

Why TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return)?

A Presentation to

The Alaska Board of Game



Presented by:

Mojo's Hope & Alaska's KAAATs

Presentation to the Alaska Board of Game

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Shannon Basner and I am the founder of Mojo's Hope and Alaska's KAAATs. I represent both of these organizations in respect to proposal 62 which addresses the modification of the regulation: 5 AAC 92.029, Permit for possessing live game, which currently prohibits the release of cats into the wild. At the inception of this regulation there may not have been a clear understanding of the existence of community cats—also known as feral cats--as cats are often only considered domestic pets. Community cats are very different from our pet cats. They are both the same species, however they differ in their socialization to people. Community cats have lived healthy and happy lives outdoors for over 10,000 years. They live in nearly every landscape on all continents that are inhabited by people. They only began living indoors full-time after litter was invented in 1947.

Since most community cats are not socialized to people, they cannot live indoors like our pet cats.

I want to encourage and further educate the community about the importance of implementing the only humane and effective approach to managing community cats- Trap-Neuter-Return. "Community cats" is a term that includes both feral and friendly cats that live outdoors. Friendly cats are often stray or abandoned cats that are socialized to people. After modification of the existing regulations, if socialized cats and kittens are found, they can be brought to Anchorage Animal Control or fostered through a rescue group, and adopted from there. Socialized cats will not be returned to living outdoors. Unsocialized cats would be put through a TNR program, which means they would be spayed/neutered, vaccinated, ear tipped, given recovery time and then returned to their habitat that has a volunteer caregiver.

The current and only method that has been utilized for the management of community cats in Alaska is "trap and kill." This method has not helped to reduce the population of community cats. This method not only impacts the lives of community cats, it also affects shelter staff, the community and the people who may be familiar with the cats. Animal Control staff take on the responsibility of euthanizing healthy community cats as they are not adoptable and, due to the common interpretation of the current regulation, cannot be

returned to their outdoor homes. Community members that are familiar with these cats may not have the means to provide spaying and neutering for them. They must stand by as kittens are born and the cycle repeats. These community members do not call Animal Control for assistance with the cats as they fear for their outcome, cementing the view that Animal Control is the enemy. The public bears the burden of these costs and the ever-continuing cycle of community cat reproduction and euthanasia continues. This current policy of catch and kill is inhumane, expensive and ineffective. Fortunately, there is little community support for such a drastic, thoughtless and cruel approach. Ours is a compassionate society and we know we can do better for these animals. Included in your packet are two graphs showing the number of intake, euthanasia, and euthanasia of cats considered feral (but healthy) at our local Anchorage Animal Control. The intake numbers of cats overall has decreased over the years, however the number of ferals (healthy cats) euthanized has stayed consistent. If a TNR program were in place the number of healthy cats euthanized would be substantially lowered.

Benefits of Trap-Neuter-Return to the Municipality

The approach that needs to be implemented is called Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). TNR provides substantial cost savings to Animal Control departments. Generating volunteer manpower by reputable non-profit organizations and trained individuals working together to trap the cats, get them spayed or neutered (to stop them from reproducing), vaccinated (prevention) and ear-tipped (to identify those that have been TNR'd) will greatly reduce the number of calls the Municipality receives for cat-related concerns, along with the reduction of costs involved. Substantial cost savings are also realized when TNR is implemented on a large enough scale to realize lower euthanasia rates in municipal shelters. Given the magnitude of the problem, and the current state and local budget crises, there is no realistic possibility the state and the Municipality of Anchorage could fund a large enough animal control work force to address feral cat concerns. The volunteers managing the TNR program and the cost savings they will provide to the state and Municipality are crucial to move beyond the existing regulations.

What is TNR and why do we feel that Alaska should implement such a program?

A very important point I want to emphasize is that community cats already exist in Alaska. Feral cats are very elusive creatures that are rarely seen, as they are not socialized to people. The goal of TNR is to help reduce the current population by properly implementing such a program. Habitats require proper management, which includes but is not limited to daily monitoring, providing food, water and shelter as each program has its specific needs.

Included in your packet is the abstract and the most current study released this past month. This longitudinal study documents the management of a colony from 1992-2009 on the Newburyport Waterfront in Massachusetts. This study showed that over time and with a properly managed TNR program the number of cats was reduced from 300 to 0 through attrition by returning sterilized and unsocialized cats to the colony, adoption (for those who were socialized) and humane euthanasia (for those who were sick and could not be treated).

