

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR) AND COLONY CARE



INDIANAPOLIS ANIMAL
CARE SERVICES



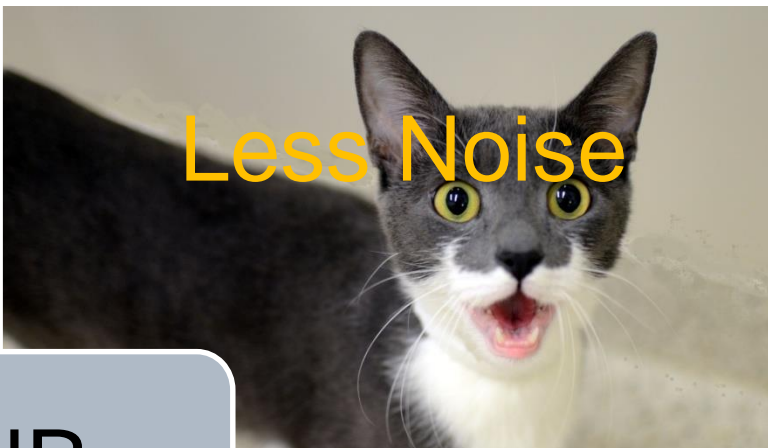
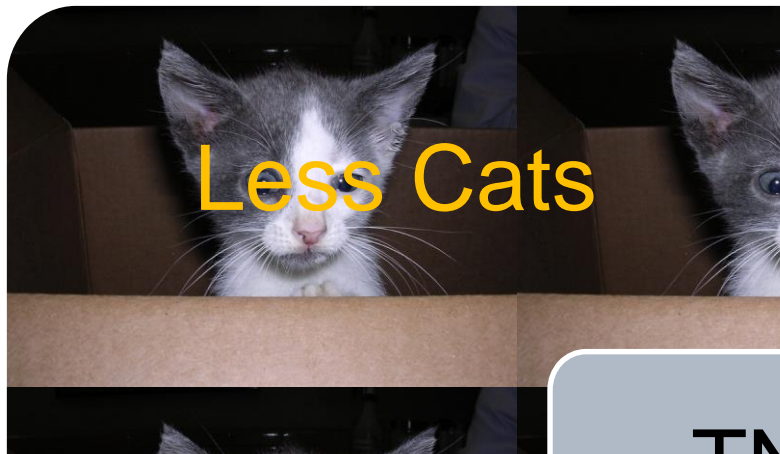
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In this workshop, you will...

- Learn about feral cats, their history and behavior
- Learn the steps of humane trapping & post-surgery care
- Practice using a box trap and trap divider
- Learn the basics of caring for a cat colony
- Learn how to build good relationships with neighbors and help the cats be good neighbors
- Gain the information you need to plan your own TNR project

Summary: Benefits of TNR



TNR



...and they end up healthier

Feral vs. Stray Cats

(Pages 54-56 in the book)

