

**Endangered and Nongame
Species Program
experiences with feral cat
management in New Jersey
&
What does New Jersey's Wildlife
Action Plan say about feral cats?**

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Beaches with losses of endangered beach nesting birds to cats:

- Ocean City (different sections over time)
- U.S.C.G. Training Center
- U.S.C.G. L.S.U. (2-mile beach)
- Sandy Hook
- Avalon
- Townsends Inlet

More recently, also: Monmouth Beach

- Sea Bright
- North Wildwood
- Stone Harbor
- Seaview Harbor Marina

FROM TASK FORCE REPORT:

- In order to effectively control the population of feral and stray cats living outdoors, it is important to take immediate steps to curtail the reproduction of these cats. The Task Force recommends that governments, groups and individuals be permitted and encouraged to practice “trap, neuter, vaccinate, return and monitor” (hereinafter “TNR” for short) **pursuant to standards that should be established by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and community groups and individuals with an interest in cats and/or threatened or endangered species.** Local governments should consider utilizing this method where appropriate (not all locations or circumstances will be conducive to TNR) and all participants should be apprised of the guidelines to be devised by the Department.

New Jersey Wildlife Action Plan

From Statewide “Threats” section

- Free-roaming and feral house cats kill millions of birds, small mammals and reptiles each year in the United States. Feral cat “colonies” contribute to the problem of anthropogenic (caused by man) wildlife mortality and can pose a serious threat to local wildlife populations. Policies and local ordinances that seek to address the public health, nuisance and animal welfare concerns of free-roaming and feral cats must consider and effectively address impacts to wildlife.

- Burgeoning predator populations, especially of species that are human-subsidized and/or that are accidentally or purposefully provisioned by people (e.g., **feral cats**, red foxes, crow species, gull species, raccoons, and skunks), severely impair nesting success and productivity of beach-nesting birds, colonial waterbirds, northern diamondback terrapins, freshwater mussels, songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.
- Large wetlands become surrounded by development and become degraded non-point source pollution, impacts from human disturbance, invasive/introduced mammalian and avian predators, **including housecats**.

SWAP Public comments re. cats

1. Dept. of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Office of Animal Welfare has jurisdiction over feral cats...not DEP. Statute: NJSA 8:23A-1.10
2. Statute also requires trap and containment of 7 days in a shelter...if DFW approves "trap & kill" method, DFW will incur a great cost as they will have to abide by this statute.
3. DHSS should be included as partners in TNR/ feral cat issues including public outreach.
4. DEP supports TNR.
5. Opposes plan on issues of being anti-TNR...wants all references to such removed from WAP.
6. Opposes WAP on issue of banning feeding of feral cat colonies.
7. Opposes WAP on issue of banning TNR programs.
8. Opposes WAP on issue of supporting trap and kill programs.
9. Opposes any anti-feral cat colony statements/ goals/ actions.
10. TNR works if developed properly & includes sterilization of feral cat colonies.
11. DFW should assist TNR managers.
12. State should create mandatory spay/neuter programs.
13. State needs improved enforcement of current abandonment laws.
14. Target TNR in urban areas or less "wildlife sensitive" areas.
15. Advocate private/non-profit support (\$\$\$) for TNR programs.
16. State needs to improve funds for spay/ neuter assistance program.

SWAP Public comments re. cats

18. Change the potential partners in the WAP to include DHSS, Animal Protection Institute, Stray Catz, Inc., and shelters.
19. WAP identifies American Bird Conservancy, Cat Indoors, and NJ Audubon Society as partners regarding feral cat issues & outreach, but none of these are considered experts in the field re: feral cats and this presents a skewed view of the feral cat issue. [We] recommend partnership with DHSS's Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) and believe this would be the most effective partnership as OAW meets w/ organizations on "both sides" of the issue.
20. Recruit volunteers to assist in managing feral cat colonies.
21. "Cat sanctuaries" are not plausible & are deemed inhumane. (per Alley Cat Allies)
22. Public outreach must be a collaborative partnership & effort between DFW, shelters, rescue centers, & other feline-related organizations.
23. Feral cats vs. free-roaming pet cats can not be distinguished...pets will be killed.
24. Tax credits should be given to cat sanctuaries & barn cat owners who spay/ neuter & care for their cats.
25. Encourage the adoption of feral cats when they can be domesticated.
26. In extreme cases, encourage & provide infrastructure to transport feral cats to a sanctuary or barn.
27. WAP: pg. 16 – statement re: "Free-roaming house cats kill millions..." is about the nation...the NJ WAP should identify a figure that refers to NJ only and specifically with regards to the number of species of conservation concern that are killed. Please revise as such.

