

Welcome!

“Helping Cats Near You”

a free

Community Workshop

www.catsinaction.org



Your Hosts: Liz Houtz & Erica Roewade

Erica Roewade

- Helping outdoor cats 14 yrs
- Tree House Community Cats Coordinator 2013-15 (Targeted PetSmart grant to s/n 2000 cats)
- PAWS Community Cats Coordinator 2015-16
- Trapped thousands, fostered hundreds of cats
- Place feral cats from CACC
- Admin Chicago Comm. Cats TNR FB Group
- 2020 Co-founded **Cats in Action**



Liz Houtz

- Helping outdoor cats 15 yrs
- Tree House Community Cats Program Manager 2013-2017
- Trapped > 4500 cats; placed > 1800 friendly cats
- > 32 cat hoarding projects
- Place feral cats from CACC
- Admin Chicago Comm. Cats TNR FB Group
- Co-Founded **Cats in Action** 2020



Visit Our Website

The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'Cats in Action'. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with various icons and text: 'Cats in Action', 'Flatsome', 'Customize', '11', '0', '+ New', 'Edit Page', 'Rank Math SEO', 'Insights', 'WPForms 1', 'Duplicate Post', and 'Howdy, Liz'. Below this is a white header area with social media icons (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) on the left, the 'Cats in Action' logo in the center (a black cat silhouette with 'CATS IN ACTION' text and the tagline 'Helping people help outdoor cats'), and a 'Donate' button and 'WISHLIST' link on the right. A search bar is also present. Below the header is a green navigation bar with links: 'Home', 'About Us', 'About Outdoor Cats', 'Resources', 'Help With Cats', 'Video & Books Library', 'Workshops', 'Press', 'Join Newsletter', 'Shop', and 'BINGO!'. The main content area features six circular images with corresponding text: 'I Found a Cat' (a white and black cat), 'I'm Feeding Outdoor Cats' (a ginger cat eating), 'I'm Seeing Cats Outside' (a cat under a car), 'My Outdoor Cat is Sick/Injured' (a black cat), 'I Need To Give Up My Pet Cat' (a brown cat), and 'I Lost My Cat' (a cat in a bush). At the bottom, there are four rectangular images showing a wire cage, a cat in a cage, a brick wall, and a person's hair.

catsinaction.org

Follow Us on Facebook



Helping people help outdoor cats



Cats in Action

974 likes • 1K followers

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Today's Workshop Covers:

- History of Cats
- What are Community Cats?
- How can we help them?
- What is TNR?
- TNR project planning
- How to trap cats
- What to do with kittens
- Colony management
- Being a good neighbor
- Predation and wildlife impact
- Cook County ordinance



History of Cats

catsinaction.org/about-outdoor-cats/

- Wild animals removed from nature more than 10,000 years ago
- Bred for companionship and rodent control for farming
- Used to living outdoors *near* people, but not inside
- Cat litter invented in 1946



History of Cats

- Limited predators & sterilization has led to overpopulation
- Breeding has left domestic cats susceptible to disease
- Dependent on humans

catsinaction.org/about-outdoor-cats/



Community Cat Statistics

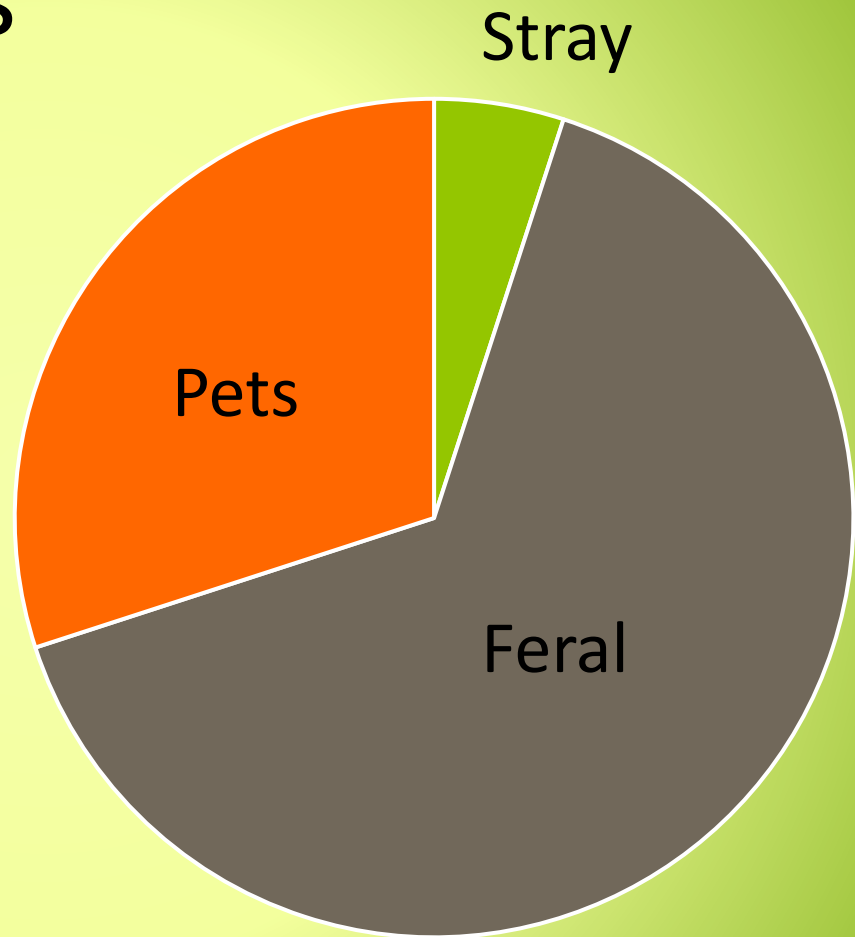
- Est. 32-90 mil. Free-roaming cats in U.S.
- Est. 200-500K in Chicago
- 80% of shelter cats originate from outside

