

Cat Population Crisis

Observers say number of homeless cats in Ann Arbor, Michigan has exploded.

Shelter, clinic and cat rescue workers are saying that the overpopulation of homeless cats in the Ann Arbor, Michigan area is the worst they've seen in years and that the number of felines is pushing the limits of foster homes, shelters and clinics.

The Ann Arbor Cat Clinic, a veterinary hospital, is over capacity 90 percent of the time, according to veterinarian assistant and adoption coordinator Nancy Moehn. Only 10 cats are allowed in the clinic's adoption-rescue program, but the clinic currently has nearly 40 cats, Moehn said.

Those who work with cats say the main reason for the overpopulation crisis is the lack of spaying and neutering.

Kitty Zimmer, who runs the Zimmer Foundation, an Ann Arbor-based organization that operates various cat welfare programs, said pet owners take advantage of spay and neuter programs in the area that offer financial help to those who can't afford the services.

So far this year, Zimmer said, her organization has identified about 50 new feral cat colonies around the area.

Debbie Wilde, operator of Crafty Cat Rescue on Ann Arbor's northwest side, said the abundance of abandoned cats is the worst she's seen in years.

Wilde mainly takes in abandoned cats, like those left behind by apartment residents who move. She said she's currently housing 27 kittens, five mother cats and five other cats - 37 rescued cats overall.

The Humane Society of Huron Valley has a capacity for 80 cats. However, as of Friday, Aug. 4, the shelter had 161 cats - 96 at the shelter and 65 in foster care. At this time last year, the shelter had 67 cats.

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