



THE PROS AND CONS OF TRAP-NEUTER-RELEASE APPROACH

NOVEMBER 25, 2011 · BY [PETMEDS PRO](#) · [PETMEDS SPOTLIGHT](#) · [12 COMMENTS](#)

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There is a lot of controversy regarding animal rights and welfare. Animal advocates sometimes are pitted against each other when it comes to the best programs and approaches of how locals should control the population of free-roaming animals such as cats. One of the most controversial approaches is the Trap-Neuter-Release approach, or TNR.



Though it might seem that it is the best thing people could do to control the growing population of cats, short of euthanizing them, there are lots of other animal supporters who are against this method. There are debates on a national scale regarding the effectiveness of TNR in keeping the feral cat colonies under control, and its effects on wildlife.

What is Trap-Neuter-Release?

For those who have not heard about the Trap-Neuter-Release approach, this is a method of capturing, vaccinating, spaying or neutering and then releasing the animals back to where it has been captured. The animals are trapped in humane cages before any further action is done. Vaccinations are done, and a rabies vaccination is automatically included in the package.

When the animal tests positive for potent viruses, they are euthanized. It is important to keep a healthy feral community that would not endanger other members of the colony, or other animals in the surrounding environment. Neutering or spaying is important for population reduction. After recovering from the surgery, the cat is released back to where it was picked up. All this is done for a nominal fee.

TNR has become the alternative for massive euthanasia of feral cats, which other animal rights supporters consider inhumane. Also, massive euthanasia of feral felines is not practical, so local governments have resorted to TNR for a more natural control of the feral colony.

Breaking Down the Pros and Cons

The main reason supporters of TNR believe in this process is because they feel it is a practical solution. The ASPCA endorses TNR as “the only proven humane and effective method to manage feral cat colonies.” More and more cats are released on public lands due to the increasing population of domestic cats, and TNR is used to help reduce that population by spaying and neutering the reproductive adults.

However, there are a couple of studies that prove that TNR may be ineffective in controlling feral populations. The movement of cats from one colony to the other can limit the effectiveness of the whole program. Thus, the number of free-

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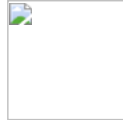
roaming cats in feral colonies does not decrease significantly over time. Another point is that feral cats pose a danger to wildlife, particularly to ground-feeding and ground-nesting animals. However, feral colonies do provide natural rodent control as well.

Attempts to completely eradicate feral cat populations usually fail due to the “vacuum” effect – other cats which have not been spayed or neutered will simply take their place. A lot of factors still need to be considered to determine how to best deal with free-roaming cats.

What do you think about Trap-Neuter-Release programs?

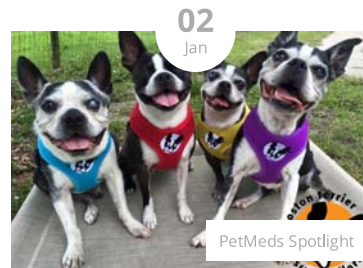
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CYNTHIA
NOVEMBER 25, 2011 AT 8:04 PM

I live in urban Chicago and do participate in a TNR program on occasion. From what I've seen I don't think it reduces the feral cat population in my area but it HAS reduced the rat population in my immediate area. I am also more comfortable knowing the stray animals in my area have a reduced chance of having a disease that could be passed on to my children.

KIM MASON
NOVEMBER 25, 2011 AT 8:20 PM

I belong to an organization as well as on my own, that trap spay and neuter felines, Although it is not the ideal situation to release them back in to the wild, it is better than euthanizing them, I take many ferals and rehabilitate them with good success in finding them homes, If the cats are captured and the kittens born in a household and socialized then adopted out, then that is a substantial decrease in the population that will become feral. Our animal rescue contacts me when they need help with ferals as many find it difficult to understand and handle them, I welcome the challenge and always try to remember that a distant relative was once someones house cat in most instances and the ignorance of people for not spaying and neutering has led to the overpopulation. Dumping and discarding of them to barns just because there is a good source of food hence mice, is not the answer. Stiffer laws and guidelines should be followed when purchasing or adopting a