



By Shelley Broussard

Is Your Cat Spayed? It's Never Too Late



Photograph by Muriel Castille

A feral is being eartipped at the Big Fix Rig which took place in March 2007. The eartip is the universal sign for spay/neuter.

Ever since I was a little girl I always knew my calling was to make a difference in the animal world. Maybe it's because I had a neighbor who was cruel to animals, maybe it was because I always found animals abandoned in deserted places left for starvation, maybe it was from seeing the animal control truck passing and knowing what that meant. Regardless, I knew my mission was to change society. Later in life it became very clear just how to go about changing our society. Changing society is a matter of educating and offering high volume, affordable and accessible spay/neutering for pet owners and aggressive TNR (trap, neuter, return).

I researched other states to see how they handled overpopulation and was immediately amazed by the presence of spay/neuter clinics and mobile spay/neuter units. The mobile spay/neuter unit consumed me because that was the key to going out to the rural areas where animals are often forgotten. I knew owning one would take years of saving. After much drive and determination, what seemed to be a dream blossomed into reality in March, 2007 when The Big Fix Rig arrived in Lafayette.

The Big Fix Rig is a 53 foot state of the art mobile, stationary unit which enables high volume, high quality low cost spay/neuter for cats. The rig was hosted by Wild Cat Foundation and Lafayette Animal Aid and joining the efforts were Acadiana Humane Society and PAAW. In just an 18 day period of time 983 cats were spayed on the rig and 100 were routed to local veterinarians. Folks were rounding up kitty cats from everywhere. It was a scene I will never forget. This was one of the largest volumes the rig has had in the 18 days of operation! The cats were all treated for ear mites and received free rabies vaccinations. All feral cats (free roaming strays) were ear tipped which is the universal sign of spay/neuter. The volunteers were many and the days were tireless, nevertheless; everyone had such wonderful spirit and teamed up beautifully to pull this historic event off.

The huge success of the rig proves that affordability and accessibility are two main factors in whether or not animals are spayed. Our goal remains to find ways to provide low cost spay/

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983 cats were spayed/ neutered in just 18 days of

neuter for low income pet owners and ferals. There is power in numbers and just as concerned citizens pulled together responsibly to actively assist in controlling the population it is my hope that we continue to pull together physically and financially. As we embrace our future challenges with much excitement we remain determined that the possibility of a no kill future is within reach.

Against All Odds

Illustration by Paula Stude-Alesi



After many years of being away, I returned to my family home on Bayou Teche. I was struck by how much and yet how little life had changed. My mother was very dedicated to her family and the church. She had raised me with a strong sense of pride, family loyalty, and love. She also taught me not to question my elders. I worshiped my mother

and excused certain traits that I did not comprehend. My grandmother hated cats, my mother feared them, and I was somewhere in between. Mother taught me to trap pesky cats that entered our domain. After all, they had little value and were not as resourceful as other animals. The plan was simple, trap the cats and she would make them disappear. To my dismay, the cats just kept coming, more and more cats.

“ The question then arose: Were there more cats, or was I just in this battle

I could no longer come to terms with my mother’s plan. But one thing was certain. I could now make my own choices. I still trap cats, but now I have them spayed. I give them food and shelter and in return they don’t get too close.

Nora G.
Arnaudeville, LA

TNR At its Best!: No Excuse Can Ever Hold Water



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

After a well deserved meal ... a fully satisfied TOMCAT

By Tina Marie Poirier

This man who I shall call “TOMCAT” found several kittens in some wooden pallets at work. Tomcat and his wife, bottle fed the kittens until they were healthy adorable cats.

A few months later, Tomcat is diagnosed with cancer and several medical conditions associated with his disease. Time escaped TOMCAT. Sick from his medical condition and overwhelmed with his ever growing colony of cats, he contacted the Wildcat Foundation requesting advise and help with how he could gain control. He did not want to relocate or destroy any of his feral cats. Both Tomcat and his wife love their cats! Weak and tired from his cancer treatments, Tom and his wife trapped...one by one. Some days none, when he was too sick. Tomcat and his wife trapped every last one of his cats: the number was in the triple digits. Once neutered/spayed, they released the cats back onto his property.



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

The highly anticipated meal

When people tell me they cannot do this or that, I just tell the story about my friend “TOMCAT”.

Today, Tomcat and his feral cats are healthy and happy living life to its fullest! His wife has renamed Tomcat to “HOUSECAT” because he is her purrfect TOM and could never be replaced.

Low Cost Spay/Neuter + TNR + *Adoptions* + **Fosters**
= **No-Kill Equation**

Photograph by Marinella Suriani



An Eye Opener

By Paula Stude-Alesi
WildCat Foundation
President

Dear Feral Friends,

A very close friend recently asked me why I do TNR. She said, "We don't have a cat problem where I live". I wanted to ask her if she was dreaming, or if she navigated her way through the city seeing only what she wanted to see. I did not want to leave her with an image of me being a mad cat woman, nor did I want to leave feeling she was a non-believer. She needed knowledge to understand our feral cat crisis. I decided to be reasonable. I told her about the benefits that come with TNR such as how it simplifies people's lives, fighting between Tomcats comes to an end, and no longer would there be unwanted kittens. I also told her how a person could trap and kill till the cows come home and new cats would replace the vanished ones. When we parted, I felt confident our friendship had passed an important hurdle.

