



HAWAIIAN
HUMANE
SOCIETY

SOLUTIONS TO CAT-RELATED PROBLEMS



DISCOURAGE ROAMING CATS FROM ENTERING YOUR YARD BY:

- understanding what they need and why
- changing behavior with safe methods
- making the area unattractive to cats

People understandably become upset when neighborhood cats behave in ways which are offensive or destructive. Some worry about the cats attacking wild birds as they feed or nest in yards. Others are offended by cats using garden spots as litter boxes. Many have problems when their own pets are upset by these wanderers invading their territory. You certainly have the right to enjoy your yard, and the birds which visit it, and to protect your own pets. But it is also your responsibility to use only humane methods to solve a cat-related problem.

UNDERSTANDING CAT BEHAVIOR

In most situations where cats are causing problems, they are just behaving naturally... but in inappropriate places. The solution lies in making those places uncomfortable and undesirable so the cats will behave naturally somewhere else!

• CATS CHASING BIRDS

Unless they are literally starving, most cats will not eat birds — but they do enjoy the “thrill of the hunt.” Cats have preyed upon birds for thousands of years; there is no foolproof way to discourage this natural instinct.

• USING YOUR YARD AS A LITTER BOX

It is a natural instinct for a cat to relieve itself in an area where it can cover its scent by burying the waste. Therefore a cat who spends time outdoors appreciates the soft, pre-dug dirt of your garden (or your child's sandbox) as a handy toilet.

- **DAMAGING YOUR PROPERTY**

When a cat naps on the hood of a car or in the center of a flower bed, it is simply sunning itself in a wonderfully warm spot. The cat doesn't realize the damage it can do and will not necessarily connect your reaction (screaming, throwing things) with the place where it naps. Yes, the cat will learn to avoid you and your voice, but will not learn to avoid the place or the activity which upset you in the first place.

- **BOTHERING YOUR PETS**

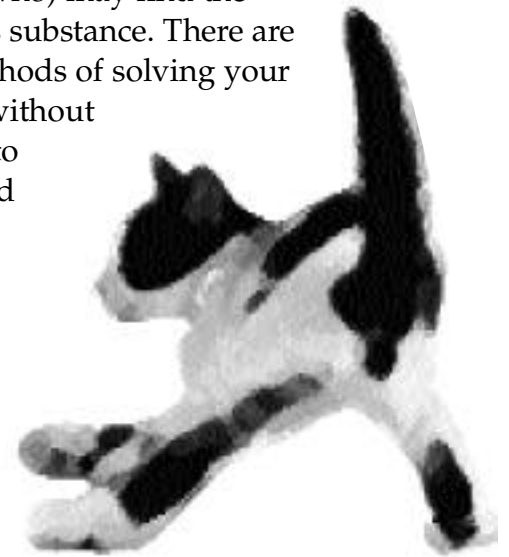
An outside cat may approach your window or lanai door and challenge your indoor cat or dog through the glass. Sometimes this challenge for territorial rights is very bold, including blatant body language and vocal insults. However, blinded by the angle or reflection of the glass, the outside cat may not even be aware of the inside animals. But your pet may still feel threatened... even if the outside cat is simply walking by or sunning itself within your pet's line of vision. The best way to relieve your pet of these pressures is to keep the outside cat away from areas your pet can see.

The ideal solution to all of these problems is for responsible pet owners to keep their cats indoors, safe where they belong! Unfortunately, prevention will not solve the problem you have right now. There are many methods of solving the problem without harming the cats, the birds, the yard or yourself. Repellents or devices

designed to startle the cat "in the act" will condition the animal to avoid the area. Since each situation is different, however, you may need patience and ingenuity to find the appropriate deterrent through trial and error.

POISONS

Do **NOT** use poisons. Poisoning can cause great suffering. It is inhumane and illegal — it isn't even very efficient. Practically speaking, poisons will only rid you of one pest and will not deter any others. Also, you have no way of knowing or controlling what (or who) may find the poisonous substance. There are many methods of solving your problem without resorting to torture and death by poison.



REPELLENTS

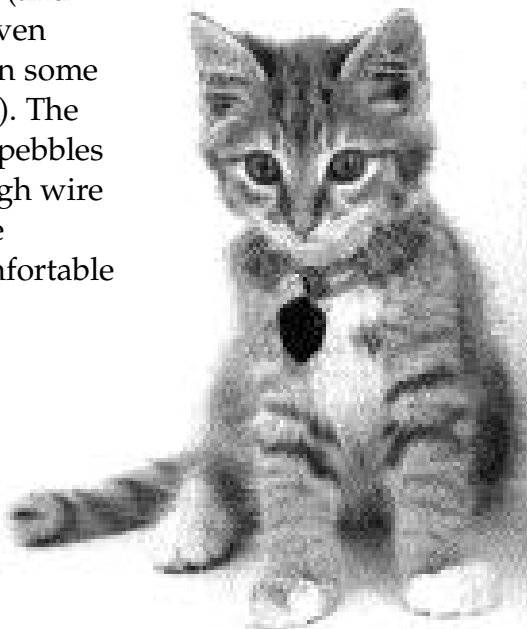
The Environmental Protection Agency has registered over thirty compounds for safe use in repelling domestic cats. Check with any pet supply store and most garden suppliers for commercial cat repellents. Most commercial repellents are based on the simple mothball compound. Mothballs or moth crystals, encased in cheesecloth bags to help protect the soil, usually work quite well to keep cats from actually digging in garden areas or potted plants.

Consumers report mixed results with

commercial repellents. Also, the effectiveness of any repellent will deteriorate with moisture or time. Whether you use moth balls or a sophisticated, expensive commercial mixture, you will certainly need to reapply the solution after each rain, heavy dew, or watering. Check with your garden supplier to be certain that the solution you choose will not harm plants growing in that area, especially if you use fertilizers or other additives.

