

AlleyCatAction

A Publication of Alley Cat Allies

The National Feral Cat Resource / Spring 2001



Smooth Sailing for the Shipyard Cats



Becky Robinson of ACA, NNSY feral cat caretaker Cynthia Moose, Jim Isaacs of ACA, and Michael Brayshaw of NNSY stand behind the thousands of postcards sent to NNSY commander, Captain Mark Hugel, supporting the shipyard's feral cats.

Photo by Steve Milner

trap-neuter-return (TNR), on the base. The resident cats will be trapped, sterilized, vaccinated against rabies, eartipped, microchipped, and returned to the shipyard where volunteer caretakers will oversee them. This victory is due to the thousands of you who expressed your deep-felt concern about the shipyard cats to NNSY.

Alley Cat Allies (ACA) approached the shipyard in August asking that Ms. Moose's pass be reinstated and that the shipyard consider a comprehensive and nonlethal management program.

NNSY officials agreed to meet with ACA in September after a considerable amount of public sentiment had been voiced in favor of nonlethal control, including a successful demonstration outside the shipyard gates. At the meeting, ACA representatives proposed a nonlethal and cost-effective approach to managing the feral cat population, which the shipyard agreed to consider.

After several weeks of corresponding with shipyard officials and addressing their specific concerns regarding ACA's TNR proposal, officials under the command of Captain Mark Hugel agreed to a second meeting on Wednesday, December 13. We discussed specific details of our comprehensive plan to stabilize and reduce the shipyard feral cat population and showed our new video, *The Humane Solution: Reducing Feral Cat Populations with Trap-Neuter-Return*.

Captain Hugel immediately agreed to support a TNR program. Hugel recognized that a comprehensive, nonlethal management program is the best solution for the feral cats and NNSY. In making his decision Hugel stated, "I defer to this group [Alley Cat Allies] as the experts."

At long last, public policy is following the direction. See **Shipyard** on page 2

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For Those in the Trenches

IN JULY 2000, the Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) in Portsmouth, Virginia, came within days of contracting with the Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services to trap the shipyard's cats (for euthanasia) at a cost of over \$21,000 to taxpayers. To make matters worse, the shipyard forbade the cats' caretaker of more than four years, Cynthia Moose, to feed the cats. They even revoked her after-hours pass. However, thanks to ACA's publicity campaign and persuasive arguments, NNSY has come about - in favor of feral cats.

On December 13, 2000, the shipyard agreed to implement a nonlethal population control method,

For its U.S. military installation guidelines known as Technical Information Memorandum (TIM), the Armed Forces Pest Management Board is in the process of reviewing how best to deal with feral and stray cats. Nonlethal control and TNR are under consideration as the preferred method of feral cat population control. Linda Kozaryn of the Armed Forces Press Service recently explained in a series of articles for the Department of Defense web site that public sentiment on U.S. bases is in favor of nonlethal population control methods when dealing with feral cats. The series can be read at www.defenselink.mil/specials/cats/catcontrol.html.

Alley Cat Action

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Upcoming Conferences

The University of Florida, Gainesville will hold its third annual **"Cat Owners and Breeders Symposium" on March 3, 2001, in Gainesville, Florida.** College of Veterinary Medicine faculty and special guest speakers will share the latest knowledge of feline disease during this full day symposium. The symposium will include some of the nation's leading veterinary specialists and feline experts. For more information call 352.392.1701, ext. 243 or log on to www.doce-conference.ufl.edu/cat/.

The National Animal Control Association (NACA) will hold its annual **"NACA 2001 Training Conference" May 17-19, 2001, in Daytona Beach, Florida.** For more information log on to NACA's web site at www.nacanet.org/confnce.htm/.

The No More Homeless Pets Conference sponsored by Best Friends Animal Sanctuary will be held **May 18-20, 2001, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.** For more information email info@bestfriends.org, call 435-644-2001, ext. 129, or fax 435-644-2078.

Doing Things for Animals (a project of the Pet Savers Foundation) will hold its 7th annual **"No-Kill Conference" August 16-19, 2001, in Hartford, Connecticut.**

Alley Cat Allies will conduct a workshop during the conference titled "Tips for Safe and Successful Trapping." The 90-minute session will cover the basics of trapping, the latest "tricks of the trade" in trapping, how to outmaneuver the most elusive feral cat, and the latest and best trapping equipment. Come take advantage of Alley Cat Allies' trapping demonstrations. For more information browse Doing Things for Animals' web site, at www.dt-fa.org/pages/conf.html.

