

What is TNR?

Ultimately, the greatest problem facing unowned cat populations is unchecked reproduction. One breeding pair of cats can theoretically result in over 11 million cats in a 9-year period!



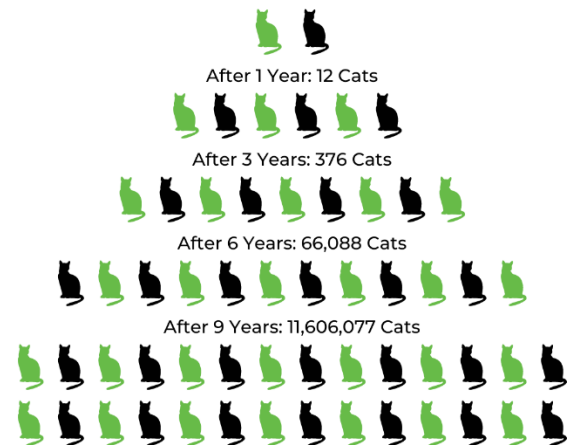
TNR stands for “trap-neuter-return.” It is the most humane method for reducing unowned cat populations, while

simultaneously providing an opportunity to vaccinate and attend to minor medical concerns.

The TNR process involves a coordinated effort on the part of many dedicated players.

1. Establish a feeding pattern, count the cats and set out shelters and feeding stations
2. Humanely trap unaltered individuals
3. Bring trapped cats into clinics where they are sterilized, vaccinated, microchipped, ear tipped and treated for minor ailments
4. Allow 24-48 hrs to recover
5. Return cats to their environment (or find homes for friendly, adoptable cats)
6. Provide continued food and shelter to cats post-TNR

1 unspayed female and 1 unneutered male can produce:



Does TNR Work?

Many studies demonstrate that **TNR IS effective at reducing unowned cat populations**, reducing feline intake and dramatically reducing euthanasia in shelters.

- In Alachua County, Florida, researchers started a TNR program in one of two areas with similar rates of shelter intake and euthanasia. After 2 years, intake rates were 3.5 times lower and euthanasia rates were 17.5 times lower in the TNR area compared to the non-TNR area¹.
- Over a period of 4 years, over 10,000 cats underwent TNR in San Jose, California. As a result of the program, local shelters reported an almost 30% reduction in kitten intake, a 33% reduction in euthanasia, and a dramatic decline in upper respiratory disease².
- The Newburyport, Massachusetts waterfront experienced the complete elimination of their “wharf cat” population through a ground-breaking 17-year TNR effort³.



TNR efforts are most effective when they are targeted. This means focusing on a specific area, and trying to alter as many cats in that area as possible (ideally 100%). The higher the rate of sterilization in a colony, the greater the impact a TNR program will have on cat populations over time.

Importantly, TNR is also the only method for reducing unowned cat population that DOES work. Other methods have been tried and failed, for reasons including:

- **The vacuum effect** – if cats are simply removed from a location, but the resources allowing them to thrive remain, other cats will simply move in to fill that ecological niche⁴.
- **Higher survival rates** – when cats are removed without a targeted approach, a greater number of the kittens born from remaining cats will survive to adulthood, until the population increases to the number of cats the available resources can support.
- **Lack of animal control resources** – there aren't enough animal control officers to remove cats at the rate necessary to effectively reduce their populations.
- **Public outcry** – as community cats are increasingly valued, removing, and euthanizing animals is simply no longer an acceptable method of population control.

Are there any other benefits to TNR?

Clearly TNR is the most effective and humane method for reducing the unowned cat population, but the advantages do not stop there!

- TNR results in a reduction of “nuisance” behaviours associated with mating (such as fighting and yowling).
- Spaying and neutering can prevent certain medical conditions (such as pyometra – infection of the uterus - and several types of cancer), and increase a cat's overall life span².
- Altering male cats reduces the odour associated with the urine of intact males.
- Meanwhile, rodent control is maintained by the cats' continued presence.

References:

- ¹ Levy, J. K., Isaza, N. M., & Scott, K. C. (2014). Effect of high-impact targeted trap-neuter-return and adoption of community cats on cat intake to a shelter. *The Veterinary Journal*, 201(3), 269-274.
- ² Johnson, K. L., & Cicirelli, J. (2014). Study of the effect on shelter cat intakes and euthanasia from a shelter neuter return project of 10,080 cats from March 2010 to June 2014. *PeerJ*, 2, e646.
- ³ Spehar, D., & Wolf, P. (2017). An examination of an iconic trap-neuter-return program: The Newburyport, Massachusetts case study. *Animals*, 7(11), 81.
- ⁴ Tabour, R. (1983). *The Wild Life of the Domestic Cat*. London: Arrow Books Limited.
- ⁵ Root Kustritz, M. V. (2012). Effects of surgical sterilization on canine and feline health and on society. *Reproduction in domestic animals*, 47, 214-222.

For further information, see:

- Kortis, B. (2014). *Community TNR Tactics and Tools*. PetSmart Charities.

