



Spay and Neuter? The Paw-sitives for Our Cats

Gwynneth Casto

ULL, UNIV 100-002
APRIL, 2023

Awareness

As an animal lover, one of my biggest fears is something terrible happening to my own pets. The thought of my cats hurting, suffering, or being neglected hurts my soul. One of my biggest pet peeves is the neglect and mistreatment of animals, especially when someone has taken that animals life into their responsibility. The most irresponsible thing you can do as a pet owner is refuse to spay/neuter. This goes for dogs *and* cats. Also rabbits, and other mammals with high breeding nature. As the subject of spay/neuter is a wide topic, I chose to narrow it down to cats, since I have 5 of my own.

I am hoping to spread awareness on this issue, and by the end of this presentation feel confident that at least *one* member of my audience will make the decision to get his/her pet spayed/neutered.

Explanatory Study: Spay/Neuter

This powerpoint is an explanatory case study reviewing the importance of spaying/neutering cats domesticated and free-living. I will explain the benefits of spay/neuter, TNR, adoption, fostering, and the impact spay/neuter has on shelter overcrowding, overpopulation, and euthenasia of cats. I will also provide and explain options for the audience locally.

Research aim:

Impact of Spay and Neuter

Objective:

Increase awareness on the importance/impact of spay/neuter in cats

Research Question:

How does spay/neuter affect cats positively and affect population control

Hypothesis:

Spaying/neutering cats will have a positive benefit on the cat's health, and overall population benefits, including lowering euthanasia rates.

In Case You're Unsure

TNR: Trap, Neuter, and Return

Spay: Sterilize (a female animal) by removing the ovaries

Neuter: Sterilize (a male animal) by removing the testicals

ASPCA: American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals

Foster: To care for (the animal) without permanent residence

Adopt: To legally care for (the animal) by bringing it up as one's own

Free roaming/free living: Non-domesticated/feral cats characterized by an independent lifestyle

“Fur”-Sure Facts

- Started with controversial drugs (chloroform) 1893
- Great Depression caused over 300,000 stray animals (peak)
- Sterilizing livestock common-spay/neuter pets accessible
- 1969 Low Cost spay/neuter clinic Los Angeles/4 month waiting list



BLOG:Marketing, K. V. P. (2022, January 12). *Fighting overpopulation and euthanasia: A history of spay-neuter practices in the U.S.* Bowman Report. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://bowmanreport.com/blogs/all-articles/history-of-spay-neuter-practices-in-us>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/jan/10/millions-of-cat-owners-could-be-forced-to-microchip-pets>

It's Not Fuzzy! The Evidence is Clear



<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/aspca-launches-national-adoption-weekend-campaign-from-june-5---7-to-encourage-virtual-animal-adoptions-during-covid-19-crisis-301063866.html>

- ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) S/N all adoptable animals
- 1973 over 13.5 million cats/dogs euthanized in USA/year
- Today, 3.4 million cats/dogs euthanized yearly in USA (25% of 1970's)

BLOG: Marketing, K. V. P. (2022, January 12). *Fighting overpopulation and euthanasia: A history of spay-neuter practices in the U.S.* Bowman Report. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://bowmanreport.com/blogs/all-articles/history-of-spay-neuter-practices-in-us>

Fun Facts

- *The Price Is Right* host (Bob Baker): "This is Bob Baker reminding you to help control the pet population — have your pets spayed or neutered." (1979)
- Fourth Tuesday in Feb. is World Spay Day (Doris Day Animal League) (1995)



<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=552987853537544&set=a.552987830204213>

BLOG:Marketing, K. V. P. (2022, January 12). *Fighting overpopulation and euthanasia: A history of spay-neuter practices in the U.S.* Bowman Report. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://bowmanreport.com/blogs/all-articles/history-of-spay-neuter-practices-in-us>

Benefits for Kitty

- Decreased mating/pregnancy stress (4 months age)
- Decrease certain risk for uterine cancer/testicular cancer
- Increase physical health
- Increase life span
- Decrease UTI in male cats
- Improve behavior/mood
- Fewer litters/overcrowding



BOOK:Marra, P. P., & Santella, C. (2016). CHAPTER SEVEN Trap-Neuter-Return: A Palatable Solution That Is No Solution At All. In *Cat wars the devastating consequences of a cuddly killer.* essay, Princeton University Press.