We would like to see an Anchorage-area based program be developed that does not put a burden on the city, helps save the city money and meets the needs of the community that is not presently being met. TNR would only be recommended in cases where there is an actual feral colony, a capable volunteer caregiver and a possibility for a good quality of life for animals. Caregivers interested in TNR will complete a needs assessment form (draft included in your packet). A volunteer from Mojo's Hope or another organization will contact the caregiver; provide assistance with information, resources, and meeting other needs as appropriate.

Mojo's Hope and Alaska's KAAATs ask that all pet owners and the Board of Game join our entire community, to create positive changes for all community cats, demonstrate compassion and show support of this admirable effort on behalf of all the animals. Thank you for your time, we greatly appreciate letting us be the voice for community cats.

DRAFT



A Rescue Group for Animals with Special Needs

Rescue - Rehabilitate - Educate - Re-home



Needs Assessment Form: TNR (DRAFT)

Please fill out this form if you have not contacted Mojo's Hope before. This form will help us to know a little bit more about your situation, so we see if we can help out. If you have any further questions about this process, please contact us via email at mojoshope@gmail.com

Please note your response might fall into your spam or updates folders. Please check all folders for our response.

Name:

Email address: (Please ensure you have entered email correctly. Double-check your SPAM folder for response):

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Primary Phone:

How many cats do you help fixing?

Please use your best judgment on the next set of questions:

How many cats have you observed in the area?

Are they in a group or is there a single cat?

Is the cat friendly and can be picked up and placed into a carrier without struggle?

Do you think any of the cats are pregnant?

Do you think any of the cats are nursing kittens?

DRAFT

Do you think any of the cats are under 2lbs or 2 months?

Do any of the cats look sickly or injured?

If you answered yes to the previous question, please elaborate:

Discharge from eyes

Discharge from nose

Sneezing

Coughing

Other

Will you need to borrow traps?

Do you need training on how to use traps properly?

How did you hear about us?

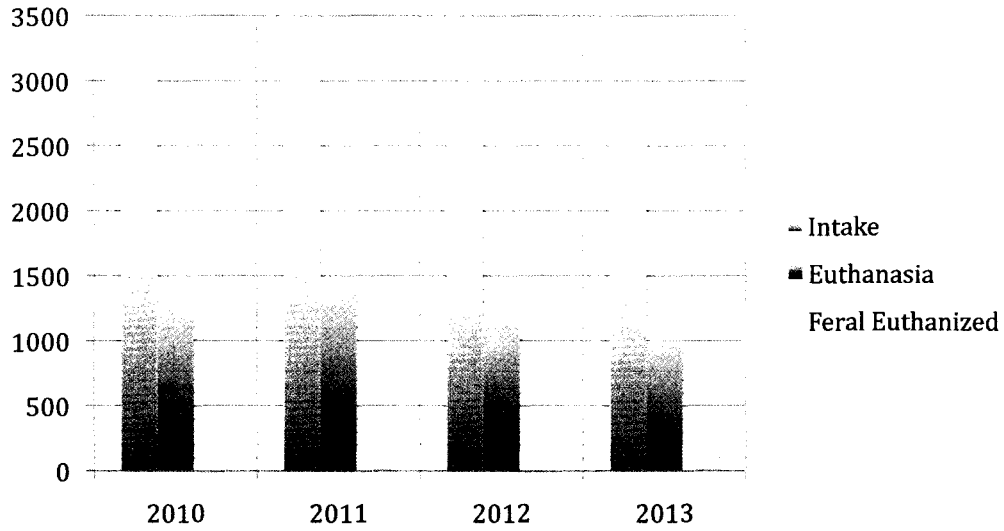
Thank you for contacting us. One of our Mojo's Hope representatives will be in touch after we review all of your submitted information.

