

Cats and Dogs in the Village

1. Feral Cats

The Council of the Resort Village of Mistusinne:

- Espouses the **guidelines for the humane treatment of feral cats** as established by the Canadian Humane Society (and summarized in the attachment),
- Seeks to **eliminate the feral cat population in the village or to reduce it to one or two cats that have each been spayed / neutered and immunized.**
- Realizes that the Village cannot achieve these objectives without the assistance of a group of caring citizens who volunteer to:
 - Initially feed feral cats,
 - Trap feral cats for transport to a veterinarian for either:
 - Spaying/neutering and release, or
 - Euthanasia.
 - Cooperate with village staff to manage this problem.
- To **facilitate the work of a group of private citizens wishing to assist in the humane treatment of feral cats**, the Village will:
 - Provide equipment such as a humane cat trap, a cat carrier, and a heating pad for trapping in cold weather,
 - Pay a predetermined fee for veterinarian services to be applied to pay a portion of the cost of either euthanizing or the cost of spaying/neutering and immunizing for release.
 - Provide meeting space, photocopying and mailing services to support the work of a concerned citizens group.

2. Domestic Cats and Dogs

The Council of the Resort Village of Mistusinne:

- Urges pet owners to act responsibly by:
 - Spaying and neutering their pets.
 - Keeping their pets in their yards or walking them on a leash.
- Will enforce Bylaw 07-84¹ regarding dogs running at large:
 - Provided that concerned citizens file a formal complaint at the office (preferably corroborated with a witness statement).
- Will assist citizens wishing to file a complaint about domestic cats that are a nuisance in other residents' yards by:
 - Writing to the owner of the offending cat,
 - Provided that the complainant provides a statement from a corroborating witness as to the identity of the offending cat.
- Reminds citizens that the Village does not employ an animal control officer and, as such, is dependent upon the co-operation of its citizens for enforcing these guidelines.

¹ See Policy Page on website, Mistusinne.com

ATTACHMENT - MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT FERAL CATS ²

1. Fact - Typically there are two types of feral cats.

- Those that are born and raised without human contact, and
- Those that were previously owned and then abandoned, reverting to feral behaviour.

2. Myth – All feral cats can be re-socialized with loving confinement.

Kittens less than six weeks old can be trapped and tamed. Kittens between six weeks and four months may be able to be tamed but the process takes much longer and is not always successful. The only adult feral cats that can be successfully tamed are those that were previously owned before being abandoned.

3. Myth – Feral cats can fend for themselves in the wild.

In fact, the lives of feral cats are filled with danger, disease, hunger, fear, and extreme temperatures, usually ending in a slow painful death.

4. Fact – Feral cats breed frequently.

Female cats reproduce two or three times a year. Cats can become pregnant at as early as 4-5 months of age. Within a few years, a couple of cats can produce a colony of fifty or more cats.

5. Myth – Feral cats are useful because they keep down the mouse population

A colony of feral cats quickly grows too numerous to survive by means of mice alone. Soon these cats cause other problems such as:

- Ripping open garbage bags,
- Using flower bed and sand boxes as their litter boxes,
- Frequent and loud noise from fighting and mating behaviour,
- Strong foul odours from unneutered male cats spraying to mark their territory,
- Visible suffering from dying kittens and injured adult cats.

6. Myth – The feral cat problem can be addressed by feeding the feral cats

While the feeding feral cats is a humane solution to the immediate suffering of these cats, unless the cats have been spayed/neutered, the number of cats will continue to increase until the cat colony becomes too large to support by feeding. Also, should the persons feeding the cats move away, the cats are left without the support they have learned to depend on. A program for feeding feral cats should be part of an overall plan for dealing with the problem.

7. Myth – Feral cats can be moved to a better location such as a farm.

It is very difficult to trap feral cats. Typically, the only people who can successfully trap feral cats are their caregivers who know their numbers and behaviour patterns. Also, although many people think that "cats can be transported to some farmyard paradise and let loose", this rarely happens.

² Information taken from www.catcaresociety.org/feral.html and www.winnipeghumanesociety.ca/feral-cats

Unless the host farmers agree to provide food and shelter, the cat colony will likely not survive solely on mice. Feral cats on farms are just as likely to starve, freeze, contract illness and suffer.

8. Fact – There are two options for dealing with adult feral cats.

- (1) Neutering and releasing. Cats that are neutered and returned to their familiar environment are healthier and will not be adding to the pet overpopulation problem by having unwanted litters. Neutered cats that have received their shots³ and are living wild in small stable colonies are healthier and nicer to have around. With supplementary feeding, the neutered colony can control the mice population without adding to the nuisance factor.
- (2) Euthanasia by a qualified veterinarian is often the kindest way to relieve the hunger and suffering that a feral cat suffers.

Both options require the trapping of the feral cats.

9. Fact – Trapping feral cats begins with a planned feeding program

Feral cats should be fed on a regular schedule, preferably early morning and late evening, in a safe area away from dogs or children. After a period of feeding, the food can be moved into a humane animal trap, and the cat is caught.

10. Fact – Humane trapping needs to be carefully planned

The essentials for trapping feral cats are:

- The use of a humane trap which does not cause any pain (although it does frighten the animal).
- A prior arrangement with a veterinarian for dealing with the cat (either by neutering or by euthanasia) immediately upon trapping. Animals should not be held in the trap for more than 12 hours.
- Placing the trap in a sheltered location.
- Checking of the trap every few hours and never leaving the trap unattended.
- Never trapping during extreme heat or extreme cold.
- After the animal is trapped, covering the trap with a blanket (with the ends open for ventilation) to ease the animal's panic and immediate transporting of the animal to the vet.

10. Fact – Taming a feral kitten takes time and patience

Initially the kitten should be kept in a small room such as a bathroom or bedroom where it cannot hide. Escape routes or hiding places must be blocked (where plumbing enters the wall or heating ducts). Provide a warm bed, fresh food and water, a litter box and toys. Make frequent short visits. Use heavy gloves when handling the kitten. Of course, the kitten must be spayed or neutered and given the necessary shots for rabies or feline leukemia.

³ For rabies and feline leukemia