



May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Mayor Brian Bowman  
510 Main Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3B 1B9

Dear Mayor Bowman,

The Wildlife Society - Manitoba Chapter, Nature Manitoba, and Bird Studies Canada are a few of Manitoba's premier science-based wildlife and nature organizations representing wildlife professionals, naturalists, scientists, professors, managers, biologists, educators, and planners.

We are writing you to express our deep concern regarding a recent proposal to develop a trap neuter release (TNR) program for feral cats in the City of Winnipeg (March 22<sup>nd</sup>, [cbc.ca/manitoba](http://cbc.ca/manitoba)). Although we recognize the intentions of this initiative, we feel it important to share scientific evidence that demonstrates that this is poor policy for both human health and our local wildlife. Although TNR may seem like a logical and reasonable approach to our growing numbers of feral cats, numerous studies (Centonze and Levy 2002, Castillo and Clarke 2003, Levy et al. 2003, and Winter 2004), have shown that it fails to actually reduce feral cat populations due to ongoing immigration from other areas, residents utilizing these locations to abandon unwanted cats, and encouraging the idea that cats should be permitted to roam outdoors. Furthermore, since free-roaming cats are against the current City of Winnipeg bylaw (92-2013) such a proposal would not only be in violation, but would encourage others to believe that the City is not serious in the enforcement of the existing prohibition.

A growing body of literature, including reports from Canadian federal scientists (Calvert et al. 2013), shows that feral cats kill billions of small mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians annually. Feral cats are likely the single greatest source of human caused mortality for birds and mammals in North America (Loss et al. 2013). Feral and free-ranging cats also serve as reservoirs for several diseases, including rabies, toxoplasmosis, bartonellosis, and typhus that can have significant effects on the health of humans, wildlife, and other domestic animals.

On behalf of our memberships, we would urge you to consider alternate approaches to managing the growing problem of feral cats in the City of Winnipeg. These could include:

- Support and encourage the humane elimination of feral cat populations, including feral cat colonies, through adoption into indoor-only homes of eligible cats and humane euthanasia of unadoptable cats.
- Support the passage and enforcement of municipal and provincial ordinances prohibiting the feeding of feral cats, and the release of unwanted pet or feral cats into the wild.
- Support programs to educate and encourage pet owners to neuter or spay their cats, and encourage all pet adoption programs to require potential owners to spay or neuter their pet.
- Support efforts to reduce risks to the health of humans and other animals posed by diseases and parasites of feral cats, including but not limited to removal of free-ranging cats and elimination of feral cat colonies.
- Work with the conservation and animal welfare communities to educate the public about the effects of free-ranging and feral cats on native wildlife, including birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and endangered species.

A carefully considered feral cat plan is needed for the City of Winnipeg, recognizing, that people have a long standing association with cats and can feel passionate about their well being (Longcore et al. 2009). As an organization committed to conservation of wildlife, The Wildlife Society has developed a standing issue statement on Feral and Free Ranging Cats. As the City of Winnipeg, and The Winnipeg Humane Society move forward with planning, we would encourage you to review this document.

We would invite you to contact our organizations if we can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,



Brian Kiss,  
The Wildlife Society  
Manitoba Chapter



Jack Dubois,  
Nature Manitoba



Christian Artuso,  
Bird Studies Canada

cc Winnipeg Humane Society

Attachment: [TWS IS Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats]



## References

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