

## Feral Cat Vocabulary

- Feral cat - A feral cat is an offspring of a domestic cat that was born in the "wild" and not accustomed to being handled and socialized by human beings. Feral cats exist because some pet owners do not spay or neuter their cat and allow it to roam outside. Feral cats also originate from unneutered cats who have been abandoned by their owners.
- Feral cat colony - A feral cat colony consists of two or more cats who live outdoors, often in abandoned buildings, parking lots, behind warehouses, in parks, or in rural areas. Most often, the cats are malnourished and untrusting of humans. Their lives are often shortened due to abuse, starvation, and/or disease.
- Managed colony - A managed colony is a colony of feral cats who have been spayed/neutered. This surgery removes the cat's desire to breed and helps the cat to better absorb nutrients in food and become healthy. A managed colony does not allow new unneutered cats to join the group and is stabilized in number.
- Trap/Neuter/Return - Trap/neuter/return (t/n/r) is an ethical and practical method of controlling the feral cat population. Cats are humanely trapped and taken to a veterinarian to be spayed/neutered and vaccinated against Distemper and Rabies. T/n/r eliminates behavior associated with mating and protecting territory and humanely addresses the problem of overpopulation.
- Vacuum Effect - The vacuum effect is the result of removing feral cats from a colony. It allows for unneutered cats to join the colony, continue the cycle of breeding and contribute to the overpopulation problem. The vacuum effect is not present in a managed colony where all of the cats have been spayed/neutered.

There are many local animal welfare organizations who provide low-cost spay/neuter services to feral and domestic cats. If you are aware of a feral cat colony, or know someone who has a cat that is allowed outdoors, explain how spaying/neutering humanely addresses the problem of cat overpopulation and encourage people to seek assistance so that every cat is spayed/neutered.



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Every Cat Matters. Every Person Counts.