Paradigm Shift in Cat Management in the Shelter & Community

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www.sheltermedicine.com
www.millioncatchallenge.org
The Five Freedoms

1. **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst**
   By ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.

2. **Freedom from Discomfort**
   By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. **Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease**
   By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. **Freedom to Express Normal Behavior**
   By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5. **Freedom from Fear and Distress**
   By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
One more freedom?

Five Freedoms +1
Which of these things is not like the others?
Which of these things is not like the others?
Some common assumptions on which sheltering programs are based

- Spay/neuter and educational efforts targeted at owners and pets will reduce shelter intake
- Animals admitted to the shelter have owners who might come looking for them
- Animals admitted to the shelter could be adopted if not reclaimed
- *Extent of application to cats will vary by community*
So...

Let me ask, "How's that working for you?"
Pretty darn good news

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<th>Killed per 1,000 humans</th>
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<tr>
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But...

...and it’s a BIG but...
Colorado 2000-2007

- Intake: 36%
- Euthanasia: 55%

- Intake: 0%
- Euthanasia: -11%
Ohio 1996-2004

Intake: +10%  Euthanasia: +11%

Intake: -19%  Euthanasia: -40%
California 2000-2010³

- Intake: +28%
- Euthanasia: +24%
- Intake: -1%
- Euthanasia: -32%
A whole lot of cats

California animal control shelters:
2000-2010: 2.5 million cats euthanized
276,052 in 2010; 756 per day
2 million annually in U.S.; 5650/day
Financial, human, opportunity cost?
Why?
What are the goals of a shelter?

- Abide by all relevant laws
- Resolve citizen complaints and concerns
- Reunite lost pets with owners
- Maintain health and welfare in shelter
- Find new homes for pets
- Euthanize suffering or dangerous animals
- Mitigate harm associated with free-roaming animals
- Reduce pet over-population
Abide by relevant laws?

California F and A 31105. The board of supervisors shall provide for both of the following: (a) The taking up and impounding of all dogs which are found running at large in violation of any provision of this division. (b) The killing in some humane manner or other disposition of any dog which is impounded.
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Resolve complaints?

A 2007 national telephone survey asked: “What would you do about un-owned cats in the street?”

[Pie chart showing 81% for Leave the cats alone, 14% for Trap & kill the cats, and 5% for Other]
Role of a “shelter”?
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Reunite cats with owners?

- Only ~ 2% of cats reclaimed by owners nationally\(^{12}\)
- Cats are > 13 x more likely to return home by non-shelter than by shelter means\(^{13}\)
- 66% of lost cats found because they return home
- Only 7% found via call or visit to shelter
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Maintain health and welfare?
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Find new homes?

- Less disparity with dogs than for reclaim and euthanasia
- Adoption numbers increasing in many communities
- Flatter trend
  - Increasing intake result in increasing euthanasia in many regions despite adoption efforts
Not the only game in town\textsuperscript{14}

Source of cats, American Pet Products Association, 2012
Not the only game in town³, 25

Feline outcomes Erie SPCA stray wait list (n=419)

- Hit by car: 2%
- Vanished: 14%
- Unreachable: 10%
- Rehomed: 23%
- Keeping: 45%
- Found owner: 6%
- Took to rescue: 0%

Feline outcomes California 2000-2010 (n= 3,798,220)

- Cats Euthanized: 71%
- Cats Adopted: 22%
- Cats Reclaimed: 2%
- Cats Transferred: 5%
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Euthanize suffering or dangerous animals?

- < 1% of > 100,000 cats at TNR clinics euthanized for humane reasons
- < 10% of cats entering shelters are sick/injured
  - Median body condition score “ideal”
- Annual survival of semi-owned cats up to 90% (un-owned ~50%)
  - 6.8 years in managed colony
Euthanize suffering or dangerous animals?

