



Community Cats News

Community Cats TNR
P. O. Box 384
Ludington, MI 49431

Winter 2013—2014

A humane Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program to reduce the number of homeless cats

18,000 Fewer Kittens!

Community Cats was organized in 2012 to address the ever-increasing number of homeless, free-roaming cats, particularly in the City of Ludington. We trapped our first stray cat, a gray two-year old female, on September 26, 2012. By the end of November, 2013, we had humanely trapped and spayed 74 females, and trapped and neutered 69 males – a total of 143 homeless cats! As a result of community support, we have far exceeded our early projections of what we could accomplish in a year's time!

The Humane Society of the United States provided this information: "The University of Washington's Math Department calculated the reproductive potential of one female cat using the scientifically collected data from Dr. Michael Stoskopf's

population studies of feral cat colonies in North Carolina.

Here are the assumptions used for the population projection: One female cat gives birth to six kittens per year. Kitten gender is 50% female, and only 25% of kittens survive to reproductive age. All surviving female kittens become adults and reproduce with the same birth and kitten mortality rates. If no adult cats ever die, how many cats/kittens would there be at the end of seven years?

The consensus of five Math Department professors these experts based on these assumptions is this: One female cat and her offspring could produce between 100 and 400 cats by the end of seven years."

The calculated assumption is that each female will produce only one



A female brown and gold tabby recovers in her trap following surgery prior to return to her cat colony in Ludington.

litter per year. A female is capable of producing kittens as early as five months of age, and could have four litters per year. We are finding that two litters seems to be the norm in our area, but are aware of some females producing more than two litters. Based upon the 74 female cats already spayed by Community Cats TNR, we have already prevented the birth of approximately 18,000 kittens over the next seven years!

What is TNR?

TNR is Trap-Neuter-Return

Free-roaming, abandoned, stray, feral cats are:

- Humanely trapped by trained caregivers and volunteers.
- Transported to veterinarian clinic
- Given a health check, parasite treatment and rabies shot
- Spayed or neutered
- Left ear tipped for identification
- Returned to colony
- Monitored by caregiver for new strays.

KEEP THEM DRY AND WARM “If you are cold, so are they”



Rick and Mary Ann Randall display one of the Alley Cats winter cat shelters they built this fall.

For a variety of plans and options for building your own winter cat shelter, visit www.alleycat.org or www.bestfriends.org or www.neighborhoodcats.org

Search each site for feral cats and winter cat shelters.

Also, check out Community Cats TNR website. More and more information is being added to this site as it is being developed.

www.communitycatstnr.org

Winter is brutal for homeless cats. They need help throughout the winter months to find shelter that provides them protection from cold and wet weather. Without a good shelter, cats may become ill, and may suffer from frostbite on their ears, nose and paws.

There are many ideas and designs available for winter cat shelters, but all good designs share two qualities: strong insulation and minimal air space. The insulation is needed to trap the cats' body heat. Minimal air space is necessary so that cold air doesn't fill the empty space and chill the cats. Straw is the best insulating material to use inside the shelter. Blankets or towels will become wet, will freeze and draw body heat away from the cats. Cats will cozy or burrow into straw and keep their body heat from escaping.

Community Cats TNR volunteers have been building the Alley Cat winter cat shelter shown in the photo. It is constructed of 1/2" plywood, has a 5" x 6" opening, double walls to allow for insulation between, a sloped and shingled roof, and a wind block just inside the entrance. Cats enter the shelter, go around the wind block, and cuddle into the straw interior. Volunteers have experimented and modified the design provided by Alley Cats to add roof insulation, an interior shelf, and a two-story design with compartments.

Another popular shelter can be assembled using a large and a small storage bin. Foam insulation or straw can be placed below, above and around the interior "box" which is lined with plenty of straw. Entrance holes approximately 5" x 6" can be cut on one end of the long side of the outer storage bin and on the end of the interior bin. Depending on the size of the storage bins, the cats may be able to enter the larger bin, then turn and go into the smaller bin. Another option is to line up the entrances, and connect them with 6" circular drainage tubing.

Dog houses may be modified by making the opening smaller, and large dog houses may be modified to reduce air space by designing "compartments" inside.

Allowing cats an entrance into an outbuilding will provide excellent protection from the elements, especially if you also add one or more small corners of straw, perhaps in a wood or cardboard box, under a tarp, etc.

