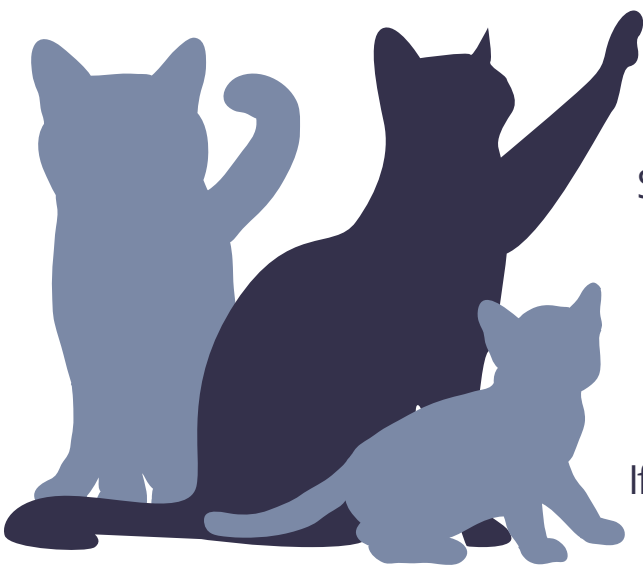


STRAY CATS



Stray and feral cats are a growing problem in the United States. In fact, the Feral Cat Coalition has estimated more than 60 million stray cats exist. That's a lot of cats!

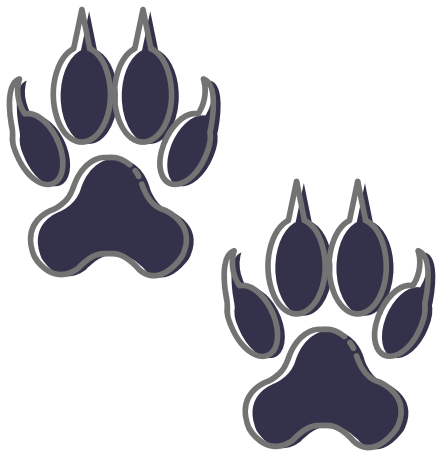
Even if you like cats (not everyone does, you know!), you probably don't want strays using your lawn, garden, sandbox and/or planters as a litter box. It's stinky, gross, and cat feces can carry parasites.

If stray cats are having a field day in your flower beds, you need to know how to keep them out of your yard.

DISCOURAGING OUTSIDE CATS

There are a number of ways that can help keep any outdoor, stray, or feral cats away from your yard:

- **Remove Food:** Feral cats will stay in any area where food is plentiful. Avoid feeding your own pets outdoors and cover trash scraps securely to keep from giving unwelcome cats an easy meal.
- **Close Shelter:** All wild animals need a secure place to sleep and to raise their young.
- **Make Life Uncomfortable:** Cats are well known for their love of relaxation, and making a yard uncomfortable can discourage feral visitors. Fill flower beds and areas where cats lounge with sharp pebbles, eggshell shards, or a layer of chicken wire so the ground will be uncomfortable.
- **Remove Temptations:** Unaltered males will be attracted to any female cats in heat.
- **Repellents:** Cats have very keen senses of smell and taste, and commercial repellents are available to discourage unwanted cats. Natural repellents to sprinkle on flowerbeds or gardens include **moth balls, ammonia soaked rags, ground mustard, cayenne pepper, citrus peels, coffee grounds, and citrus-based sprays.** Reapply repellents after heavy rains or long periods for the best effectiveness.
- **Scare the Cats:** Old-fashioned scare tactics can discourage cats from visiting a yard regularly. Ultrasonic sirens, motion-activated sprinklers, and motion-activated lights can all be useful.
- **Humane Traps:** Spring-loaded humane traps can be effective for catching feral cats that can then be turned over to local shelters and rescues.
- **Spread the Word:** A feral cat's territory extends well beyond a single yard. Talk to neighbors about the problems with feral cats and encourage them to take similar steps to discourage unwelcome visitors.



TECHNIQUES TO AVOID

No matter how problematic feral cats may be in the yard, there are certain techniques that should never be used to keep these unwanted visitors away, including:

- Poisons or any toxic contamination
- Shooting, even with non-lethal ammunition or pellet guns
- Inhumane traps, including glue traps
- Aggressive dogs

These techniques are difficult to control, and using them against feral, stray, or domestic cats can violate local laws. Furthermore, because these methods are unpredictable, using them can have negative consequences against unintentional targets such as neighbors' outdoor pets, other wildlife, or people.

CITY OF WATAUGA ORDINANCES

The City of Watauga recognizes that we do have a stray cat problem; not many people know that it is in-fact against City Ordinance to feed stray animals.

In an effort to help control the growing stray cat population we want to remind you:

- **Harboring** means the act of keeping and caring for an animal or of providing premises to which the animal returns for food, shelter, or care for a period of ten days.
- **Owner** means any person who has right or property in an animal or allows an animal to remain about his premises for a period of ten days.
- **Running at large** means:
 - (1) **Off-premises.** Any dog, cat, or other animal which is not restrained by means of a leash or chain of sufficient strength and length to permit the animal's action to be controlled while off-premises.
 - (2) **On-premises.** Any dog, cat, or other animal not confined on the premises of its owner by a substantial fence or other enclosure of sufficient strength and height to prevent the animal from escaping therefrom. However, an animal shall not be considered to be "at large" if it is secured on a premises by a leash or chain of sufficient strength to prevent the animal from escaping from the premises when the chain or leash is extended to its maximum length. However, every chained or leashed animal shall be provided access to water and food at all times.

Sec. 6-35. - Running at large. It shall be unlawful for any person owning or harboring an animal to permit such animal to run at large. This does apply to cats. Cats may only be outside of its' enclosure if it is on a leash.

The City of Watauga does not support or allow T.N.R. (Trap, Neuter, & Release) Programs within city limits.



CITY OFFERED SOLUTIONS



The Shelter can provide Watauga residents with a trap for a \$55.00 deposit that will be returned to you once you have trapped the wildlife/animal you are wanting removed from your property. You may also use your own private trap as long as it is humane, Animal Control will remove whatever you may have trapped.

Additionally, if you know of a neighbor feeding outside cats or if you know who the cat's rightful owner is, this information should be reported to Animal Control. An Animal Control Officer will then speak with the home owner/resident about city code violations and tips on how to alleviate the issue. It is possible a citation will be issued. As a general practice we wish to be a part of the solution, issuing a citation is a last resort.

Click [here](#) to print a Live Animal Trap Request Form.

The City of Watauga Animal Services staff can be reached at 817.656.9614 or by stopping by the Animal Services Center, 5203 Watauga Road.