

No-Frill No-Kill: A New Approach to Saving Cats?

Clicker poll

- How well is your community handling unowned cats?
 - Cats? What cats? We are importing cats into our community to meet the needs of local adopters.
 - No problem – almost all cats are moved to a permanent home after a brief stay in a shelter or rescue group.
 - It's a mix - most of the cats are eventually placed, but we feel overwhelmed at times - especially during kitten season.
 - We are struggling - more than half of cats that enter shelters in our community are eventually euthanized (live release rate < 50%).
 - I am not sure.

Felis domesticus

- Cats are the only species to domesticate themselves
- Have been living outdoors in the periphery of human society for 10,000 years



Controversies

- Environmental concerns
- Public health concerns
- Cat welfare concerns
- Traditional sheltering vs. No Kill sheltering vs. management in the field



Free-roaming community cats

- Stray cats
 - Homeless pet cats
 - Abandoned
 - Lost
 - Socialized/friendly
- Feral cats
 - Untamed/evasive
 - Born in the wild
 - Stray cats turned wild



What is the source of cat population?

	<u>Pet Cats</u>	<u>Community cats</u>
	89 million	89 million
Female	50%	50%
Sterilization rate	85%	2%
Litters/year	1.4	1.4
Live births/litter	3	3
Kittens born/year	28 million	175 million
Kitten survival	75%	25%
Live at 3 months	21 million	46 million

Community cats = most important source of cat population

Public opinion polls

- 2007 telephone survey

(Chu 2007

ACA Law & Policy Brief)

- What would you do about unowned cats in the street?
 - 81% would leave the cats alone
 - 14% would trap and kill the cats
- What if you knew the cats only lived for 2 years?
 - 72% would still leave the cats alone
 - 21% would trap and kill the cats



Clicker poll

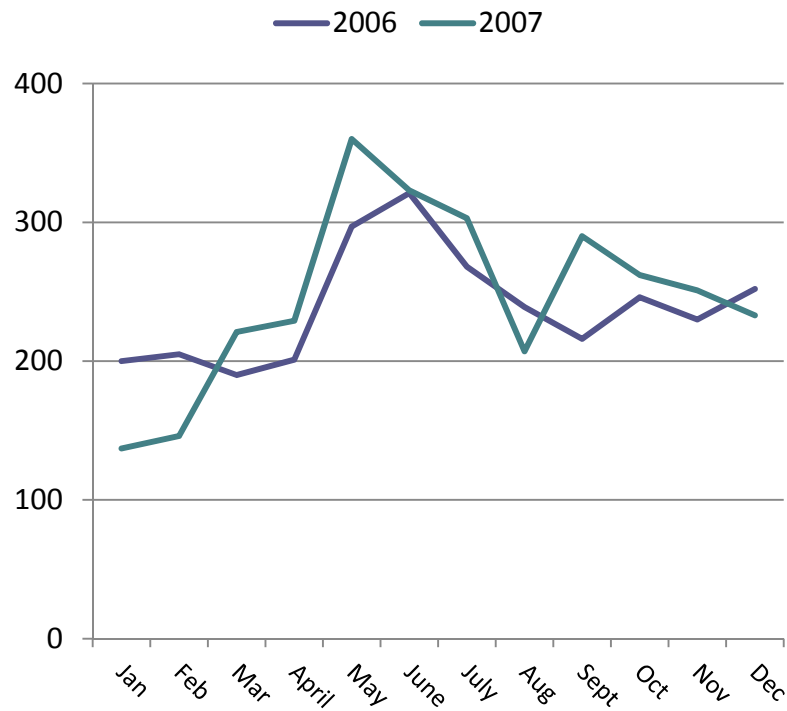
- Is trap-neuter-return a resource available in your community's cat management toolbox?
 - No, our community has no TNR program.
 - Yes, some people use TNR in our community for a relatively small number of cats.
 - Yes, TNR of unowned cats has become a major component of life-saving in our community.
 - I am not sure, but I hope so!
 - I am not sure, but I hope not!

