

### ***Trap, Neuter, Return programmes at the Atlantic Veterinary College for feral cats on PEI***

Feral cats have high birth rates because they are sexually intact and have uncontrolled reproduction. They also have high death rates because of the harshness of their lives: fighting for mates, competing for food, and susceptibility to disease. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programmes are designed to decrease the birth rate within the feral cat population and decrease the stressors in their lives.



There are two projects carried out through the SJDAWC in cooperation with a community group, the [PEI Cat Action Team](#) (CAT), under which feral, stray, and barn cats are neutered at AVC. Through Dr. Peter Foley's project—*Neutering feral cats on PEI*—neuter days are conducted every two months on Saturdays, during which many students and faculty supervisors volunteer their time to participate. Through the *Pegasus feral cat neutering programme*, feral cats are neutered on Fridays at the AVC by senior veterinary students under the supervision of AVC Community Practice veterinarians, according to the same protocols established by Dr. Foley. This latter project has been generously supported by the Pegasus Family Foundation, through the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, since 2004. CAT also raises funds for, and coordinates, the neutering of additional feral cats at other PEI veterinary clinics.



Since the TNR programmes began in 2001, well over 8,000 feral cats have been neutered on PEI. Individual cats benefit through vaccination, deworming, and surgical sterilization, resulting in a less stressful life with less competition for food, less fighting, and less spread of disease. The feral cat population on PEI benefits through sterilization of whole colonies, or at least a decrease in the rate of growth of those colonies, and decreased prevalence of feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). Domestic cats on PEI have less chance of contracting infectious diseases like upper respiratory tract viruses, FeLV, and FIV from feral cats, and less likelihood of fighting. Veterinary students benefit through increased surgical experience and through an enhanced sense of responsibility to the welfare of feral cat populations. Nuisance behaviours of feral cats such as urine spraying and fighting are decreased. Research spin-offs for this programme include reporting of disease prevalence data on PEI as a whole and also within local pockets on the Island. This neuter programme has also served as a template for the creation of similar programmes in Eastern Canada.



Cats recovering