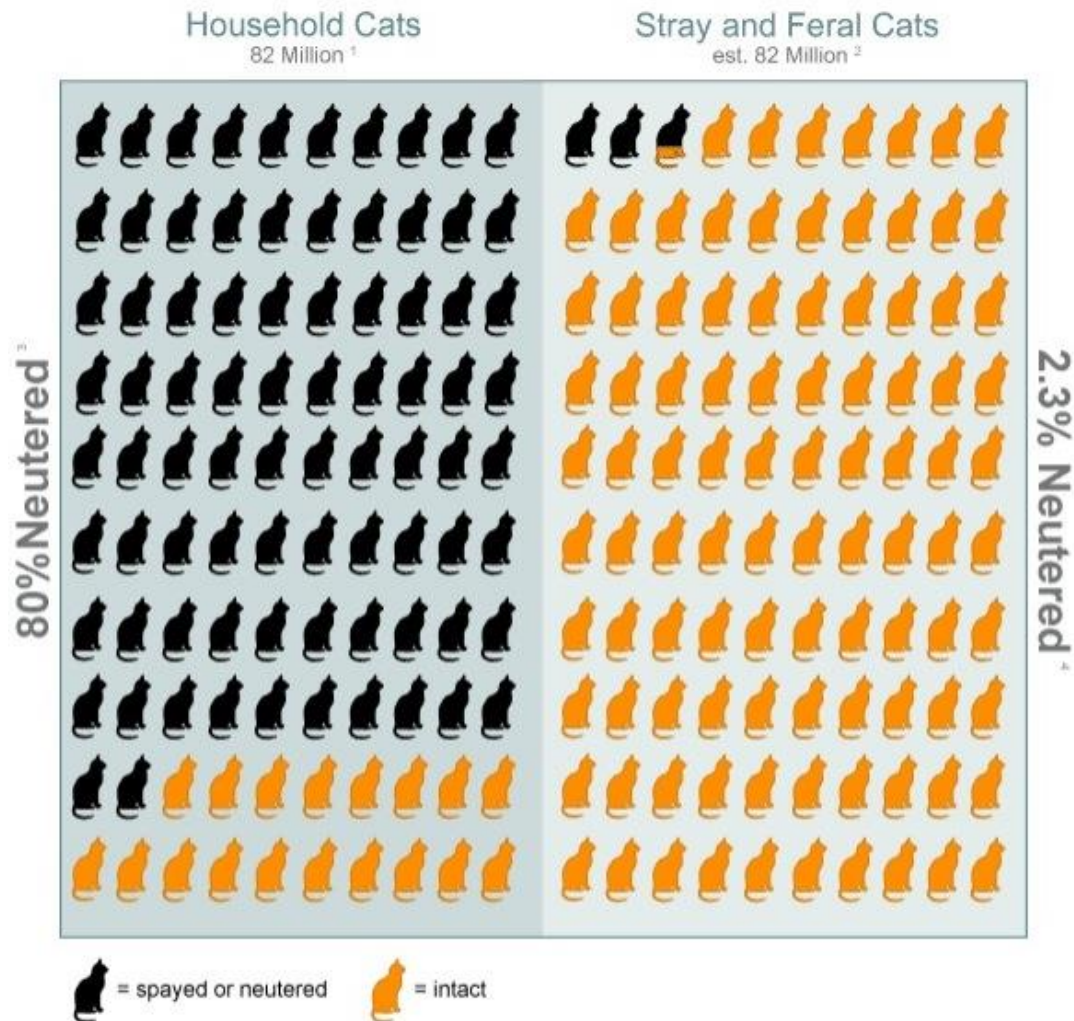
STRAY	FERAL
May approach people, houses, porches, or cars	Will not approach and will likely seek hiding places to avoid people
May be vocal, meow, or “answer” your voice	Unlikely to meow, beg, or purr
Will be visible primarily during the daytime	More likely to be nocturnal; occasionally out during the day
Will probably be dirty or disheveled.	Will probably have a clean, well-kept coat (unless ill or injured).
Less likely to have an eartip	Will likely have an eartip if neutered as part of a TNR program

Where do community cats come from?

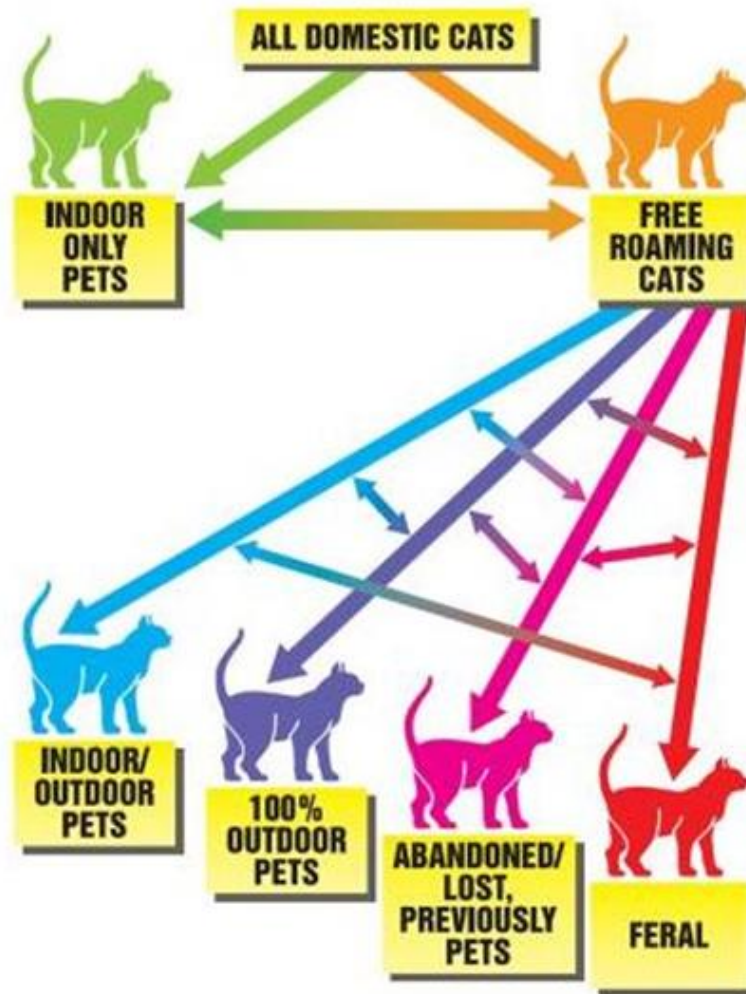
- Female cats can become pregnant at 4-5 months of age
- Abandoned or lost pet cats are often intact
- Conservative estimate: One unspayed female = 100 to 400 community cats in 7 years.
 - If you consider the grandchildren and great grandchildren, etc. the estimate is going to be hundreds of thousands
- Nationwide: 80% of owned cats neutered; 3% of community cats neutered.

