

# Addressing Common Concerns about Outdoor Cats

The list below includes most of the common concerns that may come up around feral cats and TNR. A variety of solutions are offered to address each issue. The solutions are most often effective when several are combined to fit the specific situation.

## **“The feeding area is messy and attracts insects/wildlife.”**

- Keep the cats’ feeding area neat and free of leftover food and trash.
- Do not overfeed the cats.
- Remove all remaining food after an hour.
- Feed during daylight hours and remove any remaining food before dusk.

## **“Too many cats around!”**

- Locate the feeding area and any shelters provided for the cats away from public view.
- Do not feed at *peak hours* when people are most likely to be in the area and see the cats.
- Discourage others from leaving handouts for the cats.
- If you provide a feeding station or shelter for the cats, make it as inconspicuous as possible by painting it to blend into the local area.

## **“Cats are sleeping under my porch.”**

- Physically block or seal the location the cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice when the cats are not there.
- Provide shelters for the cats.

## **“Cats are getting into my trash.”**

- Provide a regular food source at a set time and in an out-of-the-way location.
- Keep trash properly covered and secured.

## **“Cats are hanging out in my yard.”**

- Be sure the cats are neutered.
- Use a repellent to keep cats out of the area.
- Do not feed birds on the ground.
- Put up a six-foot fence that comes right to the ground.

## **“Cats are digging in my garden.”**

- Use a repellents to keep the cats out of the garden.
- Create a physical barrier to digging.
- Make an outdoor litter box in an acceptable place.

## **“Cats are drinking from my swimming pool.”**

- Provide alternative water away from the pool.

## **“I can smell cat urine.”**

- Spray the area thoroughly with white vinegar or with products available in pet supply stores.
- Neuter the cats to reduce marking and make urine less pungent.

## **“Cats are making a lot of noise, fighting, yowling, spraying, and breeding.”**

- Neuter cats to reduce hormones that cause these behaviors.

## **“Cats are walking on my car.”**

- Purchase a car cover to protect the car from cat prints.
- Provide a table, create a platform in a tree, or provide a shelter that cats can lie on top of.
- Move shelters and feeding stations away from the area where cars are parked.

## **“The cats might have fleas.”**

- Have your veterinarian treat for fleas when the cats are spayed or neutered.
- Add Capstar to the cats’ food.
- Change the straw bedding material in the cats’ shelters regularly and use nontoxic flea eliminators.

## **“I’m worried about our health and safety.”**

- Feral cats are naturally wary of people and will not approach humans they do not know. Feral cats will not attack anyone unless they are cornered.
- It’s always a good practice to avoid touching or cornering any animal you are not familiar with and to wash your hands thoroughly after gardening.
- Studies show that feral cats and housecats share similar health status and do not pose a risk to public health.
- TNR involves vaccinating and neutering the cats and providing ongoing care to them, which keeps them healthy.