catsinaction.org/about-outdoor-cats



Community Cats

- ALL cats outside in our community
- Also called “free-roaming” cats
- “Stray” = Lost or Abandoned friendly cats



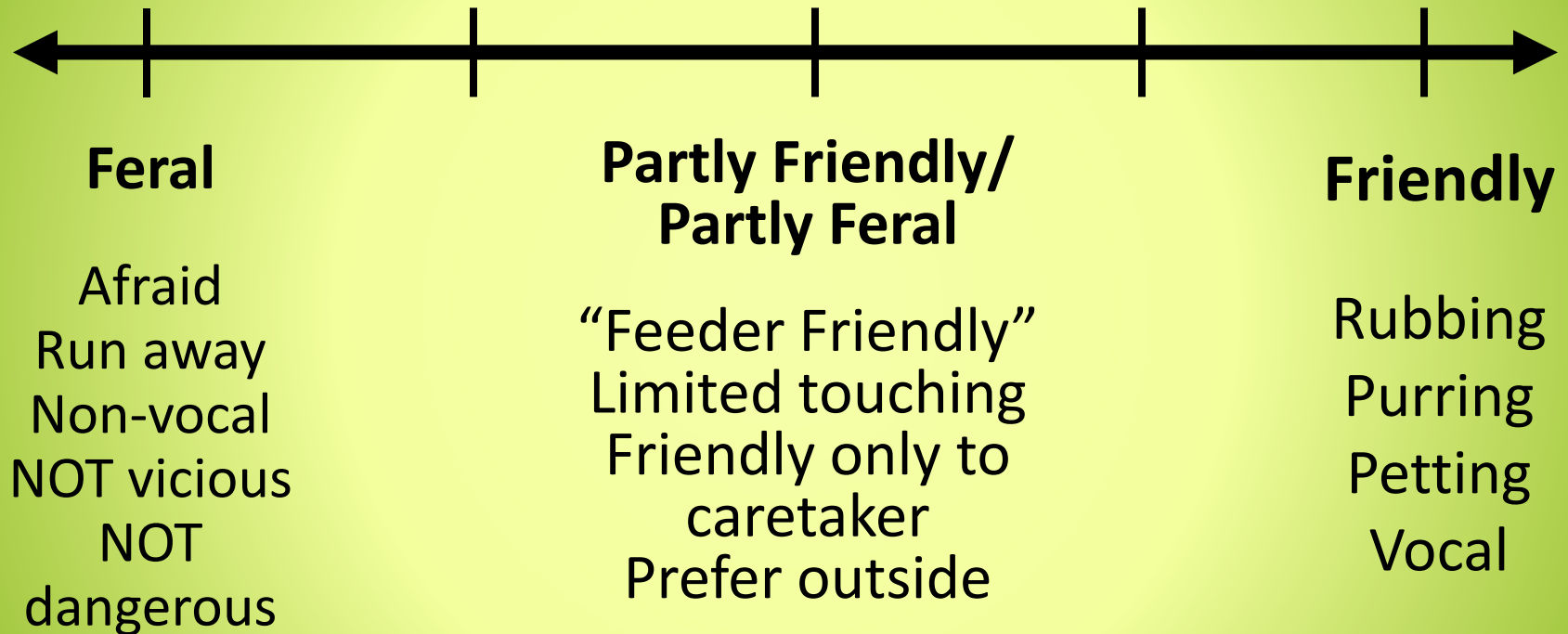
What does “feral” really mean?

- Feral cats are not socialized to people (wild)
- **Feral** refers to socialization towards humans, NOT location (outside)

catsinaction.org/about-outdoor-cats



Friendly vs. Feral



** If you are planning to re-home cats, they should be outwardly friendly towards strangers*

Feral vs. Fractious

- Feral = fearful, not vicious
- Run away vs. attack
- Fractious: growling, hissing, spitting, lunging, biting, scratching
- Fractious cats are typically upset friendly cats/house pets



The Breeding Cycle

- 2-4 litters annually
- Pregnant at 4 mo. and while lactating
- Multiple fathers in one litter
- Mating begins in Jan, triggered by longer daylight hrs. not temp.
- Without intervention **50%-75% kittens die** before 6 mo.



