



AAV Resolution on Free-roaming Cats

Whereas: Domestic cats (*Felis domesticus*) are a nonnative introduced species wherever they occur;

Whereas: Free-roaming (stray and owned) cats have had well-documented significant impacts on local wildlife populations and are an important cause of the decline of neotropical migrants;

Whereas: Free-roaming (stray and owned) cats face a multitude of life-threatening hazards and diseases, present zoonotic risks to humans, and contribute to the growing problem of cat overpopulation and suffering;

Whereas: Managed cat colonies do not solve the problems of cat overpopulation and suffering, wildlife predation, or zoonotic disease transmission;

Whereas: Veterinarians are uniquely positioned to offer recommendations and counseling on indoor living as part of a feline preventative health program, and by offering this service can contribute to the improved welfare of cats;

Whereas: Veterinarians are increasingly concerned with preventative feline health care, yet are poorly trained to counsel cat owners to incorporate indoor living as part of a preventative health program;

Whereas: Promoting veterinary education which emphasizes responsible cat ownership, and supporting local ordinances that include mandatory licensing, vaccination, and neutering, can contribute to a reduction in the number of unwanted free-roaming cats;

Whereas: The Association of Avian Veterinarians seeks to preserve species and their natural habitats, and has adopted the philosophy that veterinarians should take a leading role in preventative care for all the earth;

Be it resolved that the AAV:

1. Supports community efforts to develop local ordinances that a) require mandatory spay/neuter of all cats over six months of age unless the owner purchases an annual intact permit and/or breeders permit; b) require all cats to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies; c), discourage cat owners from allowing their cats to roam at large.
2. Supports reducing the numbers of stray cats through humane capture (with placement in homes where appropriate) by local health departments, humane societies, and animal control officers.
3. Supports actions by governmental wildlife agencies, public health agencies, and public and private organizations to ban or eliminate cat colonies on public lands in a humane manner and discourage feral cat colonies on private lands.
4. Will work with veterinary educational institutions and other professional organizations - as well as within the AAV - to promote awareness, education, and research aimed at reducing the number of owned and stray free-roaming cats.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Dr. Robert Groskin at rgroskin@aav.org.