

Self Help Guide to Strays

Animal shelters nationwide are faced with an overpopulation crisis! Millions of friendly, healthy animals are killed due to a lack of homes. Many no kill shelters, like Forgotten Felines and Fidos, run solely on donations and are at capacity.

When you find a stray cat or a momma cat with kittens, you may be the only hope in saving the animal. Shelters may be full and unable to help you, especially during buy "kitten season" (spring).

We would like to offer you some guidance in dealing with strays. With your cooperation and caring, and our resources, we can help you save a life! We are here to help you find a good solution so one less animal has to suffer.

First and foremost, any stray should be spayed (female) or neutered (male). This is the best way to control the population. Low cost spay or neuter options are widely available and rabies and distemper shots maybe included, depending on the organization's policy. You've now taken the first step in preventing any further breeding.

Whether you intend to keep the cat or not, spaying or neutering is the most important first step. Not only are you preventing the birth of unwanted kittens and mating males, you're also making the cat more attractive to potential adopters.

Proven Methods for Finding a Home for your Stray

- * A picture is worth a thousand words! A photo with the cat's sad story can be posted at veterinary offices, places of work, grocery stores, churches, pet stores, Petfinder.com classifieds or other places where social events are posted.
- * Place a call directly to your local vets. They may know someone who recently lost a pet that is looking for a new companion.
- * Place an ad in local and/or community newspapers. Always ask for a donation in your ad never advertise free to a good home.
- * Ask rescue organizations if you can attend their adoption clinics. Some shelters, including Forgotten Felines and Fidos, will offer this option on a space available basis.
- * Ask local rescue organizations to place the cat on their waiting list. If space becomes available, you could be contacted.
- * Tell friends, family and co-workers that you've found a stray and are trying to find a home for it.



*Forgotten Felines & Fidos
P.O. Box 62
Germansville, PA 18053*

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Tips

- * We can provide you with our screening checklist and our private adoption form to help make this a positive experience for you and the cat!
- * Always ask for at least a small donation. It is a good way to screen out undesirable people who just want “free”. It also helps you recoup some or all of your expenses.
- * Farms are not suitable homes. Cats are left unspayed/neutered and are often lucky to get fed. Do not take your stray to a farm. Be responsible!
- * Do not be afraid to ask questions of potential adopters. If they’re unwilling to answer the most basic questions, they’re probably not going to provide proper care.

When your stray is wild (feral)

- * A feral or wild cat won’t let you near it. He eats and runs. It is even more important to spay or neuter these cats to prevent additional unwanted kittens. Females can have 2-3 litters a year that will end up just as wild. The kittens will have kittens, and so on... the vicious cycle continues. What to do:
- * Purchase or borrow a Hav-a-Heart humane trap. These are safe, secure and easy to use.
- * Make an appointment for low cost spay/neuter surgery.
- * Trap the cat-it’s recommended that the trap be set the day before your appointment. Cover the trap with a sheet or towel to help keep the cat calm.
- * Bring the cat to the shelter or veterinary office for their surgery. Pick up the cat as instructed.
- * It is ideal to hold cats for 24-48 hours after surgery for observation. A cage or large carrier (with litter pan) works well. If at all possible, this is strongly recommended especially during winter months.
- * Feral cats should not be relocated unless the area they’re from presents an immediate threat to them. The stress of relocation could prove too great and the animal may die.
- * Release the cat back into the environment from which it was trapped. It is important to return the cat to familiar territory.



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When you find a stray with kittens

- * Finding a stray female cat with kittens presents some additional challenges, but the rewards are great!
- * Spay the female when the kittens are weaned (approx. 5-6 weeks old). If necessary, use a humane trap to catch the mother. She can go into heat and become pregnant before she is even done nursing her kittens.
- * Either trap, neuter and release (TNR) or if she is not feral, follow guidelines to find her a home.
- * Secure kittens after catching the mother. They should be kept in a cage in order to socialize them and so they can learn to use the litter pan. Be sure to feed them canned kitten food and make sure they are eating well. At 6-8 weeks old, they should receive an initial vet check. We can offer assistance in this area.
- * For a minimal donation to cover costs, we can give them their first distemper shot, test for Feline Leukemia, flea treatment, deworm and check their ears for ear mites.
- * Getting these initial evaluations make the kittens more desirable to potential adopters. We can provide you with written medical forms.

Rescuing can give you a great sense of accomplishment- you've saved a life! By following the steps in this guide, you gain control and keep a bad situation from getting worse!



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