

## Readers' Letters

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### Researchers Do Not "Steal" Cats

I have owned and loved cats my whole life. I also have worked in the research field my entire working life. I hate to break it to you, but we (research facilities) do not want your cat for research. We will not be buying them from shelters or unknown breeders, nor will we be collecting off the street. To have valid results for medicine and vaccination testing (both humans and animals) we need animals that are from registered USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) breeders.

These animals have known genetic backgrounds and are free from known pathogens and diseases. These breeders also do not want your cat. They purposefully breed the animals for research. This is, of course, contrary to what the Humane Societies want you to believe, as shown in one of the letters in your February 2007 magazine.

I am proud to have worked in the research field. I have seen great advances in health protection and disease prevention to help keep my cats and others safe. To accuse research of "stealing" animals does a great disservice to everyone.

Jessica Webber, veterinary technician  
Via email

### No to TNR

We see many articles and hear stories about the "success" of TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return), but they lack any representative scientific data as to the efficacy of this method. We never seem to hear of colonies that no longer exist. TNR is touted as humane, but what is humane about cats living and dying in colonies? TNR has not been proven to reduce the number of feral cats through natural attrition and, cats usually do not die of old age but rather from trauma. The outdoors is no life for any domestic companion animal.

Consistently we hear folks refer to ferals as wild animals when that is fundamentally incorrect. Genetic changes that took place throughout thousands of years have made these animals dependent on humans. A true feral might behave in a wild manner, but it is not wildlife.

Most people understand that cats are prolific hunters that can negatively impact native wildlife already struggling to survive, so how can we in good conscience promote programs that are environmentally irresponsible, result in terrible deaths for cats, and have no public health benefits?

The National Association of Public Health Veterinarians has stated that there are potential human public health risks and that there is no evidence that colony management will reduce diseases. As a wildlife rehabilitator, I see the results of free-roaming cat attacks. As someone who rescues colony cats, I witness poor management and unacceptable living conditions. TNR is a lose-lose situation for cats and wild animals.

As someone who regularly and successfully socializes older kittens and cats, I am disturbed by the insistence that this is the exception and not the rule. Human organizations are doing a disservice by discouraging socialization of older kittens and cats and promoting a method that results in nothing more than pure self-indulgence. For more information, visit [www.tnrrealitycheck.com](http://www.tnrrealitycheck.com).

Linda Cherkassky  
Voorhees, N.J.

### Animal Friends

When I left my country I left behind my pets (two cats, one parrot and two dogs) with my parents. Every year when I go back, believe it or not, my pets remember me. When they hear my voice, they get so happy.

Ana Paula de Campos  
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

#### False Bird Facts

Thanks to CAT FANCY, cat lovers and cat advocates have been educated throughout the years about the help feral cats receive from grassroots efforts dedicated to carrying out Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). Yet your January 2007 issue promoted an organization on record as being opposed to TNR and feral cats as part of our communities.

The American Bird Conservancy's assessment of the effect of cats on bird populations is built on inflated figures and questionable studies couched in heartwarming prose that obscures its underlying premise. Its goal is to eliminate all outdoor cats: outside pets, strays, and ferals, whether sterile or not. ABC openly opposes feral cat colony management – TNR.

There is no credible evidence that feral cats are a significant source of wildlife depletion. Studies from leading wildlife organizations, including Defenders of Wildlife and the Audubon Society, show that the overwhelming cause of wildlife depletion is the destruction of natural habitat because of overdevelopment, chemical pollution, pesticides, man-made structures and drought.

In October 2006, Alley Cat Allies kicked off the "Discover the Truth about Feral Cats" campaign in honor of National Feral Cat Day. The more people know about the nature of feral cats and the real causes of bird and wildlife loss, the better decisions we all can make about how to protect wildlife and reduce the number of cats who call the outdoors home.

Becky Robinson, national director of Alley Cat Allies  
Bethesda, Md.

#### Feral Sanctuary

We rescue injured, homeless and feral cats and kittens, and we neuter/spay and vaccinate them. They live in a large barn that is heated and has three outdoor, enclosed pens. Some "weasel" their way into the main house where they team up with our dogs. There is never a dull minute.

We have some blind cats, tail-less cats and tiny cats. Many have upper respiratory infections and eye problems that need constant care. An article on this problem would be greatly appreciated. I'm curious as to whether these health issues are common among ferals.

Susan and Bob Morlle  
Via email

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