



Myths about Feral Cats

From Alley Cat Allies

Myth 1: Feral cats lead short, miserable lives so it's best to trap and euthanize them.

Reality: Studies show that feral cats have about the same lifespan as pet cats. And they contract diseases at about the same rate. It is simply not humane or prudent to kill a healthy, feral cat, and this practice does not reduce their population over time. In fact, the opposite occurs. By removing cats from an area, the territory improves for the remaining cats, which will begin breeding more frequently and have larger litters to reach the carrying capacity again. Maintaining a healthy population of altered feral cats will decrease the reproduction rates and prevent any new cats from entering into the area.

Myth 2: Feral cats are diseased and can make pet cats or children sick.

Reality: Feral cats are generally healthy. The incidence of disease in feral cat colonies is no higher than among owned cats. Feral cats shun human contact, especially with unfamiliar people. They aren't interested in interacting with you or your children.

Myth 3: Feral cats can be trapped and taken to your local Animal Center for adoption.

Reality: Feral cats are not pet cats and they will be killed at most shelters. The Rancho Cucamonga Animal Care and Adoption Center (RCACAC) is a progressive animal center that began a Trap-Neuter-Release program for feral cats in April 2007. However, this program relies on residents in Rancho Cucamonga for its success. If a feral cat is brought to our Center, we cannot adopt them out because they are wild. Unless we have a colony/residence to release the cat once he/she is altered and vaccinated, the only other option is humane euthanasia. We are always looking for neighborhoods and/or residents who are interested in providing a release area for feral cats brought in by people who have no desire to have them back. If you're interested, please contact RCACAC directly.

Myth 4: Feral cats are predators and kill birds and other small mammals.

Reality: Studies show that the overwhelming cause of wildlife depletion is destruction of natural habitat due to man-made structures, chemical pollution, pesticides, and drought – not feral cats. Ornithologists estimate that 100 million birds die each year from flying in to windows and breaking their necks. Habitat destruction and encroachment of people into wild areas is the most detrimental aspect causing the decline of bird species. In summary, feral cats have almost no impact on wildlife populations.

Most feral cats in urban areas are fed by caring residents as it only takes one person in an apartment complex to provide enough food to sustain a large population of cats. Most feral cats rely on this as a main source of food. As the U.S. becomes more and more urbanized, very few feral cats have the need to hunt wildlife to sustain their population. Those that do often become opportunistic scavengers in garbage cans or catch mice/rats, which is always looked on as a positive by residents. In fact, organic farmers can list feral cats under their rodent control methods when registering with the USDA.

Myth 5: Feral cats are causing destruction in my neighborhood (i.e digging in my garden, attacking my indoor/outdoor cat)

Reality: Feral cats are rarely seen by people and are most active at night when they are hunting/searching for food. The cats that often cause this type of destruction are owned cats that are allowed to free roam by their owners. These cats are more comfortable being out during the day and are not frightened by people so they often times have to be scared off by annoyed residents. Working with your neighbors and communicating concerns about their cats will often times alleviate problems that arise over differences in pet care.



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