



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
**OF THE UNITED STATES.**

# America's Favorite Pets

**T**HEY'RE PLAYFUL AND LOVING. Aloof and mysterious. And frisky and mischievous. They're also becoming the most frequent occupants of America's animal shelters, where millions of them are cared for each year.

They're cats—America's most popular pets, but also the pets most likely to die prematurely from diseases, poisons, attacks by other animals, abuse by humans, or speeding vehicles.

Cats are as deserving of our protection as dogs. But millions of cats suffer and die needlessly because they are allowed to roam. The vast majority of these cats aren't the victims of cruel or thoughtless owners; in fact, their caregivers often love them like children. Instead, cats are the victims of outmoded perceptions that cast them as independent, natural explorers who prefer to be left to their own devices.



# The Myth of The Outdoor Cat

**T**HE GOOD NEWS IS THAT CATS don't need to wander to lead fulfilling lives. The bad news is that many cat caregivers believe the opposite.

Free-roaming cats get a dangerous tradeoff: freedom to roam in exchange for the vastly increased likelihood of a premature, painful death.

The Humane Society of the United States estimates that the average lifespan of a free-roaming cat is about three years, compared to 12–18 years for the average indoor-only cat. Even cats in “safe” suburban neighborhoods can meet untimely fates and never return home.

Safely confined cats avoid these hazards:

- **TRAFFIC.** Collisions with cars and other vehicles are common killers. It is a myth that cats are “streetwise” about cars. Cats are intelligent and alert but, like most other animals, stand little chance against fast-moving vehicles.
- **DISEASES.** Rabies and other diseases that can be transmitted to humans are a serious public health concern. According to the American Association of Feline Practitioners, as many as 15 percent of sick cats are infected with feline leukemia or feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)—and many cats have both. These viruses are fatal and transmitted through contact with other cats.
- **POISONS.** Poisons exist on chemically treated lawns, in bait left out to kill rats or mice, and in auto antifreeze—which has an appealing taste—that leaks from cars.
- **OTHER ANIMALS.** Other cats, dogs, and wild predators such as coyotes, raccoons, and foxes are potential enemies of cats and often engage in fights that leave cats injured or dead. Outdoor cats can suffer torn ears, cut eyes, abscesses, and other injuries requiring costly veterinary treatment.
- **CRUEL PEOPLE.** Many shelter workers see cats who have been burned, poisoned, or otherwise tortured by disturbed children and adults.

## Other Dangers Lurking Outdoors

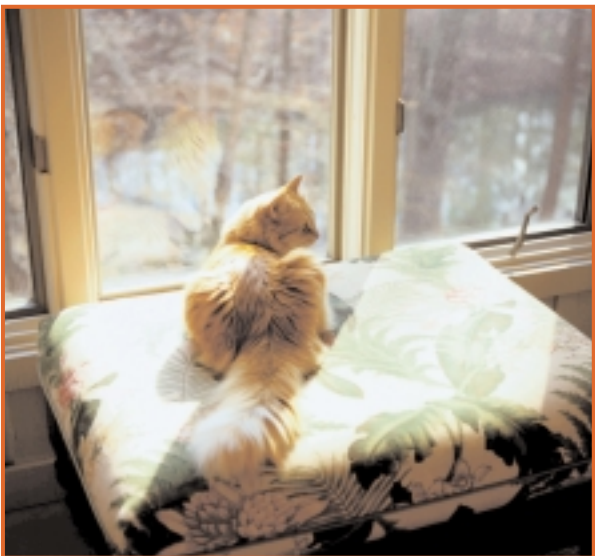
**F**REE-ROAMING CATS INEVITABLY pick up fleas and ticks and then bring these pests into the home. Fleas can cause anemia, skin irritations, and allergies in cats—and transmit diseases to humans through their bites. Unsterilized cats allowed to roam contribute to the high number of cats who end up in our nation's animal shelters every day.

Most veterinarians treat the injuries and diseases resulting from allowing cats outdoors unsupervised. In fact, two out of three veterinarians recommend keeping cats indoors, most often citing dangers from vehicles and disease.\*

And fewer than five percent of “found” cats taken in by animal shelters are reunited with their owners. That’s why outfitting your cat with a collar and visible identification is an important step to keep your cat safe.

\*HSUS veterinarian study conducted in June 2001  
by Jacobs Jenner & Kent.

***An indoor cat remains safe and content—free from danger and disease.***



# The Myth of the Indoor-Only Cat

**K**EEPING CATS SAFELY CONFINED is not new to many long-term cat lovers. But it is news to many people who grew up with indoor-outdoor or outdoor-only felines.

Some cat owners believe that it is unnatural, or even cruel, to keep cats cooped up inside all the time. Unfortunately, this belief is self-perpetuating, especially if the pet caregiver makes no effort to provide the cat with a stimulating indoor environment.

While most cats enjoy being outside where they can hunt prey and explore their surroundings, it's a myth that going outside is a prerequisite for feline happiness. Playing with an indoor cat easily satisfies the animal's stalking instinct and keeps the cat stimulated and healthy through exercise. In fact, the indoor cat who gets lots of attention and playtime is often happier than the indoor-outdoor cat who is generally ignored by human companions.

