



Fledglings and ground nesting birds are vulnerable to predation throughout the nesting season.

## SHARING COMMON GROUND

Most people care about cats and wildlife and want to protect them from harm. By working together, animal advocates, conservationists and the public can humanely resolve conflicts between people, cats and wildlife, and reduce and prevent free-roaming cat populations.

Outdoor cats may prey upon many wild animals, from songbirds to small mammals. This danger comes alongside existing challenges for native wildlife, such as habitat loss and fragmentation as well as climate change. But not all cats are hunters. Some never catch prey. A minority of cats—less than 15 percent—are mighty hunters and are responsible for most of the wildlife predation.

Reducing the number of cats living outside is best for all involved. That's going to take time, determination, innovation and collaboration. Simply removing cats from the environment is not effective or humane. Animal welfare groups work to address cat overpopulation, keep cats in the homes they have and find new homes when necessary. Reuniting pets with their owners, decreasing abandonment and euthanasia and expanding resources—such as accessible spay/neuter programs—are goals both cat advocates and conservationists can support. Focusing resources in areas with critical wildlife habitat and underserved communities can help us make a bigger impact. Read on for tips to help cats and wildlife in your community.

## Our Promise

**We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.**

Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. With our affiliates, we rescue and care for thousands of animals every year through our animal rescue team's work and other hands-on animal care services.

We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: a humane society. And we can't do it without you.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**



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DON BOX/FRIEND OF CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE (CCFAW); COURTESY OF NEIGHBORHOOD CATS

# Cats, wildlife and *you*



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LEFT: The tip of an outdoor cat's left ear is clipped during surgery to show he's been neutered and vaccinated.

BELOW: Well-managed community cat colonies and trap-neuter-return programs are the long-term solutions wild animals need.

wild animals may sneak into your house.

Position bird feeders at least 12 feet away from grass and shrubs, which can serve as good cat cover, or hang feeders on a wire strung at least 8 feet above the ground, between two trees that are at least 8 feet apart. Even better, consider replacing bird feeders, which concentrate feeding at one location, with native berry-producing shrubs and plants that host caterpillars and other insects that birds like to eat.

Drive cats away from bird feeders or nesting sites with a motion-activated product that sends out a burst of high-pitched ultrasonic vibrations, or install a motion-activated sprinkler to scare off any outdoor cats. Add plants that repel cats, such as the "scaredy cat" coleus or rue.

## GET INVOLVED WITH TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN AND MANAGED COMMUNITY CAT COLONIES

Effective TNR programs lead to fewer cats living outdoors. It is the long-term solution wild animals need. Lethal controls are both unpopular with the public and ineffective in reducing populations of community cats. While TNR is not the only tool needed or appropriate for every location, it is a vital one.

TNR decreases public health risks. Vaccinating community cats against rabies is a responsible preventive measure against the potential spread of the disease. Cats who are neutered and



## ENRICH YOUR CAT'S INDOOR LIFE WITH A TASTE OF NATURE

Cats can experience the outdoors and the thrill of the hunt without having a negative impact on wildlife.

Interactive toys and puzzle feeders emulate hunting and foraging behaviors while preventing boredom and obesity. Tall cat trees, window perches and pots of cat grass also bring nature a little closer.

A catio (cat patio) is an outdoor enclosure that allows cats access to the outdoors while keeping them—and wildlife—safe. Having safe—and supervised!—outdoor time can help kitties thrive in multi-cat households, resolve certain behavior issues and make for an overall happier cat. Learn all about catios at [animalsheltering.org/catios](http://animalsheltering.org/catios), and look out for garden catio tours in your own city.

Don't have room for a catio? Try training adventurous cats to walk on a well-fitting harness and leash.

## SET WILDLIFE UP FOR SUCCESS

Encourage neighbors who let their cats outdoors to keep their cats indoors, or at least reduce the amount of time the cats are out. Keep cats indoors at dawn and dusk when birds are most active and in spring when many wild species are nesting and nurturing their young. A CatBib™ or Birdsbesafe® collar can also reduce risks to wildlife, but these products aren't a substitute for keeping cats indoors.

Keep rabies vaccinations up to date. Even indoor cats can escape and come into contact with wildlife—or curious

vaccinated are healthier and less likely to spread diseases or parasites.

A ready-made army of volunteers is also on hand to assist with TNR, since the scope of the work is beyond what shelters can tackle alone. When colonies are actively managed, abandoned housecats and kittens can be removed and rehomed, preventing population growth. When feeding is regular, it can be done in a way that minimizes attracting wildlife while reducing potential harm.



## HOW TO HELP

- Keep pet cats inside or contained in an outdoor catio, or trying walking them on a harness and leash.
  - If you can no longer care for your cat, contact a local shelter or rescue. Resources to help you keep your cat or find her a new home may be available before you rehome the cat. Share resources so others are aware of their options. Abandoning a cat at a well-managed cat colony puts that colony in jeopardy and is not an appropriate place for a pet cat.
  - Support local shelters and cat rescue groups. Volunteer, donate and get involved!
  - Spay or neuter all cats to prevent more unwanted kittens from being born. A cat can become pregnant as early as 4 months of age! Help neighbors access affordable spay/neuter programs so they can be part of the solution, too.
  - Help a lost cat get home. Get tips from the Missing Pet Partnership at [missingpetpartnership.org](http://missingpetpartnership.org).
  - Keep cats' microchip information up to date. Fit cats with a collar and ID tag so that if they get lost, they can get back home more quickly.
  - Adopt, don't shop! Adopt from a shelter, or help a friendly stray cat find an indoor home. Support pet-friendly housing policies in your city so that more people can adopt cats.
  - Support humane cat management policies, including trap-neuter-return. Make sure outdoor cats are ear-tipped—a universal sign that cats are spayed/neutered and vaccinated.
- For more information on what to do about cats who live outdoors, visit [humanesociety.org/outdoorcats](http://humanesociety.org/outdoorcats).