

PETS

Trap, neuter, release workshop to help control cat population

By Ashley Varese
editor@navarrepress.com

For the most part, feral cats are at home outdoors. They keep their distance from humans, and help with rodent control. But since they aren't spayed or neutered, their population continues to increase, leaving more and more animals vulnerable to life-threatening situations.

"If they're born outside, they can die from exposure to the cold," Cindra Anderson, with Emerald Coast Animal Allies, said. "They can drown ... a lot of them are picked up by hawks. It's bad. People bring them to our nonprofit; one had his eye matted shut and couldn't see. I've seen a lot of suffering, and that's why I dedicated my retirement to educating people and ... paving the way for them."

Cat euthanasia is also a problem, Anderson said. She said killing the cat population is not the answer and causes "needless suffering." Instead, she's working to prevent overpopulation in the first place.

"Cats can have a litter at any time," she said, "one or two more litters per year than dogs." She said birth rates are lower in the winter, which is when she tries to do most of her work preventing pregnancies.

Anderson will teach an hour-long workshop Saturday educating people about trap, neuter and release (TNR). The concept is simple: use a humane trap to catch the feral cat; take the cat for surgery the next day; and release the cat back to the same environment.

Anderson said cats begin to trust people within a few days of being fed. She recommends feeding the cat at the same time each



Piper was part of a trap, neuter, release program, but eventually found his "forever" home.

Photo by Ashley Varese

day, and placing the trap nearby so it becomes familiar to the animal. She said she traps the cats the night before the surgery.

Anderson said not all outdoor cats are feral and not all feral cats are unadoptable.

"Some of them were pets," she said, adding that her organization tries to rehome the cats who are adoptable.

Anderson said some people will continue feeding a feral cat rather than take them to the shelter for fear of euthanasia. But that doesn't solve the problem, she said, because the cats keep reproducing. The goal is to stabilize the population.

"I knew I needed to start teaching others," she said. "It's the only way I can make a difference."

Eventually, Anderson would

like to see a high quality, high-volume clinic where appointments aren't necessary and they take walk-ins. Right now, she's working with a number of vets who provide low-cost spay or neuter services, but she said it's not enough to meet the need. There's a high-volume clinic in Mobile where volunteers from Animal Allies will make the trip with 10 cats in one day.

The workshop will offer handouts and materials to help people get started with TNR. Anderson will also follow up with participants after the workshop to see if she can be of additional assistance.

"The process doesn't hurt the cats at all," she said. "We're very much about that - do no harm. I'll show them how to

catch the kitties safely."

Neutering costs between \$65 and \$70, she said, and the cat also receives a rabies shot and removable sutures, eliminating a follow-up visit to the vet.

"We have the technology and the science to help these animals," she said. "We need to make it a priority as a community that this is not the way we want to handle it - to euthanize them or just let them go. We want to stop the suffering."

Anderson is offering two workshops, one from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and another from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Escambia Public Library, 239 North Spring St., Pensacola. To register, email cindraanderson@cox.net. A suggested \$5 donation will support the organization.

My Pet World

By Steve Dale,
Tribune Media
Services



Steve's website is www.stevedalepetworld.com.

Cat may need follow-up appointment after dental cleaning

Experts converged to teach veterinary professionals at the North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando Jan. 17-21. Some of those renowned experts took time to answer your questions.

Q: Molly, my 5-year-old Jack Russell, had her teeth cleaned previously with no problems. About a month ago, after having her teeth cleaned again, she was listless for a few days. While she's back to herself, she now wakes me at around 11:30 p.m. and again at 1 a.m. each night to go out, even though my husband walks her before bed. After coming back in, she gets a treat and we go back to bed. Could this behavior be related to the dental procedure? -- L.K., North Las Vegas, NV

A: Dr. Kate Knutson, past president of the American Animal Hospital Association, says to first contact your veterinarian to determine if the anesthetic protocol was any different this time. It's also important to inform your veterinarian about the lethargy following the dental cleaning, so that next time around the "anesthetic cocktail" might be adjusted.

Knutson, of Bloomington, MN is a proponent of full-mouth x-rays before a dental procedure to determine everything that's going on your pet's mouth. So much of what happens occurs below the gum line, and is otherwise impossible to detect. Your veterinarian might want to see Molly again to make sure her mouth checks out healthy and pain free. The vet may also want to eliminate other issues, such as a urinary tract infection.

If medical issues can be ruled out, why is Molly bothering you at night?

Well, she obviously enjoys the cookie game -- getting up late at night to go out, then being rewarded with a treat upon returning. It might be that for whatever reason she really needed to go one night, and after receiving a reward, she instantly learned what happens when she goes out late at night -- whether she really has to relieve herself or not.

