

Responsible Cat Ownership Outreach

(side project completed by Jaylene Harper (Wildsight Golden's Invasive Plant Program Coordinator 2018))

The Invasive Plant Coordinator of the 2018 Community Invasive Plant Program (Jaylene Harper) put time towards getting more public outreach regarding “responsible cat ownership” out into the Town of Golden. The goal was to bring more awareness to cat owners about how devastating roaming cats have proved to be to songbird populations. Responsible cat ownership includes: not letting your cat roam unsupervised, creating a “catio”/safe enclosed outdoor space for your cat, leash training your cat, keeping your cat indoors as much as possible, and putting bird feeders/houses in appropriate locations where cats are not able to reach them. Two organizations which have great programs on this cat and bird topic, Nature Canada and the Stewardship Centre for British Columbia, were contacted by Jaylene and asked if they would each donate their brochures which give information on responsible cat ownership. Both brochures were sent in quantities of 45 and 70 and were distributed on August 23rd by Jaylene to locations within Golden associated with cat ownership. These locations included: Golden's two local pet shops (Pet Valu and Happy Tail Pet Supplies), Little Mittens (animal rescue), and the local Veterinarian office. Both Little Mittens and Pet Valu, who work together on cat adoptions, agreed to add the two brochures to their adoption package. All locations were willing to display or hand out the brochures to current or future cat owners. A meeting at Little Mittens, on August 17th 2018, occurred between Jaylene and the Executive Director of the animal rescue. Little Mittens expressed to Jaylene that they have been striving to reduce feral cat populations by volunteering to spay mother cats and their kittens at no charge, as well as by taking in feral cats when possible. Although their current budget does not allot to creating a larger sanctuary for feral cats (they did not receive as many grants as hoped in 2018), they do have goals to expand their cat rescue facility, as well as continue to reduce feral cat populations.

WHO WE ARE

Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives is a coalition of individuals and organizations concerned about the well-being of cats and birds. We believe all creatures are important, and as humans we owe both cats and birds protection. Led by Nature Canada, the oldest national nature conservation charity in the country, the coalition includes national partners Bird Studies Canada, Earth Rangers and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, as well as an ever-growing list of regional and local partners.

Please visit www.catsandbirds.ca to see a current list of partners.



We are grateful for financial support from:










RESOURCES TO KEEP CATS SAFE & SAVE BIRD LIVES

Please see the links below, or contact us at Info@catsandbirds.ca for more information.



Resources for Cat Owners

Ensuring a Stimulating Environment
www.catsandbirds.ca/research/safe-happy-cat

Safe Outdoor Options
www.catsandbirds.ca/research/cat-enclosures-and-catios

Harness Training your Cat
www.catsandbirds.ca/research/harness-training-your-cat

Dealing with Escape Artists
www.catsandbirds.ca/research/dealing-with-escape-artists

What to Do if You Find an Injured Bird

To find a wildlife rehabilitator near you
www.ontario.ca/page/find-wildlife-rehabilitator

Other resources available at www.catsandbirds.ca

- DIY Cat Shelf
- Cat Proofing Your Garden
- Cat Spray Solutions
- Homeowner's Brochure: Window Collision Prevention

KEEP CATS SAFE & SAVE BIRD LIVES

www.catsandbirds.ca

Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives celebrates the contributions that cats and birds make to our lives, environment, and community.

We invite **YOU** to consider what you can do to make Canada a safer place to live for both cats and birds.



"Both cats and birds are safer when cats are protected from the risks of roaming unsupervised outdoors."

-Dr. Shane Bateman, DVM

KEEP CATS SAFE & SAVE BIRD LIVES


www.catsandbirds.ca

KEEP CATS SAFE

There are roughly 10 million pet cats in Canada, and about 4 million of those spend time outdoors unsupervised. But outdoors can be a very dangerous place!

Risks for cats when unsupervised outdoors

- **DISEASES** including Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus, Rabies, Feline Distemper, Feline Leukemia
- **CARS**
- **FIGHTS** with other cats, wildlife, or dogs
- **PARASITES** such as fleas, ticks, earmites, worms
- **POISONING** from common garden plants, antifreeze, rat poison, etc
- **GETTING LOST** The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies' shelter statistics indicate that while 31% of dogs are reclaimed by their owners, only 5% of cats are.



SAVE BIRD LIVES

Another good reason to keep your cat from roaming freely is the risk to birds and wildlife.

- More than 400 species of birds can be found in Canada
- The number of bird species at risk increased from 47 to 86 between 2001 and 2014
- More than 115 bird species are considered vulnerable to cats because they nest or feed near the ground; these include species at risk such as Barn Swallows and Wood Thrushes, as well as popular birds like Cardinals and Goldfinches
- Birds provide vital services such as reducing insect pests and regenerating forests through dispersing seeds

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES


Pet cats hunt for stimulation, and there are lots of alternative ways to meet that need.

Safe outdoor options include:

- Catios
- Cat Fencing
- Cat enclosures
- Cats walks and tents
- Harness-walking

Tips to help keep your cat healthy, happy and safe indoors:

- Invest in a scratching post, puzzles & feeding toys
- Get your cat a window perch for non-stop entertainment
- Provide cat-nip or cat-grass
- Spend 10-15 minutes twice a day playing with and petting your cat
- Look into adopting a playmate



Stewardship Centre for BC brochure:

The Feral Cat Epidemic

Every year in Canada, an estimated 1 million cats end up homeless. They are either born feral or abandoned by their owners. These cats have a devastating impact on birds and wildlife.

