



Relocating Community Cats

Question: When is it a good idea to relocate community cats?

Answer: Almost never.

By nature, cats are territorial animals. They form strong bonds with the other cats in their colonies and also to their surrounding environment. They map out food and water sources as well as shelter and escape routes from predators. When they are suddenly removed from this environment and transplanted to a new, unfamiliar location, they become disoriented and will immediately try to find their way back to their home. They do not have the capacity to understand that they are supposed to just stay in the new location. Sudden relocation is cruel and extremely disorienting for the cats as they are not familiar with food sources or traffic patterns in the new area. Most cats that are relocated are killed or lost trying to find their way back.

It is a far better course of action to address and solve the problems that are forcing the cats out of their established home. There are many creative solutions for common complaints about cats. For suggestions about how to handle problems with your Community Cats, please email us at forgottenfelinesofforsyth@gmail.com, and an FFF volunteer will be happy to provide feedback.

Only under extreme circumstances and once all other options have been exhausted, should a cat be relocated. Relocation must be done in a specific way in order for there to be any chance of success. Below are some tips and resources for how to safely relocate Community Cats:

- ✓ Select a new home for the cats which is far removed from traffic. Make sure the cats have a consistent food source and a caretaker willing to continue to care for them. The caretaker should be involved in the relocation process and will need to understand the importance of each step.
- ✓ The cats will need to be confined in a safe enclosure for the first 3 – 4 weeks at their new location. The enclosure should be large enough for the cats to move about, and it should contain shelter on the inside. The enclosure should be large enough that other animals such as coyotes and dogs cannot reach inside to harm the cats. The cats should be able to move away from the edges and into their shelters if necessary. The enclosure needs to be absolutely escape proof. Please research confinement techniques and enclosures before attempting to relocate cats. The following pages are good places to start:
 - <http://www.alleycat.org/relocation>
 - <https://bestfriends.org/resources/relocating-feral-cats>
 - <http://indyferal.org/Literature/RelocationTips.pdf>
 - <https://www.neighborhoodcats.org/how-to-tnr/colony-care/relocation>
 - <https://www.neighborhoodcats.org/how-to-tnr/trapping/fostering-feral-cats-safely>
- ✓ Move the cats in groups. There is a far better chance of success if the cats can remain with other cats they have bonded with. Be sure to slowly and safely introduce them to animals that already live in the new home. Dogs that are not used to having cats in the area will typically chase them away.
- ✓ Be sure that the cats are sterilized and vaccinated before being released into their new environments.
- ✓ Follow up with the new caretaker to ensure that the transition is being executed properly and that the cats are transitioning comfortably.

Thank you for caring for the Community Cats in Forsyth County and the surrounding areas!