"Some dogs are very good at training us," Knutson adds.

Q: My 17-year-old dog's health is failing badly, although there's no cancer or heart disease; just what my veterinarian calls "old age catching up." How do I know when the time is right to put Emma to sleep? --V.D., St. Paul, MN

A: "This is the question I hear most often," begins Los Angeles, CA-based co-founder of Lap of Love, Dr. Mary Gardner. Lap of Love is a nationwide network of veterinarians whose goal is to empower pet owners to care for their geriatric or sick pets, offering counseling and in-home euthanasia.

"If there's disease or illness, and/or the pet is in pain which can no longer be relieved, those are initial considerations," says Gardner. "In this pet, that's apparently not the issue, so next we consider quality of life, which can be hard for pet owners to decide (about) on their own."

To help pet owners navigate the issue, there are several quality of life scales, including Lap of Love: http://www.lapoflove.com/Pet_Quality_of_Life_Scale.pdf and another from pioneering veterinarian Dr. Alice Villalobos:

<http://www.pawspice.com/downloads/QualityofLifeScale.pdf>.

Gardner says it's helpful to seek the opinion of a third party who knew your pet in better times -- a friend or neighbor, for example. Also, consider a medical opinion from a veterinarian.

"It's difficult to judge when it's your own pet. I've personally been at that place and this is what I do for a living," she says.

Gardner says that the quality of life for people who live with an aging pet should also be considered.

"If you have to drag a 90-pound dog up three flights of stairs to the apartment, it's a real consideration. And realistically, cost of care may be an issue," she notes.

Gardner sums it up, "It's best to euthanize a pet before there's suffering, and while the pet is still smiling; that's the goal." Indeed, the entire idea of euthanasia is to prevent suffering.

Pet Briefs

Support Squiggley's Safe Haven

The St. Francis Vet Center is hosting an event that will include a chili cook-off, heart worm testing and pet pictures to benefit its rescue, Squiggley's Safe Haven. The event takes place Saturday, Feb. 14, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The heart worm test is \$10, Mardi Gras pet pictures are \$10 and participation in the chili cook-off is \$5 if tickets are purchased in advance. Contact Lisa at 850-936-4446 for more information.

'Smooch Your Pooch'

Pet Nation will celebrate the love of dogs with its "Smooch Your Pooch" event on Valentine's Day. Bring in your dog(s) on Saturday, Feb. 14, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Plant a big kiss on your dog's face and receive a Valentine's goody bag full of a sampling of dog products. One bag per dog, while sup-

plies last. All dogs must be on a leash or remain in their human's arms. Pet Nation is located at 1898 Andorra St., in the Publix Plaza on Navarre Parkway. Call 850-936-8201 for more information.

Kids and Kritters Parade

The fifth annual Kids and Kritters parade sponsored by Pensacola Beach's Krewe of Kids will be held Feb. 7 at the Casino Beach parking lot across from Sidelines. This year's theme is pirates and prizes will be awarded for the best costumed pets and best mini float made from a stroller or wagon. Registration begins at 1 p.m. and the parade starts at 2 p.m. An entry fee of \$5 is required for pets, kids are free. For more information, fliers and registration forms, visit www.PensacolaBeachMardiGras.com.

Kids and Kritters Parade Pensacola Beach

Starts at 2pm, Saturday, February 7th

Some of the adoptable dogs will be at the parade however there will not be any adoptions on that day. For anyone who falls in love with one of the dogs at the parade, you can come to the office the next business day to adopt your new furry family member.

Petco Adoption Days

1670 Airport Blvd, Pensacola
February 8th from 11-2pm
February 15th from 11-2pm

Please come see us at one of these wonderful events or stop by the office anytime!

Hours of Operation
Monday- Saturday
9:30am - 4pm



PENSACOLA
HUMANE SOCIETY™
850-432-4250



NAVARRE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

- Digital Imaging
- Vaccinations
- Laboratory
- Dentistry
- Pharmacy
- Laser Surgery
- Boarding & Baths

Kevin P. Sibille, DVM
Gina M. Bauman, DVM
939-1373

Mon-Tue 7:30-5:30
Wed, Thur & Fri 7:30-5:00
Sat 7:30-12:00

**February is Dental Month
20% Discount on Dental**

To see
your pet
as Pet of
the Week
please submit
their name,
your name,
where you
live and your
pet's photo to

pets@navarrepress.com

(Please submit photo of your pet only)

PAWSITIVELY VALENTINES GOURMET JUST IN!



BAKERY STYLE DOG COOKIES

NATURAL PEANUT BUTTER OR SWEET POTATO

PET NATION
cool pets. hot prices.

1898 ANDORRA STREET, NAVARRE - 936-8201

Trouble in Navarre

