



Community Cats & TNR

What are community cats and how does TNR help?!

TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return)

ERAS (East Ridge Animal Shelter & Services)

Community cats are unowned, semi-owned, owned, feral, and semi-feral cats that are living outdoors. Some of these cats are friendly, and some prefer not to be approached. Semi-feral and feral cats are not adoptable cats, but there are people in the community that feed and care for them.

Community cat caregivers provide an important (and free) service to the community. Without a caregiver's intervention, the community cat population would be even larger. It is also not realistic to try to enclose community cats. There aren't enough places to put them or people to take them. It doesn't make sense to blame the existence of community cats on the people sterilizing them. Some people think that if people stop feeding community cats, the cats will leave. This isn't true. Feeding bans (prohibiting people from feeding community cats) have not decreased the community cat population because cats are bonded to their homes. If anything, the cats could become more of a nuisance after their consistent food source is gone because they might dig in people's trash for food.

The first step to co-existing with community cats is to make sure the cats are sterilized. Spraying, roaming, and yowling are common behaviors exhibited by unsterilized cats. After the cat has been sterilized, these behaviors will lessen or disappear. Simple changes to your own behavior can also make your property less attractive to cats. For example, securing your garbage can lid with bungee cords protects against cats and other wildlife like raccoons.

TNR is an animal control management practice where community cats are humanely trapped, sterilized by a veterinarian, vaccinated against rabies, ear tipped, and returned to the trapping location. An ear tip refers to the small portion of the top of a cat's ear that is removed during surgery (while the cat is under anesthesia) to indicate that the cat has been through the **TNR** process. Many peer-reviewed scientific studies have demonstrated that **TNR** not only reduces community cat populations but also saves local governments' money and improves community relations. **TNR** is the only effective method of community cat management. No other method has permanently reduced the community cat population. Lethal control has failed because it only temporarily reduces the number of cats in a specific area. Animal control officers must continually trap and kill the new cats year after year, creating a cruel cycle where cats are trapped and killed at great cost to taxpayers with no decrease in the population.

ERAS has a **TNR** program to help control the community cat population in the city of East Ridge. We are limited to how many we can take a week, but there are alternatives that you can reach out to for assistance. If you are a citizen of East Ridge, you can contact ERAS and get put on their list to have any community cats in your neighborhood **TNR'd**. If you are not a citizen or if you are a citizen and want to have the cats **TNR'd** yourself, you can contact the below groups/organizations.

SheltersNet Clinics/Organizations that perform TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return)

Scratch Inc - <https://www.scratchinc.org/>

Rad Cat - <https://www.radcatinc.org/>

Chattanooga Feral Cat Alliance - <https://chafca.org/>

McKamey Animal Center - <https://mckameyanimalcenter.org/>

Humane Educational Society of Chattanooga - <https://www.heschatt.org/>

Chattaneuter - <https://www.chattaneuter.org/>

Dixie Day Spay - <https://www.dixiedogsandcats.org/>

East Ridge Animal Services - eras@eastridgetn.gov