Mark your calendars for the **"2001 Southern Regional Leadership Conference: Forming State Networks to End Cat/Dog Overpopulation."** The conference will be held **September 28-30, 2001, in New Orleans, Louisiana.** The conference will instruct individuals and groups on how to develop or join state networks, develop business plans, and raise funds. For more information contact www.spayusa.org or 800.248.SPAY. ●

Shipyards continued from page 1

tion of popular sentiment. The Norfolk shipyard has joined the ranks of other military bases across the U.S. in implementing TNR. NNSY is one model of many showing that all workplaces can successfully and cost-effectively incorporate compassion into business operations and implement humane management plans for feral cats, i.e. TNR. Currently (see sidebar), the military is looking at TNR as the preferred feral cat population control method for all of its military bases. The U.S. is

home to 519 military installations.

The planning stages are under way for training volunteer feeders and trappers at the shipyard, constructing feeding stations, and coordinating a spay/neuter mobile unit for the cats to receive veterinary treatment. Implementation of the program will commence early in the year 2001. Thanks to NNSY for agreeing to launch this progressive and life-saving program! And, hats off to all our allies out there who helped us with this campaign. ●



The Making of a Humane Ohio

Alley Cat Allies (ACA) has launched an ambitious public policy outreach program in conjunction with Humane Ohio throughout the state of Ohio as part of our national campaign promoting the humane treatment of feral cats and trap-neuter-return (TNR). We developed the program to encourage hundreds of shelters, animal control agencies, and health departments to implement TNR for feral cat population control. Often, these institutions simply do not have the resources or the information to manage feral cat colonies.



The Ohio program is proving to be very successful. To date, at least 50 individuals and organizations are implementing TNR as a result of our outreach program. This effort included distribution of introductory information regarding nonlethal feral cat population control with follow-ups of on-site and long-distance consultation, and distribution of our instructional videos. We tailor our information to the individual needs of the facility, and supply protocols for trappers, veterinary staff, and the

cats themselves, based on TNR models used successfully elsewhere.

In early 2001, ACA National Director, Becky Robinson, will conduct TNR workshops in five cities within Ohio between February 16th and 21st. The workshops will focus on the benefits of feral cat colony management, the myths surrounding feral cats and TNR, and the ways to encourage local communities to adopt a permanent nonlethal control policy.

Ohio is among several states demonstrating how the grassroots efforts can culminate in change on a statewide level.

Ohio has shown that representatives from animal control, humane societies, health departments, and individual caretakers can successfully come to the table prepared to explore alternatives to traditional trap and kill methods of feral cat population control.

This campaign is made possible by the Kenneth A Scott Charitable Foundation and the tireless efforts of Humane Ohio founder and director, Aimee St. Arnaud and statewide coordinator Mike Nestor.

Louisiana Feral Cats To Benefit from ACA Contest

Alley Cat Allies awarded \$1,000 worth of cat care equipment to the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' Feral Cat Initiative program. The winner of Alley Cat Allies' "It's Grand to Spay and Neuter" contest was chosen on October 21, 2000. Animal Care Equipment and Services

(ACES) donated the prize. Caroline Page, Program Coordinator of the Feral Cat Initiative, is in the process of deciding what to "purchase" for her feral cat program.

In addition, ACA recognized Kathy Jackson of Middletown, Delaware, as the individual who submitted the most entries. She will receive a trap, donated by Heart of the Earth Marketing.

Beginning May 2000, hundreds of individual caretakers as well as feral cat groups nationwide began sending in their spay/neuter contest entry forms, although receipts could go back to January 2000. Alley Cat Allies initiated the contest to encourage cat sterilization. When a cat was sterilized, her caretaker sent in her spay/neuter receipt as well as a contest entry form, which Alley Cat Allies provided. The lucky contestant was selected in a fundraiser held at Franklyn's, a coffeehouse in Washington, DC (named after a local cat).

To all those who entered the drawing, thank you for helping the cats lead longer, healthier lives. Keep up the great work!

Campus Cat Egroup

INTERESTED IN LEARNING about feral cats on college campuses? Already involved with feral cats on your college campus? Then join Alley Cat Allies' feral cat college campus egroup where you can exchange ideas, receive or give advice, or simply obtain moral support.