Cat Scratch Fever

Un-Altered Cats Behavior

- Free living colonies and domesticated
- Roaming
- Caterwauling
- Yowling
- Scent marking (urine)
- Fighting
- Prey species extinction

BOOK:Marra, P. P., & Santella, C. (2016). CHAPTER SEVEN Trap-Neuter-Return: A Palatable Solution That Is No Solution At All. In *Cat wars the devastating consequences of a cuddly killer*. essay, Princeton University Press.



<https://www.yourcat.co.uk/cat-advice/how-do-i-stop-a-cat-fight/>

This is the face of an unneutered cat.



He has ended up lost, battered, scarred, and has impregnated countless female cats on his travels.

Please do not let this happen to your cat.

FAQs Spay and Neuter



- Cost: \$35-\$75
- Is it painful: Anesthesia/won't feel pain
- Discomfort after surgery/post op care
- When to spay: **ASAP** (females pregnant at 4 months, toms mate by 6 months)
- Will my cat get fat: Process lowers metabolism/don't encourage free feeding

<https://www.pumpkin.care/blog/best-time-to-spay-neuter-cat/>

WEB: Louisiana SPCA. (2021, December 1). *Spay/neuter faqs*. Louisiana SPCA. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://www.louisianaspca.org/clinic/services/spay-neuter-questions/#:~:text=Are%20there%20health%20benefits%20to,dog%20will%20prevent%20testicular%20cancer.>

The Facts: Too many cats?

- Overpopulation responsible for 3.4 million cats in shelters yearly (USA)
- 1.4 million (half) euthanized every year
- 10-25% of euthanizations are due to shelter “overcrowding”, or lack of resources



REF: Bradley, J., & Rajendran, S. (2021). Increasing adoption rates at animal shelters: a two phase approach to predict length of stay and optimal shelter allocation. *BMC Veterinary Research*, 17(1), 70. <https://doi-org.ezproxyprod.ucs.louisiana.edu/10.1186/s12917-020-02728-2>

- In an effort to increase adoptions:
 - Reduce adoption fees
 - Prior sterilization
- Leading cause of overcrowding:
Failure to spay and neuter = excessive breeding
- Also:
 - Human abandonment
 - Irresponsible pet care
 - Buying instead of adopting



<http://www.shelterplanners.com/blog/2013/3/26/take-steps-to-reduce-overcrowding-in-animal-shelters.html>

REF: Bradley, J., & Rajendran, S. (2021). Increasing adoption rates at animal shelters: a two-phase approach to predict length of stay and optimal shelter allocation. *BMC Veterinary Research*, 17(1), 70. <https://doi-org.ezproxyprod.ucs.louisiana.edu/10.1186/s12917-020-02728-2>



Veterinary Consequences of Shelter Overcrowding

- Job stress
- Work/family conflict
- Low job satisfaction
- Impaired mental/emotional health
- Substance abuse/depression
- Failure to fix = more euthenasia,
more euthanasia = more suicides

REF: Bradley, J., & Rajendran, S. (2021). Increasing adoption rates at animal shelters: a two-phase approach to predict length of stay and optimal shelter allocation. *BMC Veterinary Research*, 17(1), 70. <https://doi.org.ezproxyprod.ucslouisiana.edu/10.1186/s12917-020-02728-2>

What is TNR

- Trap, Neuter, Return
- Used to keep feral/free-living cat populations under control
- Returns cats to their original colonies
- Supports a stable colony and doesn't encourage breeding
- Prevents in-breeding
- Identifying incision

MAG: Trap Neuter Return: Helping to reduce the overpopulation of cats. (2023). *Your Cat*, 14–16.



TNR

- Discourages new cats/colonies
- Colonies keep rodent/invasive population under control
- Prevents disease within colony
- Remove/killing is outdated/cruel and encourages new cats to breed
- Identifying incision

MAG: Trap Neuter Return: Helping to reduce the overpopulation of cats. (2023). *Your Cat*, 14–16.





Does TNR Infringe on Animal Rights?

- TNR (trap, neuter, release) “harm” one for the benefit of all
- Less overcrowding/overpopulation
- Prevents lack of resources
- Prevents euthenasia
- Leads to a longer life span

