

Welcome to Language That Harms Cats

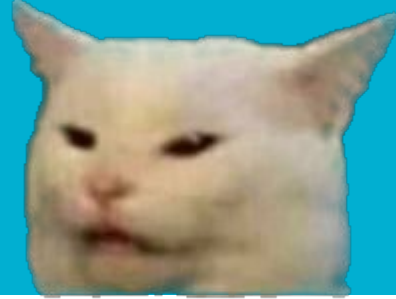
We will begin the presentation at 3 pm ET

In the meantime, follow this link to print out some **BINGO CARDS** to play along during this presentation and to enter a contest to win a Tomahawk gravity drop trap and trap labels

<https://bit.ly/WebcastLanguageThatHarmsCats>



WHOOOPS!



Language That Harms Cats

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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

american pets alive!

Let's start a discussion.

Many of the **words** we use are deeply embedded in our work and in our lives.

Changing how we talk about cats will be an evolution, a process.

We are all a work in progress.



Our Words Matter



Words have the power to shape culture and instigate change.

Words we use help create a narrative; they are part of the story we tell.

Words reflect how people think.

Words have different meanings to different audiences.

There are correct and incorrect ways to use any **word**.

If we want to build a positive culture around cats, we need to choose our **words** appropriately.



fe·ral

/ˈfɛrəl, ˈfɪrəl/

adjective

(especially of an animal) in a wild state, especially after escape from captivity or domestication.
"a feral cat"

"Feral"

This is an adjective, not a noun. Feral is temperament, not a breed of cat, not a species. Does not mean a cat who lives outdoors. This word now sounds scary, wild, ferocious cats.

Use instead: "Community Cat" as a noun. "Fractious" or "Unsocial" as an adjective.



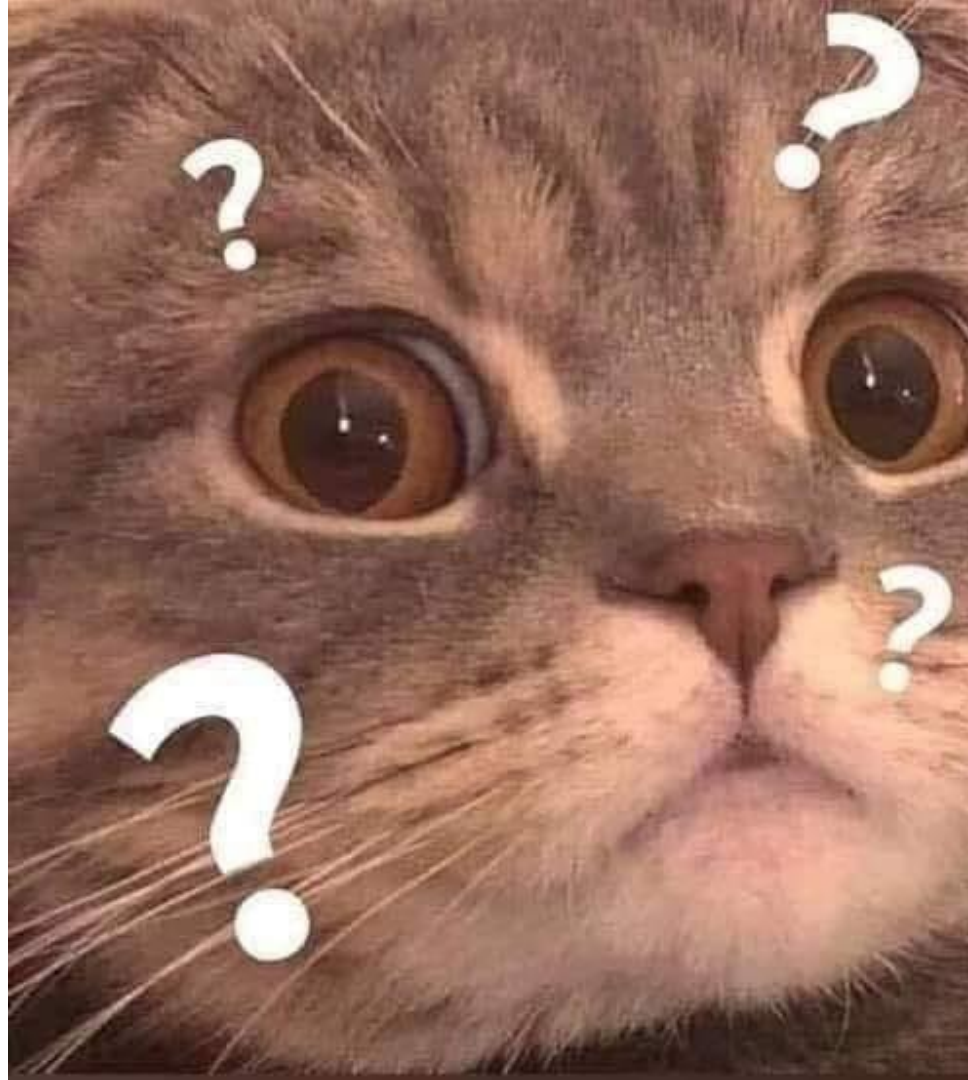
????

