



FEEDING GUIDELINES

The location of cat feeding stations and feeding schedules is at the root of many Campus problems involving cats and wildlife. We must be sensitive to the fact that not everyone shares our affection and enjoyment of them and our appreciation of their right to life. Adverse public awareness of the Stanford cats and their feeding areas may compromise the feline-friendly environment at Stanford. Campus wildlife are unfamiliar to many students from urban areas who expect an urban campus. They are unprepared for and have not been oriented to Stanford's rural setting. Close encounters with Campus wildlife may frighten people and precipitate efforts which threaten their existence.

Through diligence and dedication, the Stanford Cat Network has established control of a healthy cat population; but the Campus is teeming with wildlife, primarily raccoons, skunks and some opossums. Although Campus habitat is being lost to building projects, food is not scarce. These primarily nocturnal animals are capable of foraging for themselves and should not become dependent on humans for food. Besides, a cat is no match for a raccoon; so confrontations should be averted, by discouraging wildlife from competing for food at cat feeding stations.

Furthermore, no one looks forward to being sprayed by a skunk or inhaling air laden with the lingering scent of one. Accordingly, no one appreciates inhabiting a building with a skunk in residence or with an infestation of fleas introduced by Campus critters. Neither can most of us appreciate the eyesore afforded by a junky, dirty, indiscreetly-located feeding station, including the cats. Following are suggestions to address these concerns and alleviate problems.

FEEDING STATIONS

1. Locate feeding stations in areas where neither they nor the feeding cats are visible to passersby or occupants of nearby buildings.
2. Locate feeding stations away from heavily-populated or trafficked areas--bike racks and parking lots, doorways, footpaths and streets. This is less disruptive and safer for both cats and people.
3. Camouflage feeding shelters and food dishes, using materials that are inconspicuous and blend in with the surroundings.
4. Provide durable, draining shelters to keep food dry during the rainy season.
Get ideas from other feeders.
5. Keep feeding stations clean and neat.
 - a) Keep dishes and shelters clean.
 - b) Collect scattered dishes.
 - c) Dispose of stale food to discourage flies and odors.
6. Spray surrounding area for ants, and/or place food in a container surrounded by a water moat to discourage pests.

A volunteer non-profit organization supporting a spay/neuter, feeding and adoption program for homeless cats at Stanford - by agreement with but not funded by Stanford University.

Helpline: (650) 566-8287 Website: catnet.stanford.edu Email: CATNET@forsythe.stanford.edu



FEEDING SCHEDULES

1. Feed during daylight hours, preferably early to mid-morning, when it is relatively quiet and the air is still cool (during the summer months), i.e., when you are more likely to see your cats yet not attract nocturnal wildlife.
2. Gauge the amount of food provided so that it is enough to feed the cats, with minimal food left over to attract wildlife in the evening.
3. Recruit a substitute feeder to feed on your days off, rather than leaving an automatic feeder to cover for you. Outdoors, automatic feeders are emptied overnight, and automatic waterers are dumped by scavenging wildlife. You have only managed to attract critters, while leaving your cats hungry and thirsty.
4. Provide clean, fresh, drinking water daily.
 - a) Cats need fresh water, especially to keep cool on hot summer days. Replenish water in the morning, since wildlife probably will have dumped or dirtied the water overnight.
 - b) Neutered males, especially, need fresh drinking water to prevent urinary problems.

Establish and maintain a regular feeding location and daily feeding schedule. Accordingly, your cats will become conditioned to show up at feeding time. This contact is essential to your being a responsible caregiver of the Stanford cats. It enables you to observe them to make sure they are safe and healthy and to respond with rescue efforts or veterinary care if they are not. It also enables your timely spotting of hungry new arrivals, who are then trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated and released to care on Campus if they are wild or semi-wild (feral) cats. Every effort is made to find the owners of tame stray cats. Unclaimed stray or other tame cats and any kittens are boarded or fostered until they can be placed permanently in carefully-screened, adoptive homes.

While these suggestions serve to protect the cats, they also protect the wildlife. If wildlife become a problem in an area of Campus, the University necessarily traps and removes them from that area. They used to relocate them back to the foothills; but relocation of wildlife no longer is permitted by the State Department of Fish and Game, in an effort to prevent the spread of domestic animal diseases to pristine wildlife habitats. This applies throughout the State, not just on Stanford land. Even feral cats are domestic animals, and any trapped cats are surrendered to the Cat Network. However, if other wild critters are trapped, they cannot be released elsewhere on Stanford land; they must be euthanized. Even relocation may not have been very humane. Urban wildlife, used to raiding neighborhood pet food dishes and garbage cans, may not know how to search for food in the wild and may starve. They also may fall victim to territorial disputes with established wildlife in areas where they are released.

Stanford land with its vast areas of open space is natural habitat to an abundance of wildlife. The presence of these critters is a fact of life at Stanford; please do not endanger their existence by attracting them with cat food to populated areas of Campus where they will be trapped. Accept responsibility for their welfare, as well as that of the Stanford cats!

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