

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FERAL & STRAY CAT?

Feral, stray, and pet cats are all members of the same species; they are all domestic cats. But stray cats and feral cats are also different from each other in a very important way—in their relationship to and interactions with people.

STRAY CATS –

- ❖ May have lived indoors, been socialized to people at some point in their life, but left or lost their home, was abandoned, & no longer has regular human contact.
- ❖ Can become feral as her contact with humans dwindles.
- ❖ May be socialized enough to allow people to touch them but will become less socialized—or even feral—if they spend too much time without positive interaction with humans.
- ❖ Under the right circumstances, a stray cat can also become a pet cat once again but may require a period to re-acclimate.

FERAL CATS –

- ❖ Are not socialized to people but are socialized to their feline family members and bonded to each other.
- ❖ Most are fearful of people & are not likely to ever become a lap cat or enjoy living indoors.
- ❖ Kittens born to feral cats can be socialized at an early age & adopted into indoor homes.



Since it is difficult to determine each cat's socialization during a stressful event such as trapping, it's a good idea to observe cats on their own outdoors.

Scared stray cats often need time to relax and show their level of socialization. Stray cats may approach people, houses, porches, or cars.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) saves feral cats' lives, and benefits all community cats, regardless of their level of socialization.

Adult feral cats are not socialized to people, will not approach people, and will likely seek hiding places to avoid people.

Stray cats who are thriving & don't have microchips indicating they are lost can be returned to their outdoor home or fostered & adopted.