

National Feral Cat Day Seeks to Protect Strays

Alley Cat Allies calls for end to killing of shelter felines.

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A national educational campaign about the protection of these wild and outdoor cats kicks off Thursday, Oct. 16. Photo courtesy Alley Cat Allies. When feral and stray cats are taken into shelters, the chances of survival are slim to none. A national educational campaign about the protection of these wild and outdoor cats kicks off Thursday, Oct. 16, to call for a proactive approach for the care of feral cats, said Elizabeth Parowski, Alley Cat Allies spokeswoman.

The organization launched National Feral Cat Day eight years ago as a way to help stop the killing of cats in shelters. Feral cats live healthy lives on their own, content in their outdoor environment, according to the group.

The reactive approach practiced at shelters across the United States where cats are routinely rounded up and killed is a misguided attempt to control their numbers, Parowski said. The group's mission is to get more people involved in efforts to adopt humane programs such as Trap-Neuter-Return.

The "catch and kill" approach is not supported by the majority of Americans, she said, noting a national survey conducted for Alley Cat Allies by Harris Interactive, which found that 81 percent preferred to let an outdoor cat live out its life than have it caught and killed.

That's why it's important, Parowski said, for people to get involved by urging local government officials to adopt programs such as TNR. Alley Cat Allies promotes a wide variety of ideas and events for National Feral Cat Day, available at its website.

Becky Robinson, president of Alley Cat Allies, said the group is pushing for a revolutionary change in shelter practice and policy. "We already know we have the support of hundreds of thousands of citizens nationwide," Robinson said in a statement. "National Feral Cat Day is our national call to action for this movement."