“Friendly Feral”

Oxymoron that confuses the public.
Can lead people to believe all feral
cats can become friendly housecats.

Use instead: Just Stop It.

“My cat was feral, she came from
outside and we brought her in because
she followed me home.”





do·mes·tic

/də'mestik/

adjective

1. relating to the running of a home or to family relations.
"domestic chores"

"Domestic"

Also an adjective, not a noun. All the cats we're working with for CCP are *felis catus*: the domestic house cat. The cat in your house, and the cat on the sidewalk, are all "domestic." Creates a divide between respect and tolerance for cats in our homes and cats outside.

Use instead: "Cat"





stray

/strā/

verb

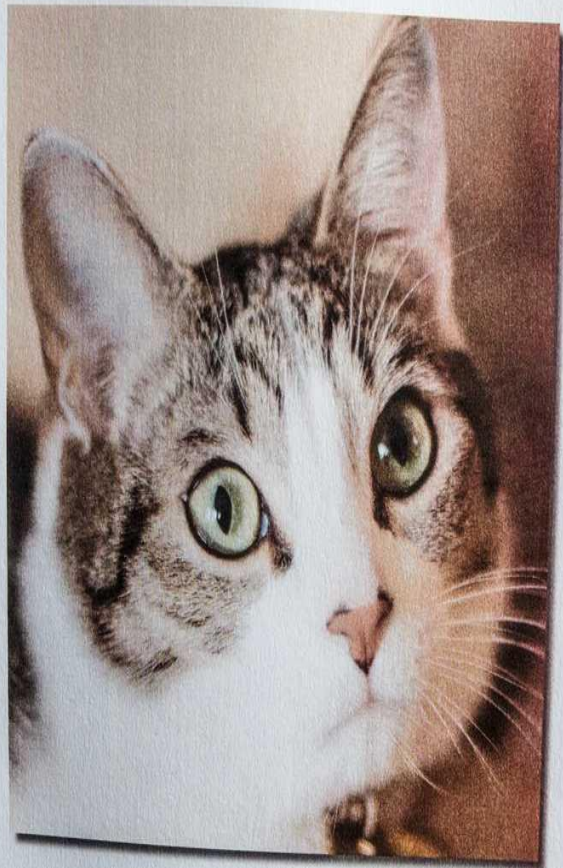
move away aimlessly from a group or from the right course or place.
"dog owners are urged not to allow their dogs to stray"

"Stray Cat"

In reality, means a cat who has gone astray or is lost. In practice, industry calls all friendly outdoor cats stray cats. Shelters also lump a lot of cats into a "stray" intake category.

**Use instead: Lost/Abandoned, or
Community Cat**

MISSING CAT



“Trap-Neuter-Release”

The correct word is return, as in return where you found the cat. Not release it wherever you feel like or release to a shelter or rescue.

Use instead: Return (to home!)



 jar·gon¹

/ˈjɑrgən/

noun

special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand.

"legal jargon"

"Return to Field"

Makes it sound like we're dumping cats back in some meadow, a literal field. Field is an industry term for "on the ground" or "away from the office." In reality, we are returning cats to homes, backyards, neighborhoods, parks, businesses - the location they came from and where the cat calls home.