AP-Petside.com Poll: 7 in 10 pet owners: Shelters should kill only animals too sick or aggressive for adoption

By SUE MANNING, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Seven in 10 pet owners say they believe animal shelters should be allowed to euthanize animals only when they are too sick to be treated or too aggressive to be adopted.

Only a quarter of the people who took part in a recent AP-Petside.com poll said animal shelters should sometimes be allowed to put animals down as a population control measure.

If we had thumbs, we would be snapping.
Is *humane euthanasia* in shelters a reality for feral cats?
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If things get any worse I'll have to ask you to STOP helping me.
Mitigate harm associated with free-roaming animals?

- Risk for some diseases is higher in ferals than pets
  - And vice versa
- Many conditions also carried by other species
- How could we protect public health if killing cats was not an option?
Mitigate harm associated with free-roaming animals?

- Studies show mixed effect of cats\textsuperscript{22,23, 24}
- Micro-habitat specific effect
- How could we protect wildlife if killing cats was not an option?

A domestic cat with a European rabbit. Domestic and feral cats are significant predators of a wide range of prey species.
Reality check

- Most shelter intake is concern/complaint driven rather than targeted.
- Capture, transport, holding, lethal injection and disposal is time consuming and costly.
- Scope is insufficient to reduce overall population.
The limits of our superpowers

A SUCCESS STORY: BREEDING OF BURROWING PETRELS (PROCELLARIIDAE) BEFORE AND AFTER THE ERADICATION OF FERAL CATS FELIS CATUS AT SUBANTARCTIC MARION ISLAND

- 11 by 7 miles; 2500-3000 cats
- 96 cats trapped, infected with panleukopenia, released by helicopter
- 8 full time teams of 2 hunters hunting day and night
- 5 full time teams of 2 trappers running 500 lethal traps
- Poison injected into 30,000 day-old chicks
- Cats eliminated after 14 years
Discontinuing ineffective strategies to control predators can ultimately protect prey.

Suggestions in changing Wildlife Services range from new practices to outright bans

By Tom Knudson
tknudson@sacbee.com
Published: Sunday, May 6, 2012 - 12:00 am | Page 1A
Last Modified: Sunday, May 20, 2012 - 1:11 pm

Last of three parts

Like many ranchers, Bill Jensen drives a pickup, shoots a high-powered rifle and loves to talk about sheep, cattle and the outdoors.

But unlike many ranchers, he no longer relies on the federal government for predator control.

"We've pretty much learned how to control coyotes on our own," said Jensen, whose losses to coyotes have declined 60 percent to 70 percent – from about 50 lambs a year when a federal trapper worked there to 15 to 20 today. "Anything that can help you 24 hours a day, like electric fencing, is a good thing."

http://www.sacbee.com/2012/05/06/4469067/suggestions-in-changing-wildlife.html
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Reduce pet overpopulation?

- 50% permanent removal
- OR
- 75% sterilization/release required to reduce population\textsuperscript{9,10}
  - Less than 5% of outdoor cat population admitted to CA shelters annually\textsuperscript{3}
  - << 1% in shelters on any given day

Rough estimate of 1 un-owned cat per 6 people\textsuperscript{7}; 1 pet cat per 4.1 people (AVMA), 40-% allowed outside
Wait a minute...are those lines going UP?
Hmm...
1 in 7
Rabies risk from cats decreased by 11%
Toxoplasmosis risk unchanged
Rabies and toxoplasmosis risk from cats decreased by 33%
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The bottom line: *traditional sheltering is not an effective tool to eliminate or protect community cat populations.*

Using a tool that’s mismatched to the job is hurting cats, shelters, and communities, and distracting us from finding real solutions.
How about we just stop?
What could we do instead?

