

**PRESS RELEASE
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**OCTOBER 16 IS NATIONAL FERAL CAT DAY
Capital Area Humane Society promotes National Feral Cat Day with additional Feral Fix days**

(Columbus, OH) – The number of stray, feral and unwanted cats in our community is staggering – an estimated one million in Franklin County alone. Last year, more than 10,000 cats were brought to the non-profit Capital Area Humane Society because there was no place else for them to go. The single most important thing we can do for cats is to have them spayed or neutered. Thousands of cats are euthanized each year in our community because there are not enough homes.

The Capital Area Humane Society provides support to feral cat caregivers through its Feral Fix Program. This program provides 20 – 25 spay or neuter surgeries at no cost for feral cats each week as a part of established TNR (Trap, Neuter & Return) programs throughout central Ohio. In celebration of National Feral Cat Day, the Humane Society is expanding its surgical services for feral cats by providing three days of spay and neuter services for caregivers.

“Trap, Neuter and Return is the only humane, effective method to manage the outdoor cat populations in our community. TNR is a community solution to a community issue and we are proud to support the work of community feral cat caregivers through the Feral Fix Program,” said Jodi Lytle Buckman, Executive Director of the Capital Area Humane Society.

Trapped ferals are dropped off by their caregivers in the morning and picked later that same day after the cat has recovered from the surgery. In addition to the spay or neuter surgery, feral cats receive vaccinations, flea control medication and an ear tip for future identification. For a fee, caregivers can request that symptomatic cats be tested for feline leukemia (Feleuk) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

Surgery services will be provided by the Capital Area Humane Society in partnership with The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Senior veterinary students complete a two-week surgery rotation at the Humane Society. This program provides students with practical surgical and medical experience, exposure to a community-based organization and helps expand the Humane Society’s capacity to make a difference in the lives of animals in need.

The Capital Area Humane Society, a non-profit animal welfare organization founded in 1883, provides programs and services for animals and people in Central Ohio. It is our mission to fight animal cruelty, help animals in need and advocate for their well-being. More than 95 percent of our funding is provided by donations and fees for services, we are not a government agency and we do not receive operating support from national organizations. For more information about the Capital Area Humane Society, visit www.cahs-pets.org.

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* Note: All of these surgery slots are full and not open to the public.

FERAL CAT FACTS

What is the difference between a stray cat and a feral cat?

A stray cat is a domestic cat that has been abandoned or has strayed from home and become lost. A feral cat is born and raised outside with little or no human contact or is a stray that has lived outside long enough to revert to a wild state. Adult feral cats usually cannot be tamed and are most content living outside. Feral kittens up to eight or ten weeks of age, on the other hand, can often be tamed and placed in homes.

The average life span of a male feral cat that survives beyond kittenhood is typically less than 2 years, while a domestic housecat lives an average of 12 – 16 years. Feral cats may live alone, but are usually found in groups called colonies. Each colony anchors around a predominant food source. The more bountiful the food, water and shelter source, the larger the colony. The denser the food sources, the denser the colonies. A large apartment complex, with several dumpster locations, will likely have several separate colonies, as will a row of fast food restaurants.

A pair of breeding cats, which can have two or more litters per year, can exponentially produce 420,000 offspring over a seven-year period

What is Trap, Neuter & Return?

Trap/neuter/return, commonly referred to as "TNR," is the only method proven to be humane and effective at controlling feral cat population growth. Using this technique, all the feral cats in a colony are trapped, neutered and then returned to their territory where caretakers provide them with regular food and shelter.

TNR has many advantages. It immediately stabilizes the size of the colony by eliminating new litters. The nuisance behavior often associated with feral cats is dramatically reduced; including the yowling and fighting that come with mating activity and the odor of unneutered males spraying to mark their territory. The returned colony also guards its territory, preventing unneutered cats from moving in and beginning the cycle of overpopulation and problem behavior anew. Particularly in urban areas, the cats continue to provide natural rodent control.

Another significant advantage to TNR is that, when practiced on a large scale, it lessens the number of kittens and cats flowing into local shelters. This results in lower euthanasia rates and the increased adoption of cats already in the shelters.

What is the Capital Area Humane Society's Feral Fix program?

The Capital Area Humane Society's Feral Fix Program is designed to support the great work of responsible feral cat caregivers by providing access to spay and neuter services for ferals involved in TNR programs throughout Central Ohio. The Capital Area Humane Society is deeply committed to supporting the work of feral cat caregivers in the community. We believe that responsible feral cat colony management is the most humane response to the estimated hundreds of thousands of feral cats living in communities throughout our community. Though the Capital Area Humane Society lacks the resources necessary to actively manage feral cat colonies directly, we support colony management by providing access to spay and neuter services.