



Humboldt Spay/Neuter Network

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GUIDELINES FOR FEEDING FERAL CATS

The following guidelines have been developed to minimize potential problems related to the feeding of feral cats.

FEEDING STATIONS

- Locate feeding stations in areas where neither they nor the feeding cats are visible to passersby or occupants of nearby buildings.
- Locate feeding stations away from heavily-populated or trafficked areas—buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, and streets. This is less disruptive and safer for cats and people.
- Camouflage feeding shelters and food dishes, using materials that are inconspicuous and blend with the surroundings.
- Provide durable, draining shelters to keep food dry during the rainy season.
- Keep feeding stations clean and neat.
 - a) Keep dishes and shelters clean.
 - b) Collect scattered dishes.
 - c) Dispose of stale food to discourage flies and odors.
- If necessary, spray surrounding area for ants, and/or place food in a container surrounded by a water moat to discourage pests.

FEEDING SCHEDULES

- Feed during daylight hours, preferably early to mid-morning, when it is relatively quiet and the air is still cool (during the summer months), i.e., when you are more likely to see your cats yet not attract nocturnal wildlife.
- Gauge the amount of food provided so that it is enough to feed the cats, with minimal food left over to attract wildlife in the evening.
- Recruit a substitute feeder to feed on your days off.
- Provide clean, fresh, drinking water daily.
 - a) Cats need fresh water, especially to keep cool on hot summer days.
 - b) Replenish water in the morning, since wildlife probably will have dumped or dirtied the water overnight.
 - c) Neutered males, especially, need fresh drinking water to prevent urinary problems.
- *Establish and maintain a regular feeding location and daily feeding schedule!* This will condition your cats to show up at feeding time. This contact is essential to your being a responsible caregiver. It enables you to observe them to make sure they are safe and healthy and to respond with rescue efforts or veterinary care if they are not. It also enables your timely spotting of hungry new arrivals, who are then trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated and released to care if they are wild or semi-wild (feral) cats, or re-homed if they are tame.