Where do community cats come from?

Spay/Neuter Status of U.S. Cat Population



Where do community cats come from?



The Cause for “Kitten Season”

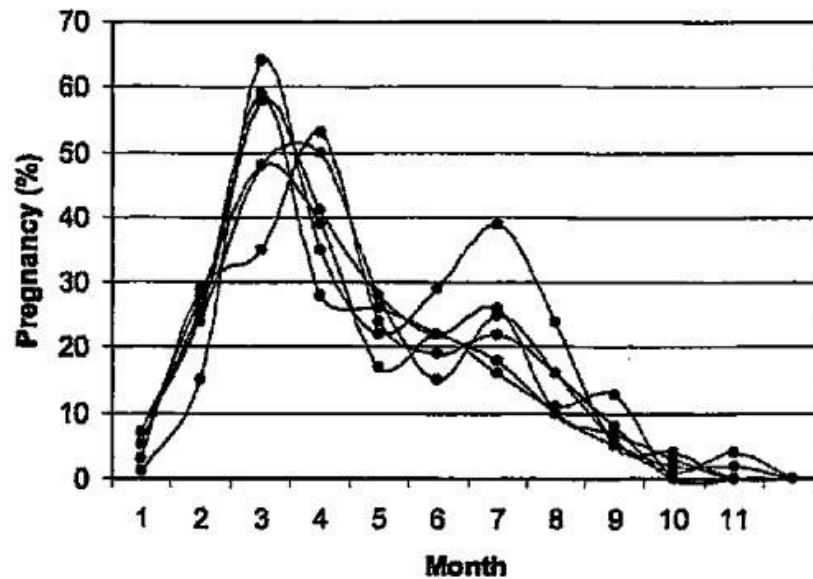
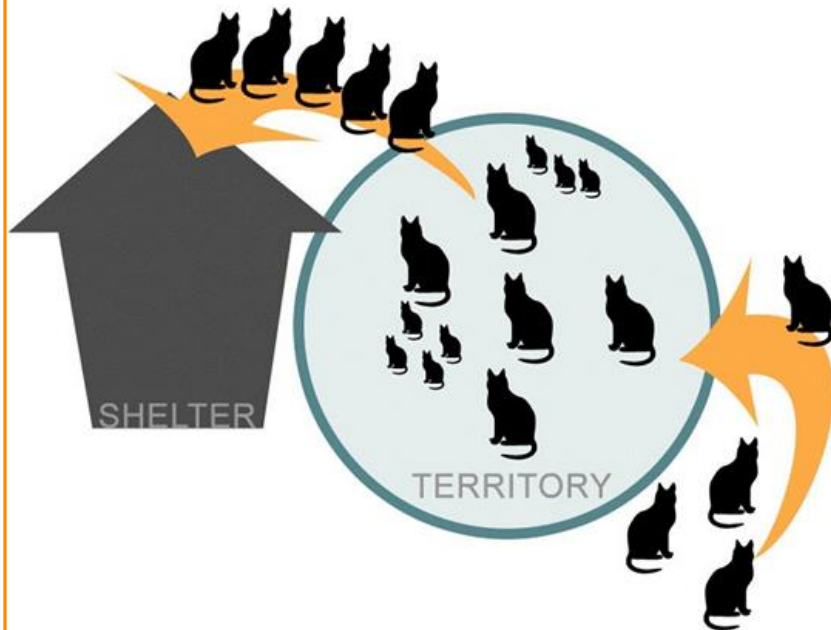