Alternative

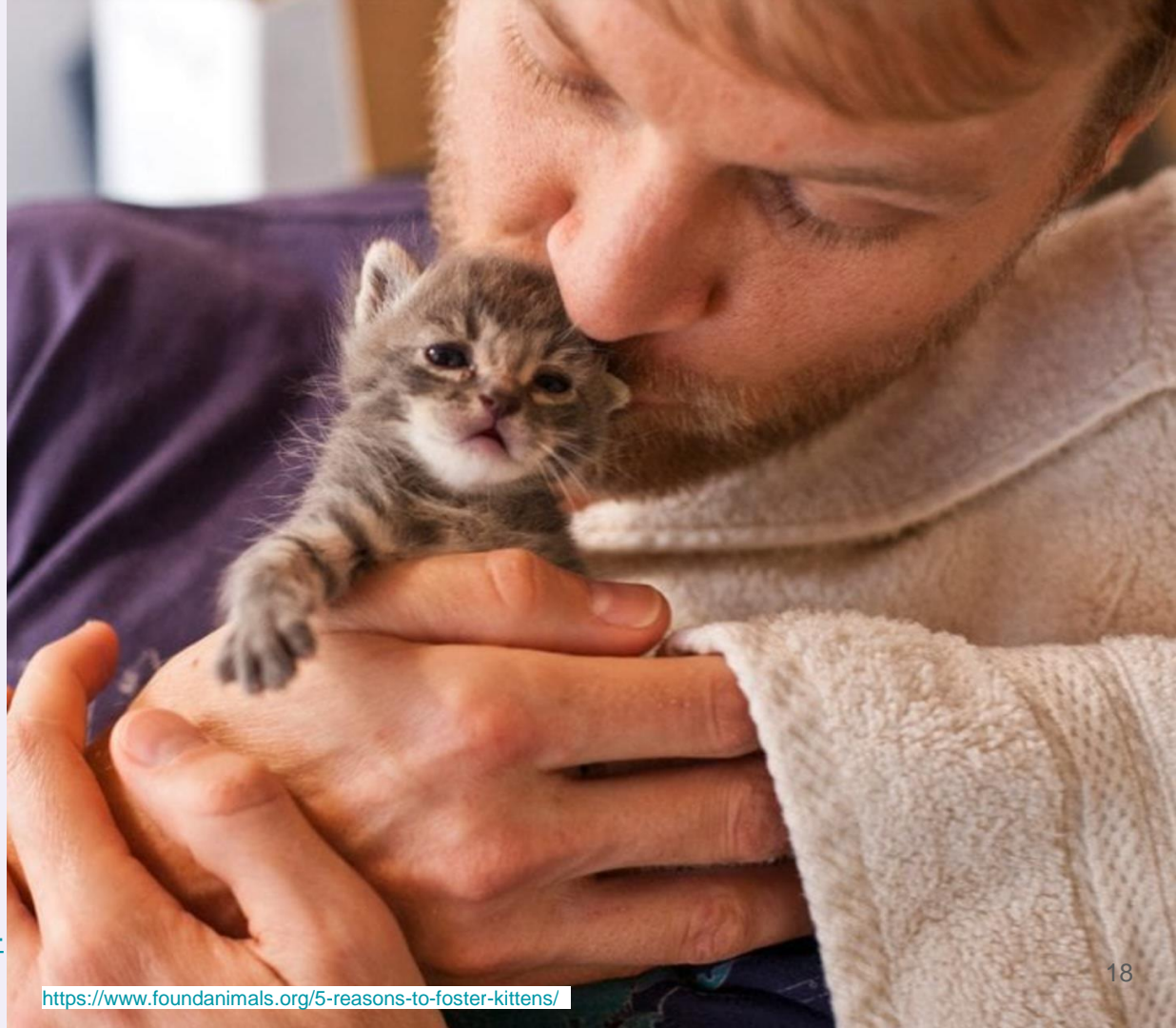
- NO TNR can lead to:
 - Serious harm (free-living cats/domestic)
 - Illness/diseases
 - Starvation
 - Territorial conflict
 - Premature death

REF: ABBATE, C. (2018). Harming (Respectfully) Some to Benefit Others: Animal Rights and the Moral Imperative of Trap-Neuter-Release Programs. *Between the Species: An Electronic Journal for the Study of Philosophy & Animals*, 21(1), 94–126.

Fostering the Fur-Babies

- Foster cat care = normal cat care
- Stray, abandoned, lost, previous family loss
- Vet clinic takes care of (most) expenses (vetted/medication)
- Pair cat's needs to home environment
- Sometimes foster for +1 year

MAG: Sewell, A. (2021, August 19). *How to foster a cat: The unsung heroes of foster care.* Modern Cat. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from <https://moderncat.com/articles/how-to-foster-a-cat-the-unsung-heroes-of-foster-care/>



Friends Fur-ever



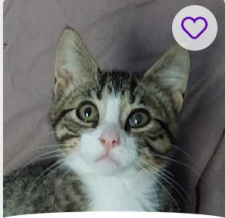


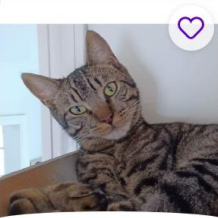
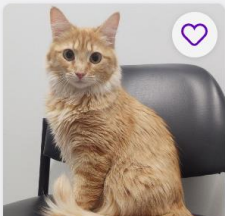