In addition to Dry and Warm

Keep them well fed with nutritious cat food to keep them healthy.
Don't forget to provide fresh water.

YOU CAN BE A CAREGIVER

A cat appears on your porch. She appears to be cold and hungry. Can you just ignore her so she goes away? Where will she go? Who will help her? Is she somebody's lost pet? You are part of a caring community for both people and animals. She may be friendly or feral, but she needs you!

Community Cats TNR works with caregivers to help them spay/neuter the stray, mostly feral, cats in their care.

Volunteers meet with caregivers, assess the size, ages, health of their cats, provide them with information on how our program works, show them how to safely and successfully trap the cats, and how to care for cats before and after surgery. We schedule the veterinary appointment and help trap the cats

the day before surgery. On the morning of surgery, we pick up the cats in their traps, transport them to the clinic and then return them to the caregiver after surgery later in the day.

Two local veterinarians make time in their surgery schedules for Community Cats – Country Vet Clinic, and Animal Hospital of Ludington. After surgery, cats are cared for in the traps either by the caregiver, or by one of our volunteers. Males are generally released the next day and females are generally kept for three days. Kittens over three pounds (about 10+ weeks old) can be spayed/neutered.

We find that after TNR, the cats are healthy, recover

quickly and caregivers are appreciative that they won't be producing any more kittens. The cats are staying closer to their feeding areas because the males in particular aren't inclined to roam. Neighbors have reported a huge reduction in spraying and mating noises and behavior and are happy about that.

Although some of the cats have learned to trust the caregivers who feed them and can be friendly, others are frightened and will not approach people. Stray cats may range from a friendly lost pet to a truly feral cat that has had no contact with people. We teach caregivers to never trust a frightened cat, and to follow safe procedures while caring for cats in traps before and after surgery.



Our thanks to Drs. Steve and Leslie Paxton and staff of Animal Hospital of Ludington and Drs. Glenn Walquist, Laura Waldo, Rex Payne and staff of Country Veterinary Clinic for making time in their busy surgical schedules for Community Cats.

Do you have a friendly stray?

If you have a stray cat that you can handle, call 757-4470 and request a spay/neuter certificate from Our Wish (soon to be called Fixing Furry Friends).

You can do so much to help reduce the overpopulation of stray cats by having your friendly stray spayed or neutered—the certificate will help you with the cost.

YOU CAN HELP!

The success of the Community Cats TNR program relies upon donations. Please consider making a donation today! Make check payable to COMMUNITY CATS TNR and mail to P. O. Box 384, Ludington, MI 49431 **THANK YOU!**

YES—I CAN HELP!

Name

Address

Phone Number

Comments

(Community Cats TNR has made application to the IRS for 501c3 tax-deductible non-profit status)

**BE A RESPONSIBLE
CAT OWNER**

NEUTER OR SPAY!



PIZZA!!!!

Take a break from your last minute Christmas shopping on Monday, December 23.

Pizza Hut is sponsoring a fundraiser for Community Cats TNR from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. 10% of the proceeds from eat in, carry out and delivery will be donated to helping Community Cats.

We will also be offering homemade baked goods for sale.

What could be better than ending your day of Christmas shopping with a delicious Pizza Hut pizza (no cooking!) and then taking home a desert to share with your Christmas guests!

Mark your calendar now-December 23, 4-8 pm—Pizza Hut

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN

Visit www.neighborhoodcats.org. On the home page you can find “Feral Cat Winter Shelter Page” and “Preventing Water from Freezing.” Down further, you can find a truly comprehensive guide on all things TNR and cats, the [Neighborhood Cats TNR Handbook, 2nd Edition](#).

Visit www.alleycat.org. On the home page click on What We Do, Care for Cats, Colony Care, Colony Care Guide. You will find Winter Weather Tips. For plans—Fact Sheet “Build an Inexpensive Cat Shelter” click on [learn how to build one yourself](#).

Visit www.humanesociety.org. Search “TNR” on their site for a list of many resources.

Visit www.bestfriends.org. Search “TNR” or “Trap Neuter Return” on their site for a list of many resources.

Visit www.communitycatstnr.org. Our website is still under construction. More and more information and links will be added as time goes on.

Come to our next meeting: Sunday, January 12, 2014 at 2 p.m. at Ludington Library.

*Ludington, MI 49431
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