SWAP Public comments re. cats

28. WAP does not provide any literature citations that support the argument that free-roaming cats kill “millions of birds, small mammals and reptiles each year in the United States.” Studies that have been conducted used small study sets in isolated areas and then applied the results across the town, state, country, etc.
29. Partnership with NJAS and Burlington County Feral Cats Initiative to develop a model within the county for the successes of the TNR program and feral cat colony management. Why can't this be done throughout the state? OR at least allow counties/ municipalities to make decision.
30. Traps used today (legholds, Conibears, and snares) are inhumane and kill non-target (including E/T) species.

Statewide Conservation Goals and Strategies

Reducing the impacts on native wildlife of subsidized predators such as raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) ^{No change} **and free-roaming “owned” and feral cats** will require the concerted effort of many government and non-government agencies, but must commence with an aggressive and thoughtful public outreach campaign. Such a campaign should be developed via the collaboration of wildlife biologists, the veterinary community, environmental educators and representatives from local and county animal shelters and advocacy groups.

- **a. Conservation Goals**
- Reduce impact on wildlife populations of subsidized predator populations, including free-roaming and feral cats.

Statewide strategies:

- Educate the public about the negative impacts of free-roaming cats (“owned” and feral) on New Jersey’s native wildlife through public service announcements, brochures, public presentations, etc. These materials should be grounded in, and clearly cite, current research on the impacts of cats on wildlife.
- Provide educational materials at all public and non-government organization natural land areas.
- Encourage **research** to develop better information on the impacts of feral and free-roaming cats on native wildlife populations.
- *Educate the public about the negative impacts of free-roaming cats (“owned” and feral) on New Jersey’s native wildlife and encourage responsible cat ownership and care through public service announcements, brochures, public presentations, etc.*
- Provide educational materials at all public and non-government organization natural land areas.
- *Develop and support research to provide better information on the impacts of feral and free-roaming cats on native wildlife populations.*
- Distribute Cats Indoors brochures and available informational material on the hazards of feeding wildlife to all county, state, and local nature/environmental centers and all NGO nature/environmental centers/environmental centers.

- Develop and implement management practices to reduce predation on native wildlife such as predator exclosures and electric fences.
- Conduct appropriately focused integrated wildlife damage management in areas where predators are significantly diminishing reproductive success of wildlife species of concern.
- Develop and support research to improve management practices (e.g., predator exclosures and electric fences) that reduce predation on native wildlife.
- ***Identify areas where predation is significantly diminishing reproductive success of wildlife species of conservation concern and apply appropriate integrated predation management techniques.***

- Cat colonies, including those managed by Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) programs must be eliminated from areas where there are concentrations of vulnerable native wildlife, especially endangered and threatened species (e.g., beach-nesting bird colonies). Such action must be accompanied by proactive efforts targeted at local residents, business owners, and land managers to reduce resources that encourage re-colonization by feral cats (e.g., securing dumpsters and trash cans, removing sources of shelter, removing rubbish piles where rodents can be abundant).
- Work with local municipalities to develop policies and/or establish regulations that minimize the impacts of predators on native wildlife species, including bans on “managed” cat colonies and feeding of wildlife near critical wildlife areas.
- *Collaborate with animal rights/welfare groups, local municipalities and conservation organizations to develop and implement model ordinances, policies and guidance documents to address the impacts of predators, including feral and free roaming cats, on native wildlife species, including:*
 - *A model ordinance for municipalities that elect to implement or allow trap, neuter, and release (TNR) programs to attempt to reduce feral cat populations.*
 - *A guidance document/protocol for minimizing the impacts of TNR on native wildlife.*
 - *A model ordinance for regulating feeding of wildlife.*
 - *A model pet-licensing ordinance.*
 - *Mapping of colonies to evaluate impact on species of conservation concern*

Problem:

Feral cat predation on wildlife

- Cats kill large numbers of wildlife
- Feral cat numbers are increasing
- Mortality from cat predation, especially in fragmented (island) habitats, can limit populations
- Cat-caused mortality is a factor in continued imperilment of local populations of some species

Desired Outcomes:

- Significantly diminish feral cat populations
 - Significantly diminish losses of wildlife to feral cat predation
 - Significantly diminish losses of particular wildlife (e.g., rare, imperiled species / species of conservation concern) to cat predation
 - Significantly diminish losses of wildlife in particular places (e.g., Parks, WMAs)

**Identified
Problem**



**Management
Strategy**

**Desired
Outcome**

SCIENCE

**SOCIO-
POLITICS**

**MANAGEMENT
APPROACH**

ECONOMICS

