

The best way to keep cats healthy and protect wildlife and human health is to keep cats indoors.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OUTDOOR CAT A HAPPY INDOOR CAT*

* Although it takes patience, an outdoor cat can become a perfectly content indoor pet. Whether you make the transition gradually or all at once, the key is to provide lots of attention and stimulation while the cat is indoors.

* Share periods of special play time to substitute for outside excursions.

* Offer interesting toys, especially those which are interactive. Some cats enjoy searching for toys; they also enjoy ping pong balls, paper bags and cardboard boxes.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO

* Cat condos offer interesting places to lounge, play and scratch. Also provide scratching posts, corrugated cardboard or sisal rope and praise your cat for using them.

* Provide fresh greens for safe grazing as an alternative to damaging house plants.

* You might wish to provide an outdoor covered enclosure to minimize the dangers of being outside. Check out the following products:

Cat Enclosure Kit, www.edpets.com

Kitty Walk, www.midnightpass.com

SafeCat Outdoor Enclosure, www.just4cats.com

* Trim your cat's claws every one to two weeks to minimize damage to furniture.

* Provide one litter pan per cat and scoop the litter pan at least once daily.

* *Cats Indoors!* and *The American Bird Conservancy*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

* Keep your cat indoors and encourage others to do the same. If you are unwilling to keep your cat indoors, do not attract birds to your yard with feeders, bird houses or birdbaths.

* Do not rely on bells or declawing to prevent successful hunting; they are largely ineffectual. Declawed cats can bat prey to the ground and bite it. Once bitten, the prey will likely die.

* Spay or neuter your cat, and don't feed other outdoor cats. Feeding will not diminish hunting and will tend to form high densities of cats which adversely impact wildlife.

* Never abandon unwanted cats. Instead, take them to your local animal shelter to give them the best possible chance of adoption into loving, lifelong homes.

"Please do not allow the prospect of euthanasia to deter you from trapping cats. If you leave them where they are, they will almost certainly die a painful death. A painless injection is far kinder than any fate that feral cats will meet if left to survive on their own."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Open Admission Shelters

These facilities will receive homeless animals.

Contra Costa County Animal Services (East)
4800 Imhoff Way, Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 335-8300

Contra Costa County Animal Services (West)
910 San Pablo Ave., Pinole, CA 94564
(510) 374-3966

Antioch Animal Services
300 L Street, Antioch, CA 94509
(925) 779-6989



Mount Diablo Audubon Society

P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php



**WE
LOVE
CATS!**



GLENTERKE PHOTO

and Birds, too!

An important message from

Mount Diablo Audubon Society

THE GREAT OUTDOORS IS NO PLACE FOR CATS

According to the American Bird Conservancy, outdoor cats—even well-cared-for cats—face an extraordinary array of dangers:

- * Cats kill millions of cats each year in the US and maim countless others.
- * Cats find poisonous chemicals on treated lawns, in rat/mice bait and in antifreeze.
- * Outdoor cats are injured or killed by free-roaming dogs, wildlife and other cats, and contract fatal diseases transmitted by bites and scratches from infected animals.
- * Animal control agencies report situations where cats have been burned, stabbed or otherwise hurt by malicious humans.
- * Cats are caught in traps set for other animals and may be injured or suffer before being released.
- * Unaltered outdoor cats are the main source of overpopulation. In warm climates such as ours, a female cat can have three litters per year with 4 to 6 kittens per litter, causing millions of unwanted cats to be euthanized at animal shelters each year. Dealing with this preventable tragedy costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year.
- * According to The Humane Society of the United States, free-roaming cats typically live less than five years, whereas cats kept exclusively indoors can live to 17 or more years of age.

CATS AND DISEASE

- * Unvaccinated cats can transmit diseases to other cats, native wildlife and humans. Cats are the domestic animal most frequently reported to be rabid to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cats are also suspected of spreading fatal feline diseases to native wild cats such as the mountain lion and bobcat.
- * Plague is transmitted primarily by wild rodent fleas which can infect cats. In recent years, almost all human cases of pneumonic plague have been linked to domestic cats.
- * Toxoplasmosis is caused by a tiny parasite which resides in cats' intestinal tracts and is expelled in the feces. If contracted by a pregnant woman in her first trimester, the disease can cause abortion of the fetus or blindness, retardation or seizures in the newborn.

CATS AND WILDLIFE

Recent scientific studies estimate that in the US each year outdoor cats kill 1.4–3.7 billion birds and up to 20 billion mammals, reptiles and amphibians. On average, each cat kills from two to four birds each month.

(The impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States, Scott R. Loss, Tom Will & Peter P. Marra, Nature Communications, January 2013).

Cats Are **Not** a Natural Part of Ecosystems

- * Descended from European and African wild cats and domesticated in Egypt more than 4,000 years ago, cats may be the most widespread and efficient predator in the world.
- * Cats are hard-wired to hunt. Despite beliefs to the contrary, even well-fed cats hunt and kill wildlife. Birds that nest or feed on the ground, such as California Quail, are the most susceptible to cat predation, as are the nestlings and fledglings of many other bird species.
- * Most birds that seem to escape don't survive cat attacks. Cats carry many types of bacteria and viruses in their mouths. A victim that looks perfectly healthy may die from internal hemorrhaging or injury to vital organs.

It's Our Job to Protect Wildlife



BETH BRANTHAVER PHOTO

- * California Quail, our state bird, has seen a decline in population in recent years. Why? One major factor is an increased number of predators that prey on the quail's young and eggs. Well-meaning visitors to our city and regional parks regularly feed feral cats, raccoons, foxes and other animals, but this extra food brings in more predators and allows the park to artificially support more predators that then turn to other local wildlife as an additional food source.

CAT COLONIES

- * While seemingly humane, “managed” cat colonies are the wrong solution. They become a dumping ground for unwanted cats and a reservoir for diseases, some of which pose a serious threat to human health. The Trap-Neuter-Release strategy has not been shown to either reduce the cat population problem or prevent predation on wildlife.
- * Cats can have significant impacts on local wildlife populations, especially in habitat “islands” such as parks and wildlife refuges. Well-meaning visitors regularly feed stray (lost or abandoned) or feral cats (descendants of strays living in the wild), but this food also attracts other wildlife and supports an artificially high number of predators which can decimate sensitive species.

CATS INDOORS!

Safer for Cats

Safer for Birds



LET'S KEEP OUR PETS

AND WILDLIFE SAFE!