The Breeding Cycle

- Males fight with other males over territory and females
- Cause bite wounds, become infected
- Hold down females during mating
- #1 way to spread disease



Why not bring them ALL inside?

- Adult feral cats are nearly impossible to socialize, not practical to try
- Feral cats VERY stressed in captivity
- Shelters can't adopt them
- Too many friendly cats need homes
- Do NOT stash ferals in your basement or attic!



Why not bring them ALL inside?

- Relocation is very stressful, stay rates low
- Sanctuaries are impractical, run out of money
- Ferals can lead healthy lives outside
- Sterilizing and returning is best option (TNR)



Why not Trap and Euthanize?

- No city funding
- No city resources
- No volunteers
- No community support

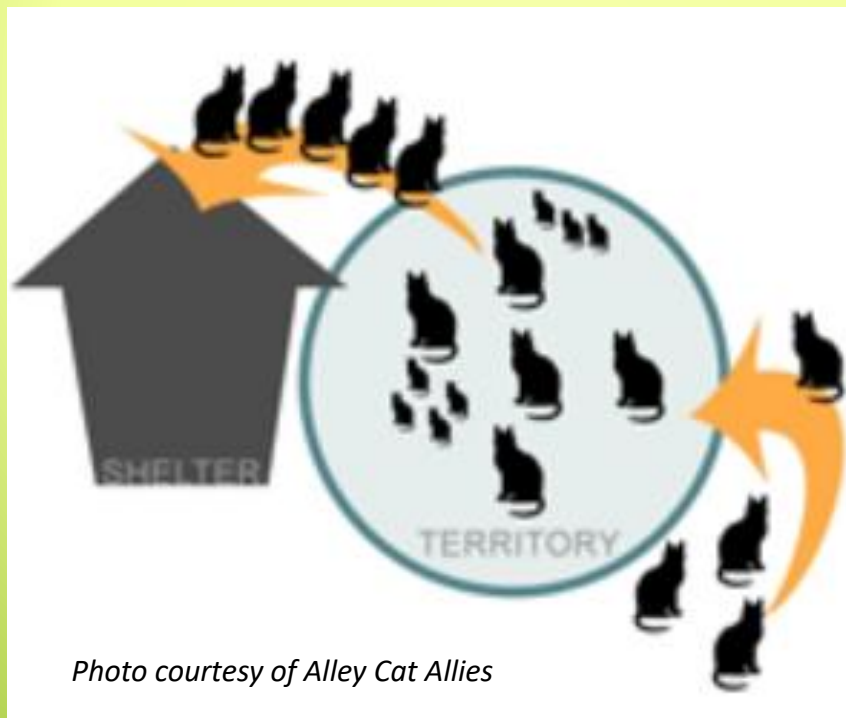
No one wants to kill cats!



Trap and Remove Doesn't Work

The Vacuum Effect: Removing cats from an area creates a vacuum and new cats move in, likely unsterilized.

catsinaction.org/resources/why-trap-neuter-return-tnr/



How Can We Help?

GOALS:

- (1) Reduce the number of cats outside
- (2) Improve their lives



What is TN(V)R?

- TRAP
- NEUTER
- VACCINATE
- RETURN

Cats are caught, sterilized, vaccinated and returned to their outdoor homes where people continue to care for them. Territorial nature prevents new cats from coming in.



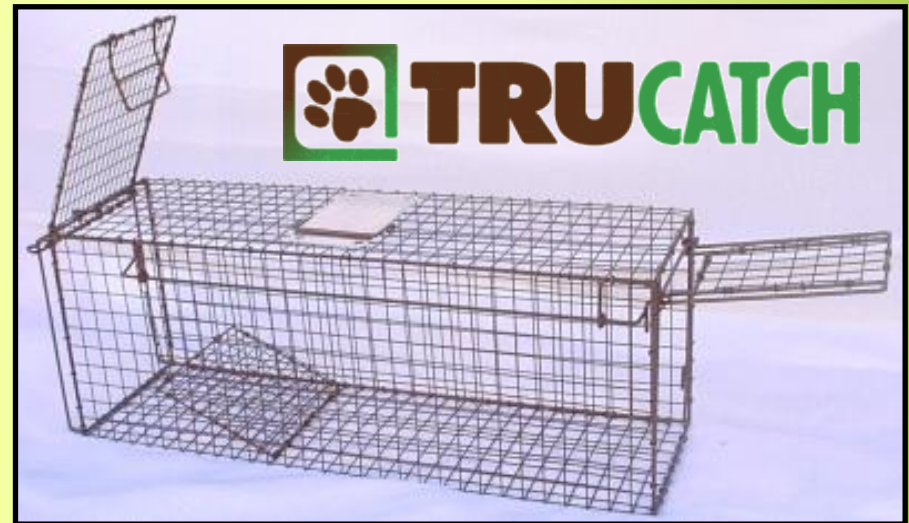
Trap

Catch the cats using humane traps

<https://catsinaction.org/resources/where-to-get-traps/catsinaction.org/video-books-library/>



