

Cats and Wildlife

HOW YOU CAN PROTECT BOTH



The best way to keep cats healthy and protect wildlife and human health is to
Keep Cats Indoors

Keep Your Cat Safe Indoors

- ◆ **Cats are wonderful companion animals that need human care and protection.** Cats are a domesticated species, brought here by European settlers. They are NOT wild animals.
- ◆ **Outdoor cats lead shorter lives** averaging 5 years instead of 12 years for indoors cats, due to diseases, poisons, traffic accidents, dog and predator attacks.
- ◆ **Cats go where they are not welcome.** Neighbors may not enjoy your cat's visit.
- ◆ **Cats kill wildlife no matter how well they are fed.** Cats do not hunt because they are hungry, they hunt because of an innate urge to hunt.
- ◆ **Veterinarians recommend indoor living** for better feline health.

CATS and DISEASES

- ◆ **Unvaccinated cats can transmit diseases to other cats, native wildlife and humans.** Cats are the domestic animal most frequently reported to be rabid. Cats spread fatal diseases like distemper to native cougars and bobcats.
- ◆ **Plague is transmitted primarily by wild rodent fleas, which can infect cats.** In recent years, almost all human cases of pneumonic plague have been linked to domestic cats.
- ◆ **Toxoplasmosis is caused by a tiny parasite that reproduces only in cats' intestinal tracts and is expelled in their feces.** Toxoplasmosis is of particular concern to pregnant women and those with compromised immune systems.
- ◆ **As a result of potential human health impacts from cats,** the CDC recommends that all cats be kept indoors.

Cats and Wildlife

Domestic cats are **very efficient predators** of our native wildlife. New Mexico's wildlife evolved in an environment that did not include cats. The introduction of cats to New Mexico has added a predator that has changed the natural balance.

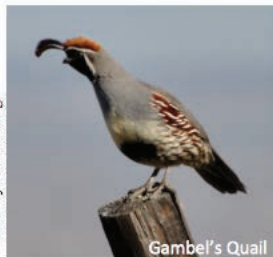


Photo by Joe Schelling

Gambel's Quail

Birds that feed or nest on or near the ground are most at risk from free-roaming cats.

The presence of cats interrupts nesting birds reducing the feeding of their young by one third. If a cat merely breathes on a wild bunny, it will die within three days due to the bacteria that all cats carry.



American Robin

Photo by USFWS



Photo by Joe Schelling

Greater Roadrunner

Cats compete with native predators like our hawks and owls for small mammals and reptiles. Cats kill lizards which are food for the Greater Roadrunner.

We cannot blame what should be the family pet for following its instincts.

With increased pressure already facing wildlife, it's up to the owners to take responsibility for reducing predation by their cats. We owe it to our pets, our neighbors and to our wildlife. Keep cats indoors.



Photo by Nauticat19

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ◆ **Keep your cat indoors** and encourage others to do the same. If you are unwilling to keep your cat indoors, do not attract birds to your yard with feeders or birdbaths.
- ◆ **Do not rely on bells** or declawing to prevent your cat from hunting.
- ◆ **Spay or neuter your cat.**
- ◆ **Never abandon unwanted cats.** Instead, take them to your local animal shelter.
- ◆ **Resist feeding stray or feral cats** without first making a commitment to giving or finding them a permanent indoor home.
- ◆ **Using cats as mousers is not eco-friendly.** Cats do not distinguish between species, killing many song birds and species that are in decline.



Photo by SnaWiBma

Bringing Your Outdoor Cat In

Although it takes patience, an outdoor cat can become a perfectly content indoor pet. The key is to provide lots of attention.

- ◆ **Share periods of special play time.**
- ◆ **Give your cat interesting toys.**
- ◆ **Provide scratching posts.**
- ◆ **Brush your cat and trim its claws.**
- ◆ **Clean litter boxes regularly.**
- ◆ **Give your cat a window perch.**
- ◆ **Provide routine veterinary care.**
- ◆ **Leash train your cat.**
- ◆ **Give your cat a safe outdoor experience with an outdoor cat enclosure.**

Check out the following products:

Cat Enclosure: www.cd pets.com
www.catoasis.ca, www.just4cats.com
Cat Fencing: www.catfence.com
www.catfencein.com
www.purrfectfence.com



"New Mexico law provides for basic standards of animal care, including providing food, water, shelter and shade. State law also requires rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats. Other aspects of good care include spaying and neutering and proper means of confinement and identification. Cats should live indoors and be allowed outdoors only under close supervision."
Animal Protection of New Mexico

Free-Roaming Cat Solutions

- ◆ Promote Cats Indoors by supporting more effective animal control ordinances and their enforcement.
- ◆ Promote stronger and more effective licensing, identification, and confinement laws.
- ◆ Start an ongoing public education program that promotes responsible pet ownership.
- ◆ Provide safeguards for property owners who want to protect wildlife on their land. Maintain "no trespass" statutes that provide owners with effective, legal, humane methods to address cats that come onto their property.
- ◆ Protection for native predatory species that may prey upon free-roaming, stray and feral cats.
- ◆ Promote the humane removal of cats from designated natural areas.
- ◆ Ask local shelters to give cats for adoption to indoor only homes.

Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Audubon is partnered with The American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors Campaign for information visit their website www.abcbirds.org/cats