

Cats & Wildlife - You Can Save 1,000's of Lives

It is our responsibility to protect and provide for our planet's wildlife.

- What's the problem?
- Why is this a problem?
- AWARE can help
- Want to learn more? [Free-Roaming Domestic Cats: What's the Problem?](#) Although humans are the #1 predator of wildlife, the #2 predator is unleashed by humans: the domestic cat.
- Many of these cats belong to you or your neighbor.
- Others are feral cats that are being trapped, neutered and released by well-meaning, but uninformed, cat lovers. 1. Cats are the only domestic pet that we allow to roam free in North America. We don't even allow horses or cattle to roam free without providing an enclosure to protect them. 2. We have been brought up to believe that cats must be free to catch bugs and small animals to be happy. This argument could be made for any domestic animal, but we do not allow any other domestic animal to have this same freedom because we are concerned for their safety. (back to top)
- Why is this a problem? 1. Each free-roaming cat kills 200-400 wild animals every year. These wild animals are yours to protect and enjoy. If your neighbor's pet came into your yard and killed one of your animals, you would justifiably be upset. This happens every day, probably in your yard. More information: <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/faqs.html#Predation> 2. The bacteria in a cat's mouth is deadly poison to small animals. If a small animal is attacked by a cat, then it likely has a puncture or scratch wound. That wound, no matter how minor, represents sure death to the animal if it is not put on antibiotics in the first 6 to 8 hours. If you rescue an animal from a cat, please assume that it has a wound and find a wildlife rehabilitator immediately. DO NOT release the animal back to the wild to suffer and die a slow, painful death. 3. By allowing our cats to roam free, we expose them to:
 - Being run over, poisoned or stolen
 - Being killed by others
 - Being a threat to others
 - Contracting a disease
 - Getting into fights with others and potentially injured
 Then, when something happens to them, we blame the car, the dog or the coyote -not ourselves. As pet owners, it is our responsibility to provide a safe haven for our pets. We need to take responsibility for the fate of our cats. 4. The killing doesn't stop when the cat is dead. Cat lovers who allow their animals to roam free and kill wildlife show no concern for their cat or our wildlife.
 - First, the owner's cat kills hundreds of wild animals each year.
 - When the cat is killed by a coyote or a fox, the pet owner blames the coyote or fox.
 - This causes a vigilante mentality within the neighborhood to rid the area of coyote and fox.
 - As a result, even more wild animals die. The coyote and fox are only doing what nature intended and should not be blamed. 5. Feral cat rescuers who trap, spay/neuter and release stop short of completing the process. It is wonderful that the rescuers care so much for these unwanted animals, but these rescuers need to think through the process. If they truly care about saving lives, then they would see that they are promoting the needless killing of hundreds of thousands of wild animals by re-releasing feral cats. These cats are not a part of the natural order and should not be allowed to kill our wildlife. Feral cats need to be caught, taken to shelters and adopted. If they are unable to be adopted, they need to go to a sanctuary. If no one can find the money to create sanctuaries, the remaining alternative is euthanasia. Unleashing them to kill our wildlife is not acceptable. Watch a video on cats and birds (back to top) AWARE can help You can protect your cat, wildlife, and extend your cat's life expectancy by 30%. Simply provide the same safeguards that you would for any other domestic pet.
 - First, construct an enclosure for your cat that will allow it to spend its entire life outside.
 - Then, attach the enclosure to your house with an overhead wire tunnel through a cat door into the house window.

This enclosure will allow your cat to enjoy wildlife without being able to kill for fun.

- Examples: Cat Safe Harbor, Purrfect Fence, Cat Enclosure Kit AWARE recommends that homeowners trap feral and free-roaming cats and take them to the local human society or animal control agency in your area. If your neighbor has free-roaming cats, please provide them with this article and let them know that you are taking the proactive measure of trapping. Trapping of coyotes and foxes is not the answer. Virtually every scientific study on this issue has concluded that trapping only increases the population because the remaining members of the species over breed to fill the gap that was created. (back to top) Want to learn more?
 - Watch a video on cats and birds
 - Cats, Birds, and You (American Bird Conservancy)
 - Trap, Neuter, Release - Bad for cats, bad for birds (American Bird Conservancy)
 - Cat Indoor Campaign (American Bird Conservancy)
 - Reducing Threats from Cats (Audubon Society)
 - Protecting cats and wildlife (Humane Society)
 - Keep your cat happy indoors (Humane Society)

- Outdoor cat vs. Indoor cat (Animal Planet)
- How to make an outdoor cat an indoor cat (American Bird Conservancy)
- Fox and Coyote Problems
- AWARE's Tips for Coexistence (back to top) We must first AGREE TO PRESERVE the earth if we hope to LIVE TO DISAGREE on its use.