Register at alleycat@alleycat.org

Glossary—

Feral Cat Terminology

FERAL CAT—Feral means "gone wild" - either a cat has reverted to the wild state after being lost or abandoned or is born outside, the offspring of stray or abandoned domestic cats.

STRAY CAT—A domestic cat that has been abandoned or strayed from home and become lost. Once a companion animal, a stray cat can usually be successfully placed into a home.

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR)—A humane and nonlethal approach to feral cat population control. A comprehensive management plan where all healthy feral (wild) cats are sterilized and vaccinated, then returned to their habitat and provided with long-term care. Adoptable cats and kittens are placed into homes.

MANAGED COLONY—Where all cats have been sterilized, vaccinated, provided food, and provided with shelter from inclement weather. The colony cats are healthier and no longer breeding. The caretaker regularly monitors the colony and individual cats.

VACUUM EFFECT—Removing feral cats from an environment creates a phenomenon known as the "vacuum effect." More cats, moving in to take advantage of whatever meager food source is available, will quickly fill this space. These new unsterilized cats will breed to the capacity of the site.

In Honor of Babe and Wilbur

Andy Miscuk lost most of his possessions that fateful day of October 27, 2000, the result of a fire. Worst of all, his two beloved alley cats, Babe and Wilbur, perished. To honor his cats, Miscuk decided to raise money for charity, including Alley Cat Allies, through his group Cocktail Charities. Tryst, a café in Washington, DC's Adams-Morgan neighborhood, hosted the function on December 7. Several of their wait and bar staff donated their tips to Cocktail Charities. The event generated over \$1500.

In Memory of Those We Love



Marion Heimerle had already taken in five stray cats when she was faced with another two she just couldn't turn away. They were kittens who were being abandoned by a neighbor—for the second time.

She decided to make room in her overcrowded house, only to find that both kittens were seriously ill and needed to be euthanized. It broke her heart to do it, but she wanted to do what was best for Black and Tiger. These were the names she had given to her newest babies.

She had been determined not to get too attached to

Black and Tiger. However, that proved impossible. As a tribute to them, Marion chose to put a memorial plaque on the conference wall of Alley Cat Allies. Her gift has been dedicated to "helping those who are friendless" through the Alley Cat Allies Compassion Fund.

We salute Marion and all the work she has done to save homeless animals. Thanks to her generous contribution, countless cats will be friendless no more.

In Loving Memory of Black and Tiger
November 24, 2000

For more information on our memorial gift program, please contact Development Director, Catherine Pajic at cpajic@alleycat.org or call 202.667.3630, extension 109.

ALLEY CAT ALLIES NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Your contribution can save a life! Without our generous and loyal allies we could never have done so much for the cats we all cherish.

Please send your tax-deductible gift of:

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\$50

\$100

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Q&A

with Dr. Marvin Mackie, D.V.M.

Raised on a farm in rural Idaho, Dr. Marvin Mackie, D.V.M., never intended to work with small animals. He dreamed of becoming a noted large animal veterinarian — to follow in the footsteps of his mentor, a hometown farm veterinarian. However, close to forty years after graduating from Washington State University Veterinary College and four Animal Birth Control Clinics later, Dr. Mackie is fully immersed in working with only small animals. His four clinics in Southern California, two in the Los Angeles area and two 130 miles east of L.A. in the Southern California desert communities, successfully provide low-cost spay/neuter services. In all, 640 clinic days per year are devoted to spaying/neutering. With approximately 40 animals a day being sterilized, a lot of non-reproducing animals are walking out of his clinic — penetrating the very core of the companion animal overpopulation dilemma. In addition, Dr. Mackie's clinics spay/neuter about 160 feral cats per month. Alley Cat Allies recently sat down with Dr. Mackie to discuss his clinics, his philosophy on spay/neuter and the overpopulation issue, and what propels him to promote low-cost and juvenile spay/neuter.

When and why did you start specializing in low-cost spay and neuter?

I was employed as a relief veterinarian by a group of veterinarians who owned a spay/neuter clinic. While at their clinic, I saw a specialty that interested me and provided a unique challenge. I saw the problem of companion animal overpopulation and the need to help, but at that time, I knew of no one making a decent living offering affordable spay/neuter services to the community. I felt that I had found my niche in spay/neuter work and I thought I could run a successful clinic based on high volume and affordable prices. I opened my first clinic with a partner early in 1976. We proceeded to open five clinics over the next five years.

