

Cats and Birds Collaborative Workshop



Notes

February 25, 2020

Salmonberry Room

610 Pipeline Rd, Vancouver, BC V6G 1Z4

9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Agenda

- 09:30 Welcome and Introductions
Participant introductions
DG Blair, [Stewardship Centre for BC](#)
- 10:15 Session 1: Shared Learnings from the Oregon Collaborative Model
Bob Sallinger, [Audubon Society of Portland](#)
Karen Kraus, [Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon](#)
Q & A
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Session 2: Presentations
Dr. Elizabeth Gow, University of Guelph [Dr. Elizabeth Gow](#)
Marieke van der Velden, [BC SPCA](#)
Tanya Luszcz – [ECCC](#) –Engaging veterinarians on the cats and birds issue
Q & A
- 2:00 Break Out Groups – Common goals & opportunities for collaboration
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Whole group discussion/next steps
- 4:00 Wrap up and Adjourn/thank you's



STEWARDSHIP CENTRE
FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

Participants

Name	Organization
Tanya Luszcz	Environment and Climate Change Canada
DG Blair	Stewardship Centre for BC
Anna Skurikhina	Stewardship Centre for BC
Derek Matthews	Vancouver Avian Research
Emily Pickett	Vancouver Humane Society
Marieke van der Velden	BC SPCA
Elizabeth Gow	University of Guelph
Meghann Cant	BC SPCA
Erika Nassichuk	District of North Van
Chelsea Nerpio	District of North Van
Esther Lintern	Wildlife Rescue Association of BC
Matthew Discusso	City of Richmond
Dannie Piezas	Stanley Park Ecology Society
Lianne Payne	Wild Bird Trust
Rebecca Clapperton Law	BC Nature Kids
Karen Kraus	Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon
Bob Sallinger	Portland Audubon Society
Harold Eyster	University of BC

Could not attend but indicated interest in future collaboration/meetings

Kathy Powelson	Paws for Hope
Krista Voth	City of Vancouver
Krista DeGroot	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Tom Bearss	Delta Naturalists
Louise Blight	University of Victoria/ UBC
Pamela Zevitt	City of Surrey
James Casey	Birds Canada



Wiebe, Michael	City of Vancouver
Amy Wilson	Veterinarian
Marg Cuthbert	BC Nature
Tamsin Baker	South Coast Conservation Program
Leeann Graham	City of Delta
Karen Devitt	City of Port Moody
Steven Pettigrew	City of Surrey
Colin Clasen	Nature Vancouver
Alan Duncan	City of Vancouver
Rob Butler	Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee

1. Presentations followed by questions and answers by the following speakers:

DG Blair, [Stewardship Centre for BC](#)
 Bob Sallinger, [Audubon Society of Portland](#)
 Karen Kraus, [Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon](#)
 Dr. Elizabeth Gow, University of Guelph [Dr. Elizabeth Gow](#)
 Marieke van der Velden, [BC SPCA](#)
 Tanya Luszcz – Environment and Climate Change Canada

2. Break Out Groups

Three breakout groups reviewed and discussed Oregon’s Cats Safe at Home Policy Statement that has been signed by Audubon Society of Portland; Bonnie L. Hays Animal Shelter; Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon; Multnomah County Animal Services. Below is a summary of the discussions. Overall, all three groups agreed that the Portland policy would be a great template for moving ahead in the Vancouver area, specific comments on each part of the policy can be found below.

Cats Safe at Home Policy Statement

1. Vision: a metropolitan region where all cats are safe at home resulting in a safer and healthier environment for both cats and wildlife.

Discussion:

- Great vision
- Agreement that cats killing birds is a big issue
- How to get people/organizations involved? What is the “hook”?
- Vancouver is a major migratory bird flyway



- 2. Goal: To humanely reduce and prevent free roaming pet, stray and feral cat populations in the Portland Metropolitan area by integrating a range of strategies that are good for both cats and wildlife.*

Discussion:

- Thumbs up!
- Part of the statement: “to humanely reduce...” is key for buy-in

- 3. Public Outreach and Educational Campaign: Education and outreach promoting responsible cat ownership and focused on reducing free roaming pet, stray and feral cat populations. Positive and consistent messaging will emphasize the importance of keeping cats safe at home by using a variety of methods to benefit both cats and wildlife in the Portland Metro area. Effort will be made to ensure that messaging is unambiguous and strong on the overall goal of reducing free roaming cats across the landscape.*

