

Animal Control Places Cats in Protective Custody

The new method in Florida attempts to reduce loose dogs' attacks on cats.

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After months of futile efforts to stop cat killings and maulings by dogs, Seminole County, Fla., animal-control officials began trapping stray cats to protect them.

Animal-services Director Mike Wittmer confirmed that traps are being put in alleys and other public places in Sanford, Fla.'s downtown, historic district and nearby neighborhoods where several cat killings have occurred.

"We've been picking up dogs left and right, but that's only part of the problem," Wittmer told the Orlando Sentinel newspaper.

Some cat owners say trapped cats will be easy targets for dogs until animal-control officers can take them from the traps.

Wittmer said seven cats were picked up in the first week. Owners retrieving their cats are fined \$50 and charged a \$25 housing fee, which has upset some people. Francoise Ager of the group Alley Cats of Sanford told the newspaper that the problem is dogs going onto private property and attacking cats, not that there are too many stray cats.

Reports say that as many as 60 cats have been killed in Sanford since November 2006.