

Free-Roaming Cats

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society recommends that domestic owned felines be kept indoors, or allowed outdoors only in an enclosed area or secured with a leash/tie-out with appropriate supervision. The Society recognizes disparities in viewpoints of feline owners who may exercise personal choice in allowing their cats to roam outdoors. However, the Society does not support the practice of allowing cats to roam outdoors without supervision.

Definition:

Free-roaming: "Free-roaming" owned cats spend most of their time unconfined outdoors; this term focuses more on lifestyle than temperament or ownership and can include ferals, strays, and pets.

Owned: "Owned" cats are companion animals with identifiable owners and homes.

Rationale

- Research shows that indoor cats live longer and tend to be healthier than outdoor cats
- Free-roaming cats are exposed to numerous dangers:
 - DISEASE: Unvaccinated cats are at high risk of contracting diseases.
 - PARASITES: Cats can act as hosts for parasites such as fleas, ticks, worms, and/or ear mites.
 - POISONING: Cats may encounter antifreeze, yard chemicals, contaminated garbage, or poisoned animals. There are also reports of people intentionally leaving out poisoned food for cats.
 - OTHER ANIMALS: Some animals prey on cats.
 - HUMAN DANGERS: Some people view free-roaming cats as a nuisance, and may deal with them inhumanely.
 - TRAFFIC: Cats are not always adept at avoiding moving vehicles and vice versa.
 - DISORIENTATION: Cats can become disoriented when outside, leaving them unable to find their way home.
- Unsterilized, free-roaming cats contribute to the pet overpopulation problem. One unaltered male and one unaltered female can have approximately two litters averaging 2.8 kittens per year. Over the course of ten years, all those cats and the resulting offspring would add up to 80,399,780 cats.

References

1. American Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming Abandoned and Feral Cats." AVMA policy statement, n.d.
2. Humane Society of the United States. "The HSUS's Position on Cats." HSUS position statement, 2013.
3. Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. "Free-Roaming, Abandoned and Feral Cats and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) HSVMA policy statement, Washington, 2011.
4. Kortis, Bryan. "Defining Community Cats." PetSmart Charities. Last modified April 16, 2014. <https://www.petsmartcharities.org/blog/defining-community-cats>.