Tomahawk Live Trap



 **TRUCATCH**

Neuter (or Spay)

- Neutering (castration) or spaying (hysterectomy) sterilizes the cat so he/she can not reproduce
- No external stitches
- No more heat cycles (females)
- Urine loses potent stench (males)
- No more mating, fighting, spreading disease



Ear Tipping

- Universal symbol of a sterilized cat (not a colony cat)
- Vet removes $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top of the left ear during spay/neuter
- Prevents repeat trapping, transportation, anesthesia



Vaccinate

Rabies

- Law in Cook County
- IL State law – 1 vaccine for ferals (2019)

<https://catsinaction.org/resources/il-cook-county-laws-and-requirements/>

FVRCP

- Feline viral rhinotracheitis
- Calicivirus
- Panleukopenia (distemper)



Return

- Return to the *exact* trapping location
- Point trap away from traffic and people
- Open back door
- Cat will typically bolt!
- It *may* take a few days to get back to normal behavior



Where to Start. . . .

catsinaction.org/resources/trapping-guidelines/

- Make a plan
- Think through the process from beginning to end
- Don't wait to socialize cats or "make friends"
- Don't worry about trapping a neighbor's indoor/outdoor pet cat



Where to Start. . .

catsinaction.org/resources/trapping-guidelines/

- Trap all kittens > 2 lbs (8 weeks)
- Trap pregnant females
- Don't let cats give birth
- Don't wait for placement for friendlies
- Trap now, seek placement as Step 2



Planning & Preparing

- Communicate with neighbors
- Assess the colony; document the cats you've seen
- Have a [PLAN](#) *before* you trap
 - What are you going to do with the cats (TNR, take in and foster, etc.)?
- Get as *at least* many traps as you have cats (You may get some “bonus cats”)



catsinaction.org/resources/trapping-guidelines/

Planning & Preparing

- Establish a routine eating schedule
- Trap at the normal meal time when cats show up and are expecting food
- You *can* withhold food one meal or reduce amount of prior meal
- Trap rehearsal: feed inside traps 1-2 weeks, gradually migrating food from front to back.



Planning & Preparing

- Obtain supplies (newspaper, trap covers, tarps)
- Choose a bait (tuna, cat food, chicken)
- Prepare your vehicle
- Recovery space



How to Trap

- Only trap when you are home/available to monitor frequently
- Chain traps up with a bike lock and place a sign on them if in a public place
- Best practice: Stay and watch your traps
- Never leave traps unattended for > 20 min and **never** leave traps open overnight



catsinaction.org/resources/trapping-guidelines/

How to Trap -

<https://catsinaction.org/video-books-library/>

- Line trap with newspaper , tape it down so it doesn't blow in the wind.
- Place food directly on newspaper or ½ a small paper plate.
- Do not use glass, ceramic or metal dishes
- Cover trap with a blanket or towel
- It's ok to trap without a cover *if* you maintain the trap in sight at all times and are able to cover quickly when a cat goes in



How to Trap

- Release any wildlife at the trapping spot
- Trapping wildlife without a license is *illegal*
- Relocation is dangerous for the animals (most die!)



<https://catsinaction.org/resources/wildlife/>

Recovery

- Feed and change newspaper with trap divider
- The only purpose of holding cats for recovery is to assure that anesthesia is out of their system
- **12-24 hr. recovery in trap (males & females) following surgery – no longer!**
- Provide canned food later the night of surgery and keep covered



What to do with kittens. . . .

HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN? Alley Cat Allies

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 all-in-one kitten progression chart, featuring Cuddling the Kittens, is here to help you out!



so fragile!

a little wobbly!

NEWBORN **ONE WEEK** **TWO WEEKS** **THREE WEEKS** **FOUR WEEKS**

When kittens are first born they are completely helpless—their eyes are closed, their ears are folded, and they can't stand, hold themselves upright or walk on their own. They rely on you for everything!

Darling is starting to become more aware of his surroundings! He almost never closes his eyes, a kitten's ears will unfold and their eyes may start to open.

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 you.

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 warmth.

Look how much Darling has grown! At four weeks kittens are already as thick as you and playing with each other, food, and people.



let's play!

so grown up!

ready to take on the world!

FIVE WEEKS **SIX WEEKS** **SEVEN WEEKS** **EIGHT WEEKS** **NINE WEEKS** **TEN WEEKS**

Get ready for a lot of love! Darling is now full of energy and plays wackadoodle. Interacting with people is important for kittens at this age. Darling is developing his personality!

Every day Darling is getting more sure of himself through exploration and play. He's using his litter box and eating cat food — though he still needs room for treats and comfort!

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.

The powder Darling now weighs enough to be weaned. He's also getting more skilled and adventurous. Darling is learning so much from his mom, siblings, and human caregivers.

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

Darling is fully weaned, weaned, 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

What to do with kittens. . . .