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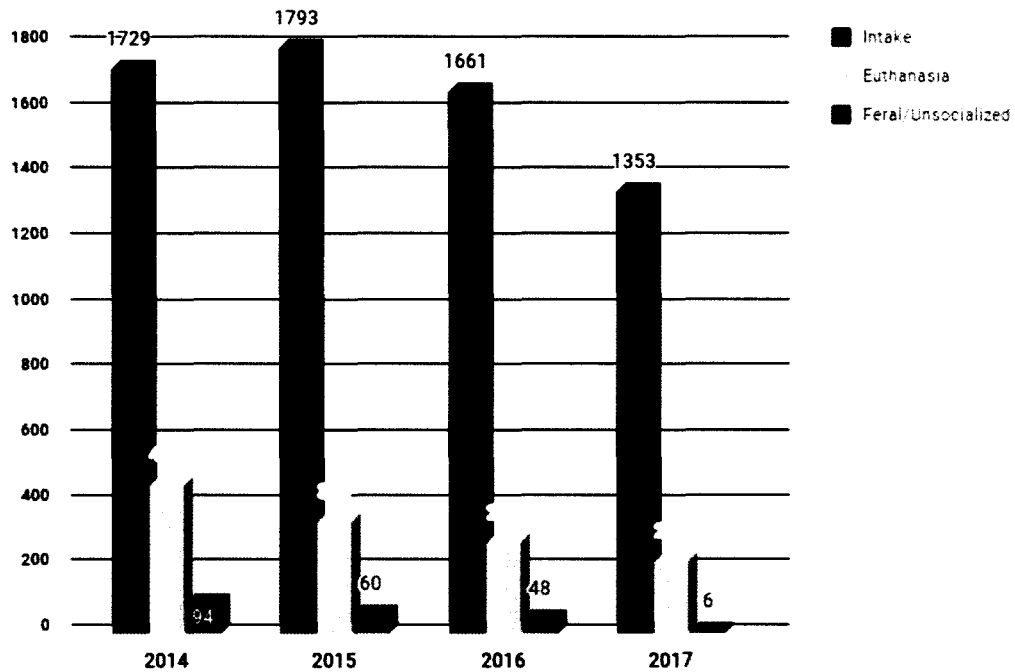


Mojo's Hope is a registered 501(c) 3 Non-Profit Organization
EIN 30-0764346

Anchorage Animal Care & Control 2010-2013



Anchorage Animal Control 2014-2017



An Examination of an Iconic Trap-Neuter-Return Program: The Newburyport, Massachusetts Case Study

Link to the full study: <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/7/11/81>:

An Examination of an Iconic Trap-Neuter-Return Program: The Newburyport, Massachusetts Case Study

Abstract: The use of trap-neuter-return (TNR) as a humane alternative to the lethal management of free-roaming cats has been on the rise for several decades in the United States; however a relative paucity of data from TNR programs exists. An iconic community-wide TNR effort; initiated in 1992 and renowned for having eliminated hundreds of free-roaming cats from the Newburyport; Massachusetts waterfront; is cited repeatedly; yet few details appear in the literature. Although the presence of feline population data was quite limited; a detailed narrative emerged from an examination of contemporaneous reports; extant TNR program documents; and stakeholder testimony. Available evidence indicates that an estimated 300 free-roaming cats were essentially unmanaged prior to the commencement of the TNR program; a quick reduction of up to one-third of the cats on the waterfront was attributed to the adoption of sociable cats and kittens; the elimination of the remaining population; over a 17-year period; was ascribed to attrition. These findings illuminate the potential effectiveness of TNR as a management practice; as well as call attention to the need for broad adoption of systematic[...]

Memorandum of Agreement

Between, Mojo's Hope, Alaska's KAAATs and other agencies and organizations.

Draft : 05/2/17

1. Purpose

The following is an agreement between Mojo's Hope, Alaska's KAAATs and other agencies and organizations. The purpose for this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to recognize the complex and interconnected nature of animal welfare and TNR (Trap-neuter-return) specifically and to define the roles, responsibilities and procedures for collaboration between the groups work-ing together to help community cats in the Anchorage area.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- Mojo's Hope agrees to provide TNR information, supplies and assistance for caretakers who are willing and able to provide long term care.
- Mojo's Hope will sponsor one educational event a year, to teach interested caretakers about TNR and how to humanely manage community cats.

3 Policies and Procedures

- Community cats is a term including both feral and friendly cats. Friendly cats are often stray or abandoned and if found will be brought into Anchorage Animal Care and Control or fostered through a rescue group. Friendly cats will not be returned to living outdoors.
- TNR would only be recommended in cases where there is an actual feral colony, a capable caretaker and possibility for a good quality of life. Unwanted ferals, stray and abandoned cats would possibly face euthanasia at ACCC-cat rescue groups could help as able.
- Caretakers interested in TNR fill out a needs assessment form and a volunteer from either MH or Alaska's KAAATs will contact them, utilizing information and resources available.

4. Information Sharing

- Mojo's Hope, Alaska's KAAATs and other agencies involved in this effort will train one another on their respective services and share information regarding other services, clients, providers and resources to assist in maintaining and updating their respective resource databases.
- Mojo's Hope, Alaska's KAAATs and other agreeing agencies will provide each other information about unmet needs for animals in the community.
- All agencies involved will share information that will impact TNR or community cats.

5. Collaborate of Community Events and Outreach

Groups will collaborate on community events and outreach.

This agreement is effective until terminated by any party and may be revised upon the mutual concurrence of all parties.

Agency represented, printed name and signature

Date: _____

Agency represented, printed name and signature

Date: _____

Agency represented, printed name and signature

Date: _____

Agency represented, printed name and signature

Date: _____