Addressing Common Concerns About Outdoor Cats – One Sheet

The list below includes most of the common concerns that may come up regarding feral cats and TNR. A variety of solutions are offered to address each issue. The solutions are most often effective when several are combined to fit the specific situation.

“**The feeding area is messy and attracts insects/wildlife.**”
- Keep the cats’ feeding area neat and free of leftover food and trash.
- Do not overfeed the cats.
- Remove all remaining food after an hour.
- Feed during daylight hours and remove any remaining food before dusk.

“**Too many cats around!**”
- Locate the feeding area and any shelters provided for the cats away from public view.
- Do not feed at peak hours when people are most likely to be in the area and see the cats.
- Discourage others from leaving handouts for the cats.
- If you provide a feeding station or shelter for the cats, make it as inconspicuous as possible by painting it to blend into the local area.

“**Cats are sleeping under my porch.**”
- Physically block or seal the location the cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice when the cats are not there.
- Provide shelters for the cats.

“**Cats are getting into my trash.**”
- Provide a regular food source at a set time and in an out-of-the-way location.
- Keep trash properly covered and secured.

“**Cats are hanging out in my yard.**”
- Be sure the cats are neutered.
- Use a repellent to keep cats out of the area.
- Do not feed birds on the ground.
- Put up a six-foot fence that comes right to the ground.

“**Cats are digging in my garden.**”
- Use a repellent to keep the cats out of the garden.
- Create a physical barrier to digging.
- Make an outdoor litter box in an acceptable place.

“**Cats are drinking from my swimming pool.**”
- Provide alternative water away from pool.

“**I can smell cat urine.**”
- Spray the area thoroughly with white vinegar or with products available in pet supply stores.
- Neuter the cats to reduce marking and make urine less pungent.

“**Cats are making a lot of noise, fighting, yowling, spraying, and breeding.**”
- Neuter cats to reduce hormones that cause these behaviors.

“**Cats are walking on my car.**”
- Purchase a car cover to protect the car from cat prints.
- Provide a table, create a platform in a tree, or provide a shelter cats can lie on.
- Move shelters and feeding stations away from the area where cars are parked.

“**The cats might have fleas.**”
- Have your veterinarian treat for fleas when the cats are spayed or neutered.
- Add Capstar to the cats’ food.
- Change the straw bedding material in the cats’ shelters regularly and use nontoxic flea eliminators.

“**I’m worried about our health and safety.**”
- Feral cats are naturally wary of people and will not approach humans they do not know. Feral cats will not attack anyone unless they are cornered.
- It’s always a good practice to avoid touching or cornering any animal you are not familiar with and wash your hands thoroughly after gardening.
- Studies show that feral cats and housecats share similar health status and do not pose a risk to public health.
- TNR involves vaccinating and neutering the cats and providing ongoing care to them, which keeps them healthy.

More resources: (1) [FAQ to share with neighbors concerned about outdoor cats](#); (2) [tips for managing conflicts over outdoor cats](#); (3) [solutions for common concerns about outdoor cats](#).