- *Friendly* mama: Trap her with kittens asap and get inside to safety
- Keep mama with kittens until they are 2 lbs (8 weeks), spay/neuter kittens
- Spay mama, re-home

<https://catsinaction.org/resources/socializing-kittens/>



What to do with kittens. . . .

- Do NOT remove newborn kittens!
- They need mama's milk/antibodies
- Bottle feeding is difficult and labor-intensive
- Morbidity is high in shelters
- Mama usually disappears, only to keep having litters!



What to do with kittens. . . .

- *Feral* mama: Leave kittens outside until >5-6 weeks *if they are safe*
- Trap her with kittens *if they are not safe outside*
- Crate in a large dog crate, small room
- **Minimize stress:** Keep crate covered, minimize interaction with mama



- Separate at 5-6 weeks if eating well on their own
- Spay mama, return to colony

Once you rescue kittens. . . .

- Remove fleas, bathe if too young for flea meds
- Provide vetting (vaccinate, deworm, spay/neuter)
- Seek shelter admission
- If you adopt them out of your house, please make sure they are sterilized or you are certain their adopters will do it



Stay on top of it!

- Talk with neighbors, share your success, spread the word!
- Trap any newcomers as quickly as possible
- Don't let the population explode again



Chicago Clinic Resources (June 2025)

The Anti-Cruelty Society

- Open Tu-Th, www.anticruelty.org, \$15
- You can only book using the online scheduler

Tree House Humane Society

- Open Tu-F, \$60, call 872-302-4671

PAWS Chicago

- Open M, W, Th, F, email clinic@pawschicago.org, \$80 (or \$64 if you bring 5 cats)

Chicago TNR & Clinic Resources

catsinaction.org/resources/spay-neuter-clinic-list/

Feral Feline Project (NW Cook)

Heartland (NE Cook)

Triple R Pets (S & SW Cook)

CatVando (W Cook)

Feral Fixers (DuPage)

Paws for a Cause (Naperville)

Spay & Stay (Lake County, IL)

South Suburban HS (Chicago Heights)

NAWS (Mokena)

SNIP (Joliet)

Preparing for Winter

catsinaction.org/resources/winter-shelters-supplies/

- Cats are very resilient to winter temps
- Properly insulated shelters enhance comfort, avoid frost bite
- Trapping is safe year round
- NO cardboard, towels, blankets, cloth



Winter Shelters

- 18-30 gal storage bins
- 1" foam insulation
- Wooden shelters
- Straw, no blankets



Other Winter Supplies

Hydration is super important in Winter!



Plug-in Heated
Water Bowl



Microwavable Snuggle Safe disk

Heating Pads



Nuisance Prevention

Acknowledge Your Neighbors' Concerns – They are also Part of the Community.

Address elimination issues:

- Outdoor covered litter boxes
- Open sand boxes
- Chicken wire over gardens



Nuisance Prevention

Do not invite wildlife:

- Adhere to a strict meal-feeding schedule
- Remove food when cats are finished
- Provide a designated feeding station
- Never leave food out overnight



Ongoing Medical Care – How to Treat

catsinaction.org/resources/vets-for-feral-cats/

- Not all vets see feral cats
- Vaccines last a long time – 6+ years
- Deworming typically not necessary



Ongoing Medical Care – Common Issues

- Weight loss
- Eye infection, runny eyes, runny nose, sneezing
- Limping, walking on 3 legs
- Bite or scratch wounds
- Fur loss, scratching



