



APNM Position Statement: Trap-Neuter-Return

Animal Protection New Mexico (APNM) supports trap-neuter-return-monitor (“TNRM,” or “TNR” for short) as a humane and effective strategy for humanely managing community cat populations. The best available data shows that programs that attempt to use lethal control to eliminate cat populations are inhumane, ineffective, and wasteful of scarce resources.

APNM believes TNR should be considered a humane means to an end—the humane reduction and eventual elimination of unowned cat populations—not a method of permanently maintaining outdoor cat populations.

Community cat issues are complex and varied, impacted by geography, climate, the presence of other animals including wild carnivores and prey, human populations, cultural norms, and numerous other factors. As such, local entities should take steps to craft TNR programs to address the particular needs in order to achieve a positive outcome for cats and the communities in which they live.

Local community cat TNR ordinances should include the following components:

- Municipal/County ordinances must define all terminology used to describe TNR and clearly lay out how TNR will be accomplished, where, and by whom.
- All TNR should take place as a cooperative effort between the governing body, its animal services, and the community.
- TNR means cats should be humanely trapped and, if healthy, spay/neutered, rabies vaccinated, microchipped and ear-tipped (for identification), and returned to their community for ongoing monitoring by a designated colony caretaker.
- A colony caretaker is responsible for ensuring any new cat colony members undergo the TNR process.
- A colony caretaker is responsible for ensuring that the cats in the colony all have access to outside shelter from extreme temperatures and inclement weather, water, and food delivered in a manner to minimize “pests.”
- Cat colonies should not be maintained in ecologically sensitive areas; in areas where demolition, development, or vehicle traffic is likely to cause harm; or where cats are being subjected to harm or cruelty. In such cases, cats who cannot be adopted should be relocated.
- Community collaboration and public education should be built into any TNR program implementation, coupled with low/no-cost spay/neuter services for owned cats.
- Socialized community cats should be made available for adoption when possible.

Clear directives that abandoning owned cats or allowing owned cats to roam beyond the owner’s private property is prohibited.