



## **How to Prevent Cat Colonies**

Cats can reproduce quickly and one cat can produce offspring to form a cat colony in a very short time. Many people believe that a stray cat stands a much better chance of surviving on its own instead of being held in a shelter with no guarantee of being adopted. Too often people make the mistake of ignoring the abandoned/stray cat or of feeding it until the cat and its offspring become a problem. Instead of trying to rehome one cat shelters are left to determine the fate of many offspring that are born feral (wild) and are very hard to place in homes.

### **Step One: Quick Action**

If you know of a stray/abandoned cat in your area contact your local animal control or animal shelter to report the stray. The owner may have reported the cat missing. If it hasn't been reported make arrangements to bring the cat in or have it picked up. At peak season between spring and fall shelters are usually over crowded with cats and kittens and most shelters don't provide pick up service.

You may be asked to feed the cat until space is available and to provide transportation. Some stray cats are approachable and friendly but others are frightened and may react aggressively if picked up. Try putting food inside a cat carrier and get the cat used to being fed there. When it's time to bring the cat to the shelter you just close the door gently on her while she is eating. Some cats may be very wary and need to be live trapped. Arrangement will have to be made with your local animal control or shelter.

### **Step Two: Find out the Number of Cats in an Area**

If you already have a cat colony in your area then it's important to try and determine how many cats make up the colony. Capturing four cats out of a colony of twelve will be ineffective. The remaining cats will continue to breed and population numbers will continue to increase.

### **Step Three: Become a Volunteer**

No shelter has the man power to continually set up traps and monitor them. Traps must be watched to prevent a cat from injuring itself trying to escape the cage. They must also be watched to prevent the cat from being exposed to the elements for too long and to prevent further anxiety to the cat.

For this reason traps that are set out must be checked constantly and any animals caught should be quickly transported to a shelter/animal control. This requires more resources, people wise, than most shelters have. Offering your time to monitor traps and deliver animals to an animal shelters can make a huge difference.