DETERRENTS

For areas where cats want to dig, ornamental pebbles may be an effective deterrent. (Avoid those which are very round or smooth; they make a great cat bed!) Rocks or pebbles should be firmly secured into the dirt or mulched area so that they cannot easily be moved or overturned. Small-gauge chicken wire can also be buried under a light layer of dirt or mulch (and may even restrain some weeds). The sharp pebbles or rough wire will be uncomfortable to soft paws.



There are also a number of plants that cats avoid — probably because of the smell. If cats are digging in your flower or vegetable garden, try planting a border of marigolds,

marjoram, rosemary or basil.

Most cats really dislike water, so if you have cats wandering into your yard, try spraying them with water. Use a watering can, spray bottle or gentle spray of a hose. They also don't like loud noises. Try clapping your hands, shouting or banging a stick on a garbage pail lid. Be consistent; use the same technique every time you see the cat enter your yard. After a few days, they should get the idea and go elsewhere.

SURPRISE DEVICES

It is possible the cat will not associate the area with your behavior. If this is the case, the villain should be the area itself... not you. Simple devices can effectively "booby-trap" any surface or area that a cat has found attractive. Experiment with variations on the following suggestions to determine what works best for your situation.

SOUND or MOVEMENT : Cats remember unpleasant, undignified surprises and will avoid situations and places which recall such negative memories.

Scatter dry beans, macaroni, or bird seed on a metal tray (disposable pie pans or cookie sheets are ideal and inexpensive). Balance several trays along the fence, porch or deck railing, the window sill or around the edge of any vehicle where the cat jumps onto the surface. Birds can still land safely if the trays are balanced properly, but the weight of a cat leaping onto the surface will upset the tray. The cat will be startled by the noise and the unsteady, collapsing perch.

TEXTURE: To keep cats from jumping onto flat surfaces (railings, vehicles, lanais,

boat covers, etc.), criss-cross double-sided tape onto a piece of sturdy plastic; a heavy plastic drop-cloth, or vinyl tablecloth works well. Drape the plastic over the surface, and secure it with cord or with at least one weighted object to keep it in position. The sticky tape on the cat's paws is annoying (without pain or panic), and the slick plastic rattles and offers no foothold.

WATER: This method works especially well for those areas where birds feed on the ground or where cats are using a garden area as a litter box. When the temperature permits, turn on a water sprinkler at the prime times of disturbance (usually dawn and dusk if the cat is on your property to hunt.) A timing device for the sprinkler, set to a staggered schedule, will help discourage those intelligent cats who would otherwise simply avoid the area at "regularly wet" times of day.

As a variation on the "falling tray" method, set shallow plastic lids filled with water on each end of the trays to add a shower to the noise and movement to the falling tray.

OBSTACLES: If your bird feeder or birdhouse is mounted on a post, nail a galvanized metal guard in the shape of an inverted cone to the post to protect the platform.

WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT REALLY?

If these remedies fail to provide relief, we encourage you to call the Hawaiian Humane Society to discuss the problem. The cat may be either feral (wild), a domesticated stray with no real owner, or an owned cat who is allowed to roam.

If the problem cat belongs to a neighbor, your problem is a shared one. It is the

owner's responsibility to restrain his or her pet from its disruptive or destructive behavior. Try to discuss the issue diplomatically with the neighbor. Do not accuse your neighbor of being irresponsible. Threats and accusations may make your neighbor defensive and probably won't solve the problem. Be friendly and try to avoid confrontation by showing your concern for the cat's safety and well-being.

By emphasizing your concern for the cat's safety instead of the problems it is causing, you have a greater chance of gaining your neighbor's attention. It is very possible that the owner of your problem cat has never considered this side of the issue.

Cats kept indoors (or whose outdoor experiences are strictly supervised) are protected from the many hazards that face outdoor cats. Diseases, parasites, garbage which is spoiled or infested with vermin, attacks from other animals (and people), and vehicles are very real dangers which threaten cats' lives daily.

If you cannot determine the cat's owner, the problem is indeed in your hands. It is often impossible to distinguish a feral cat from a potentially friendly stray, so play it safe... don't touch!



If other deterrents do not work, you may need to resort to a humane trap. If you have any reason to believe that the cat has an owner, think twice before trapping it unless you plan to simply return it to its owner. Please don't use trapping as revenge against an uncooperative neighbor.

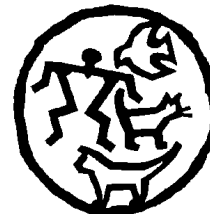
HUMANE TRAPS

Do NOT use any trap other than a humane cage trap. These traps are designed to lure the animal into the cage with food and to safely contain it until it can be moved to another area. The Hawaiian Humane Society loans humane traps free to the community. Our staff will show you how to use the trap (they're easy to use) and offer suggestions about the placement and best bait to use. For those unable to come to the Humane Society, you can arrange for a trap to be delivered to you.

To trap a stray or feral cat, bait the trap with canned cat food (fish). Place the trap in a tempting area, sheltered as much as possible from the sun and rain. Although you may hear some alarming noises when the animal realizes it is trapped, the cat is only reacting to confinement... not hurt.



However, once trapped, it is confined, with no access to water or shelter from weather or predators. It is important that you remove the trap from the area as soon as possible. Using gloves to prevent scratches or bites, put the trap in a sheltered area until you can bring the cat, still in the trap, to the Hawaiian Humane Society. The Humane Society will pick up a cat if it is confined in a trap or box, or you may bring the trapped cat to us. Our Incoming Animals Department (ext. 285) is open 24 hours daily.



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