Cat owners can easily create feline-friendly homes that meet all of their cats' needs. Many innovative and fun toys can help make the indoor life a great but safe adventure.

And cats don't have to be deprived of the great outdoors to stay safe. Cats can be trained to accept a harness and leash, and cat enclosures can allow them to experience all the pleasures of the great outdoors without all of the risks.





# Keeping Communities Safe

**C**ATS ALLOWED TO ROAM FREELY outside not only face potential harm but also have an unintended impact on our communities.

Local governments spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year controlling stray animals, from neighborhood cats defecating in sandboxes to feral cats living in urban areas. Cats are now a major focus of local animal care and control agencies, which in the past concentrated most of their efforts on dog control and rescue.

In fact, animal control agencies were established long ago primarily to control the spread of rabies among dogs in the street. Today, cats who roam, particularly after dark, are likely to come into contact with nocturnal creatures, including raccoons and skunks, the primary vector species of rabies in the wild. As a result, cats are now the most common domestic vectors of rabies, with 278 cases reported in 1999 in the United States. Because of this, increasing numbers of cities and counties have been backing measures to inoculate cats against rabies.

In addition, free-roaming cats kill millions of wild animals each year. Studies have shown that most of the animals killed are small mammals; approximately 25 percent are birds. Well-fed housecats kill wildlife because of their instinct to hunt prey, not because they need the food. Cats are not a part of natural ecosystems, and their predation causes unnecessary suffering and death to wild animals. They also cause conflicts among neighbors, pitting gardeners and bird lovers against cat owners who allow their charges to roam.





# Keep Your Cat Safe

**B**ECAUSE OF OLD PERCEPTIONS concerning independence and predatory stalking, people have been slow to recognize that cats need and deserve the same kind of protection as dogs. But the transition has begun. Many shelters now require potential adopters to commit to keeping their cats indoors and strongly recommend that cats wear collars and ID tags. In addition, local ordinances aimed at encouraging cat owners to confine their cats, as they do dogs, are being implemented.

***Cats are healthier and happier when safely confined.***

For more information or materials, complete and return the order form in this brochure. Or write to Safe Cats, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, or visit [www.safecats.org](http://www.safecats.org).



*Generous support for the Safe Cats campaign was provided by The Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, a KeyBank Trust, and the Frances V. R. Seebe Charitable Trust.*

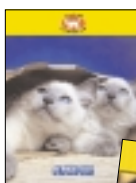


# Safe Cats Campaign Order Form

## Safe Cats Campaign Kit

If you want to be an advocate for cats, start with this kit. It includes all the Safe Cats items listed below. PM2277

1-5/\$4.00 each, 6-49/\$2.75 each, 50+/\$2.40 each



## A Safe Cat Is a Happy Cat

The Safe Cats campaign brochure gives the facts about keeping cats safe and happy—indoors. PM2276

1-5/60¢ each, 6-49/40¢ each, 50+/30¢ each



## Cat Care Basics

A favorite of shelters for their adoption packets, this best-selling booklet covers cat care basics—adoption, health care, nutrition, introducing a cat to your home, and tips for keeping your cat safe yet stimulated.

PM2137 1-5/\$1.99 each, 6-49/\$1.25 each, 50+/75¢ each



## The Safe Cats Guide to Cat Law

This booklet describes local ordinances and programs that protect both cats and communities. PM2139 \$1.50 each



## Safe Cats Bookmark

Mark your page with a Safe Cats reminder!

PM2321 1-99/10¢ each, 100/\$5.00, 500/\$18



## Safe Cats Magnet

Spread the message that cats are safer indoors. PM2320 1-24/25¢ each, 25-99/20¢ each, 100+/15¢ each



## Safe Cats PSAs

Three sheets of print-ready public service announcements (with three on each sheet) feature messages about keeping cats safe, spaying and neutering, and responsible cat care. PM2140 15¢ for set of 3 sheets



## The Uninvited Cat

This brochure explains what to do about neighborhood cats visiting your property. PM2317 1-5/60¢ each, 6-49/40¢ each, 50+/30¢ each



**To order, please use the form on page 8 ➡**



# Safe Cats Campaign Order Form

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\*Residents of these states should add applicable sales tax: CA (7.25%), CT (6%), DC (5.75%), FL (6%), IL (6.25%), MD (5%), OH (5%).

Material will be sent to the address above. Please provide a street address as shipment cannot be sent to P.O. boxes. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

All orders must be prepaid.

Enclose payment with this order form  
and mail to:

Safe Cats

The Humane Society of the United States

2100 L Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037



The goal of The Humane Society of the United States Safe Cats™ campaign is to convince cat caregivers that there is truly no place like home for their cats. This campaign provides cat caregivers with information on creating feline-friendly homes and offers caregivers and public officials information on the consequences of—and the solutions to—letting owned cats roam unsupervised outdoors.

**Promoting the  
protection of  
all animals**



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES®**

2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100 ■ [www.safecats.org](http://www.safecats.org)

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