- Never abandon an unwanted cat or kitten outdoors. Take them to a shelter to give them the best chance at finding a safe home.
- Resist feeding unowned or feral cats unless you can commit to finding them a permanent indoor home.



What can we do to reduce cat overpopulation?

There are an estimated 10.2 million unowned cats in Canada. Animal welfare groups and shelters become easily overwhelmed as only 47% of cats are adopted to new homes. Only 5% of the clearly-owned cats that end up in shelters are claimed by owners. This is a tragedy for cats and for communities.

- Adopt from your local shelter. Cats come spayed and neutered and there are all ages and temperaments to choose from.
- Always have your cats spayed or neutered to prevent unwanted kittens.
- Respect and follow animal bylaws in your municipality.

Fact: Spaying female cats before one year old reduces the rate of mammary cancer by 80-90%. Neutered male cats are less aggressive and they spray less often than intact males.

Isn't it cruel to keep a cat indoors?

Because they are smart and independent, we think cats can look after themselves, but they are not wild animals. For thousands of years they have been bred to be pampered domestic companions. Outdoor cats are exposed to the risks of predation, parasites, diseases, trauma and toxins. When raised indoors, many cats show little desire to go outside, and even outdoor cats can adapt to being indoor pets with patience, alternative activities, and time. Most cat welfare groups recommend keeping cats indoors with only supervised outdoor access (e.g. screened porch, leash and harness).

Tips for Happy Indoor Cats

- Provide window spots so your cat can look outdoors and watch the neighbourhood.
- Cats love to perch up high. Install a cat post or shelves to give your cat "a bird's eye view."
- Cats prefer two litter boxes with daily cleaning. Litter type, depth, and smell all make a big difference.
- Spay or neuter your cat at 4-6 months.
- Play with your cat and encourage their urge to chase and pounce with toys.
- Provide comfortable beds. Cats spend an average of 15 hours per day sleeping.
- Provide your cat's favourite type of scratching posts such as vertical or horizontal posts of cardboard, carpet or natural fibre.
- Use food puzzles to make cats think their way to dinner.
- Provide multiple hiding spots in your home.
- Provide access to outdoors with a screened porch and an enclosed outdoor run (catio).
- If trained when young, cats enjoy walking with a leash and harness.

Art by Manda Mapp. Photos from Ird Andej, Izard Hobbs, and Wikimedia Commons.



The Happy Cat

Tips for Responsible Pet Ownership



STEWARDSHIP CENTRE
FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Stewardship Centre for BC urges you to keep your feline family members indoors and adopt these tips. It's better for cats and better for birds, bats and other wildlife.

For further information go to:
www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca
1-866-456-7222



What is a responsible cat owner?

Being a good guardian isn't just about keeping your cat fed and healthy. It is also your job to keep your cat safe and be responsible for your pet's behaviour.

DO

- ✓ Keep your cat indoors, with only supervised outdoor access.
- ✓ Ensure your pet is spayed or neutered, even if it's an indoor cat.
- ✓ Identify your cat with permanent identification, so it can be returned to you if lost.
- ✓ Take your cat to the vet for annual check-ups and vaccinations.

DON'T

- ✗ Let your unsterilized cat roam where it may meet other cats or predators.
- ✗ Let your cat cross roads where it could get hit.
- ✗ Let your cat use neighbours' gardens and children's play areas as a litter box.
- ✗ Let your cat chase and kill birds, bats, or other wildlife.



Fact: An indoor cat's life expectancy is 10-20 years, but outdoor cats live 2-5 years on average.

Look what the cat brought in!



Outdoor cats can bring home diseases that are picked up from other cats, wildlife that are caught and eaten, and from the soil. Fleas are easily picked up and easily multiply in your home. Feline leukemia is life-threatening to your pet. Cat scratch disease, rabies, flea-borne typhus, plague, roundworms, and toxoplasmosis are serious diseases that can be transferred from cats to humans.

Fact: Did you know that over 60% of cat owners in Canada keep their cats indoors?

Cats are natural hunters

Cats can have a devastating impact outdoors because of their powerful hunting instinct. Studies have demonstrated that cats may only bring home about 20% of their wildlife prey. Even if they leave the house on full stomachs, cats will still seek out and kill birds, bats and other wildlife.

It is unfair and irresponsible to let wild animals suffer for our pet's brief entertainment. As their caregivers, we need to replace that hunting activity with stimulating play activities.

Wildlife in Canada need your help

Birds play an important role in all ecosystems and brighten up our lives with their colourful beauty, bird song and activity. The #1 direct source of bird deaths in the country is hunting by domestic and feral cats. Cats are estimated to kill 100-350 million birds every year in Canada, many of them nestlings.

Bats can eat their body weight in insects every night and are vital to control insect pests. Cats may hunt bats as they swoop out of their roost to forage, or prey on sick bats that may have ended up on the ground. Visit www.bcbats.ca for more information.

Let's keep birds safe from free-roaming cats.

Cats and birds don't mix!

If you feed birds, make sure feeders are located away from places where cats can hide.

- Keep your cat inside.
- Don't put out bird feeders if you have cats coming into your yard.
- Bells or collars will not prevent wildlife mortalities.



Fact: Canada's songbird population is in serious decline. Many bats are now at risk like this endangered Little Brown Myotis.