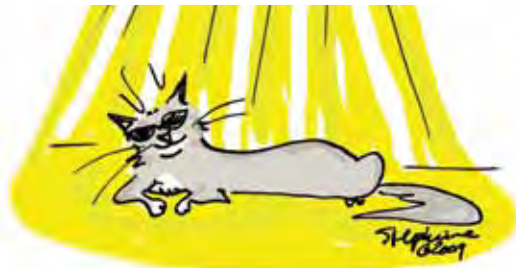


Tips for Happy Indoor Cats:

Kittens that are kept indoors usually show no desire to venture outside as adults. With knowledge, patience, and time, we can change most free-roaming cats into happy indoor pets. Here's how:



- ◆ Provide window shelves to permit your pet to monitor the outdoors from the safety of your home.
- ◆ Play with your cat each day. Paper bags, tissue paper, and cardboard boxes are sources of unending delight when you are away.
- ◆ Plant kitty grass (available in pet supply stores) in indoor pots so your cat can graze.
- ◆ Clean litter boxes regularly.
- ◆ Spay or neuter your kitten as early as eight weeks of age.
- ◆ Provide routine veterinary care, including annual check-ups and vaccinations.
- ◆ If you can, provide a safe, outside enclosure, such as a screened porch.



Together, We Can Reduce Cat Overpopulation:

To end the tragic cycle of cat overpopulation, we must first become a nation of responsible pet owners and keep our cats indoors. In addition, we can:

- ◆ Support local cat control and protection plans. Contact your local Department of Animal Care/Control.
- ◆ Support legislation requiring cat owners to register their cats and prevent them from roaming. Contact your local city or county council member.
- ◆ Resist feeding unowned or feral cats without first making a commitment to giving or finding them a permanent indoor home.
- ◆ Not dump unwanted cats. Instead, take cats for which you cannot care to your local animal shelter to give them the best possible chance of adoption into loving, lifelong homes.



For more information, visit:
www.abcbirds.org/cats

American Bird Conservancy
P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198
www.abcbirds.org • abc@abcbirds.org
540-253-5780 • 888-247-3624

All artwork by Stephanie Piro, www.stephaniepiro.com

CATS, BIRDS, and YOU



Introduction:

Being a responsible cat owner

means much more than making sure your best friend is well fed, gets lots of attention, and receives regular checkups by a vet. You must also keep your pet safe from all the dangers that it can encounter outside.

The sad fact is that each year, millions of outdoor cats fail to come home, either killed by the many hazards they encounter, lost, or stolen, leaving their owners broken-hearted.

In addition, billions of birds and other wild animals fall victim to cats every year. America's native wildlife is under ever-increasing pressure from shrinking habitats and other man-made threats. The added hazard posed by non-native domestic cats could be the final straw for some species.

That's why American Bird Conservancy (ABC) encourages you to keep your cat indoors.



two-thirds of the bird species found in the U.S. have declined over the last half-century, many precipitously.

- ◆ Scientists estimate that cats kill billions of birds each year and six times as many small mammals. While many birds killed by cats are relatively common, even common birds are now in decline. Other birds, such as the Least Tern, Piping Plover, Snowy Plover, and California Gnatcatcher, are already threatened with extinction—even occasional predation by cats can impact their populations.
- ◆ Regardless of whether a species is rare or not, each wild animal suffers when captured by a cat. Cat saliva is heavily laden with bacteria, so even if a bird escapes, it will likely die a slow and painful death from infection or injuries.

Safer for Cats:

Domesticated cats are happiest and healthiest when kept inside. Here are some quick facts:

- ◆ The average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just two to five years, while an indoor cat may live comfortably for more than 15.
- ◆ Millions of cats are run over by cars each year. Many other cats, seeking warmth while outdoors, curl up on car engines and are killed or maimed when the car is started.
- ◆ The world outside your front door can be a brutal place for your beloved pet. Your veterinarian sees far too many cats that have been attacked and suffer from torn ears, scratched eyes, abscesses, or internal injuries from their encounters with other cats, dogs, coyotes, or foxes.



- ◆ Sadly, there are cruel people who want to hurt animals. Each year, animal shelters and vets treat cats that have been shot, stabbed, or even set on fire. Even more appalling, some free-roaming cats are sought after for use as 'bait' to train fighting dogs.
- ◆ It is also well established that cats that are allowed to roam outside are much more prone to being exposed to fatal diseases, including rabies, feline leukemia, and distemper. They often bring debilitating little "friends" such as worms, ticks, mites, and fleas back into your home.



Safer for Birds:



Birds are not only beautiful and interesting creatures eagerly welcomed by millions of Americans into their backyard every year, they are also an important natural resource. They pollinate our crops, control pests, and warn us of impending environmental danger. Sadly,

Domestic Cats Are Not Native Predators:

The domestic cat was introduced to North America by Europeans only a few hundred years ago. Their dramatic rise in population in such a short period of time has been devastating to native wildlife.



While cats may instinctively hunt wildlife, it is clear that they are not adapted to life in the wild. Feral cat populations are most commonly found in and around human settlements because they cannot survive without the support of well-intentioned, though often misinformed humans.

Sadly, many cat owners either refuse to believe their cat could or would kill a bird or other animal because of its sweet disposition, or because it is well fed. The facts are that domestic cats retain their hunting instinct, and even well-fed cats kill wildlife. Putting a bell on a cat's collar does not help, as unfortunately, wild animals do not necessarily associate the ringing of a bell with imminent danger.