

The Cat Overpopulation Crisis

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Animal Welfare in Focus

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Every year SPCAs and humane societies across Canada admit thousands of homeless animals into their care, and the overwhelming majority of these animals are cats. Cat overpopulation has reached a crisis point and thousands of felines are being euthanized as a result. The problem of overpopulation has exploded as unaltered males and females are allowed to wander throughout communities, increasing the number of stray and feral cats. Some Canadians recognize this as a problem, but shelters are filled beyond capacity with cats, it is apparent the severity of the problem is not broadly understood and that a serious challenge lays ahead. The primary remedy to address this is to encourage Canadians to spay and neuter their pets, especially cats.

The seriousness of cat overpopulation can be illustrated by looking at the impact that one unaltered cat can have on the overall population in a very short time. One un-spayed cat and its offspring has the ability to produce an additional 420,000 cats (two litters of three kittens a year) over a seven year time period. These offspring are destined to be euthanized if feral or not adopted. Based on a nation wide survey, cats make up over 70 per cent of the animals euthanized in SPCAs and humane societies. It's for this reason that cat owners must take action and become responsible pet owners in order to reduce the number of euthanized cats.

The message that needs to be conveyed to pet owners is to spay or neuter your cat. Surgical sterilization provides health benefits such as reducing the risks of some cancers and impeding the possibility of future litters. Rest assured there is no truth to the myths that altering cats changes their personalities or makes them lazy. There is no justifiable argument against spaying or neutering.

For many, the cost of the surgery still remains a major deterrent, but there are options to help lessen the financial burden. Some spay and neuter clinics operated by municipalities or local not-for-profit organizations provide a low cost option. A number of veterinarians also offer a low-cost program and therefore doing your research can save you money. The cost of the procedure can be a burden for many cat owners, but the expenses related to pregnancy, possible complications during birth and properly caring for the multiple litters of kittens surpasses the cost of the surgery. More importantly, you'll help shelters concentrate on finding homes for neglected cats. By doing this you'll be doing your part to tackle the overpopulation crisis.

Contact your local SPCA or humane society for information on the low-cost spay or neuter services in your community.