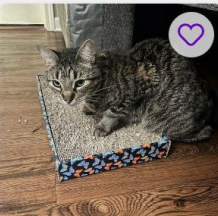
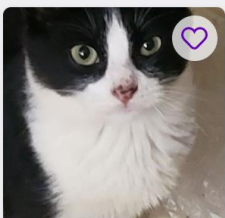
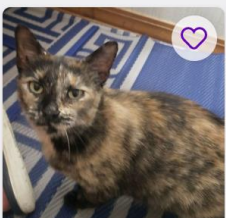
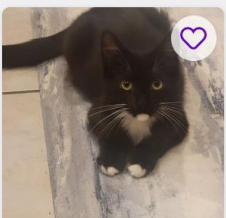
- Kittens find homes faster (kitten season)
- Adults may have behavioral issues (previous life experience)
- Applicants meet the cat before adopting
- Cats have a loving home while in foster (compared to cold cells/shelter)
- Increases outreach for shelters (foster home advertising)

MAG: Sewell, A. (2021, August 19). *How to foster a cat: The unsung heroes of foster care*. Modern Cat. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from

<https://moderncat.com/articles/how-to-foster-a-cat-the-unsung-heroes-of-foster-care/>¹⁹

Adopt, Don't Shop!

- 1/2 euthanized in shelter (overcrowding/overpopulation)
- Animals left alone for long periods of time
- Understaffed/rely on volunteers
- Almost NO “no kill” shelters
- limited funding to counties


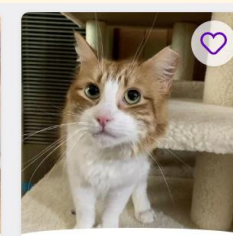
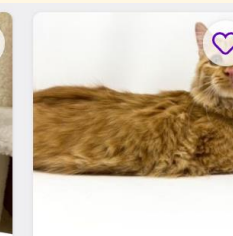
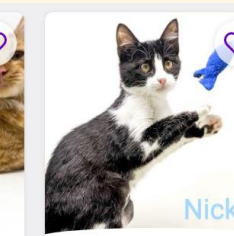
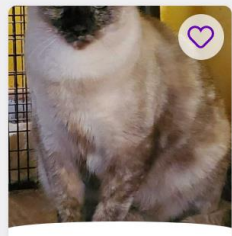
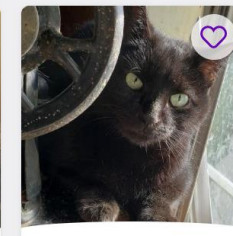
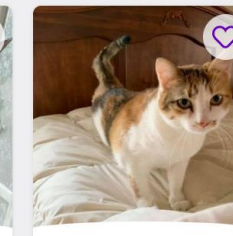

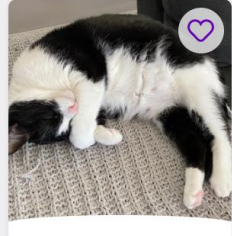
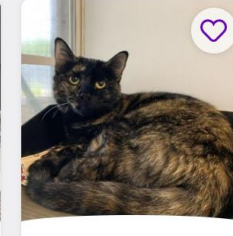


 <p>Stevie Wonder Kitten • Domestic Short Hair 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Apple Cider Adult • Domestic Long Hair 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Panic! At The Disco Young • Domestic Short Hair 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Blink-182 Young • Domestic Short Hair 3 miles away</p>
 <p>Sunflower Adult • Domestic Medium ... 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Meredith Young • Domestic Short Hair 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Everly Adult • Domestic Medium ... 3 miles away</p>	 <p>Maxwell Adult • Domestic Short Hair 4 miles away</p>
 <p>Male Tuxedo Kitten Kitten • Domestic Short Hair 4 miles away</p>	 <p>Female Young Adult Young • Tortoiseshell 4 miles away</p>	 <p>Tony Adult • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>	

NEWS: Times-Herald, T. N. (2023, February 6). *Dogs: Adopt, don't shop!* Times. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from https://www.times-herald.com/opinion/dogs-adopt-don-t-shop/article_89bdc97c-830d-5ad0-8623-9910b365b0c9.html

Fur-ever Home

- Length of stay (longer for older cats)
- Good shelters/bad shelters (get them out)
- shopping/buying promotes excess breeding, inbreeding, disease
- Adds to overpopulation
- Supporting animal mills (even at pet stores)