When you began low-cost spay/neuter, how did the public and veterinarian professionals respond?

Public response to my clinic was good but not overwhelming. In the 1970s, there was a strong professional mandate against advertising. Stepping over the line brought great scorn. It took a long time for the public to learn of us.

The response of the veterinarian community was mostly a "non-response." My colleagues were curious to see how long we would last.

When establishing your clinics what factors did you consider?

In establishing each of the first four clinics, we tried to determine locations of probable need and to open a clinic in a shopping center in that area. Thus, they are easily accessible.

Do you believe that a companion animal overpopulation crisis exists in the United States?

Definitely. Fortunately, notable inroads are being made. Many animal control authorities are currently reporting a huge reduction in animal intakes and euthanasia. One would have to conclude that good progress is being made.

Do you consider yourself a part of the solution?

Yes, I am proud to consider myself a major contributor to the solution. The problem of too many fertile and reproducing animals requires that large numbers of animals be sterilized in order to make an impact. In order to stay in business as a spay/neuter clinic and continue to serve this community's need, I had to increase the number of patients sterilized in a given period of time without sacrificing the quality. Twenty a day simply doesn't do it. Once I had demonstrated that 40 then 60 or 70 cat sterilizations were possible in one day, other veterinarians followed. Breaking down

Dr. Mackie regularly instructs veterinarians and spay/neuter clinic staff throughout the United States on the techniques involved with high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter. In addition, he speaks to various groups/meetings on the currently "hot" subject of prepubertal gonadectomy; i.e., early-age spay/neuter.



the numbers limit barrier was significant to my practice. Consequently, I have successfully shown that it is possible to maintain low costs and provide affordable services through high-volume spay/neuter.

When did you start working with feral cats?

In 1991, I was approached by the then Executive Director of the Los Angeles SPCA with a proposal to begin a program to support a small contingent

of dedicated feral cat caretakers. The volunteers would Trap and Return, and Animal Birth Control would provide the Neuter services. ACA put a name to this process: Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). The SPCA would fund the work. I felt the Director was forward thinking and that this plan was in the spirit of the SPCA objective.

Do you believe and support trap-neuter-return?

Absolutely, for all the reasons that Alley Cat Allies lays out so clearly.

Please explain what low-cost spay/neuter includes, such as vaccinations, etc.

My Los Angeles clinics offer a walk-in vaccine clinic. Our technicians will also discuss general health care, behavior and training issues, and if warranted refer medical questions to a full-service hospital known to be friendly to our work. We also perform fecal exams, deworming, and FeLV/FIV testing.

What are the differences between spaying and neutering feral cats and domestic cats?

As a surgeon, essentially there is no difference. Once the cats are sedated, prepped, and on the surgical table, they are the same as any domestic cat. Obviously, my technicians have to use a different technique to immobilize the feral patient. But these technicians are well trained and skilled. They have never been seriously hurt handling a feral cat. We never handle the feral cats until they are immobilized by injection.

See **Mackie** on page 7

On Our Bookshelves

Yes, please rush me the items below.
Each merchandise item includes shipping and handling

VIDEOS

New Alley Cat Allies Video
The Humane Solution: Reducing Feral Cat Populations with Trap-Neuter-Return



The Humane Solution educates policy makers about the benefits of trap-neuter-return (TNR), and demonstrates that nonlethal methods are by far the best path to take in controlling feral cat populations.

PRICE QTY TOTAL

\$13.00

Trap-Neuter-Return: A Human Approach to Feral Cat Control

A comprehensive training video produced by ACA that shows you step-by-step how to implement TNR in your area. Educational and engaging, it contains valuable guidelines for novices and pros alike.

Reduced
~~\$16.00~~
\$13.00

BOOKS

The Stray Cat Handbook
BY TAMARA KREUZ

Both individuals and shelters can benefit from this book. Kreuz deeply cares about the plight of stray and feral cats and describes practical ways to help them.

Reduced
~~\$13.00~~
\$10.00

Idealism in Action
BY OPERATION CATNIP

A guidebook and policy manual for running a high-volume trap-neuter-return program for feral cats.

\$10.00

Disposable Animals: Ending The Tragedy of Throwaway Pets
BY CRAIG BRESTRUP, PHD

Dr. Bestrup's book describes the use of euthanasia by animal-control and animal-welfare organizations and the unintended consequences of this practice.

