

## Facts & Fallacies About Free-Roaming Cats

There are outside cats in most neighborhoods and apartment complexes in San Antonio. Due to our warm climate they breed year-round here. Where did they come from? The answer is simple: people. People who do not fix their pets and allow them outside, and people who move away and leave their pets behind, are why we have so many outside cats.

The most effective way to control outside cat populations is a method called Trap – Neuter – Return (TNR). This is a proven method done in cities and countries around the world. Our city council has endorsed TNR to reduce San Antonio's overpopulation of cats and has given funds to the spay/neuter clinics in support. It can be difficult to get people to participate in a program to fix a problem they did not create. Residents who trap and fix neighborhood cats are performing a service for their community and should be thanked!

It all starts with one unspayed female. Tomcats will find her! That one cat and her offspring will create 95 cats in the span of one year. So the money spent to fix that one cat is actually a very good investment!

Outside cats only live an average of 5-7 years. During this time the cats will keep rodents and snakes away, as well as other stray cats. Neutered cats will still spray to mark their territory but the odor is not as strong. This marking keeps other cats, who are not fixed, out of their territory and out of your yards.

If you are a feeder, be a good neighbor and put a sandbox in the corner of your property to encourage the cats to use that instead of next door. There are very effective deterrents to keeping cats out of yards. One of the most effective is the Scarecrow. It's a motion-activated device that connects to your water hose and sprays out in all directions. Cats do not like to be sprayed with water and will quickly learn not to enter your yard.

### **There are 2 myths regarding outside cats that are important to understand:**

1. Stop feeding them and they will go away.

Cats do not leave their home territory. They just widen their search for food and can become more destructive in that search.

2. Remove them and that will solve the problem.

For a short while, yes. Then other cats will move in when they do not detect cats in the area. This is a phenomenon called the "vacuum effect". (you can Google this)

It is illegal to harm an animal. Pets have died when people were trying to poison outside cats. Please do not let this tragedy happen in your neighborhood.

The San Antonio Feral Cat Coalition is an all-volunteer group dedicated to humanely reducing the free-roaming cat population in our city. We help the public with TNR by providing the traps and subsidizing the spay/neuter clinics so the cost to you is only \$20 – which includes surgery & rabies vaccination. Let us help you be part of the solution, not the problem. **Call us at 210-877-9067.**

Email: [info@sanantonioferalcats.org](mailto:info@sanantonioferalcats.org) Website: [www.sanantonioferalcats.org](http://www.sanantonioferalcats.org)

**San Antonio Feral Cat Coalition**