

Readers' Letters

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Let's Work Together

It is disappointing to read another letter intending to divide pet and wildlife lovers written by Becky Robinson, the national director of Alley Cat Allies, (March 2007). In her letter, Ms. Robinson accuses American Bird Conservancy (ABC) of using "inflated figures" (entirely untrue) and "questionable studies" (we form conclusions using peer-reviewed data from scientific publications and consultation with acknowledged scientific experts). She then points out that Defenders of Wildlife and National Audubon Society believe that habitat destruction is the primary cause of wildlife loss. ABC agrees, though, ironically, there is little solid data to support this either — scientifically proving causes and the relative scale of wildlife loss is very difficult. Worse, she intentionally misleads by not mentioning that both of these organizations support ABC's position on free-roaming cats: You can read about this for yourself on their websites.

If the implication is that we don't need to worry about anything other than the probable leading cause of wildlife loss, isn't that like saying we don't need to worry about cancer or car accidents because heart disease kills more people?

Advocates on both sides of the free-roaming cat issue must end the division among those with whom we disagree. The bird conservation community recognizes that trap-neuter-release (TNR) advocates are passionate and humane people. Though we disagree about the problems of TNR, instead of hurling insults, we should be discussing solutions that work for both cats and birds.

George Fenwick, president of the American Bird Conservancy
Via email

Create Your Own Scratching Post

I built my cat a cheap, simple, renewable scratching board with a tower. The basic structure is a triangular wood frame about 25 inches high inside with a long base so one end can be placed under low furniture. This prevents the sides from tipping over. Each scratching face is about 6 inches wide. When one face gets torn up, I turn the scratching board around to provide a new face.

I use carpet discards from carpet companies, typically at no cost because they were leftover scraps being thrown away. I secure the carpet to the side with carpet tacks and use large diameter head screws to attach it to the prime scratching faces. I found the screws to be necessary early on because Buddy scratches with a vengeance. This is where I typically find discarded claw sheaths.

In more than eight years of use, my cat Buddy has never touched one piece of furniture, my carpeting or throw rugs. I introduced him to his scratching board as a kitten by rubbing a little catnip into all of the carpet surfaces until use of the board became a conditioned reflex.

Warren Eberspacher
Orchard City, Colo.

My Cat Saved My Life

My "Baby Marie" is a solid black American domestic shorthair. When little Marie was only about 5 months old, I reached out to pet her one day and as I touched her back, she screamed.

I rushed her to the emergency pet hospital. The wonderful veterinarians and technicians checked her and periodically gave me estimates as they went through the tests so that I wouldn't be surprised as the bills increased.

I quickly maxed-out my credit cards and had to call my daughter when we learned Marie Noire needed surgery to have a kidney removed. The surgery was successful and five days later, my little Marie was released from the hospital and well.

Between my daughter and me, we spent about \$3,200 to pay the surgery bill. Now I can tell you how much Marie Noire is worth: She saved my life!

A few weeks ago, she flew through the cat door and dropped something from her mouth. I turned and got up to see: It was a snake! And not just any snake — a baby rattlesnake! I had the snake's identity verified by an expert from Project Wildlife.

I'm just happy that Marie Noire caught the snake before any of my other cats or I was surprised by it in the garden. Marie is no longer my sickly cat — she's my heroic cat!

Joan Delao
San Diego

Better Ways to Remember Your Pet

I was aghast to read the "Diamond in the Rough" article in your March issue that described how to extract the carbon from a deceased pet to make a diamond. I have wonderful memories and lots of photographs of my lost treasures, but I cannot imagine how a cold, hard stone could remind me of a soft, warm living creature.

If bereaved pet owners have \$3,000-\$20,000 to throw around, I suggest they donate it to one of the many reputable pet charities. Their beloved pet is beyond all suffering — there are thousands which are not.

Fiona Hammond
Via email

More on Animal-Printed Clothing

I felt personally and generally offended by Kim's comments in the March 2007 issue on wearing animal prints as condoning the real thing! I wear leopard print as an expression of my love for leopards and their beauty. I am against wearing real fur and have publicly (and loudly) spoken out against it. I've even made enemies because of it.

Is Kim suggesting that we not wear any animal prints/nature prints at all? Does she suggest that in doing so we condone killing animals for vanity? I think not! There is no excuse for killing for vanity, but let's not go overboard! Animal prints harm no one and should not encourage anyone to wear the real thing.

Inge Alger
Michigan

CAT FANCY Has Improved

I want to tell you how much I think you've improved CAT FANCY. You've made the magazine much more attractive and the articles seem to be more interesting (or maybe that's because they're presented more attractively now). It's really a first-class magazine now!

Jean Roberts
Via email

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