Figure 23.1. Pregnancy is highly seasonal in cats and is correlated with day length. Data collected from more than 12,000 feral cats presented for sterilization in San Diego, California, during 1995–2000 demonstrate synchronization of pregnancies early each year, followed by a second, smaller peak of pregnancies in the summer.

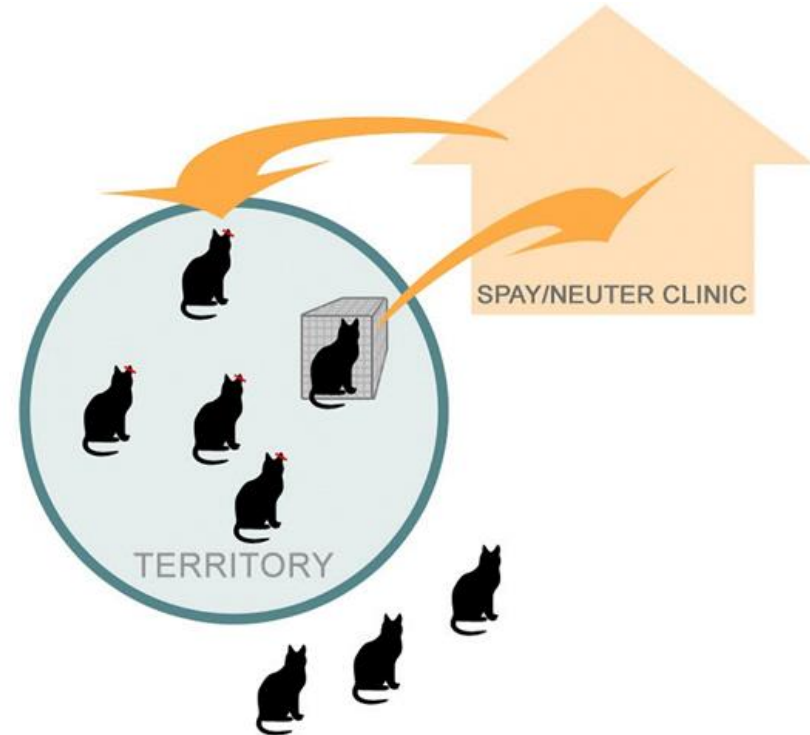
Taking them to the shelter won't help you or the cats

- Feral cats cannot be adopted into human homes, so when they are brought to a shelter they are often killed.
 - Sometimes they are placed in barn homes but that doesn't stop the vacuum effect...
- Trap-and-kill, trap-and-relocate policies create a vacuum. New, unneutered cats will move into the territory and breed to form a new colony: the **Vacuum Effect**.

Vacuum Effect



Catch and Kill
or catch and rehome



Trap-Neuter-Return

The Steps of TNR

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Trapping
3. Going to the Vet
4. Post-Surgery Care
5. Returning Cats
6. Ongoing Colony Care & Neighbor Relations



Photo by Rob Day

Video: Step-by-Step Guide to TNR

<https://youtu.be/larsSTLUdTw>

Create a Plan

(Pages 3-9 in the book)



- ✓ Count and assess the cats
- ✓ Line up a clinic
- ✓ Set up a holding & recovery area
- ✓ Obtain equipment
- ✓ Pay attention to the weather
- ✓ Coordinate with caretakers
- ✓ Talk to the neighbors
- ✓ Regular feeding schedule
- ✓ Withhold food for 24 hours before trapping
- ✓ Confirm the right transportation
- ✓ Get a trapping buddy
- ✓ Contingency plans
(kittens; nursing, pregnant, ill, injured, or friendly cats)

TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Nursing Mothers *(p. 74)*

- Spay and release ASAP (Kittens survive 36 hrs+ without milk)
 - Clinic will contact caretaker/trapper to alert of nursing cats
- Selectively trap around mom, trap her & kittens after weaning



TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Nursing cats

- If a cat is determined to be a nursing mother at the time of her spay, IndyHumane will contact the trapper/caretaker to arrange for her to go home that evening.
 - She will be given reversal and fluids to help her wake up more quickly
 - She can be released that evening and we often see that she shows up with her kittens in a few weeks

TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Pregnant Cats *(p. 75)*

- Spaying recommended; it may be your only chance
- Confining a pregnant/nursing feral cat is stressful for her, you, and possibly harmful to the kittens



TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Kittens

- Younger than 4 weeks – need to stay with mom
 - Option A: Be sure to catch EVERYONE
 - Option B: Do not trap and leave them alone
 - If mom is accidentally trapped, work on catching the kittens.

DO NOT RELEASE



TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Kittens

- Between 4-8 weeks- can be socialized and adopted out. Contact foster@indyhumane.org or iacssurrender@indy.gov to schedule a time to bring them.
- Older than 8 weeks- TNR
 - It is difficult to socialize kittens after 8 weeks of age and is not 100% successful.
- Always trap, never grab kittens



TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN?



Kittens are adorable at any age, but did you know that figuring out how old a kitten is can help determine what sort of care they need? It can be tricky to tell, but our at-a-glance kitten progression chart, featuring Darling the kitten, is here to help you out!



NEWBORN

When kittens are first born they are completely helpless—their **eyes are closed**, their **ears are folded**, and they can't stand, keep themselves warm, eliminate waste, or eat on their own. They rely on mom for everything!



ONE WEEK

Darling is starting to become **more aware of his surroundings**! At about seven days old, a kitten's ears will unfold and their eyes may start to open.



TWO WEEKS

Look at those blue peepers! Darling's **eyes are fully open**, and he is taking his **first wobbly steps**. Kittens this age start interacting more with each other, but still need mom.



THREE WEEKS

Darling's now playing with his siblings and getting more mobile. You should be able to **tell if kittens are boys or girls**. You can start providing a **litter box** and **wet food**.



FOUR WEEKS

Look how much Darling has grown! At four weeks kittens are **sturdy on their feet** and playing with each other, toys, and people.



FIVE WEEKS

Get ready for a lot of fun! Darling is now full of energy and **plays exuberantly**. **Interacting with people** is important for kittens at this age. Darling is developing lots of personality!



SIX WEEKS

Every day Darling is getting more sure of himself through socialization and play. He's **using the litter box** and **eating cat food**—though he still visits mom for snacks and comfort.



SEVEN WEEKS

Darling is **almost fully weaned**, and continues to play and learn. Being **introduced to new people, places** in the home, and **other pets** is an important part of socialization.



EIGHT WEEKS

Two pounds! Darling now **weighs enough to be neutered**. He's also getting more skilled and adventurous. Darling is learning so much from his mom, siblings, and human caregiver.



NINE WEEKS

Looking pretty grown-up, Darling! At this age kittens are behaving and using their body language like adult cats. Darling is **eating all solid food**, and his eyes have gone from blue to yellow.



TEN WEEKS

Darling is fully weaned, neutered, and—because he was socialized to people—**ready for his loving adoptive home**. They grow up so fast!

Get even more details (and cute pics!) with our week-by-week kitten progression resource at

alleycat.org/KittenProgression

TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Ill or Injured Cats *(pp. 38 - 41)*



- Plan for care and/or decisions
 - These cats often need a foster for 1-4 weeks.
 - Dog crates make perfect temporary holding spaces.
 - Veterinarians will help determine if treatment will maintain quality of life
- If you are working with another local or program, please contact them about the illness or injury to verify services.
- In Indianapolis email info@indyneighborhoodcats.org and we will direct you to the best resource for that specific situation.

TNR Tips: Contingency Plans

(See handbook)

Friendly Cats (p. 52)



- Will you try to find homes?
 - Shelters are often bursting at the seams with cats and kittens March-November
 - If a cat is comfortable living outside, TNR is ideal
- Can always bring them in off the street later
- Intro to Taylor Robey from IACS on Shelter – Neuter – Return in Indy.

