



**Join us in helping feral cats
in our community!**

Feeding Feral Cats

Important feeding guidelines that should be used when caring for a feral colony

- Establish set feeding times - It is important to feed at set times, for example, early morning and at dusk. This schedule will encourage the cats to be available to eat at specific times. (This will also make trapping them easier.) Once the cats learn the feeding schedule and realize that food isn't available 24/7, they will show up at these times. Food bowls should be removed after about 30 minutes. However, water should be available 24/7.
- After the cats eat, clear the feeding area of food debris and dishes. With a clean area and set feeding times, raccoons and other wildlife will be less of an issue. Many feeders opt to set up a feeding station in an out of the way area so that the cats are less visible. This may also deter people from dumping cats at a location because they think that the cats will be fed at that site.

There are two feeding-related issues that can jeopardize how the cats are accepted at a colony location.

- Cat food should never be dumped on the ground for feeding.
- Residents should not feed cats around their doors, under cars, etc. As mentioned previously, feeding the cats in a less visible area is always a good goal.

It is legal to feed feral cats in Sacramento.

- Although it is legal to feed feral cats in Sacramento, if a property owner or business does not want cats fed on their property, then cats cannot "legally" be fed at that location. However, cats could be moved to adjacent property to feed - with permission of the owner – or to adjacent public property.

***Providing Assistance for Feral Cats &
Resources for the People Who Care About Them***

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If cats eat rodents, do I still need to feed them?

Many people believe that only hungry cats actively hunt mice, rats, and other vermin.

Although cats play an important role in rodent control, the cats cannot remain healthy on a diet of only rodents. In fact, many cats will not eat rodents unless they are near starvation. When the cats die from lack of food, there is no longer the benefit of vermin control in the area. In addition, cats that are starving are more prone to disease, illness, and flea infestation.

However, even well-fed cats remain an excellent source of vermin control. The cats retain their stalking and hunter drive, and they will “play” with their prey to the point that it dies. Although cats have an important role in rodent control, they still require a daily feeding of nourishing food, and water should be available at all times.

Some people are reluctant to feed stray cats because they think that the cats will breed out of control if they are fed. In reality strays can breed out of control whether or not they are fed. Not feeding stray cats will not reduce the stray cat population. Even very hungry cats can still breed and produce litters of kittens that will also starve if they are not fed.

Since cats have become domesticated, they are no longer wild animals able to fend for themselves outside. Without human intervention, they don't survive well outdoors on their own. The best that stray cats can usually do is to eat from garbage cans. Every now and then they may find a mouse to eat, but in general most stray cats are starving. If no one wants to feed the cats in a neighborhood, it is more humane to trap the cats in approved traps and take them to the local shelter, where they will likely be euthanized.