

What to Do About Unwanted Cats in Your Yard

CATS INDOORS

Bird lovers, indoor cat owners, gardeners, and homeowners often ask, “What can I do about feral cats or my neighbor’s pets getting into my yard, digging up and fouling my garden, spraying my bushes and deck, and killing birds at my feeders?” Here are some answers.

Ask your neighbor to Keep Their Cat Indoors: The best solution is to talk with your neighbor and politely ask them to keep their cat indoors or under their control when outside. The ABC brochure, *Cats, Birds, and You*, and fact sheet, *How to Make an Outdoor Cat a Happy Indoor Cat*, (both available at www.abcbirds.org/cats), should be helpful in explaining to your neighbor why they should keep their cat indoors and how to best make that transition.

Contact Animal Control

If politely talking with your neighbor fails to solve the problem or feral cats are being a nuisance, contact your local animal control office and ask for their advice and assistance. If the animal control office is not helpful, contact your local elected city or county officials and ask for their help.



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Humanely trapping cats: When all else fails, some people feel they have no choice but to trap nuisance cats and take them to a shelter. You should check local laws first, because in some areas, it is illegal to trap a pet cat, even if it is on your property. Also, if you know it is a pet, warn your neighbor that you plan to trap their cat if they refuse to control it.

Many animal control agencies or shelters have humane live traps to lend to homeowners who need to trap a nuisance animal. Regularly check the trap, preferably every hour. A word of caution: well-fed cats can be hard to trap. You may also end up trapping non-target animals such as raccoons, opossums, or skunks, so avoid trapping at night. Also, minimize trauma to the cat by gently handling the trap, and put a cloth over it during transportation.

Take the cat to your local shelter and if it’s your neighbor’s cat tell the shelter staff so that they can contact your neighbor. You should also contact

your neighbor right away. Never abandon the cat or harm it in any way. Be extremely careful not to get bitten or scratched, especially if you are trapping stray or feral cats, because they may carry rabies and other diseases. For more tips on trapping cats, see the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals fact sheet, *Feral Cats: Trapping is the Kindest Solution*, at: <http://www.peta.org/issues/Companion-Animals/feral-cats-trapping-is-the-kindest-solution.aspx>.

Working for laws to prohibit free-roaming cats: While this can be an effort, working for local cat ordinances to decrease a cat over-population problem or to prohibit free-roaming cats can be very effective, especially if the necessary funding for enforcement goes along with it. For more information, see the fact sheet, *Get The Facts About Cat Law* at: www.abcbirds.org/cats.

Fencing around bird feeders: Some people have found that placing poultry or rabbit wire fencing around bird feeders and bird baths is a very effective way to prevent cats from killing birds at these locations. The fence need only be two feet high and four feet in diameter. If a cat tries to jump over it, the birds have a greater opportunity to fly away.