2007: An experiment in life-saving

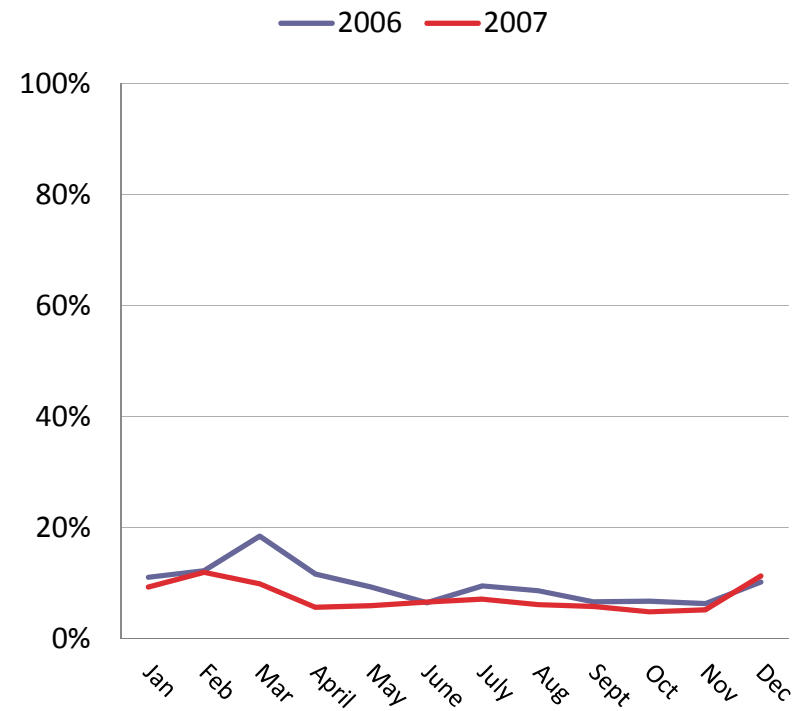
- Duval County = City of Jacksonville
 - Largest land-mass county in US
 - 857,000 people
 - ~143,000 community cats
- Jacksonville Animal Care and Control
 - Impounded 13,365 cats
 - Average population of 200-300 cats in the shelter
 - Adopted out 521 cats
 - URI rate >80%
 - Live release rate <10%

Outcomes for cats at JACC

Shelter Inventory: Cats



Feline Live Release



“The Year of Big Solutions”

- Feral Freedom, August 2008
 - Partnership between a nonprofit TNR group and the county municipal shelter to reduce cat intake and euthanasia
 - Funding from Best Friends Animal Society
 - All feral cats that come into JACPS are turned over to FCNMHP for TNR
 - Targets nuisance cats in the community



How it works

- Citizens borrow traps from the municipal shelter
- Animal control officers pick up trapped cats from citizens or citizens bring them to the shelter
- FCNMHP picks up trapped cats twice daily for transfer to FCNMHP Spay/Neuter clinic for TNR



How it works

- Cats have surgery, ear tip, vaccinations, parasite treatment if needed
- Cats housed overnight for recovery



How it works

- Cats returned to trapping site the next day
- Educational material left at houses near trapping/release site



By the numbers

2008-2011

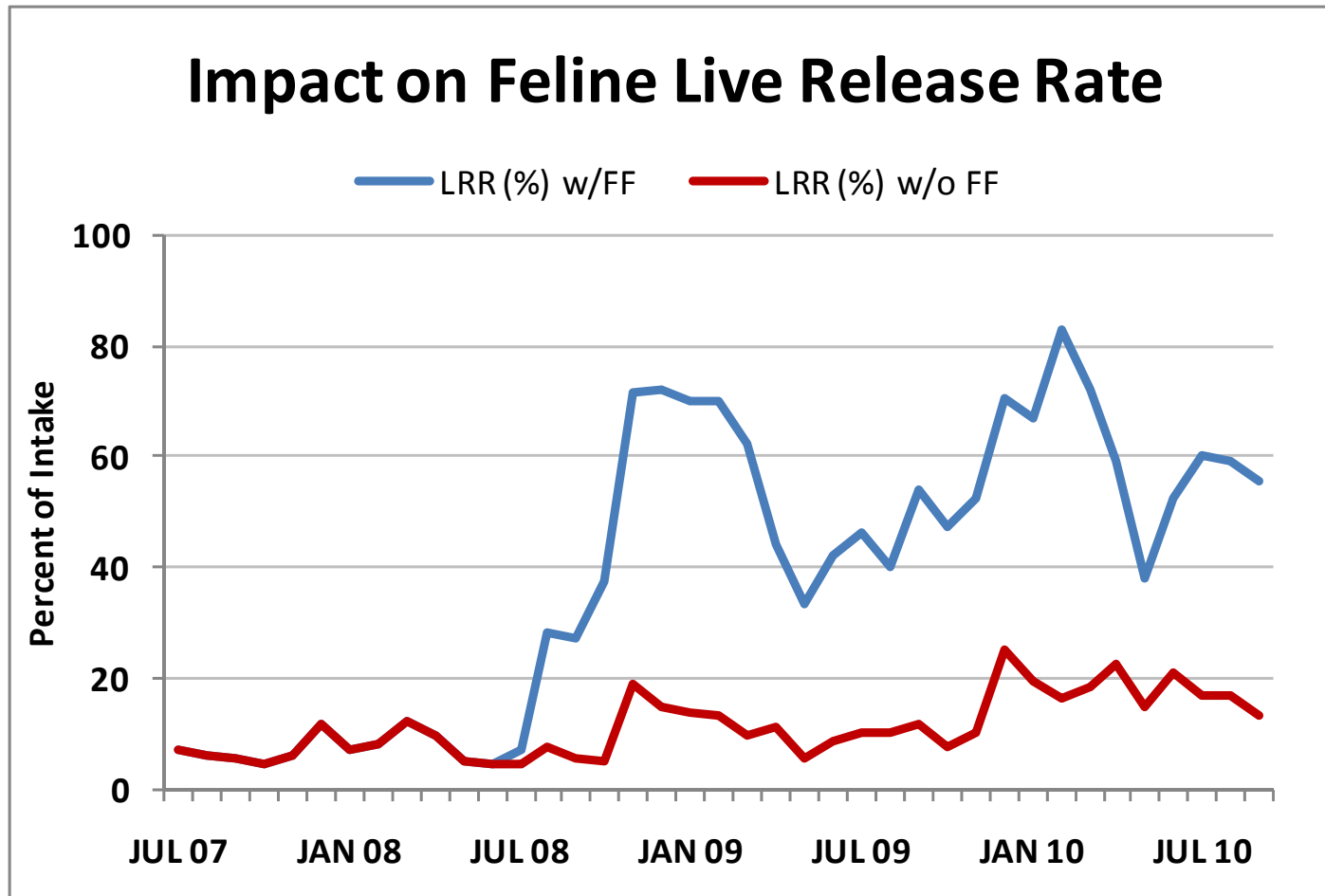
- 15,274 cats transferred
- 958 sent to rescue
- 174 euthanized
- 954 trapped more than once
- 59% decrease in adult feline euthanasia and 19% for kittens at JACPS



