

Feral Cats and Nuisance Caused by Cats

Feral Cats

Feral cats are cats which have no owner. They live wild in colonies and tend to react aggressively to people. They feed by scavenging and live outdoors or in disused buildings.

Our Pest Control staff will arrange to investigate where we believe that there are eight or more feral cats, causing problems to local residents from their fouling or the damage they are causing. We will try to capture these cats, and can arrange for them to be neutered / spayed and re-released, after a health check, or rehomed if there is anyone willing to take them.

Where we find feral cats in a poor state of health we will take advice from a vet, and may put them to sleep to prevent unnecessary suffering. We can only take these actions where a cat is truly 'feral'.

Cats do not have to wear collars, and need not carry their owner's details, accordingly tracing an owner may be difficult.

If you are looking to arrange for a cat to be rehomed you can approach local animal charities directly. Details of Animal Rescue charities who may be able to assist are below.

Cat Fouling

We often receive complaints about cat fouling. Cats can legally roam and foul areas other than their own garden. Their owners are not held accountable in law for any damage a cat causes.

Unlike dogs, cat owners are not obliged to remove their pet's fouling, and there is no offence of allowing a cat to stray.

Discouraging Cats

Residents can take a number of steps to dissuade cats from coming into their gardens, however they must ensure that none of the controls cause cruelty. It is an offence to trap, injure, poison or kill a cat. You can be prosecuted if you cause a cat to suffer.

The RSPB has previously offered the following advice which gives practical measures you can take to deter cats from your garden:

- Surround an area with a fence (chicken wire etc) that leans in the direction from which the cat will approach. The cat is unable to climb over such an angled fence.
- Flimsy plastic roll-up fencing placed on top of a fence etc to prevent cats climbing over it.
- Taut wire or string fitted 10-15 cm above the fence-top makes it difficult for cats to balance on the fence.
- Specially designed strips of plastic spikes on top of a fence, shed roof, nest box roof etc to prevent cat from walking on it.
- Place half-full plastic bottles in borders. This is an old gamekeeper's trick - the light reflection is supposed to deter.
- Mail shot and other unwanted CDs can be threaded on twine with knots in between to keep them apart. String these across flower beds or hang from trees. The light reflections deter.
- Spiked tree collar to prevent climbing up a tree.
- Downward-opening cone or a biscuit tin fixed to the pole below the bird table to prevent cat climbing up it. Vaseline or other grease on a smooth pole will also help.

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- Placing clippings from thorny or spiky plants under bird feeders and under bushes will prevent cats from using these areas to stalk birds.
- There is a new garden plant, Coleus canina, on the market. It is marketed under the names Pee-off and Scaredy-cat. This plant has a pungent odour that is said to repel cats and other mammals from the garden. It should be available from a number of garden suppliers.
- Scent deterrents will either serve to repel (e.g. Citronella) or mark a territory (e.g. Silent Roar). Alternatively, try orange or lemon peel, since cats are not keen on the smell of citrus.
- Bucket or water pistol full of water will help to chase a cat out of the garden. There is an automated option, the scarecrow, which is attached to a hosepipe, and will deliver a water jet when activated by a motion detector, but be aware that water freezing in the pipes can damage the gadget.
- The RSPB also endorses an ultrasonic cat deterrent - CATWatch further details are available on its website.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/gardening/unwantedvisitors/cats/catdeterrents.asp>

Cat Rescue Charities

Cats Protection - Stoke & Newcastle

Branch Tel: 01782 515167

National CP Helpline: 08702 099 099

Email: cpl@cats.org.uk

Website: www.cats.org.uk or www.stoke.cats.org.uk

Iris's Cats in Need

Stoke on Trent / Stafford

Tel: 01782 519673

Animal Lifeline

PO Box 411, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs., ST3 4SS

Tel: 01782 638341 or 01782 311893

Email: cassie@animallifeline.co.uk

RSPCA - Staffordshire North

General Branch Tel: 01782 871871

Web site: www.rspca.org.uk

National RSPCA Enquiries: 0300 1234 555 / Cruelty Line: 0300 1234 999

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