
To the Alaska Board of Game, respectfully:

I was concerned to hear that some Board members seemed to accept Proposal 144 proponents' claims that "feral cats only hang out around human settlements, where native wildlife has been destroyed and only voles and shrews are subject to cat predation." I wish to dispute these erroneous claims if that's allowed:

When allowed to "free-roam", cats are accomplished travelers: One two-year Illinois study found that 42 unconfined cats wandered over more than 6,200 acres. One particular feral cat had a home range of over 1,351 acres. As would be expected, unconfined "owned" cats have smaller home ranges than strays/ferals. What the TNR folks conveniently ignore is that in most of suburban, small town and rural AK "barn cats" can easily hunt and deposit their disease-laden feces in adjacent woodland/wilderness. As they are unconfined, there is--by definition--nothing to stop them from going to such areas.

Same applies to song-birds vis-a-vis said human settlements. Further, they're actively attracted to such settlements because people put out bird feeders. This of course makes them vulnerable to cat predation.

[Researchers track the secret lives of feral and free-roaming house cats | News Bureau | University of Illinois](#)

Also, wild Arctic foxes, bears (all three Alaskan spp.), musk ox, caribou, moose, wolves, walrus, Stellar's sealions, walrus, bearded, spotted & fur seals, river and sea otters etc. etc. in AK generally don't hang out in town. Nonetheless significant percentages of these species are infected with toxoplasmosis suggests that cats are getting near enough to "wild areas" to spread the disease to native wildlife.

The aquatic/marine mammals got it because of toxoplasmosis contamination from runoff. Could be true for some of the terrestrial mammals as well by their drinking from contaminated water bodies. Herbivores for sure pick it up from contaminated grazing areas.

In addition to contaminated soil and water, some predators get it from eating

cats. This is definitely true of bald eagles. I again re-emphasize that the TNR enthusiasts make NO mention of cat-vectored diseases. And the fact that they intend to establish their "colonies" NEAR human dwellings makes people more vulnerable to cat-vectored diseases, not less.

Sincerely,

F. H. Minshall