

# **FERAL CHANGE**

## **2022 IMPACT REPORT**



**FERAL CHANGE**

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What an exciting year we had in 2022! Since our founding in 2014, when Feral Change was just a handful of dedicated cat-loving trappers, we have grown to a multifaceted organization that now stands as an indispensable partner within the East Bay community. This past year, we have touched the lives of over 900 cats, whether through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) or helping get friendly cats and kittens off the street. Feral Change continues to expand its impact through direct outreach to cat caretakers through community cat spay/neuter clinics, education, fostering and adoptions, and lending equipment.

Over the last year, we initiated some changes to Feral Change's organizational structure. We formalized several volunteer positions so that we now have dedicated coordinators for our community cat program, grants, foster and behavior, medical care, adoptions, and marketing. Many of the initiatives, events, and TNR clinics that Feral Change leads or is involved with are a direct result of the behind-the-scenes work of these coordinators. This past year, the foster team worked with our foster homes and with transfer partners to help get over 300 cats and kittens off the street, while the community cat team helped respond to hundreds of requests for assistance ranging from TNR to medical concerns.

By lending out equipment and teaching colony caretakers the nuts and bolts of trapping, we are working to empower community members to take an active role in trapping. In 2022, Feral Change volunteers hosted multiple TNR and neonatal kitten care workshops, including visiting two schools in Oakland to teach kids about community cats. In December, Feral Change led a workshop to teach East Bay Regional Parks rangers about trapping and community cat best practices. Through raising awareness and supporting community members, Feral Change is hoping to expand its impact and make a difference to even more cats and the greater community. We also continue to refine our data and tracking systems for all the cats coming through our program, whether as fosters or for TNR. This helps to streamline our processes and helps us better determine the needs and impact of our organization.

An exciting development for both our outreach and fundraising efforts is the establishment of a Feral Change online store ([feralchange.bigcartel.com](http://feralchange.bigcartel.com)). Sale of our merchandise increases our visibility and awareness in the community and all profits help support our mission. Relatedly, we had a fantastic turnout for our end-of-year fundraising efforts. For Giving Tuesday, we exceeded our matching donation and raised over \$20,000. This level of support blew us away! Our community's generosity makes such a huge difference to our ability to care for the cats of Oakland and surrounding areas.

It's with great pride that I share with you Feral Change's inaugural impact report. In this report, you will find statistics about the cats and communities we have served in 2022. You can also learn about some of the colonies we've helped to manage and read about a few of our wonderful volunteers.

With gratitude,



Kirstin Cummings  
Executive Director



**FERAL CHANGE**

# DID YOU KNOW?

The mild Northern California climate allows for a prolonged "kitten season." Feral Change receives calls about pregnant cats and found kittens year round but we are the most busy March - September.

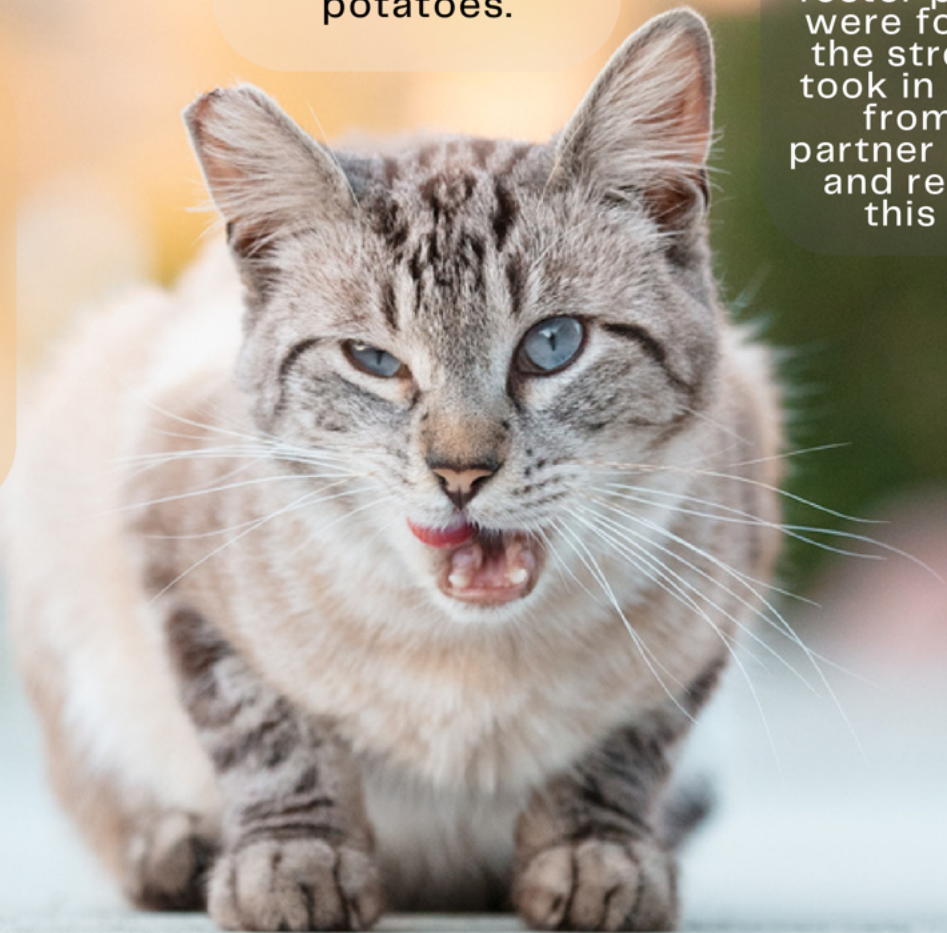
Of the community cats Feral Change fixed, the most common coat pattern was tabby followed closely by solid color cats.

