Are there outdoor cats in your neighborhood?

Connecticut is in a cat crisis – it has been for at least 10 years now. The cat crisis is due to irresponsible pet owners who abandon cats that are unaltered, or who allow their unaltered pets to roam outside. Cats living outside search for a food source and establish a territory. If unaltered, their home becomes a breeding ground.

The Greater New Haven Cat Project, Inc. (GNHCP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, comprised solely of volunteers. GNHCP humanely addresses the outdoor cat population through an effective approach called trap/neuter/return (TNR). TNR gets to the root of the problem through the non-lethal method of spaying/neutering. The organization averages 35 spay/neuters per month.

It is essential that the stray and feral cat issue be addressed in a humane and ethical manner, and that we promote respect and ethical treatment for all animals and humane values to our younger members of society. Educating the next generation and improving lives of animals is also important to neighborhood good will.

Feral cats are a member of the domestic cat species, and are protected by anti-cruelty laws. They are not trusting of humans, but their presence is a result of irresponsible humans. They live outdoors – and should remain outdoors. Once neutered, they can be just as healthy as indoor pet cats. Attempts to remove the cats only invite new, unaltered cats into the territory (the vacuum effect). It also sends the wrong message to our children and society as a whole. Respect should be for all animals, whether it is a pet, or an outdoor animal.

What are the benefits of spaying/neutering outdoor cats through TNR:

* Most important is breaking the cycle of reproduction; the population stabilizes, *i.e.* becomes “managed.” The colony size diminishes over time and no new cats will join the colony
* Improving the quality of life for the cat -- reduced cat fight injuries and nuisance behavior of unneutered cats such as spraying; reduced roaming in search of fertile mates; reduced risk of disease; and reduced pregnancies
* Regular feeding regular decreases susceptibility to disease
* Promoting the health, safety and general welfare of residents in the area by reducing the number of cats living outside
* Practical use of financial resources - it costs more to impound, hold, euthanize and dispose of an animal than to spay/neuter it. Organizations such as GNHCP provide volunteer labor to do the leg work of capturing the cats, transporting them to the vet, and recovering them after surgery
* Alignment with the purpose of anti-cruelty laws which protect the lives and welfare of animals from intentional human harm and abandonment
* Rat abatement
* Lower predation on birds and wildlife
* Public health benefits – Rabies: cats are not rabies vector species. A vaccinated feral cat will not acquire the rabies virus and cannot transmit it to other animals or humans. In addition, sterilized feral cats are less likely to encounter infected wildlife because of behavioral changes they undergo with neutering; also the vaccine titer last longer than the vaccines dictates
* Vaccination provides a “herd immunity” effect, a barrier species for humans—as the cats are vaccinated and protected against transmission
* Statistics: 1 unneutered cat can produce 6 kittens = 7 cats / in 4 months those 7 cats can produce 42 more kittens / while some of those mothers are nursing, they could become pregnant again and within another 4 months if all 42 cats survive you can have 252 cats – Spay/Neuter today!

For more information, please contact GNHCP at (203) 782-CATS, [www.gnhcp.org](http://www.gnhcp.org) or [gnhcp1@gnhcp.org](mailto:gnhcp1@gnhcp.org). Thank you for your support of our efforts.