Shelter crowd control



Saving lives



News

Good News for Community Cats in Salt Lake County

October 20, 2010, 8:57AM MT

By Julie Flanders, Best Friends Network volunteer

New ordinance allows free-roaming cats to be released back to their general area following sterilization

The community cats in Utah's Salt Lake County will now have more options when they come into the county animal shelter, thanks to an ordinance that is scheduled to go into effect on Wednesday, Oct. 27.

Currently, feral cats who enter the shelter can only be released to a registered colony, a practice which has limited the shelter's options for the care and release of community cats. But as a result of the new ordinance, the cats can now be released back to the general area from which they came after they have been sterilized. This new trap/neuter/return (TNR) program is loosely based on the hugely successful **Feral Freedom** program, which Best Friends helped implement in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2008.



According to Shawni Larrabee, director of Salt Lake County Animal Services, the new ordinance, which was passed by the Salt Lake Council on October 12, states that a feral cat in the shelter system "shall be released within a reasonable proximity to where it was trapped or picked up." In addition, "each cat shall be sterilized, identified by 'ear-tipping,' and vaccinated (including rabies vaccination) prior to release." The passage of this ordinance is just the start of a whole new approach to the care of community cats in Salt Lake County.

The cat traps are working.





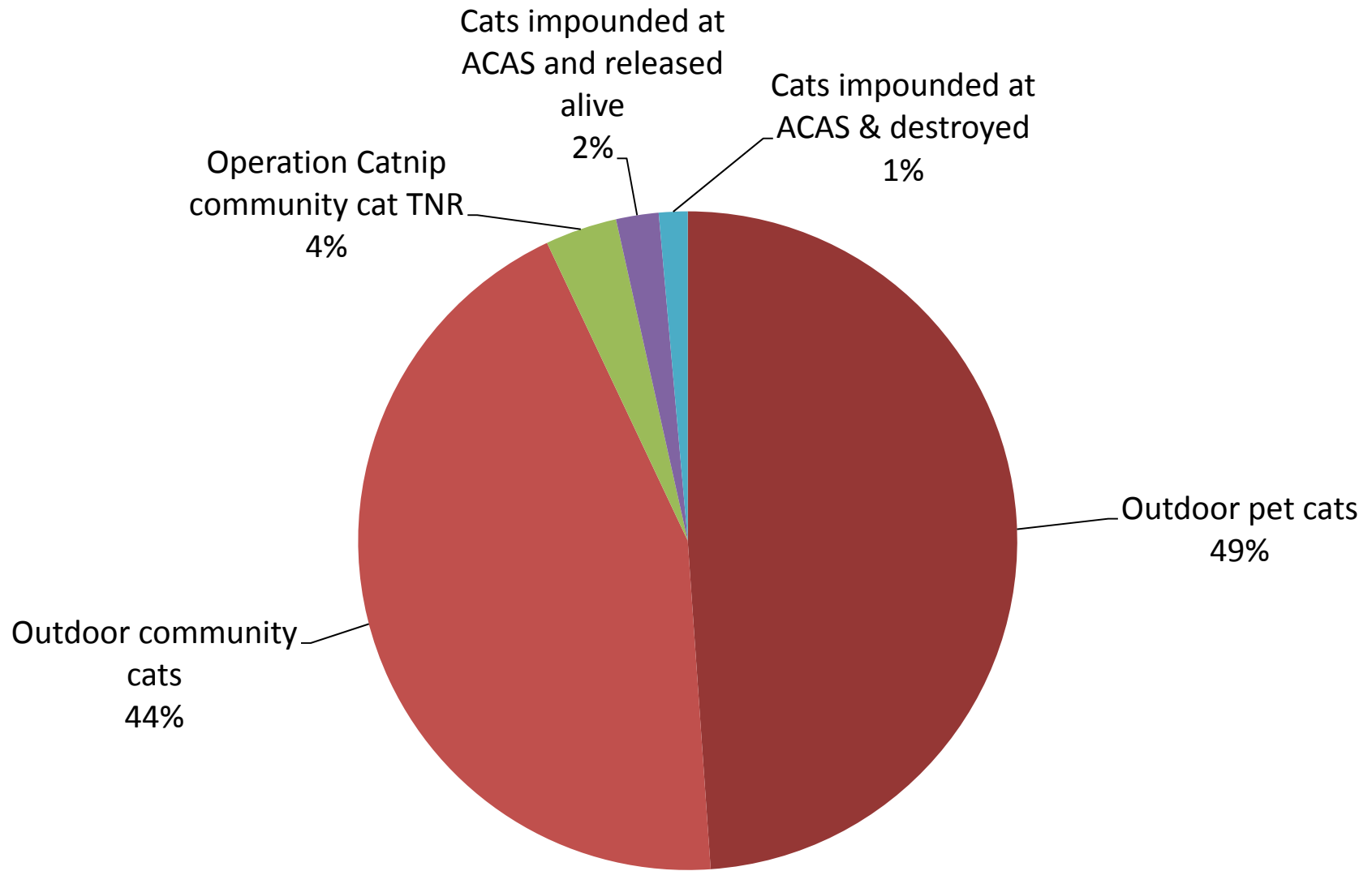
Clicker poll

How do you feel about the Feral Freedom program in which feral cats are immediately transferred to a TNR program?

- Love it –our community already has a similar program.
- Love it – wish we could do it.
- I don't support it because it's not safe and humane for the cats.
- I don't support it because it's not good for the environment.
- I'm still thinking about it.

