



## BEST PRACTICES FOR CATS & BIRDS LIVING IN HARMONY



### FOR CAT OWNERS

- pet cats are kept safe from the dangers of roaming, outside only if supervised (leashed, or in enclosures)
- all cats are spayed / neutered (including indoor cats & farm cats)
- cats are obtained at shelters, Humane Societies, SPCAs or reputable breeders
- cats wear identification, preferably both visible and permanent (including indoor cats)
- cats are licensed and in compliance with bylaws
- people who feed loosely owned (i.e. cats that are fed by one or more people, but not formally owned) or feral cats ensure those cats are sterilized and not near important wildlife areas

**READ MORE:** <http://catsandbirds.ca/research/safe-happy-cat>  
<http://catsandbirds.ca/research/safe-outdoor-options>

### FOR MUNICIPALITIES

- a plan to achieve change in their community formulated in collaboration with cat and nature organizations, and including strategies for pet, stray and feral cats
- a public education campaign about the benefits to cats, wildlife and the community of responsible cat ownership
- animals adopted from shelters are spayed or neutered prior to adoption (or if the animal is too young, a voucher is provided)
- retail stores are restricted to offering for adoption only animals from a recognized animal rescue, shelter, SPCA or humane society.
- bylaws including:
  - an accessible spay/neuter program
  - mandatory licensing / permanent identification
  - no roam bylaw (exempting loosely owned and feral cats)
  - enforcement and compliance promotion based on education and promise to return lost pets
  - identification of natural areas significant to birds and wildlife and relocation of any feral cat colonies currently within or very close to those areas
- a feral cat-care strategy and support in concert with local organizations with the goal of reducing the feral cat population
- public education to encourage spaying and neutering loosely owned and feral cats that people are feeding outside of formal feral cat care programs

**READ MORE:** to request a copy of An Integrated Approach to Bird Conservation and Cat Welfare: A Guide for Municipalities, email [info@catsandbirds.ca](mailto:info@catsandbirds.ca).  
<http://catsandbirds.ca/for-municipalities/>  
<http://catsandbirds.ca/blog/the-calgary-model/>

### FOR FERAL CAT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

- communities need to work together to develop a co-ordinated feral cat strategy involving vaccination, spay/neuter, care, re-homing of sociable cats, and monitoring of population size
- any strategy needs to be designed for *both* cat welfare *and* reduction of the population
- proposals for feral cat management that involve trap-euthanize will lead to conflict because of community ethics and values; euthanasia as a means of cat population control is strongly opposed by both the animal welfare movement and the general public
- feral cats are sheltered from the elements as well as fed and given veterinary care
- set traps must never be left unattended
- private sponsors of feral cat-care programs and all level of governments need to increase the capacity to provide free spay/neuter services to feral cat programs and secure locations

**READ MORE:** <http://catsandbirds.ca/blog/what-about-the-feral-cats>  
<http://catsandbirds.ca/research/an-update-on-cats-in-canada/>  
<https://bestfriends.org/resources/community-cat-programs-handbook-stray-and-feral-cats-resource>  
<https://www.petsmartcharities.org/pro/community-tnr-tactics-and-tools>

#### **FOR BIRD ADVOCATES**

- keep birds safe at your feeders (i.e. decrease likelihood of predation & window collisions / provide native plants as habitat / clean and maintain feeders every week or two / observe for signs of disease, remove feeders if cats are preying on birds)
- understand that cat-owners may be more motivated by their cat's safety than by bird safety and frame your communication accordingly
- try to build collaboration with cat organizations, especially humane societies, SPCAs and shelters: they have direct contact with cat-owners and can provide information to the public at crucial 'teachable moments' (adoption, reclamation of a lost cat)
- understand that the estimates of cat predation of birds are rough, and that trying to engage cat owners on this topic is unlikely to be productive and can be detrimental to building rapport.
- promote and support positive behaviours (leash-training, catios, etc).

**READ MORE:** <http://catsandbirds.ca/blog/keeping-birds-safe-at-your-feeder/>  
<http://flap.org/bird-safe-buildings.php>

#### **FOR NATURE / CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS**

- identify local cat organizations and collaborate with them (they are almost always *already* promoting keeping cats from roaming unsupervised)
- consult with stakeholders and identify structural barriers to change (i.e. spay/neuter resources, shelter capacity, political inertia, animal control department, etc)
- research the specifics of the local scenario (shelter statistics, # outdoor cats, # feral cats, # cats hit by cars/year, # of local bird species at risk, areas of particular importance to birds, etc) and use as much local information as possible in your communications
- access 'teachable moment' opportunities: ensure that all stakeholders have the facility and resources to communicate with cat-owners at key moments (adoptions; reclamation of a lost cat; when a cat owner brings in wildlife injured by their cat)
- support cat owners in making positive changes: communicate that the majority of cat-owners keep their cats safe; offer resources to increase cat-owners confidence in their ability to change; show the desired behaviour; and leverage influencers and early adopters
- integrate Cats & Birds education into your organization's educational initiatives
- join Nature Canada's Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives coalition and utilize the communications resources offered at <http://catsandbirds.ca> (for more info, contact [info@catsandbirds.ca](mailto:info@catsandbirds.ca))

