

## Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)

**Alabama Humane Federation believes that feral cats should be given the same consideration regarding their right to life as any other companion animal. Because most animal shelters are not able to provide feral cats placement through an adoption program, TNR, if done properly can provide an answer to curbing the growth of an unwanted cat population without placing the burden of euthanasia on local shelters and animal control facilities.**

What is Trap-Neuter-Return?

TNR is a humane and non-lethal approach to feral cat population control. It is a comprehensive management plan where healthy feral (free-roaming) cats are sterilized and vaccinated, then returned to their habitat and provided with long-term care. *(Definition courtesy of Alley Cat Allies)*

TNR is for feral (un-owned, free-roaming, wild or stray) cats only and is not intended for pet cats or cats that will be placed into homes as pets.

Why TNR?

- decades of trap and kill programs have done nothing to control or reduce feral cat populations.
- TNR is an effective method of reducing the number of feral cats in a specific area over the long-term because it stops their breeding so the 'colony' reduces over time through natural attrition
- TNR saves taxpayers money by reducing the need for animal control trapping of feral cats and reduces their subsequent euthanasia in shelters
- Feral cats often suffer short and difficult lives due to disease, starvation, and trauma. Considering the estimates of 70 million un-owned cats in our country, this is suffering of epidemic proportions
- Management of feral cat colonies allows for monitoring of injuries/illness and the identification of any newcomers so they can be quickly trapped and sterilized

TNR Considerations:

- to be effective TNR must be a community supported effort with a well-thought out plan for the long-term care and management of the colony
- colonies should not be located in areas that may endanger protected wildlife, where the cats may be subject to harm or abuse, or where the colony could pose a zoonotic risk to humans
- if a viable TNR program cannot be enacted for a particular colony AHF understands that the alternative may be the humane trapping and euthanasia of the feral cats
- AHF opposes any methods of population reduction that are inhumane such as poisoning, shooting or trapping where the method may cause suffering
- AHF encourages municipalities to require licensing, rabies vaccination, and permanent identification through micro chipping to help in identification of owned & unowned cats
- AHF encourages owners to keep cats indoors as much as possible
- Municipalities should take measures to prohibit public feeding of intact free-roaming abandoned and feral cats
- The goal of any cat management program should be the eventual elimination of feral cat colonies

AHF urges all municipalities, animal control entities and private citizen caretakers to consider TNR as an effective method of addressing feral cat colonies.