

Thank you for reaching out.

I'm not sure how much information you are familiar with regarding feral cats, so I'll provide a bit of background, a feral cat is one that has missed out on the crucial socialization window when they were kittens, or have been outside so long they have grown wild. These cats are often well adapted to living and working outdoors, although they do need our support during the cold winter months by in providing food and shelter. Feral cats can't be rehomed, not only is it not what is best for them but they also would be a safety risk to staff and foster homes, and the socialization process would take years in some cases, that's time we just don't have with limited foster homes in our community.

A feral cat is much different than a stray cat, a stray is a friendly cat that has been lost or abandoned outside. We do find that there are friendly abandoned cats in feral cat colonies, and the friendly cats can be easily removed and rehomed, we also can take feral kittens up to 8 weeks of age because their socialization time is only a few weeks.

Our TNR (trap neuter return) program operates from donations and fundraising, this is not a municipal provided service. We do not have any municipal contacts since feral cats are not something covered by municipal bylaws, so we do not have any person to refer residents to regarding cat concerns.

T-N-R is the most humane solution, by providing spay/neuter services to a feral cat, not only are you preventing the birth of kittens and limiting the colony from any further growth, but a fixed cat is also a better neighbour, there is less fighting (noise), spraying and they tend to roam a smaller area.

Our SPCA TNR program operates basically as much as fundraising supports, we are fortunate thanks to a bequest to have built a low cost clinic at the Yarmouth shelter so we can keep the costs for the spay or neuter surgery low and limited to only the cost of supplies and staffing, we can make valuable fundraising dollars go that much further to provide the spay or neuter to feral cats.

For feral cats, Trap, Neuter and Return is the best option. Since this process is still stressful for them our program insists on a quick return to their outdoor home, stress is the most common contributor to surgical complications and any risk of releasing them quickly is less than the risk of keeping the cat contained and stressed.

Our TNR programs are on their winter hold period. Unfortunately, this time of year causes another complication, it is not safe to quickly release the cat in these cold weather conditions after a surgery

procedure, as anesthetic affects their ability to regulate their body temperature, and it is also not safe or kind to contain the cat for the full duration of healing, the best course of action is to provide the cats support, remove any friendly cats and kittens and wait until the spring to trap the feral cats for spay/neuter.

I hope that answers your questions. I would advise the colony caretaker to submit their information to the SPCA to get on a waiting list for spay/neuter assistance when the program reopens.  
<https://www.novascotiaspca.ca/services-care/trapneuterreturn/>

Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) – Nova Scotia SPCA

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