary Medical Association's annual meeting here.

The issues surrounding feline abandonment are global in its impact. In public health circles there is a major concern about zoonotic disease spread, like rabies, toxoplasmosis, ringworm or bartonellosis while veterinary medicine is more closely focused on FeLV and FIV risks.

"The control of feral cats is rapidly becoming one of the most popular and controversial topics in animal control

and welfare," Levy says.

She adds that small animal practitioners working with these unowned cats are developing a sort of "herd health" program in contrast to individual patient care. Levy also founded Operation Catnip in 1996, which is credited with sterilizing more than 14,000 cats at monthly clinics.

Ultimately, officials agree the problem could be better controlled if people stopped dumping litters of kittens in parks, or leaving unwanted cats to fend for themselves. But even if that societal ailment were cured today, which is obviously unlikely, what do you do with the millions of free-roaming cats all over the United States?

TNR programs were born and are increasingly popular.

Alley Cat Allies, which is a national resource organization for these programs, estimates that 2,000 groups and 6,000 people are doing TNR, Levy reports.

There's not much arguing about the extent of the feral cat problem in this country; the bickering is about how to solve the issue, and the devil's always in the details.

**Not a solution** What has been the impact of TNR programs like CVMA's feral cat altering program?

If you ask Dr. David Jessup, a senior wildlife veterinarian for the state of California and critic of the effort, TNR is not a viable long-term solution.



"As the public has grown more attached to companion animals and there has been recognition of the fact that animals feel pain and distress, the welfare of free-roaming cats becomes an issue," says Dr. Margaret R. Slater of Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

In fact, he believes these programs are just inviting litigation, especially considering endangered species laws, laws governing conservation lands and animal protection laws.

He says that the animals are being "re-abandoned" and under California penal code if an owner allows an animal to go without "proper care and attention is guilty of a misdemeanor". What if a feral cat is responsible for killing an endangered species and was recently neutered and released as part of a TNR program? "Cats are an aggressive, invasive, nonnative, subsidized predatory species whose presence results in loss of wildlife," he contends.

Jessup believes that officials need to shift emphasis toward prevention of abandonment, provision of homes and sanctuaries for abandoned cats and elimination of feral cat colonies on all wildlife lands.

He also says there is a real need for an inexpensive oral contraceptive for cats, as well as recognizing that re-abandonment of cats is generally not a humane, professional or legal way of handling this enormous problem.

He calls on veterinarians to support programs like "Cats Indoors," which help make feral cats adoptable; and support "closed" sanctuaries as an environmentally friendly alternative to feral cat colonies. Cats at these sanctuaries would be treated humanely, yet confined indoors.

He also says that officials need to recognize that the elimination of large and "open" feral cat colonies from wildlife lands may not be possible without euthanasia, given current technology.

**TNR works** Proponents of TNR programs counter they are a viable way to reduce feline populations.

Dr. Margaret Slater, DVM, Ph.D., at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, believes TNR reduces the numbers of animals.

"Only trap, neuter and return of feral cats has been shown to stabilize and decrease the numbers of cats; fewer cats means less predation."

Slater says that a partnership between an animal control agency and non-profit feral cat TNR program was

started in Orange County, Fla. in 1995. She adds that in six years following introduction of the program, more than 7,000 feral cats were sterilized, the total number of cat surgeries exceeded the number of cats euthanized and the number of nuisance complaints decreased. "As a result, despite an increase in the human population of 25 percent, impounds remained stable and cat adoption rates slightly increased."

How acceptable is trapping and humanely euthanizing these animals simply because these animals are unadoptable? Is it hypocritical to the "no kill" movement of animal welfare? How would large scale euthanasias be covered by newspapers in the popular press? Slater is convinced it would result in very negative publicity. If enclosed cat colonies are created to house these animals, who is going to pay for the care?

The issues continue to pile up.

The human-animal bond is a powerful force. People feed and care for feral cat colonies in an attempt to help. It's a humane response that most people feel for the plight of these creatures; but ecologists say it accentuates the problem because it reduces attrition in the wild, and it doesn't make cats any less predacious.

**Wild or not** It's a hotly emotional topic.

Levy explains, "Debate about the true impact of feral cats on the environment, on feline health, and as a reservoir of zoonotic disease is ongoing, often emotional and fueled largely by a lack of sound scientific data on which to form credible conclusions."

Levy adds, "Of primary concern is the welfare of the cats themselves, and many believe that feral life is too fraught with risk and discomfort to be acceptable. Others believe the lives of feral cats should be judged no differently than those of other species existing in a 'wild' state."

Ecologists just want them inside.

Feral cats have been credited with exterminating one bird species from the face of the planet, and it poses the biggest risk for certain protected species especially on islands, reports David Duffy, Ph.D., a botany professor at the University of Hawaii.

Officials say reducing unwanted populations of free-roaming feral cats is a huge problem worldwide, and a first of a kind survey in Wisconsin has documented the problems it is posing to wildlife.

In Wisconsin alone, says Stanley A. Temple, Ph.D., of the Department of Wildlife Ecology of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1.4 million free-roaming and feral cats are believed in the state even accounting for attrition from cold winters. Surveys estimate that this population of cats has bagged 7.8 million birds. Roughly 20 percent of the documented cat kills were birds.

Temple says, "Why are we picking on cats?" He says that even though there are many, many ecological and societal trends that are impacting native wildlife species the "cat threat can be reduced by responsible human actions. There are solutions."

Temple explains, "Feral and free-roaming cats are exotic predators (in the ecological sense) that are not naturally a part of any North American ecosystem. They are not ecologically equivalent to any North American mammalian predator, and their impacts on prey species are distinctly different from those of wild predators."

Temple characterizes these cats as 'subsidized predators' in that they receive food, shelter and other benefits from their relationship with human beings, yet also hunt. "Their predation on native wildlife can have serious consequences for species already stressed by other sources of human-caused environmental degradation," he adds.

**How to help** Slater says that veterinarians can help the feral cat problem in many ways.

"Veterinarians are involved in the control of free-roaming cats as a part of practice and in many other ways. Even working to encourage responsible pet ownership is a huge help in the effort to decrease the numbers of homeless cats in the U.S.," she adds.

Client education and a talk on responsible pet ownership can go a long way to controlling feral cat problems.

"The two primary roles outside of regular private practice are as educators and as surgeon for neutering cats," Slater says.

"Education of the general public, government officials, shelter professionals and other animal welfare groups are all within the purview of veterinary practitioners."

She says that topics to discuss could include public health risks, vaccinations and infectious disease control, the importance of identification and neutering.

Other important concepts include:

- The human animal bond keeps cats in homes. Foster it.
- Don't underestimate the power of an initial kitten visit. Statistically, there is an increase in relinquishment of cats in the first two years of ownership and it became more pronounced for cats owned less than six months.
- Educate owners about normal cat behaviors, since it is a leading cause of relinquishment.
- Neuter more cats, sooner. "In one study, only 50 percent of relinquished cats were neutered while 77 percent of owned cats still in the home were neutered," she says.
- Identify cats by collar and tag, microchip or tattoo.
- Help to get homeless cats adopted.