How many cats are there?

- Pet cats:
 - Human population \div 3.5 = 68,540
 - 60% go outdoors = 42,324
- Community cats:
 - Human population \div 6 = 38,170



Feline reality check

- Only a tiny fraction of community cats are removed by the shelter
 - Only 3% of outdoor cats are impounded
 - Cost of almost \$500,000
- Many community cats are doing okay and are not a serious menace
 - Feeding is common (up to 25%)
 - Lost cats more likely to return home (13x)
 - Adoption is not rare (2x)
 - Survival is reasonable (up to 90% annually)
- Good news and bad news: Taking in or not taking in every single cat, the instant it is presented, will neither solve nor cause major problems





Feline reality check

- Community cats may or may not cause or have problems
- Programs that impact only a small fraction of the population will not change this
- Killing cats in shelters accomplishes nothing and is not good for cats or shelters

No-Frill No-Kill

- If shelter euthanasia of cats is high
 - Leave community cats where they live
 - Admit injured, sick, or dangerous cats
 - Trap-neuter-return as much as possible
 - Since the number of cats impounded is too small to impact their population, ceasing impoundment of healthy cats would have no deleterious effects on the community, but would dramatically reduce shelter euthanasia



Clicker poll

- How do you feel about reducing shelter euthanasia of cats by halting intake of healthy adult community cats?
 - I'm desperate – I'll try anything at this point
 - I am going to try it on a small scale
 - I'd like to try it but there would be too much local opposition
 - I'd like to try it but it is against the law
 - I don't think it would be good for the cats involved



UF Maddie's® Shelter
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The Pet Rescue Foundation

Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program is underwritten by a grant from Maddie's Fund®, The Pet Rescue Foundation (www.maddiesfund.org), helping to fund the creation of a no-kill nation.