



## COMMUNITY CATS

Loose, outdoor cats are unfortunately seen quite frequently in the Thunder Bay and surrounding area. An outdoor cat will fall in to three different categories:

### 1. An owned, outdoor cat

Some cat owners opt to let their cats roam outdoors. Depending on the cat's guardian, cats may be permitted to roam periodically or all the time. In situations like this, it is beneficial to know your neighbors and talk to them about their pets. Some cat owners may not realize that their cat is wandering so far or perhaps even being destructive.

### 2. A stray cat – (abandoned or lost cats)

It is difficult to tell whether or not a cat has been abandoned or lost. Both types of cats will likely be scared, hungry and in poor condition. Once you have ascertained that the cat needs help, your next step is to call the Thunder Bay & District Humane Society and report that you have found a stray cat. They will take a lost pet report and advise you to take a picture of the cat and post the information on the Thunder Bay Lost and Found Pets page on Facebook

If an owner cannot be located, the next step is to contact our shelter to book an appointment for drop off. Please do not bring the stray cat to the shelter without first contacting them. We will take in cats as resources and space allows. If there is a waiting period, try to provide the cat with a warm and safe place to reside. Boxes and crates can make great houses. If it is the winter, consider offering the cat a spare room in your house. Keep in mind that stray cats could have parasites - if possible, take a homeless cat to your veterinarian prior to bringing into your home. Your veterinarian will be able to microchip scan the cat and provide preventative treatment.

Abandoned or lost cats will sometimes be difficult to catch. Depending on the length of time they have been fending for themselves, they can be shy or leery. The best way to earn a cat's trust is through their stomach! Please check your local bylaws in regards to feeding stray cats before proceeding.

ALWAYS BE SURE TO DOUBLE CHECK LOST & FOUND FORUMS AND PAGES BEFORE FEEDING A STRAY CAT. THIS WILL ENSURE YOU ARE NOT ATTRACTING AN OWNED CAT TO YOUR PROPERTY.

### 3. A feral cat (wild and untouchable)

A feral cat is a domesticated cat that has returned to the wild, or the descendants of such an animal. It is distinguished from a stray cat, which is a pet cat that has been lost or abandoned, while feral cats have never been socialized, or have been in the wild so long they no longer have trust of humans. The offspring of a stray cat can be considered feral if born in the wild. Feral cats will often stay at a distance unless they are extremely hungry or injured. Feral cats that are left ear tipped are part of a managed feral cat colony. The left ear tip indicates that the cat has been sterilized through a TNR (trap, neuter, release) program.

**The Thunder Bay & District Humane Society unfortunately does not have the resources to bring feral cats in to the shelter. If there are no lost reports, your next step is to find out if there is a local TNR or Feral Cat group in your area. This will allow the cat to return to the wild, but without the ability to reproduce and contributing to the population.**



If you find a litter of kittens:

1. Resist the urge to immediately scoop these kittens up and take them to a shelter or care for them yourselves – the mother cat spends a large portion of her time out hunting, and chances are she is nearby and will return to care for them. Removing kittens before they are weaned (6-8 weeks old) greatly lessens their chance for survival.
2. First – observe! Be sure they have been abandoned before you take any action. Sprinkling a substance such as flour in a circle around where the kittens are kept or by the entrance to where they are may help to determine if mom is coming back and feeding (this really only works if the kittens are too small to leave their nest).
3. If you are certain the kittens have been abandoned, contact the The Thunder Bay & District Humane Society to speak to our receptionist about booking an appointment for drop off.
4. If they are not abandoned and mother is still caring for them, keep a close eye on the litter. They should not be removed from their mother until they are weaned. This usually occurs around 6 to 8 weeks. At this point if they are able to be caught, please contact our front desk about requesting an appointment for drop off.
5. The Thunder Bay & District Humane Society unfortunately does not have the resources to go out in to the community and pick cats up – finders must be willing to bring the cats to the shelter.