



Mandatory Cat Spay/Neuter

Since 1990, Alley Cat Allies has advocated that all cats be spayed or neutered, particularly those who are stray or feral. We support legislative and non-legislative approaches that rely on positive incentives and that harness community-wide resources to increase the cat neuter rate. We, however, oppose “mandatory spay/neuter.” This method not only fails to increase the cat neuter rate.

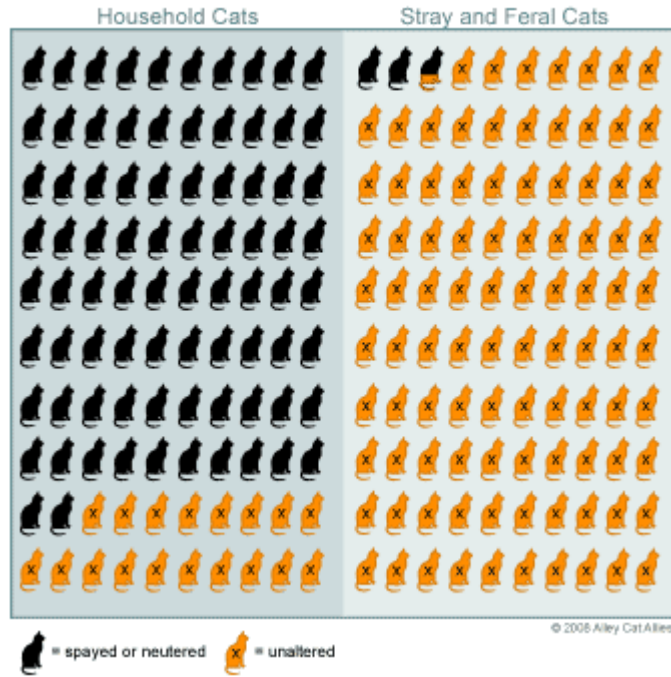
Punishing Non-Existent Cat Owners

Mandatory spay/neuter laws are based on myth not reality. As an early proponent of these laws mistakenly reasoned, the U.S. cat population exists because cat owners are breeding their animals; furthermore, because these owners will not voluntarily stop breeding their animals, it is necessary to pass laws mandating they sterilize their animals. *See* Kim Sturla, “Killing the Crisis, Not the Animal,” published by The Fund for Animals (Circa 1991). But a fault-based approach is not effective when, as is the case, the majority of cats who are breeding are unowned.

Unaltered Cat Population Largely Unowned

Here are the facts about the U.S. cat population. The total population comprises both cats living in households as well as stray and feral cats. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, 82 million cats lived in U.S. households in December 2006. Other research found that between 77% to 87% of cats in U.S. households are neutered. But these numbers account for only half of the total U.S. cat population. Although no census exists of the stray and feral cat population, scientists estimate that the number of this population rivals that household population. The most comprehensive study to date indicates less than 3% of these cats are neutered. The graph below captures this data visually.

Spay/Neuter Status of U.S. Cat Population



Punishing cat owners will have virtually no effect on increasing the number of cats who are neutered.