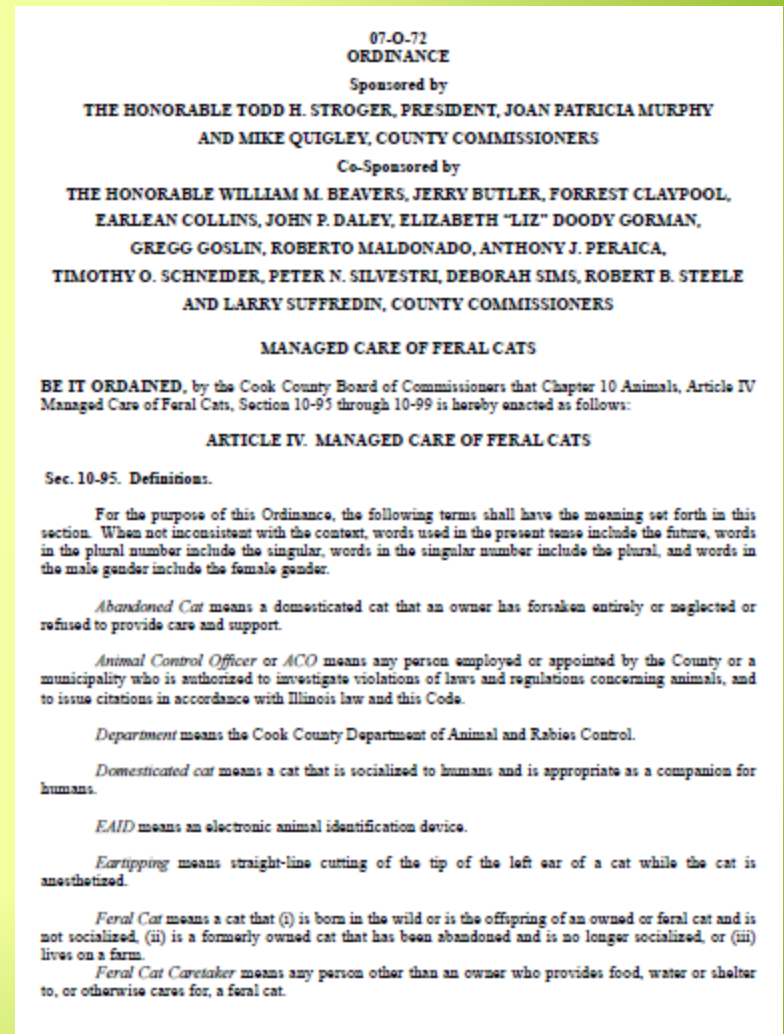
Predation – Cats as Hunters

- Outdoor cats will prey on other animals
- Cats are **opportunistic scavengers**; they go after easy prey first
- Rodents are easy to catch and present no threat
- Birds are more challenging, have sharp beaks
- Cats tend to catch sickly or injured birds



Cook County Ordinance

- Enables people to *legally* feed & shelter cats *everywhere* in Cook County
- Villages can not defy ordinance through Home Rule (Bridgeview example)
- Defines roles and responsibilities of caretakers, sponsors and CACC



Cook County Ordinance

- Registration with sponsor required
- Names and addresses are confidential
- Annual reporting (how many cats, died/disappeared, new)
- Sponsors report aggregate numbers to Cook County Animal & Rabies Control
- Registration helps demonstrate that the program is successful and TNR works!

Cook County Feral Cat Colony Caretaker Application

This application is required for anyone interested in becoming a registered Feral Cat Colony Caretaker as provided for in Cook County ordinance 07-0-72 "Managed Care of Feral Cats," passed by the Cook County Board of Commissioners on October 16, 2007. Chapter 10 Animals, Article IV, Section 10-95-9K.

The applicant has read the ordinance and agrees to comply with its terms. Applicant understands that the sponsoring humane organization ("Sponsor") with which applicant is applying, may, in its discretion, review and approve applicant as a Feral Cat Colony Caretaker. Likewise, the sponsor may decline further approval if the applicant fails to abide by provisions contained within the ordinance. Below is a list of sponsoring organizations. Please fill out the application and send it to the agency of your choice.

<u>Chicago North Side</u> Tree House Humane Society 7225 N. Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60645 Phone 773-262-6000 tr@treehouseanimals.org www.treehouseanimals.org/tnc	<u>Chicago South Side</u> FRAWS Chicago Lurie Spay/Neuter Clinic 3516 W. 26th St. Chicago, IL 60623 Phone 773-521-7729 Fax 773-521-1082 althea@lurie.org www.pawchicago.org	<u>Chicago Far South Dulton & Riverside</u> Cats In Action Phone 773-898-9899 Phone 773-517-2578 info@catsinaction.org catsinaction.org
<u>North & NW Suburbs</u> Feral Feline Project P.O. Box 1 Wilmette, IL 60090 Phone 847-800-0095 Fax 847-546-1477 fcp@feralfelineproject.org www.feralfelineproject.org	<u>Near West Suburbs</u> CatVando Phone 708-829-6013 www.catvando.org catvando@catvando.org	<u>South & SW Suburbs</u> Triple R Pets P.O. Box 86 Western Springs, IL 60558 Phone 708-738-1438 Fax 630-234-3603 info@triplepets.org www.triplepets.org

Applicant Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City & County Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

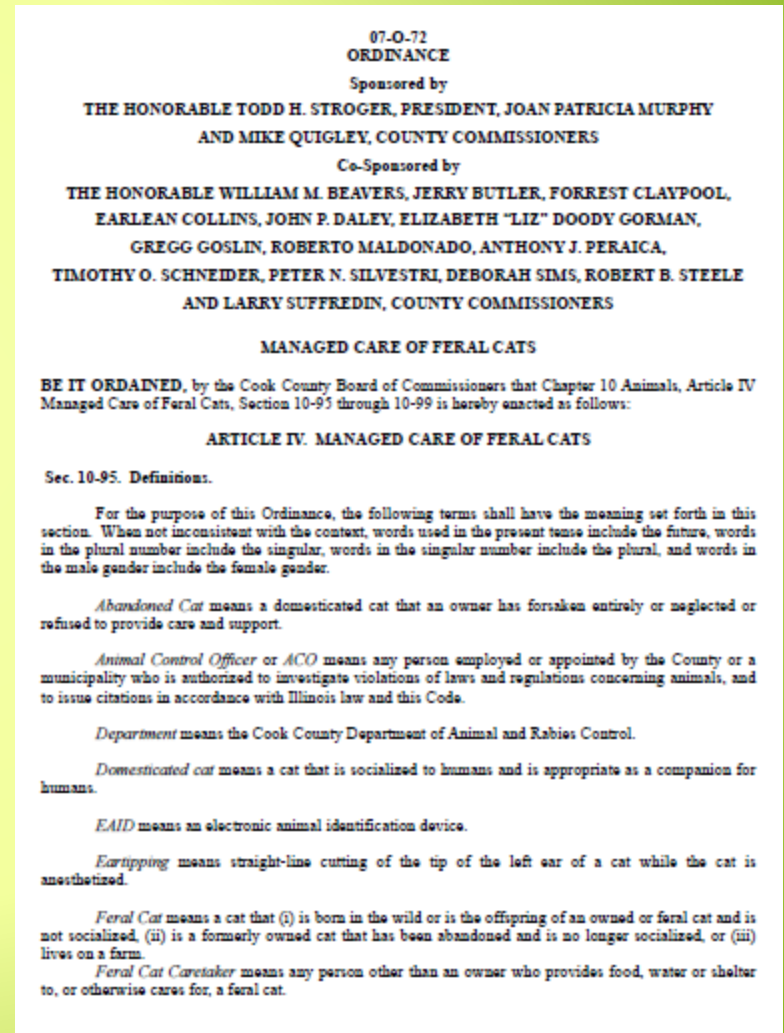
Colony Address and / or street coordinate (if different from home address): _____

