



RESOLUTION 2021-03-07

CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF FREE-RANGING DOMESTIC CATS

WHEREAS, free-ranging (including feral, stray, and owned) domestic cats (*Felis catus*) are a non-native species in wildlife habitats in the United States, Canada, and Mexico and considered invasive and harmful on state and other public lands managed and conserved for native wildlife; and

WHEREAS, free-ranging domestic cats exist in significant numbers in many rural and urban terrestrial wildlife habitats with reliable estimates in the tens of millions of free-ranging domestic cats in the United States, particularly in areas near human populations; and

WHEREAS, free-ranging domestic cats are skillful and instinctive predators of wildlife, including many species of small mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, and are estimated to kill billions of native wild animals, including some threatened and endangered species, annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, free-ranging domestic cats are one of the predominant causes of direct mortality to many migratory bird species, human tolerance and acceptance of cats on the landscape have contributed to population declines of many songbird and water-related species; and

WHEREAS, free-ranging domestic cats pose significant health risks by transmitting harmful pathogens, such as rabies virus and *Toxoplasma gondii*, to native wildlife and people; and

WHEREAS, state wildlife agencies and federal natural resource management agencies are implementing significant efforts to reverse wildlife population declines and to protect all native wildlife from introduced species and emerging infectious pathogens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes predation on wildlife and pathogen transmission by free-ranging domestic cats as important and detrimental factors affecting wildlife that resource agencies are charged to manage and conserve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies supports efforts to increase awareness of these problems and provide solutions and best practices for member agencies, as outlined in the AFWA Toolkit to Address Free-ranging Domestic Cats (*Felis catus*) on Agency Lands Managed for Native Wildlife and Ecosystem Health.

Submitted by the Bird Conservation Committee.

Adopted by the Association on September 14, 2021 in Providence, RI.