**READ MORE:** [http://catsandbirds.ca/research\\_cat/resource/](http://catsandbirds.ca/research_cat/resource/)  
<http://catsandbirds.ca/educational-resources>

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

### Nature Canada / Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives

#### For Municipalities

##### [Calgary Case Study](#)

#### For the Public



Hard copies of our brochure and bookmarks are available in English or French by request from [info@catsandbirds.ca](mailto:info@catsandbirds.ca).

#### [Safe, Happy Cat](#)

A guide to how to keep an indoor cat sufficiently stimulated and exercised

#### [Safe Outdoor Options](#)

An outline of the safe outdoor options (catios & leash walking)

#### [Leash Training Your Cat](#)

A step by step guide to leash training your cat

#### [Cat Training Basics](#)

Training your cat to obey several basic commands

#### [Tips for Transitioning](#)

How to retrain an outdoor cat to be content with a life indoors

#### [Dealing with Escape Artists](#)

How to train your cat out of continually trying to escape

#### [Cat Spray Solutions](#)

Natural ways to get rid of the smell of cat spray and discourage further spraying

#### [DIY Cat Shelf](#)

A step by step guide to building your cat a window shelf

#### [Cat-proofing your Garden](#)

Humane and natural ways to keep neighbour's cats out of your garden

#### [Keeping Birds Safe at Your Feeder](#)

A guide to food choices, placement and plantings that help keep birds safe at your feeders

#### [How Birds are Vulnerable to Cats](#)

A guide to the feeding and nesting habits, reproductive patterns and physical characteristics that make birds vulnerable to outdoor cats – even if the cats aren't hunting.

#### [How Cats are Vulnerable to Wildlife](#)

A guide to the threats wildlife can represent for cats, including predation, close encounters with defense mechanisms, pests, parasites and diseases

#### [Educational Program](#)

A cats & birds educational program for Grades 4 to 9, suitable for use by teachers, humane and wildlife educators.

#### [Junior Bird Guide](#)

A 30-page booklet for kids to learn about birds, how to identify them, and what they can do to protect birds.

#### [Angel Catbird Graphic Novels & Poster](#)

Margaret Atwood's graphic novels, published in tandem with Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives, offer an engaging narrative about an owl-cat-human superhero who is able see both sides of the cat-bird dilemma. Banners of real-world information supplied by Nature Canada appear throughout. (Link is to the poster. The graphic novels themselves are available via regular commercial channels.)

\* [Keep Cats Safe & Save Bird Lives](#) also has resources specifically for use by humane societies, SPCA's an shelters (adoptions, reclamation of a lost cat) and wildlife rehabilitators (to use when someone brings in a bird injured by their cat). These are available to partners. For more information, contact [info@catsandbirds.ca](mailto:info@catsandbirds.ca).

#### [Bird Studies Canada](#)

##### [Bird Studies Canada's Top 6 Ways you can Help Birds](#)

#### [Ecology Action Centre](#)

##### [Where the Birds Are](#)

A poster showing the niches that birds use in your backyard which make them vulnerable to cats.

## Stewardship Centre for British Columbia

### [The Happy Cat](#)

Tips for responsible cat ownership

### [Stewardship Practices Guide](#)

Stewardship practices for reducing cat predation of birds and wildlife

### [Reducing the Impact of Cats on Birds and Wildlife: Results of a Public Opinion Poll & Telephone Survey in British Columbia](#)

Report on survey about attitudes towards roaming cats and their impact on birds and wildlife in BC

## BC SPCA

### [Indoor VS Outdoor: How to Provide the Best Environment for Your Cat](#)

### [Pet Overpopulation: A Problem You Can Fix](#)

Educational lessons for intermediate students.

### [What Type of Identification Does My Pet Need?](#)

### [Model Animal Responsibility Bylaw](#)

### [Help Your Cats Climb the Walls](#)

Access to heights as an enrichment strategy for indoor cats.

### [Catio-Dadio Poster](#)

### [Keeping Your Kitty Happy](#)

Environmental Enrichment for Indoor Cats

## Humane Canada

### [Cats in Canada 2017: A Five-Year Review of Cat Overpopulation](#)

An overview of cat overpopulation and shelter statistic trends.

### [Accessible Spay/Neuter Toolkit](#)

Lays out the evidence for the benefits and savings of implementing spay/neuter programs and provides examples of successful initiatives that can be modeled in other communities

## Cat Healthy (group of cat specialist Canadian veterinarians)

### [Keep Your Cat Healthy & Happy Infographic](#)

