

JUST THE FACTS: Community Cats

Community cats are unowned cats who live outdoors.

Community cats live outdoors in virtually every landscape on every continent where people live. Like indoor cats, they belong to the domestic cat species (*Fe/is catus*). However, community cats, also called feral or outdoor cats, are generally not socialized, or friendly, to people. They live full, healthy lives with their feline families, called colonies, in their outdoor homes.

Community cats thrive in their outdoor homes.

Cats living outdoors alongside people is nothing new. It wasn't until kitty litter was invented in the late 1940s that some cats began living strictly indoors. However, community cats are truly at home outdoors.

Community cats are healthy.

Community cats are used to living outdoors, and are naturally skilled at finding shelter and food on their own. Studies show community cats are just as healthy as indoor cats, with equally low disease rates. Community cats can also live just as long as indoor cats.

Community cats are harmless members of society.

Community cats are not a public health threat. Since they typically aren't friendly to people and avoid contact, the chance for them to transmit diseases is minimal. You are much more likely to catch an infectious disease from someone standing in line with you at the grocery store than from a cat.



COMMUNITY CATS
Jarrettsville, Maryland

alleycat.org

Community Cats

Community cats have a place in the natural environment.

Cats have coexisted outdoors with wildlife for thousands of years. Scientific studies show that cats are part of our natural ecosystem and do not significantly impact wildlife populations. As animal lovers, we want what is best for all animals. That means we must address the true threat to wildlife, including birds: human-led actions like habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change.

Community cats cannot live indoors.

Community cats are generally not socialized to people and therefore are unadoptable and will not adapt to living indoors. No community cat should be taken to an animal shelter unless very briefly as part of a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. Nationwide, far too many shelters still kill most cats who enter their doors, and unadoptable community cats face the highest risk. TNR is the only humane and effective approach for community cats, and all communities should have robust TNR programs in order to save cats' lives.

TNR helps cats and the community.

In a TNR program, community cats are humanely trapped, brought to a veterinarian to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped (the universal sign that a cat has been part of a TNR program), and then returned to their outdoor homes. TNR improves cats' lives, and provides an effective, humane, and collaborative way for communities to coexist with cats.

Community cats need your help.

You have the power to save cats! Together, we can address the misconceptions and threats that cost community cats their lives. Learn more at alleycat.org/CommunityCats.

Our website is alleycat.org, where you can also find links to our active social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn, X, Bluesky, and Threads.



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