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Update date: 3/30/20 to reflect the most current information¹

Feral/Community Cat Protocol

Definitions

TNR: Trap Neuter Return

SNR: Shelter Neuter Return

RTF: Return to Field

Community Cat: any cat of any temperament currently living predominantly outdoors

This document has been updated 3/30/2020 to meet Shelter in Place and 90% reduction of social interaction mandates.

Purpose

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a plan and protocol should be in place to divert shelter intake and eliminate or reduce all non-essential personnel, and thus non-emergency programs. National animal welfare organizations, including NACA, have all called for the immediate pause of healthy community cat intake and spay/neuter. Community cat programming (TNR/SNR) should be paused as these cats are in no imminent risk in field, but they will become at imminent risk of sickness or euthanasia inside the shelter where spay/neuter may not be possible, nor recommended, at this time.

Procedure & Metrics

Suspension of Community Cat Programming

- TNR/SNR Services should be suspended in times of extreme crisis/shut-down and considered non-emergency programs as these cats are at no imminent risk in their outdoor homes.

Immediately

- Cease TNR operations of cats entering the shelter for TNR services.
- Advise the community that this service is paused due to COVID-19. The public should cease trapping of cats until such a date that the program is restarted. List this information on public websites and disseminate to community cat advocates.
- Prioritize Return to Field for all healthy, altered cats in shelter awaiting RTF. Enlist volunteers for this if needed.
- Cease all pick-up of healthy community or stray cats.

¹

Due to COVID-19 Shelter in Place government mandates and to accomplish a 90% reduction in social interaction, while maintaining the practice that every pet who enters a shelter should receive urgent, individualized treatment and care, with the goal of a live outcome.

In the Event of Shelter Closure or Limited Staff

- Vaccinate (if able with limited staff), then return all healthy cats to field, even if they are not yet altered.
- Advise Good Sam, if such exists, that cat will require re-trapping and to bring cat back to the shelter upon relaunch of services.
- Refuse intake of any healthy outdoor cat or kitten
- If an outdoor cat does appear over the counter, vaccinate the cat prior to sending back with Good Sam. Offer support (food, supplies) if Good Sam elects to home-foster the friendly cat during the shutdown. If cat is feral/fractious, she should be released to her original outdoor habitat for later re-trapping.
- Refuse intake of neonatal kittens. Advise Good Sam to return them to the exact location they were found. Or, support Good Sam with supplies and training on care of neonatal kittens until such a time as the shelter re-opens; however, emphasis should be placed upon the kittens being returned to the source location for the queen to resume care. If Good Sam refuses both, foster placement must be found or shelter staff should immediately return the kittens to the field.
- Sick or injured community cats may still require intake if the illness or injury is severe and life-threatening.
- If illness/injury is minor, provide supplies and training for Good Sam to foster-at-home. (Crate, feral cat den, food, litter, wet food to sneak medication into, etc.)
- If illness or injury is minor and Good Sam cannot foster, advise Good Sam to return the cat to the field if the illness/injury is not life-threatening (minor URI, scabies, surface wound, ear mites, etc.)
- Only community cats with a life-threatening illness or injury should be intaked.

AmPA! has virtual support services available for each of these protocols in the AmPA! COVID-19 Animal Shelter Preparedness Guide. For custom support or guidance on any of these protocols, or how to implement for your organization, contact us [here](#) and include "COVID-19 Support" in the message.