**Use instead: Return to Home
or Community Cat Program**





hab·i·tat

/ˈhæbəˌtæt/

noun

the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
"wild chimps in their natural habitat"

"Habitat"

Used by conservationists and ecologists. Paints imagery of sensitive environments. Used by detractors to sensationalize potential feline harm to wildlife.

Use instead: "HOME"





col·o·ny

/ˈkælənē/

See definitions in:

All

Politics

Building

Biology

noun

1. a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country.

“Colony”

Evokes images of swarms of cats, infestations, huge groups. This is not how cats live.

Is racially insensitive and colonial.
Supports concept of cats as “invasive, non-native” species.

Use instead: “GROUP”



“Invasive Species”

Invasive, alien, exotic, and non-native. Carries connotations of war and xenophobia. Invasive species biology relies on hyperbolic and sensational language to create negative associations.

The #1 “invasive” species around the world is humans.

**Use instead: Introduced.
Or nothing since it's not relevant,**



“Drowning in Cats”

On our social media pages. In our press releases. Devalues cats. Teaches us that there are so many cats, we have no choice but to kill them.

Just like cats sucking the breath out of babies, this is a myth.

Use instead: Just Stop It.

We are literally drowning in cats. We have over 105 animals in our care. We have 35 cats waiting to come in. So these cats/kittens that are in these pictures are





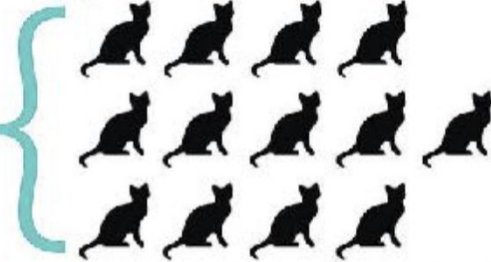
An unspayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:

1 year: 12
2 years: 67
3 years: 376
4 years: 2,107
5 years: 11,801
6 years: 66,088
7 years: 370,092
8 years: 2,072,514
9 years: 11,606,077



An unaltered female cat can produce **THREE LITTERS PER YEAR**. With average litter sizes ranging from **FOUR TO SIX KITTENS**

1 YEAR



a single unspayed female cat and her offspring can produce **MORE THAN 400,000** cats in their lifetime.

What are you telling people here? There are SO MANY cats we have no choice but to kill them.

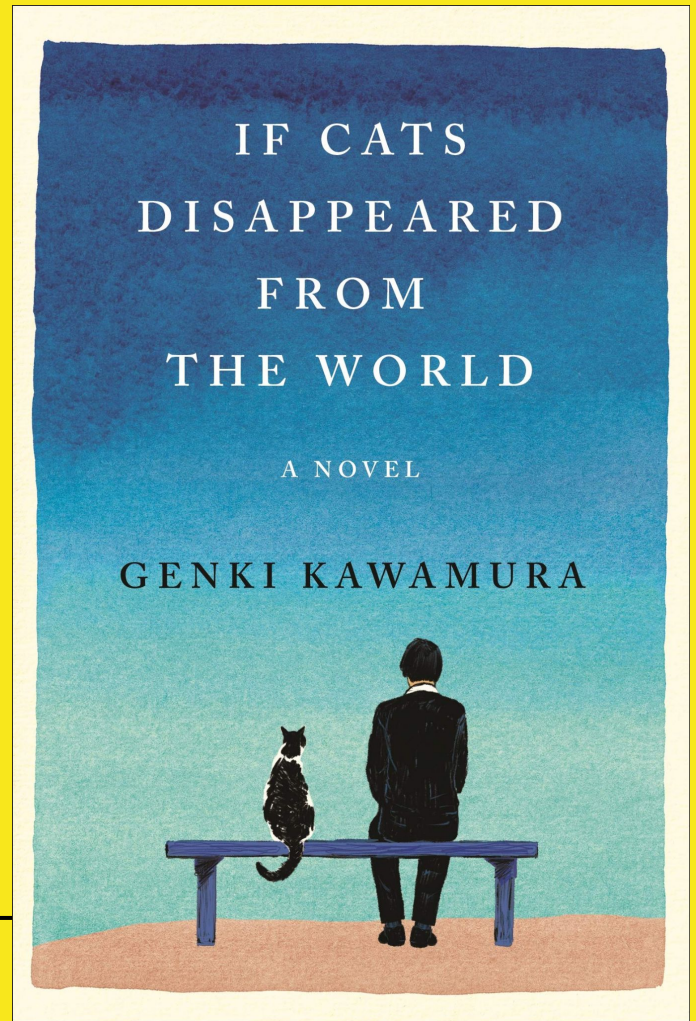
BTW, no org will take claim for starting this myth. The number is about 95 cats in 7 years, according to mathematicians and scientists.

