

# CATS group seeks donations for spay/neuter efforts

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Staff Reporter

Cats Around Town Society (CATS) — a 501(c) organization established in 2008 as a way to help reduce the area's feral cat population by offering free trap-neuter-release (TNR) services to the community — is currently seeking volunteers and donations to help fuel their mission.

"There's hundreds of free-roaming cats in our area that are still unaltered," said Nancy Ward, the group's secretary, noting that, since January 2015, CATS has facilitated more than 250 spay/neuter operations and rabies vaccinations.

"It started small, and then more and more... Two unaltered cats can reproduce pretty darn fast. It just got bigger and bigger over the years as the year-round population has grown in this area."

Ward said the group covers the area from the Delaware/Maryland border to the Indian River Inlet Bridge, and west to Route 113 and Route 26. They have worked in neighborhoods including Plantation Park and Bear Trap.

"Dagsboro had a real problem, and we did a major TNR and did approximately 35 cats," she added. "It's pretty bad. I volunteer at the SPCA, and we're constantly rounding up cats."

Natalie Bailey, who lives in Banks Acres, said her experience with CATS couldn't have been better.

"My neighbor had called them because all of a sudden we had an influx of stray cats. We normally have one or two, because we have two chicken houses around us, but all of a sudden we had black-and-white cats everywhere.

"It's a really good rescue group. I surely wish I had more funds to be able to donate to them. They don't just take the cats and get rid of them. They'll fix them for us and bring them back here and drop them off after," she said. "They actually do the catch and release. They don't catch the animal and just take it somewhere to be euthanized."

Bailey said CATS was able to trap four adult cats and seven kittens, over about a month.

"She actually got all the adults fixed, and it was all paid for by CATS, because I can't afford to pay for four cats that I don't even own," she said. "She took all seven kittens. They're being rehabilitated right now. They're all getting shots, they're all getting fixed and will then be sent to PetSmart to be adopted out."

Although some may not be happy about the cats return to their area following their visit to the SPCA to be fixed, Bailey said it actually helps reduce the cat population in the long run.

"It helps preventing any new cats from coming in the area, as well as reproducing ... because they're claiming that territory. And at least those cats that are claiming the area aren't reproducing.

"If Nancy hadn't helped us out, we probably would've ended up with 100 cats by the end of summer. One female cat can carry two litters, and there were males and females. They would've kept reproducing, reproducing, reproducing, and we would've had a crazy cat population here, and nobody wants that. As great as cats are, we don't want 100 cats in the neighborhood."

"There's a reason why you've got a feral cat colony, so more are going to come

in,” added Ward. “But if you keep the colony, get everyone sterilized, get the kittens out, fostered and adopted, you’re not going to have more come in. Eventually, through attrition, you’re not going to have a feral cat colony.” CATS has 20 cat traps that assist them in catching the feral cats in order to transport them to be fixed.

“If somebody calls us and says, ‘I have six cats hanging out around my house,’ we’ll take out the six traps and we will show the person how to use them. Occasionally, it’ll be an elderly or disabled person, so we’re the ones who actually have to do the setting and trapping,” explained Ward.

“But the ideal situation is us just going out, loaning out or traps, showing them how to use them, and the residents doing the setting of the traps. Usually, it takes a few nights. A cat will usually feed real close to the cage; then the next night it’s in the cage; then the third, fourth night, we set it.”

Captured cats are taken to the SPCA on Wednesdays for their spay-neuter clinic. Kittens are fostered, until they are able to be fixed, vaccinated and are then adopted out through PetSmart.

Ward said CATS is working hard to get out of fostering kittens, as the group’s primary objective is to offer TNR.

With approximately 12 members, Ward said the group is always seeking volunteers. From transporting cats in traps to the SPCA on Wednesdays, to serving on the fundraising/grant-writing committee, fostering kittens, writing articles, sending letters to legislators and more, Ward said every little bit helps.

“We are a small but active, hardworking group of volunteers,” said Ward.

The group is currently seeking donations from the public to help fund their efforts — to sustain the cost of operation and vaccination of the area’s free-roaming cats.

“We’re helping the community reduce the population of free-roaming cats, getting their kittens into homes, and helping vaccinating each and every cat that we take against rabies, so it’s a healthier cat population out there.”

Ward said the group is grateful for the donations and support it has received. She noted the Elaine C. Moore Group, along with Giant Foods in Millville, for their support.

She added that, although people may not see a free-roaming cat outside their house right now, without the efforts of organizations like CATS, the population of free-roaming cats will eventually affect everyone.

“I live in South Bethany, but I do not see that. But if we did not do something to stop the overpopulation, I would start looking out my door and start seeing feral cats,” she said. “Maybe in your neighborhood, you don’t have free-roaming cats, but if we don’t continue what we’re doing, then it’s going to be in everybody’s back yard.”

For more information about CATS, to make a donation or become a volunteer, visit [www.catsaroundtown.com](http://www.catsaroundtown.com) or [www.facebook.com/pages/Cats-Around-Town-Society/804863706208706?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cats-Around-Town-Society/804863706208706?fref=ts).

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