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## How to Keep Cats Happy Indoors

Kittens that are kept indoors from the start are usually content to stay indoors. With patience and time, most outdoor cats can become happy indoor pets, too. Here are some tips on how to keep your cat happy and healthy indoors:

- Play with your cat at least 15 minutes every day. Interactive wand toys provide stimulation and fun for you and your cat.
- If your budget allows, add another cat to your household to keep your cat company while you are away.
- Provide paper bags and cardboard boxes for your cat to play and hide in.
- Train your cat to go outside on a harness and leash, but never leave your cat outside unattended.
- Buy or build an outdoor enclosure. Learn about some examples at [www.abcbirds.org/cats](http://www.abcbirds.org/cats).
- Keep the litter box clean. Provide more than one litter box if you have more than one cat.
- Place bird feeders near windows to allow your cat to "bird watch."
- Plant grass in flowerpots so your cat can graze safely indoors.

## Tips on Responsible Pet Ownership

- Spay or neuter your cat as early as eight weeks of age before an unwanted litter is produced.
- Take your cat to the veterinarian for routine checkups, and vaccinate your cat against rabies and other feline diseases every year.
- Never abandon a cat. Find your cat a good home or take it to a shelter. For a shelter nearest you, see the National Shelter Directory at [www.aspc.org/findashelter](http://www.aspc.org/findashelter).
- Be sure to put a name tag on your cat's collar or have a microchip implanted, so you can be contacted if your cat slips out.
- Do not feed stray and feral cats unless you are going to find them a home. Take them to a shelter or call your shelter for help.

*Remember,  
Indoor Cats Are  
Safe Cats!*



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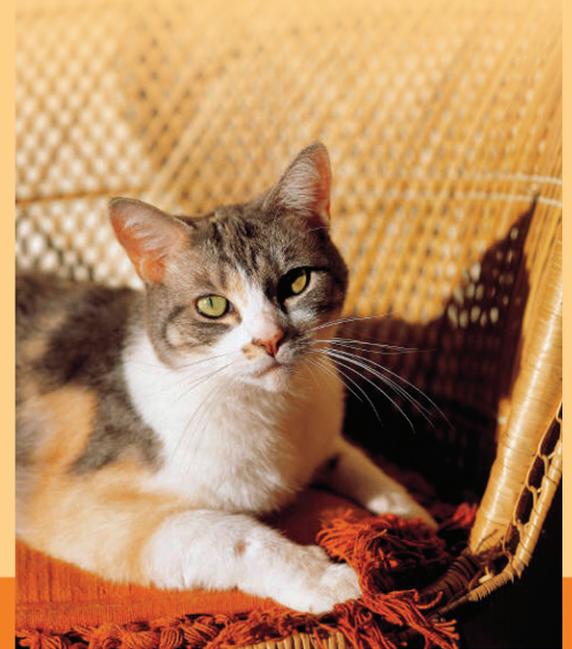
This brochure was produced by American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors! Campaign ([www.abcbirds.org/cats](http://www.abcbirds.org/cats)).

The Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative (ABCI) is a cooperative partnership of agencies and organizations committed to the conservation of all birds and their habitats in Arizona.

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# KEEPING CATS INDOORS



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*Good for Cats*



*Good for  
Arizona's Wildlife*

Many people do not realize that cats are not native to North America. A domesticated descendent of the European and African wild cat, *Felis catus*, was first brought to this continent by European explorers. Today, the cat is one of the most popular pets in America. Approximately 90 million pet cats live in the United States, with at least 1.3 million in Arizona. In addition, tens of thousands of stray and feral cats roam our cities, suburbs and natural areas. In Arizona's warm climate, cats that have not been spayed or neutered can breed year-round, giving birth to as many as eight or more kittens per litter.



Scientists estimate that free-roaming pet, stray and feral cats kill hundreds of millions of birds, small mammals, and reptiles in the United States each year, including rare species. Outdoor cats kill animals whether or not they are hungry, have bells on their collars, or have been declawed. Our native wildlife did not evolve with these efficient predators, so has few defenses against them. Cats pose a serious threat to Arizona's native birds and other wildlife, and are themselves at risk from disease, attacks by other animals, cars, and more. Free-roaming cats can also transmit diseases and parasites to people, such as rabies, cat-scratch fever, toxoplasmosis, and roundworm.

For the benefit of cats, wildlife and people, the Arizona Game and Fish Department encourages cat owners to keep their cats indoors.



## Keeping Cats Indoors: Good for Cats

Many people do not realize free-roaming cats face many hazards every day. While indoor cats can live 17 years or more, the average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is five years. Free-roaming cats are in constant danger from:

**Disease:** Outdoor cats risk exposure to fatal diseases, such as rabies, feline leukemia virus (FeLV), and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

**Coyotes and other predators:** Coyotes are common in Arizona and are known to kill cats. Hawks, eagles, and owls may also kill cats.

**Cars:** Many cats are killed or seriously injured by cars each year. On a cold night, a cat may even climb into an engine compartment and be killed or injured when the engine is started.

**Parasites:** Outdoor cats can suffer from parasites, such as fleas, ticks, ear mites, and worms. For example, fleas can carry diseases, such as the bubonic plague, that can infect other cats and people.

**Overpopulation:** Millions of cats are euthanized each year because people fail to spay or neuter their pets.

**Poison:** Cats are poisoned both intentionally and accidentally by even small amounts of pesticides, rat poisons, and antifreeze.



## Keeping Cats Indoors: Good for Wildlife

In Arizona, birds and other wildlife face more obstacles than ever before. As the state becomes more densely populated, our native wildlife is encountering more free-roaming domestic cats. Many of Arizona's birds nest or feed on or near the ground, making them particularly vulnerable to cat predation.

A study conducted by the University of Arizona on five suburban house cats found they killed a total of 113 animals in just 12-15 weeks. Species killed included various birds, such as Gambel's Quail, Inca Dove, Black-throated Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Gila Woodpecker, plus lizards, snakes and small mammals.

Wildlife rehabilitators in Arizona report that 80 percent of the small birds they receive at their centers are cat-caught. These include sensitive species such as: Brewer's Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, Gilded Flicker, and Orange-crowned Warbler. Several hummingbird species are also killed by cats, including species of conservation concern. Unfortunately, most animals caught by cats do not recover, either because of severe damage to internal organs, or because the bacteria and viruses in cats' mouths can quickly infect and kill small animals.

Hummingbirds and nectar-feeding bats, such as the Mexican long-tongued bat, are of special concern in Arizona because people attract them to their yards with feeders and flowering plants. Although year-round residents, hummingbirds and bats tend to move to the suburbs during winter, which puts them at increased risk of cat predation. Cat predation at cave entrances can also impact local populations of bats.



Photos, left to right: Burrowing Owl/George Andrejko, Arizona Game and Fish Department; Coyote/ George Andrejko, Arizona Game and Fish Department Golden Eagle with cat/Bruce Sitko, Arizona Game and Fish Department.