

## **WHY FERAL CATS DON'T BELONG IN SHELTERS**

*Get smart about outdoor cats and why they need a different kind of care.*

By Becky Robinson

What is your usual reaction when you come across an outdoor cat? Is your instinct to call the local shelter or animal control to find her a home?

Chances are, the cat you've come across is not homeless at all, but lives quite happily outdoors. Feral cats are domestic cats, but they have no desire to snuggle with you on your couch.

Feral cats live healthy, natural lives within groups called colonies and have never been socialized to people. They aren't adoptable, and they don't belong in shelters. In our current animal control system, the only happy ending for animals is adoption.

So what happens to animals who aren't candidates for adoption? In today's system, animals who are not placed in homes are killed.

Feral cats live outside but are killed in pounds and some shelters. So think twice before you call your local animal control. Instead, find out if your community supports Trap-Neuter-Return.

Trap-Neuter-Return is a humane approach for feral cats. Through this program, outdoor cats are painlessly trapped, brought to a veterinarian to be evaluated, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped. Cats who are friendly to humans and kittens are adopted into homes. Healthy adult feral cats are returned to their outdoor home.

If your community doesn't have a Trap-Neuter-Return program, organize one! Visit [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org) to find out how you can help change shelter policies that don't address the needs of outdoor cats. (Virden Pet Network is developing a Trap-Neuter-Return program for the strays in this area.)

For more information, visit [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)