Discussion:

- Education is central
- Responsible cat ownership is a gentle message
- Strategy should include the resources each group can commit to
- Could target different areas with different messages (but all messages should support vision/goal). Seek what works best
- Messaging must work for all sides – holistic approach will prevent narrow messaging
- Messaging to include: yes to responsible pet ownership; yes to reduction of free roaming cats

- 4. Landscape scale reduction of cat overpopulation: Promoting reduction of free roaming, stray and feral cat populations through a variety of methods including Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and shelter-based strategies.*

Discussion:

- Thumbs up
 - Get baseline data – determine pet vs feral populations
 - Need to know shelter statistics
 - Small scale partnerships may be a good first step
 - Check with govt. laws in some areas
- 5. Prioritization of designated natural area and critical habitat areas: Recognizing that certain locations have been set aside specifically for the protection and recovery of wildlife, those areas will be prioritized for addressing free roaming, stray and feral cat impacts. Strong effort will be made to encourage feral cat care givers not to establish or promote cat colonies in these locations and we will work together to find expeditious solutions to addressing problems in these locations if and when they do occur. While non-lethal solutions are always preferred, we agree that designated wildlife areas, the priority needs to be placed on implementing strategies that expeditiously remove cats from these locations.*



Discussion:

- Public doesn't want cats euthanized and shelters are concerned about euthanizing healthy cats
- Senior management must make these policies
- Nature organizations may need to take lead and have additional tools to protect habitat (fences? Other?)
- Designated areas should be kept safe for wildlife
- Collaboration and transparency are important when working together
- Would be important to seek additional information from people with expertise in this area to better enable this policy

6. *Safeguards for property owners who want to protect wildlife on their land: Maintaining "no trespass" and other nuisance statutes and strategies that specifically provide property owners/managers with effective, legal, humane methods to address cats that come onto their property.*²

Discussion:

- Thumbs up
- Agreement
- Could specify what to do or who to call if you have a cat
- Portland has a no trespassing ordinance
- Use of repellents to discourage cats
- Research bylaw examples³
- Research what can be done with \$\$ from licensing

7. *Protection for native predatory species that may prey upon free roaming, stray and feral cats: Impacts on free roaming cats will not be recognized as a legitimate basis for the trapping, relocation or lethal control of native predator species such as coyotes and raccoons.*

Discussion:

- All agreed with this item
- Thumbs up

8. *Responsible management of feral cat colonies that minimizes the risk of attracting, habituating and otherwise impacting native wildlife populations: TNR caregivers will be educated and required to follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reduce the risk of attracting wildlife populations to feeding areas in order to minimize risk of habituation of wildlife, disease transmission, and creation of wildlife nuisance situations such as unnaturally large congregations of wildlife populations.*

¹ <http://multcopets.org/pets-trespassing-large>

² The objective is to recognize that some property owners may be unwilling to accept free roaming cats on their property---there should be a range of alternatives available that are legal, humane and effective to effectively address this concern. Examples could range from mediation resources to statutes allowing for the capture and transport of trespassing cats to shelters.

³ SCBC has a research report for Local Governments: [Cats and Birds Recommended Policies and Bylaws 2019](#)



Discussion:

- No concerns
- Thumbs up
- What are best practices, enforcement or standards?
- How best to deliver information to those who need it

9. *Scientific Research and Adaptive Management: Ongoing rigorous assessment and evaluation of our impacts on cat over-population and on the behaviors and perceptions of the public around this issue.*

Discussion:

- Agreement – very important
- How and who will do this research?
- May be hard to get permits and funding for this as cats aren't endangered species

10. *Transparent Reporting: So that the public can see, understand and access the programs that are being implemented.*

Discussion:

- Super important
- Be consistent with reporting across all signatories
- Getting information from some groups may be hard

3. Next Steps

Discussion:

- Circulate a summary of today's workshop
- Keep people involved in the loop
- Encourage other organizations to join the Vancouver Cats and Birds Committee as a coordinating entity
- Ideas for engagement include: targeting an area or neighbourhood; virtual tours of catios; cats and birds friendly window stickers/signs;
- All organizations present can increase engagement on this issue within their own work.

4. Thank You's

Thanks to all who attended this workshop and to support by the City of Vancouver Bird Advisory Committee's Cats and Birds Committee, the Stewardship Centre for BC and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