“Overpopulation”

Increasingly we have a population disparity issue rather than an overpopulation problem. The mere presence of community cats also doesn't mean overpopulation.

Use instead:

Use overpopulation sparingly and only for discrete populations.

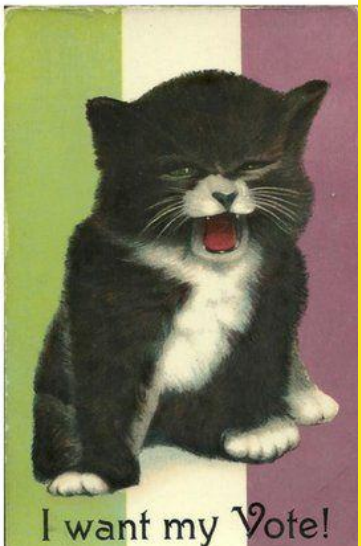
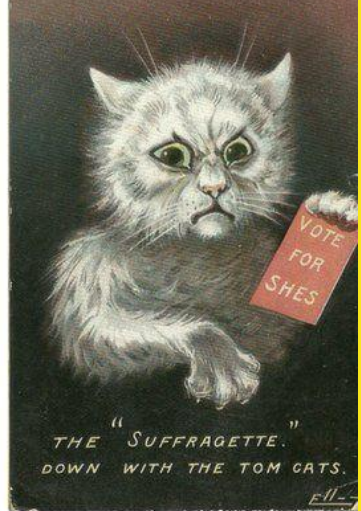
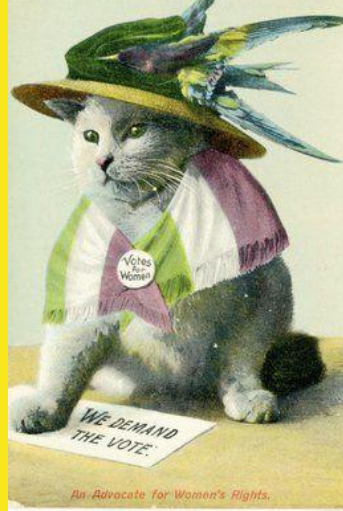


“Crazy Cat Lady”

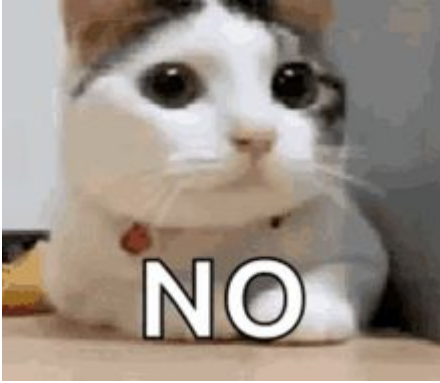
One of the oldest sexist, misogynist tropes and anti-suffrage propaganda that paints cats as anti-masculine, women with cats as lonely spinsters, encourages myths that cats cause mental health problems, female cat owners as bitter man-haters and witches.

Historically, this has been anti-female propaganda, plain and simple.

Use instead: Just Stop It.



More feline fluster...



"All of us are very supportive of a policy of trap and neuter. The problem we are having is with the return part – *returning and establishing a colony*" of cats on county properties."

"She was *abandoned as part of a feral cat colony*, and almost certainly would not have survived if she didn't receive treatment," the shelter wrote.

How do you portray outdoor cats in fundraising appeals?

What kind of help do they need?



What message does this send?





MILLION CAT CHALLENGE

Questions?

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