City & County Zip: _____

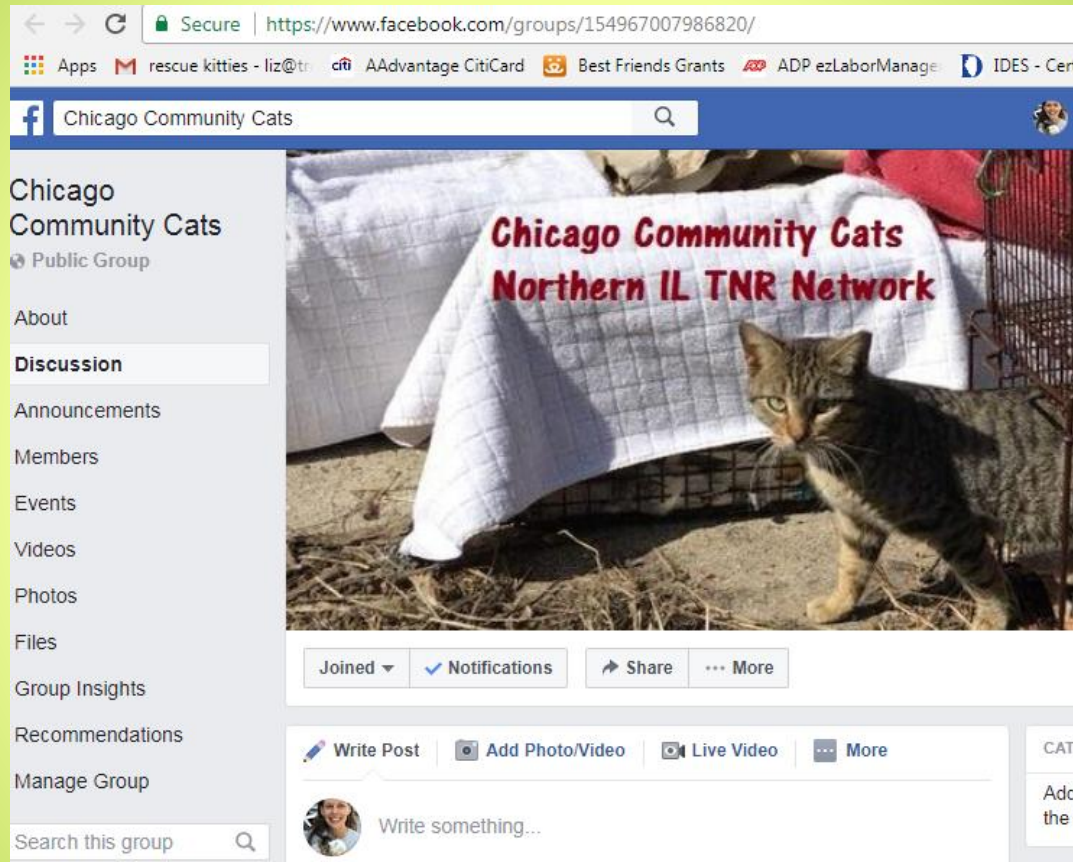
Page 1

Cook County Ordinance

- Ordinance states that Feral Cat Colony Caretakers (FCCC) are NOT owners of the cats
- FCCC have no liability if a cat bites someone
- Chicago Municipal Code regarding pets (owned) does not apply
- FCCC to make a good-faith effort to resolve nuisance issues