The Steps of Trapping

- ✓ Set up and prepare for trapping
- ✓ Label traps; line trap bottoms if desired
- ✓ Place traps carefully in usual feeding spots
- ✓ Bait traps
- ✓ Set traps
- ✓ Keep track of traps at all times
- ✓ Get away and stay quiet
- ✓ Cover trapped cats quickly
- ✓ Selective trapping and hard-to-trap cats
- ✓ Count traps
- ✓ Safe transport

The Drop Trap

Can be helpful for the trap-savvy cats or if you are only trying to catch a specific cat

https://youtu.be/rid_GAVu1rM



The Box Trap and Bottle Trick

Helpful if you are only trying to catch a specific cat

<https://youtu.be/SYhP7ONUF8>



Pre-Surgical Care

(Pages 15-17 in the book)

- 1 – 3 days before surgery
- Keep cats in covered traps
- Line with clean newspaper
- Feed wet food & change newspaper 2x daily
- *Always* use a trap divider to feed & clean – 2 dividers is best
- Use trap cover to get the cat to move to other end of trap
- May need to nudge a cat with the divider, but never touch the cat!
- Place food & water after cleaning to minimize spillage
- Remove all food the night before surgery per vet's instructions
 - Kittens <4 months may eat within a few hours of surgery
- At the end of your shift, make sure all traps are fastened securely!



Special Case: Two Cats in One Trap

(Page 16 in the book)



- Cover the trap
- Line new trap up w/first trap with sliding doors touching
- Ensure traps won't separate
- Cover the new trap
- Open the doors of both traps
- Lift cover off the front of the first trap
- Close doors as soon as the cat enters the new trap
- Lock doors of both traps
- Remove the divider & cover the first trap

Taking Cats to the Vet or Clinic

- Reconfirm what the vet will be doing:
 - Sterilization
 - Vaccination (Rabies and FVRCP)
 - Left ear-tipping
- Confirm that dissolvable sutures will be used
- Confirm special requests in writing
- Can they provide medical treatment for a special case?
- Confirm who to contact if surgical complications occur later

Post-Surgery Care and Returning Cats *(Pages 18-20 in the book)*

- **Best Practice is to hold the cat overnight.**
- Cats can be returned to colony 24 hours after surgery
 - In cases of complicated surgery or inclement weather, you may consider holding cats indoors for a longer time – discuss with clinic to see what is recommended
- Make a plan to keep cat safe indoors.
 - Must be indoors. (Shed, bathroom, basement, spare room, laundry room, mud room etc.)
- Do a complete check when the cats return from the clinic
- Release in the same location where cats were trapped
 - Give cats 3-5 minutes to adjust prior to opening the trap
 - “Aim” them in the direction that is away from roads

Thoroughly Clean & Disinfect the Equipment

(Page 21 in the book)

- A two-step process
- Scrub food, paper, & feces from trap
- Disinfect with 1:10 bleach/water solution
- Leave on traps for 10 min, then rinse
- New alternatives: Accel (5 min.) or germicidal bleach
- Never mix or spray cleaning products near cats



Colony Care Guidelines

1. Ensure TNR for all cats in colony.
2. Provide adequate food and water for the cats on a daily basis, year-round, using techniques to minimize nuisance.
3. Provide adequate shelter for cats in the colony using techniques to minimize nuisance.
4. Ensure that any cats that are injured or ill receive prompt treatment.
5. Maintain veterinary records for all colony cats.
6. Make efforts to place tame colony cats with adoption groups.
7. If you are moving or can no longer adequately care for your colony, contact a community cat program as soon as possible so that alternate caretaker(s) can be identified.
8. Be a good steward for the cats. Use humane techniques to discourage from areas where they are not welcome.
9. Report acts of neglect, cruelty, abandonment or abuse directed against any cat to the Mayor's Action Center 317-327-4622

Community Relations

(Pages 45-51 in the book)

- Educate Your Neighbors
- Preventive Measures
 - Performing TNR is a good start
 - Responsible feeding prevents many complaints
- Humane deterrents
 - Motion-activated sprinklers and ultrasonic deterrents
 - Covering sandboxes when not in use
 - More ideas are available online (search on “humane feline deterrents”)
- Providing shelter for cats deters “trespassing”
- Provide litterboxes
- Maintain colony records
- Troubleshooting

Q&A





**INDIANAPOLIS ANIMAL
CARE SERVICES**

communitycats@indy.gov

<https://www.indy.gov/activity/community-cat-program>



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www.indyneighborhoodcats.org