



**From:** Linda Cherkassky  
**Sent:** Friday, June 19, 2009 3:06 PM  
**To:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Subject:** Please add below to my comments about TNR for Town Council.

An article appeared in the Mt Olive Chronicle today about the proposed cat control plan:

[http://www.recordernewspapers.com/articles/2009/06/19/mt\\_olive\\_chronicle/news/doc4a382c75e2012299112586.txt](http://www.recordernewspapers.com/articles/2009/06/19/mt_olive_chronicle/news/doc4a382c75e2012299112586.txt)

There is incorrect information in this article. Lerner is quoted as saying that "even the National Audubon Society supports TNR". That is not the case. Please see the position statement of the National Audubon Society here:

<http://www.audubon.org/local/cn/98march/nasr.html>

Additional position statements can be found here:

<http://tnrrealitycheck.com/positions.asp>

Further, Lerner is quoted as saying that "feral cats have not caused a steady decline in the population of songbirds". The following is important to note:

Due to a combination of their opportunistic predatory behavior and their occurrence in numbers exponentially higher than native predators, cats can wipe out bird populations from otherwise suitable habitat. In some cases, cat predation may supersede habitat loss as a primary threat to birds' survival.

Cats have contributed to declines of birds worldwide and may be the single biggest cause of global bird extinctions after habitat destruction. In addition to direct mortality, cats may also cause stress responses in birds that result in reductions in survival and reproductive success. Releasing cats back to the wild is wholly environmentally irresponsible.

In the Audubon State of the Birds report from 2007, they cite invasive, non-native animals as a threat - the domestic cat falls under that. It is listed in the Top 100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species. See link for Global Invasive Species Database (<http://www.issg.org/database/species/search.asp?st=100ss>). One would have to look at the specific species listed in the Audubon report to see exactly what conservation challenges there are, but make no mistake - cats are part of the equation. Further, the first US State of the Birds 2009 - a joint effort of government wildlife agencies and conservation groups - studied 40 years of data and as part of their conclusions noted that cats are indeed, part of the problem:

<http://www.stateofthebirds.org/challenges/invasive-species>.

The citation below is for an essay published in Conservation Biology in 2009. This paper is a comprehensive examination of the reality of TNR.

Longcore et al. Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return. *Conservation Biology* (2009) pp. 1-8

The abstract for this paper can be found at: < <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2009.01174.x> >. Council should have already received a copy. The following excerpt sums up how many people feel regarding the issue of cat predation on wild birds:

“The focus in discussions of predation by feral cats on birds is usually whether the predation is significant at the population level (Lepczyk et al. 2003; Woods et al. 2003; Baker et al. 2005). We argue that it is philosophically inappropriate for population-level impacts to be the only criteria by which the effects of cats are judged. People who notice and care about birds are just as attuned to the loss of an individual bird in a backyard, or the decline of local populations of birds, as are feral cat advocates to the loss of individual feral cats. We see no justification for valuing birds and other wildlife only as populations while valuing cats as individuals”.

If Council has not yet viewed the following video from **the American Bird Conservancy**, please see here:

*Trap, Neuter and Release: Bad for Cats, Disaster for Birds*

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/stories/090601.html> (click on video at this link)

Finally, Lerner is quoted as saying that "feral cats are territorial and seldom accept other cats into their colony". This is not the case and precisely why neighborhood cats join when they find the food, why people are able to dump their cats at colonies (which is why constant monitoring of the colony is such an important part of management as stated in the article: "Any **new cats** would go through the TNR process"), and why caregivers are able to relocate cats into existing colonies. Territorial defense is a fallacy. References include:

Ash SJ. Ecological and sociological considerations of using the TTVAR (trap, test, vaccinate, alter, return) method to control free-ranging domestic cat, *Felis catus*, populations. PhD Dissertation, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, 2001.

Haspel C, Calhoon RE. Activity patterns of free-ranging cats in Brooklyn, New York. *J Mammalogy* 1993; 74:1-8.

Dobson R. Frisky cats abandon traditional values. *The Independent*. London, 2000;8.

**I have received the comments in response to my letter yesterday and will respond to those as soon as possible. Thank you for sending them.**

Linda Cherkassky  
NJ State Apprentice Wildlife Rehabilitator