\$18.00

Getting the Word Out in the Fight to Save the Earth
BY RICHARD BEAMISH

A superb resource that shows how to start and effectively run a non-profit organization. If you are launching a feral cat program, we highly recommend this book.

\$33.00



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Sterilize, Don't Euthanize!
Say it loud and wherever you drive with Alley Cat Allies' new bumper sticker.

ONLY! \$ 1.00

ACA donation

DC residents add 5.75%

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1801 Belmont Road, NW Suite 201
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: 202.667.3630
Fax: 202.667.3640

FREQUENTLY ASKED **Questions**

My neighbors are complaining about the cats that I care for who are already TNR'ed. What can I do?

Ask your neighbors the reason(s) behind their complaints. Often, complaints are easily refuted with the proper information. For example, if a cat is soiling the neighbors' gardens, place sand in an out-of-the-way area or keep litter boxes at the colony site, keep the litter area clean, and offer repellents. If neighbors voice health concerns, make sure that the cats are up to date with their vaccinations. Keep the cats' medical records in order and share this information with your neighbors.

Before speaking with your neighbors, familiarize yourself with the following information prepared by Alley Cat Allies:

- How to Talk to Anyone about TNR - Provides information on how best to approach your audience, and gives quick "sound bites" about the advantages of trap-neuter-return (TNR).
- Community Benefits of Feral Cats - Offers easy, inexpensive methods to repel cats from areas where they are unwanted.
- Health Care for Feral Cats & Toxoplasmosis: Potential Health Hazards for Humans - Provides information on the health of cats. The likelihood of your neighbors contracting any disease from a feral cat is rare.
- Once you have read the above information, provide copies to your neighbors.

Your neighbors may not be able to give you a specific reason for their complaints. Regardless, use the above information to show the benefits

of a managed cat colony. When speaking with your neighbors, emphasize that the existing feral cat colony is sterilized, vaccinated, and eartipped. These cats will not reproduce, will help to keep out new, unsterilized and unvaccinated cats, and will form an effective barrier between humans and wildlife, the primary carriers of rabies. Trap-neuter-return is the only proven method effective in reducing numbers of unwanted cats in residential or commercial areas.

Always remain polite and diplomatic when dealing with neighbors and their complaints. The cats' lives may depend on how calmly and effectively you handle the situation.

- If you have not TNR'ed your feral cat colony, immediately call Alley Cat Allies at 202.667.3630. ●

Mackie continued from page 5

At what age will you spay/neuter a cat?

We start spaying/neutering cats at six to seven weeks - not months - when presented to us by shelters, foster caregivers, and, of course, feral cat caretakers.

When you treat a feral cat, what services do you provide?

In addition to the surgery, we routinely tip the ear and administer a 3 in 1 vaccine and rabies vaccination. We treat as needed for ear mites, worms, and abscesses or wounds.

What important steps should people take when bringing a feral cat to you for treatment?

Have the trap covered with a towel to reduce the cat's anxiety and be sure to identify the cat clearly as feral - wild.

What message would you like to pass on to others?

Over the last decade of serious feral cat work (sterilizing and vaccinating) and putting what I have seen in perspective with 25 years of companion animal overpopulation work, I firmly believe that gaining control of the feral cat colonies, community by community, is the last piece of the puzzle to end the domestic cat overpopulation crisis. Stated in reverse: without sterilization of the feral cat members of a community, there is no chance whatsoever of curbing feline overpopulation. ●

For Those in the Trenches

If you are actively working to help feral cats, or would like to be you will not want to miss Alley Cat Allies' new bi-annual newsletter *Feral Cat Activist*, to debut March 2001. The *Feral Cat Activist* will provide practical information for those working directly with feral cats, whether it's managing a feral cat colony, changing feral cat public policy within a local government, or coordinating a spay/neuter clinic. The *Feral Cat Activist* will keep you in the know by providing

you with all the latest programs and information on the nonlethal control of feral cats and how you can benefit from trap-neuter-return programs that others have already implemented. Featured will be columnist Bonney Brown of Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, who will share her knowledge on fundraising. To subscribe, fill out the order form below and send or fax it to Alley Cat Allies or email alleycat@alleycat.org (please reference "Activist Newsletter").



Yes, I want to receive Allies Cat Allies' new *Feral Cat Activist* newsletter.

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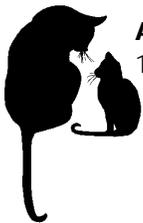
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