Chicago Community Cats TNR FB Group

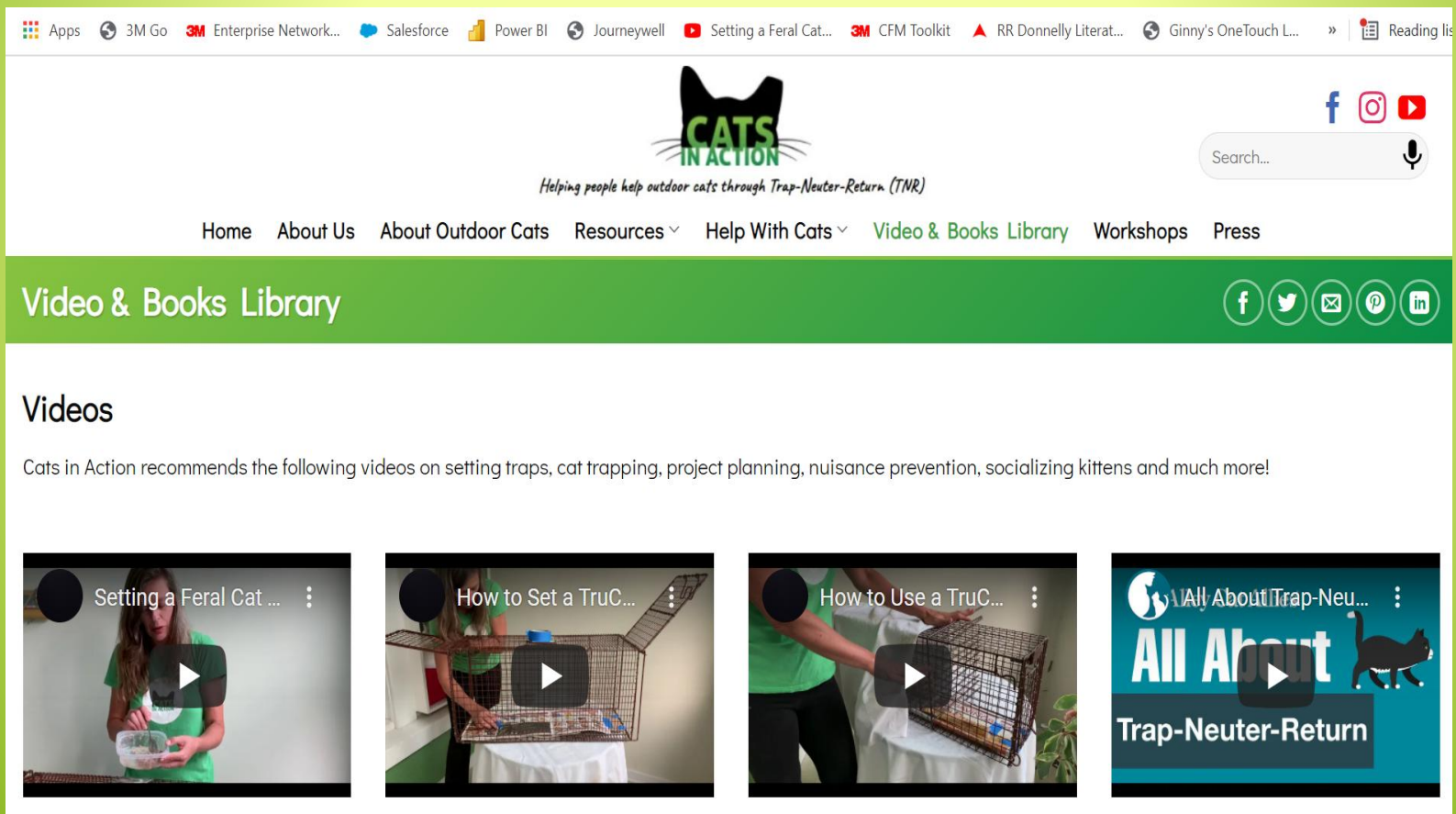


Be sure to fully answer the 3 questions!

PLEASE read the new member announcement at the top as well as the posting policies

Don't Forget to Visit Catsinaction.org

“How-to” videos for setting traps



The screenshot displays the website interface for Cats in Action. At the top, there is a navigation bar with various application icons (Apps, 3M Go, Enterprise Network, Salesforce, Power BI, Journeywell, Setting a Feral Cat..., CFM Toolkit, RR Donnelly Literat..., Ginny's OneTouch L..., Reading li) and social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The main header features the "CATS IN ACTION" logo with the tagline "Helping people help outdoor cats through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)". Below the logo is a search bar and a navigation menu with links: Home, About Us, About Outdoor Cats, Resources, Help With Cats, Video & Books Library, Workshops, and Press. A green banner below the navigation menu reads "Video & Books Library" and includes social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. The "Videos" section is titled "Videos" and contains the text: "Cats in Action recommends the following videos on setting traps, cat trapping, project planning, nuisance prevention, socializing kittens and much more!". Below this text are four video thumbnails. The first three thumbnails show a person in a green shirt demonstrating how to set a trap: "Setting a Feral Cat...", "How to Set a TruC...", and "How to Use a TruC...". The fourth thumbnail is a blue graphic with the text "All About Trap-Neu..." and "Trap-Neuter-Return" and a silhouette of a cat.

Thank You!

