

BE A FRIEND TO FERALS

Feral cats are unsocialized kitties that usually show fear of people, and may be one or more generations removed from a home environment. They often live in a group, or colony, of similar cats. These cats and their offspring are generally victims of abandonment, accidental loss, and failure by their guardians to responsibly spay and neuter their companion animals.

Unconditional Love Animal Rescue advocates for and supports community-based Trap-Neuter-Return programs with on-going responsible management as the most viable, long-term solution help to reduce feral cat populations.

Responsible TNR includes: humane trapping and spay/neuter, rabies vaccination, and treatment for illness or injury; removal of kittens and friendly adults for possible adoption; ear-tipping and return of ferals to the same location where they were trapped, provided they do not face imminent danger; and providing lifelong care consisting of adequate food, water, and shelter as well as regular monitoring of the colony for sickness, injury, and the arrival of new animals.

The goal of any feral cat colony program should be to maximize quality of life for the cats and to eliminate the overall number of existing colony members over time through the natural aging process. In addition to the welfare of the feral cats, wildlife must be considered and steps taken to ensure their safety and well being. It is imperative that feral colonies are fed consistently and conscientiously to try to keep predation on wildlife to an absolute minimum.

It is important to remember that not all skittish kitties living outside are feral. Use caution and common sense and try to engage with outdoor cats to determine if they are just shy, or if they are truly feral. Shy kitties can be brought inside and with determination and patience, they can become loving family members. Feral kittens, when rescued early can often be tamed and live happily indoors. But please remember, do not remove any kitten(s) from a mother cat before the kittens are weaned at approximately 5 weeks old. When in doubt, take a photo of the kittens and request guidance from your local shelter or rescue group with experience assessing feral cats.

If you have feral kitties living in your yard or neighborhood, you may rent humane traps at your local shelter. Many shelters and cities offer low-cost spay/neuter programs for ferals, where for a reasonable fee the cat(s) will be

tested for feline diseases, vaccinated, altered and have the ear tipped so they are easily identifiable after they are re-released. Please call Unconditional Love Animal Rescue at 408.529.4945 if you have additional questions about helping feral cats in your community.

Please be a friend to ferals and don't turn a blind eye to their presence in your neighborhood and need for assistance.