NEWS:Times-Herald, T. N. (2023, February 6). *Dogs: Adopt, don't shop!* Times. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from https://www.times-herald.com/opinion/dogs-adopt-don-t-shop/article_89bdc97c-830d-5ad0-8623-9940b30510c9.html

 <p>Kit Adult • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Coco Adult • Domestic Long Hair 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Kohl Young • Domestic Long Hair 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Nickles Kitten • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>
 <p>Paulette Adult • Siamese 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Cobi Adult • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Eliza Adult • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Katalie Adult • Domestic Short Hair 6 miles away</p>
 <p>Avis Adult • Domestic Short Hair... 6 miles away</p>	 <p>Kate Young • Domestic Short Hair 7 miles away</p>	 <p>Sally Young • Domestic Medium ... 7 miles away</p>	 <p>Xaly Young • Domestic Short Hair 7 miles away</p>

Let's Talk About It

A lack of knowledge among the general populace about spay/neuter in cats has a negative impact. By educating ourselves and others we can raise awareness about the health risks and environmental dangers for cats who are not sterile.

Spay/neuter is important to prevent disease, overpopulation, and shelter overcrowding. When a cat is not sterile, (domesticated or free-living), this can lead to the spread of diseases, territorial disputes, a lack of resources, and overpopulation, which leads to massive amounts of euthenaisa.

By taking responsibility and practicing proper pet ownership by sterilizing your cat(s), your cat will live longer, be healthier, and most importantly, you will prevent a continuing problem. According to the U.S Bowman Report, today, 1.4 million cats/dogs euthanized yearly in USA (75% less than in 1970s). This is a direct result of stressing the importance of spay/neuter across our nation.

Fostering and adopting young or senior cats is also a great way to reduce shelter overcrowding and euthenasia. You can find local adoption/foster centers and spay/neuter clinics in your area with a quick google search. Using PetFinder.com is also a great resource.

Conclusions

- Over 1.4 million shelter cats are euthanized every year
 - (75% less than 1970's/13.5 million euthanized)
- Spay/neuter can prevent shelter overcrowding/euthenasia
- Humans suffer from animal overcrowding/euthenasia
- S/n can prevent cat overpopulation
- S/n has long term health benefits for cats
- TNR can help control free-living cat populations
- Foster/adoption can also decrease shelter overcrowding
- Recap: FIX YOUR CAT



Works Cited

- Marketing, K. V. P. (2022, January 12). *Fighting overpopulation and euthanasia: A history of spay-neuter practices in the U.S.* Bowman Report. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://bowmanreport.com/blogs/all-articles/history-of-spay-neuter-practices-in-us>
- Marra, P. P., & Santella, C. (2016). CHAPTER SEVEN Trap-Neuter-Return: A Palatable Solution That Is No Solution At All. In *Cat wars the devastating consequences of a cuddly killer*. essay, Princeton University Press.
- Bradley, J., & Rajendran, S. (2021). Increasing adoption rates at animal shelters: a two-phase approach to predict length of stay and optimal shelter allocation. *BMC Veterinary Research*, 17(1), 70. <https://doi-org.ezproxyprod.ucs.louisiana.edu/10.1186/s12917-020-02728-2>
- Louisiana SPCA. (2021, December 1). *Spay/neuter faqs*. Louisiana SPCA. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from <https://www.louisianaspca.org/clinic/services/spay-neuter-questions/#:-:text=Are%20there%20health%20benefits%20to,dog%20will%20prevent%20testicular%20cancer>.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Foster definition & meaning*. Merriam-Webster. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foster>
- Sewell, A. (2021, August 19). *How to foster a cat: The unsung heroes of foster care*. Modern Cat. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from <https://moderncat.com/articles/how-to-foster-a-cat-the-unsung-heroes-of-foster-care/>
- Times-Herald, T. N. (2023, February 6). *Dogs: Adopt, don't shop!* Times. Retrieved March 23, 2023, from https://www.times-herald.com/opinion/dogs-adopt-don-t-shop/article_89bdc97c-830d-5ad0-8623-9910b365b0c9.html
- Trap Neuter Return: Helping to reduce the overpopulation of cats. (2023). *Your Cat*, 14–16.
- ABBATE, C. (2018). Harming (Respectfully) Some to Benefit Others: Animal Rights and the Moral Imperative of Trap-Neuter-Release Programs. *Between the Species: An Electronic Journal for the Study of Philosophy & Animals*, 21(1), 94–126.