



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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**Report to the Bird Conservation Committee from the  
AFWA Feral & free-ranging cat Work group  
Co-Chairs: Sara Schweitzer, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; Colin Gillin, Oregon  
Department of Fish & Wildlife**

**85<sup>th</sup> North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference  
Hilton Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska**

**Thursday, March 12, 2020, 8:00-10:00 a.m.**

Sixteen (16) people attended the WG meeting representing 7 state agencies, 3 federal agencies, 3 nongovernmental organizations, and 2 academic institutions.

Grant Sizemore (American Bird Conservancy) provided an update on legal and policy issues associated with feral and free-ranging cats. Several states such as Illinois, Michigan, Vermont, and Virginia have had bills introduced that would legalize Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) as a method to address feral and free-ranging cats. On the other hand, in New Mexico and California, lawsuits have been filed against cities that have feral and free-ranging cats, placing blame on the city for cats biting people (adults and children).

Grants asks that, in each state, we and our legal and policy staff be alert for legislation being introduced that would condone TNR or other actions that would worsen the problem of feral and free-ranging cat numbers. It would be most beneficial if this legislation did not move forward.

Ashley Gramza (Arkansas Game & Fish) provided a review and summary of the survey of agency staff the WG had completed in 2017. The results of the survey will be put in a report and will provide information for the WG's Tool Kit.

Since September 2019, WG members have drafted sections of a Tool Kit for agencies to provide background, suggestions for actions, and literature regarding feral and free-ranging cats that may cause harm to native wildlife species and habitats. During our meeting, we reviewed draft content in each section of the Tool Kit, provided suggestions, and added content and new ideas. The draft sections include: Executive Summary, Introduction, Education and Outreach, Management, Partnerships, Disease Concerns, Human Dimensions, Model Regulatory and Legal Language, Legal Issues, and Conclusions. Literature cited in each section is provided at the end of each section. The WG will add a section that will focus on impacts to game species and sport fish from cats, directly and indirectly.

The WG will continue its work on this Tool Kit and have a final draft ready for review in early to mid-July 2020, with the goal of having a final product at the September 2020 meeting.