- Expand the options for live release
- Limit intake to:
  - Cats that can be released alive
  - Cats for whom death is clearly the best alternative
- Invest resources not spent on killing cats on programs to benefit:
  - Cats
  - Wildlife
  - Communities
Shelter based TNR, aka “Feral Freedom”, aka Community Cat Program aka SNR

- Targets healthy cats brought in to shelter by citizens
- Neuter/vaccinate/return to location found
- Direct impact on shelter population and euthanasia
- Shelter or partnership operated
Shelter Crowd Control
Impact on Feline Live Release Rate

- LRR (%) w/FF
- LRR (%) w/o FF

Percent of Intake

JUL 07  |  JAN 08  |  JUL 08  |  JAN 09  |  JUL 09  |  JAN 10  |  JUL 10

Saving Lives
Additional effects?

Cats euthanized for URI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
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The cat traps are working.
What if this happened in our back yard?

Outcomes Compared to Intake

- Total Intake
- Live Release
- Shelter Death

Data for years 2008 to 2010 showing intake and outcomes.
What if this happened in our back yard?
What if this happened in our back yard?
What if TNR for every cat is not an option?
Just say no?

May be a good choice when:

- The outcome if admitted will be euthanasia of that cat or another cat
  - Shelter capacity (including for TNR)
  - Cat characteristics
- The cat is not suffering, at immediate risk, or causing danger in the community

http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/mar-apr-2015/change-for-the-better.html
Closing the expressway

- Close night drop boxes
- Discontinue healthy field pickups
- Schedule stray and owner surrendered intake
- Limit/decline intake of healthy unadoptable cats
  - Develop and use “intake evaluation tool”
  - Feel free to have a slow track
- Fee for stray and surrender especially if other options limited

Night drop closed April 2008
FIRST, stop bailing. Then see if you can build a dam, divert the flow, build a boat, and/or learn to swim.
The Million Cat Challenge!

- *Shelter based* initiative
  - Voluntary declaration of participation
- Balancing intake, C4C and outcomes
- Share challenges, solutions and success
- 5 year increase in lives saved compared to baseline
BECAUSE EVERY CAT COUNTS.

Lives Saved: 0,131,940

The Million Cat Challenge thanks Maddies Fund for their generous sponsorship and their dedication to saving the lives of our nation's cats.
The Million Cat Challenge encompasses five key initiatives to balance intake, humane capacity within the shelter, and live release:

**Alternatives to intake:**
Provide positive alternatives to keep cats in the home or community when admission to a shelter is not the best choice.

**Managed Admission:**
Schedule intake of cats to match the shelter’s ability to assure humane care and safe movement through the shelter system to an appropriate outcome for every cat.

**Capacity for care:**
Match the number of cats cared for at any one time with the capacity required to assure the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare for all cats in the shelter.

**Removing barriers to adoption:**
Expand the pool of adopters by removing barriers to adoption such as cost, process, or location.

**Return to field:**
Sterilize, vaccinate, and return healthy, un-owned shelter cats to the location of origin as an alternative to euthanasia.
Many Thanks

Kate Hurley, DVM
Director, Koret Shelter Medicine Program
UC Davis

Julie Levy, DVM
Director, Maddie’s Shelter Medicine Program
University of Florida

Jon Cicirelli
Director, Animal Care and Services
City of San Jose

Kathie Johnson
Director of Animal Services
Animal Humane Society
Minneapolis, MN

Barbara Carr
Director, Erie SPCA
Buffalo, NY
I AM NOT AN ADVOCATE FOR FREQUENT CHANGES IN LAWS AND CONSTITUTIONS. BUT LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN MIND. AS THAT BECOMES MORE DEVELOPED, MORE ENLIGHTENED, AS NEW DISCOVERIES ARE MADE, NEW TRUTHS DISCOVERED AND MANNERS AND OPINIONS CHANGE, WITH THE CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, INSTITUTIONS MUST ADVANCE ALSO TO KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES. WE MIGHT AS WELL REQUIRE A MAN TO WEAR STILL THE COAT WHICH FITTED HIM WHEN A BOY AS CIVILIZED SOCIETY TO REMAIN EVER UNDER THE REGIMEN OF THEIR BARBAROUS ANCESTORS.
Any questions?

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