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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### OCTOBER 16 IS NATIONAL FERAL CAT DAY

#### ANIMAL RESCUE OF TIDEWATER (ART) JOINS CALL FOR HUMANE TREATMENT OF FERAL CATS

October 11, 2009 – Norfolk, VA - Animal Rescue of Tidewater (ART) will honor National Feral Cat Day (NFCD), October 16, to remind people that Trap-Neuter-Return and other humane programs for feral cats are in the best interest of the cats and the community.

“Feral cats are members of the domestic cat species, but they cannot be adopted into homes. They live outdoors in groups called colonies,” said Sarah Crawford, who chairs ART’s targeted spay/neuter initiative in Ocean View. “Trap-Neuter-Return is a humane and effective option for managing feral cat colonies. These programs improve the health and wellbeing of the animals while at the same time ending the breeding cycle and stopping unwanted behaviors associated with mating.”

National Feral Cat Day was launched in 2001 by Alley Cat Allies, the national advocate for feral and stray cats and a recognized authority on Trap-Neuter-Return—a program in which cats who live outdoors are humanely trapped and brought to a veterinarian to be evaluated, spayed or neutered and vaccinated. Cats that have undergone the procedure are eartipped—while under anesthesia, a small portion of the left ear is painlessly removed for identification. If healthy, the cats are then released back to their outdoor homes. This also provides an avenue for rescuing homeless cats that are adoptable, as friendly cats and kittens are placed up for adoption.

“We applaud Animal Rescue of Tidewater for its work to educate their neighbors about the benefits of programs that rely on Trap-Neuter-Return and the use of humane deterrents to ensure that people and outdoor cats get along peacefully,” said Becky Robinson, president of Alley Cat Allies.

Robinson noted that scientific evidence as well as decades of hands-on experience show that Trap- Neuter-Return is more humane than programs that rely on catch and kill. It is also more effective, because it stops intact cats who evade capture from breeding and starting the cycle all over again, a phenomenon known as the vacuum effect.

“The cost of catch and kill is too high, and not only in terms of dollars,” said Robinson. “Being killed in an animal pound or shelter is the leading documented cause of death for cats in the United States.”

Citing statistics that show roughly 35% of dogs and 76% of cats entering Norfolk’s animal control were euthanized last year,\* Animal Rescue of Tidewater (ART) launched its Spay/Neuter Ocean View project in May 2009. ART sponsors PETA’s mobile SNIP (Spay Neuter Immediately Please) van one day a week solely for animals residing in Ocean View, including stray and feral cats. The program was launched to remove the cost factor as an inhibitor to spay/neuter of animals.

To date about 102 dogs and 233 cats (71 of which were feral) have been altered at no cost to their owners. “While different formulas for calculating animal reproduction exist, we believe we have **potentially** prevented close to 1,000 unplanned births so far this year,” explains Crawford. While curbing the companion animal population, it also means “less competition” for animals waiting in shelters to be adopted.

If you would like to participate in local TNR efforts, contact ART at 757-456-1354 or [info@ARTanimals.org](mailto:info@ARTanimals.org). To obtain details about the Ocean View Project or spay/neuter clinics, email [spayneuter@ARTanimals.org](mailto:spayneuter@ARTanimals.org). For more information about National Feral Cat Day, see [www.alleycat.org/NFCD](http://www.alleycat.org/NFCD).

\*Norfolk Animal Care Center 2008 Animal Report to Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Total Dogs Euthanized – 970 of 2777; Total Cats Euthanized – 2154 of 2832.

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Animal Rescue of Tidewater (ART) was founded in 1999. A 501(c)3 organization, ART advocates for improved animal welfare, and has identified spay/neuter with a commitment to Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as the underlying solution to animal population control. For more information, please visit [www.ARTanimals.org](http://www.ARTanimals.org) or call 757-456-1354.

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