

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](#).