

Quadra Feral Cat Group

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NEWS RELEASE

Quadra Group to Hold “Catberet” Fundraiser

With 20 cats fixed in just over two months, the Quadra Feral Cat Group is now doing double duty: trapping and transporting cats to local vets for spaying and neutering, and gearing up to stage a major fundraiser.

“There are many, many more unwanted cats on Quadra that have been left to fend for themselves, and we’re holding a ‘Catberet’ to raise funds so we can continue to manage and reduce their numbers,” explains Lara Fraser, Quadra Feral Cat Group coordinator.

Catberet, an evening of adult fun and satire, will be held May 29 at the Quadra Community Centre. The event will include door prizes and feature Quadra poets, comedy acts and musical entertainment in a production coordinated by the group’s fundraising lead, Chris Thompson.

The Quadra Feral Cat Group also hosts a table at the Saturday market, collects change in cans on local store counters and accepts donations through an account at the Quadra Credit Union.

“People and businesses have been so generous, with money, cat food, traps, supplies, time and items for our online garage sale,” Fraser says. “Beverage container returns to the Heriot Bay TruValue Foods donated to our cause in April raised \$150. The Strathcona Regional District has provided a funding boost, and we were thrilled to receive a donation to cover the surgery for 10 cats. The support is timely because we’ve fixed most of the cats around the gas station, and once that’s done, the next colony on our list has about 30 cats.” The Quadra Feral Cat Group has a growing donors list posted on its website (www.quadracats.com).

Fraser says along with funds, the group welcomes new members, needs help with cat transport to and from the vet’s office and is urgently looking for foster homes. “This is a huge undertaking, and we gratefully accept support in big ways and small,” she says. The group’s first rehabilitated stray cat is ready for adoption, and two others await foster homes. “And, of course, the Quadra Feral Cat Group urges everyone who has a cat or kitten to please get it spayed or neutered so we don’t end up with more unwanted strays,” she adds.

“Following a proven and humane plan, our efforts to date have prevented the birth of up to 10,000 unwanted kittens on this island over the next three years,” she says. “Having seen the suffering stray and feral cats experience, I can only say how glad I am that this group has formed to improve the quality of life for these abandoned animals that would otherwise be someone’s pet.”

Quadra Feral Cat Group can be reached via telephone at 250-285-3941 or by email at quadracats@yahoo.com.

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Information: Lara Fraser, 250-285-3941 (Photos available for download at www.quadracats.com)

Backgrounder

How did we end up with all these feral cats?

Research indicates approximately 85 per cent of cats in a feral colony are not spayed or neutered, and at any given time, approximately 50 per cent of the females will be pregnant. Even with 50 per cent of kittens dying before they're eight weeks old and young mothers often dying from pregnancy complications and poor nutrition, feral cat colonies continue to grow. This is a human-caused problem, and the Quadra Feral Cat Group is implementing a proven and humane feral cat population management program.

How does a spay/neuter program work?

A feral cat in an unmanaged colony has a half-starved, two to three-year life span. By spaying and neutering, the birthrate drops, and fighting and mating behaviour is eliminated, so the cats are less prone to injury and infection. And in a managed colony, any new cats that move in are spotted at monitored feeding stations, and appropriate steps can be taken. Trap-neuter-release program statistics indicate that in managed feral cat populations, numbers decrease over time as cats die of naturally.

What's involved in trapping?

The Quadra Feral Cat Group aims to notify people in the neighbourhood when traps will be set. Live traps are set at dusk, at the feeding station. A small amount of bait (rich-smelling food like sardines or canned cat food) and water are placed at the end of the trap farthest from the door. When the cat enters the trap to reach the food, its paws trigger the door release and the trap closes. The person monitoring the trap places a blanket or sheet over the trap to calm the cat. The trap is moved to a warm, dry, quiet place, and the cat is transported to the vet the next morning.

Why return the feral cats to their colonies?

Quadra Feral Cat Group aims to coordinate a group of foster homes to tame young kittens for eventual adoption. The group will also try to house and prepare semi-feral or stray cats for adoption. In some cases, semi-feral cats will adapt to being barn cats, and the group is eager to hear from people who'd be suitable hosts for a healthy, fixed semi-feral cat. Cats are very territorial, and fixed cats that cannot be placed elsewhere will return to their colony. In this location, they will prevent unfixed strays from moving in until a space is opened up through the death of a resident cat in the colony. In some cases, the feral cat colony is assisting with local rodent control, and a healthy colony will be more efficient at this task.

Are feral cats dangerous?

Feral cats are wild cats, and even kittens will scratch if scared or cornered. And cat scratches, even from a house cat, are something to avoid. People who want to help with feral cats are welcome to contact the Quadra Feral Cat Group rather than try to catch cats themselves.

Why not trap and euthanize?

These are animals that would otherwise be family pets. Research indicates that combining a population management program and public education is the only humane and proven method for reducing feral cat populations over time.

But these cats kill songbirds.

Any outdoor cat, pet or feral, hunts. By working to reduce the feral cat population through a proven method, and by encouraging people to prevent unwanted litters of kittens, Quadra Feral Cat Group is helping birds too. A managed feral cat colony is an improvement over the current situation that makes things better for the feral cats, pet cats, people and wildlife.

How can I assist feral cats?

Encourage people to spay and neuter pets - and never ever abandon pets. Unwanted pets are much better off with the SPCA. People can also volunteer to be part of the Quadra Feral Cat Group's efforts, help with funding or contact the group if they can adopt a healthy fixed family cat or kitten, or make room for a barn cat that will keep to itself.