Thought You Should Know:

- A feral cat is considered a wild animal which is often the offspring of unaltered or stray cats.
- A kitten starts reproducing by the age of four months.
- A cat can produce 3 litters of kittens per year.
- Unfortunately, feral kittens have a fifty percent mortality rate.
- If you see a kitten in a parking lot - it's mom is most likely a feral.
- Just last year, almost 2000 ferals were TNR'ed in Lafayette and its surrounding areas.
- There is an estimated 60 million to 120 million feral cats within the U.S. alone.

"With Vision Comes Responsibility . . ."

Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. Whether she meant to or not, my friend was seeing only what she allowed herself to see. With vision comes responsibility. Let's face it, animal rescue people or anyone else who is committed to a cause, can be overbearing (Council of Aging, St. Jude's, Save the Horse Farm). Once the word is out that you are active towards a cause, people you haven't seen in years phone to say things like, "I'm feeding a cat that has had kittens and she is not mine". Most want and expect you to take care of the problem pronto.

It would be to society's advantage to solve this dilemma. Those who do too much would then have time to enjoy some of life's simple pleasures and those who don't do enough would open a valuable new door for themselves. In the meantime, I'm going to take a vow to judge less, educate instead of badger, and embrace the vision.



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

By Marinella Suriani

Sometimes It Just Can't Be All About The Cats.

Because We Care

We receive phone calls almost every single day on situations regarding cats. However, on June 29, The Wild Cat Foundation had a different challenge to face. This time the event originated when a cat was chased and sadly killed by a dog. The story though, does not end there. This dog managed to get underneath a neighbour's house and somehow its collar got hooked on a water pipe.

The dog was trapped for ten days!

Numerous requests for help by the homeowners fell on deaf ears. Agency after agency denied the assistance needed to save this animal's life.

WildCat Responds Without Hesitation

One of our volunteers drove to the home and within minutes released the dog. The St. Martin Humane Society generously assisted with the rescue and aftercare of the neglected animal.



Photograph by Tina Marie Poirrier

The newly-named "Jaime Blue" feeling great after her ordeal.

To see an update on Jaime Blue you can go to:
http://stmartin humane.org/guardian_angel/jaime/jaime.htm



Photograph by Tina Marie Poirrier

The dog trapped underneath the house



Photograph by Tina Marie Poirrier

A volunteer for WildCat reaches out to help the trapped dog

"It is a problem of human responsibility, and no amount of theories or number crunching can solve the moral disconnect that allows people to think they're above taking responsibility for the living things around them-not just their own life, not just their family, not just their friends".

The Dogs Who Found Me

By Ken Foster



Support Our Cause

Get Involved

For more information on TNR please visit.

<http://www.alleycats.org>

or call

1-337-371-9865

Ways You Can Reach Out :

- Join IGive.com/wildcatfoundation.
- Ask your veterinarian to neuter a feral.
- Contact parish authorities to implement a TNR program in your area.
- Spay a feral in a friend's name and in return he or she will receive a personalized note, a photo of the feral and good will.
- If you are a UL student help to promote a progressive campus by implementing TNR.
- Participate in our Take'em Off/Bake Off in conjunction with St. Martin Human Society.

An SOS

By Marinella Suriani



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

On June 30, 2007 I decided to participate as a volunteer for the SOS. I had heard about the famous rig, and the numerous cats spayed over the period of 18 days. I immediately thought, this is going to be a very interesting experience, and sure it was! However, nobody really mentioned the amount of work involved in an event of this sort. Let's just put it this way ... it was a long weekend, but I loved it! It's really impressive when you see so many people concerned about feral cats. Cats that do not have anybody to care for them, but at the end, are the result of human cruelty through neglect of not altering. That weekend a small number of generous volunteers from every animal rescue organization showed up for duty, and collaborated with WildCat Foundation's efforts.

The work started on Friday night, and ended the following Monday. With little help, little resources but great will and care for the ferals we tackled a few areas around Lafayette. The night seemed endless, but a fully loaded car with ferals was a conquered goal for the first night. However, the night was not over yet. Following the trapping, accommodations were needed for the felines. Everyone was nicely set up at WildCat's facility, where volunteers awaited to make sure they would receive the best care they could get. We got to bed around 2 am. The next morning started quite early. Cats needed to be transported to a location that another volunteer nicely provided for the SOS to take place.

At 9 am, the veterinarian staff initiated their work. Almost 40 cats were fixed by 3 pm. Every cat that left the surgical facility was closely monitored by those volunteers designated for recovery. Long day ... but it was worth it! That night was very similar to the prior night. Bedtime again was not earlier than 2 am. I was one of the many volunteers who slept an average of 6 hours during the time the SOS was in town.



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

A little confused and scared feral awaits its turn for surgery

Despite the great success of the SOS, we can't forget that there still is a long road ahead of us. 109 was the total number of spayed ferals this time. However, how many more unaltered ones yet, are out there? And I just can't help but wonder ... why in a country like the U.S. with countless resources there are still so many ferals on the streets?

"Is it lack of information ... laziness ... affordability... apathy ... ignorance ... lack of compassion?"



WildCat Foundation

Promoting Solutions to Overpopulation

1001 E St. Mary Blvd.
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"We work in the dark. We do what we can. We give what we have." Henry Grey

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I'm not American. I've been in Lafayette for 3 and a half years, and I never felt at home, and always wanted to go back. I accidentally got involved with the people of WildCat, and now that I'm about to relocate I grieve. I met wonderful people, that do wonderful things for the uncared ferals. I wish more people from gubernamental agencies, private veterinarians and regular folks in general, did half of what WildCat has done and keeps doing for the ferals of this community.

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Visit our Website for our adoptable pets:

<http://petfinder.com/shelters/LA140.html>



Photograph by Marinella Suriani

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