Some of our foster name themes this year were: kitchen instruments, little known sports, types of cookies, dentistry, types of cars, and different kinds of potatoes.

Feral Change was initially founded as a way to support Oakland's community cats but as the organization has grown, we have been able to help neighboring cities as well.

While most of the kittens that come to our foster program were found on the street, we took in 53 cats from our partner shelters and rescues this year.

We had to think outside the city limits for spay and neuter this year; some of our cats travelled 200 miles roundtrip to be fixed!



# FERAL CHANGE BY THE NUMBERS

**707**

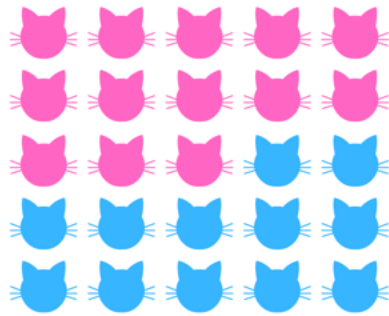
TOTAL  
SPAY/NEUTER

**339**

CATS RESCUED  
FROM THE STREET

**141**

ADOPTIONS



**52%** OF FERALS  
WERE  
FEMALE

**6-8  
WEEKS**

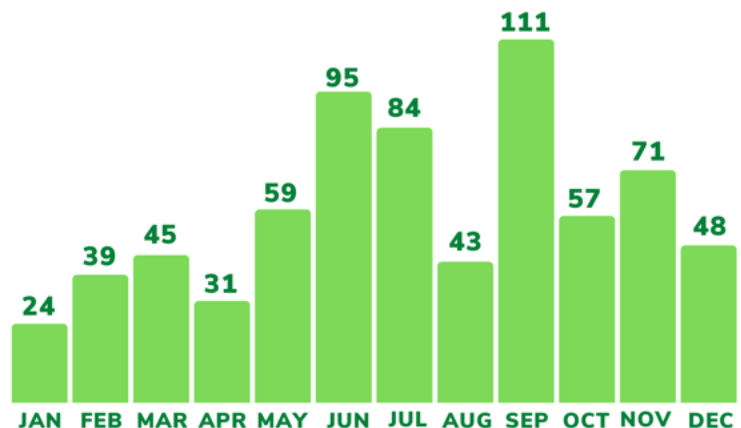
Almost a third of  
cats that entered  
our foster  
program were  
between 6-8  
weeks old

**MAY**

was the busiest  
month for intake

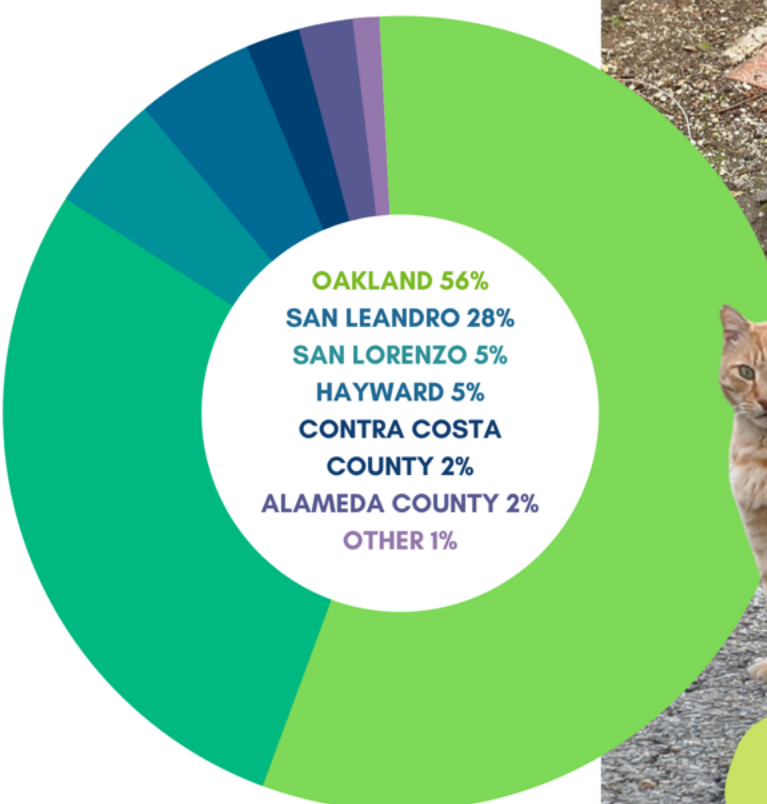
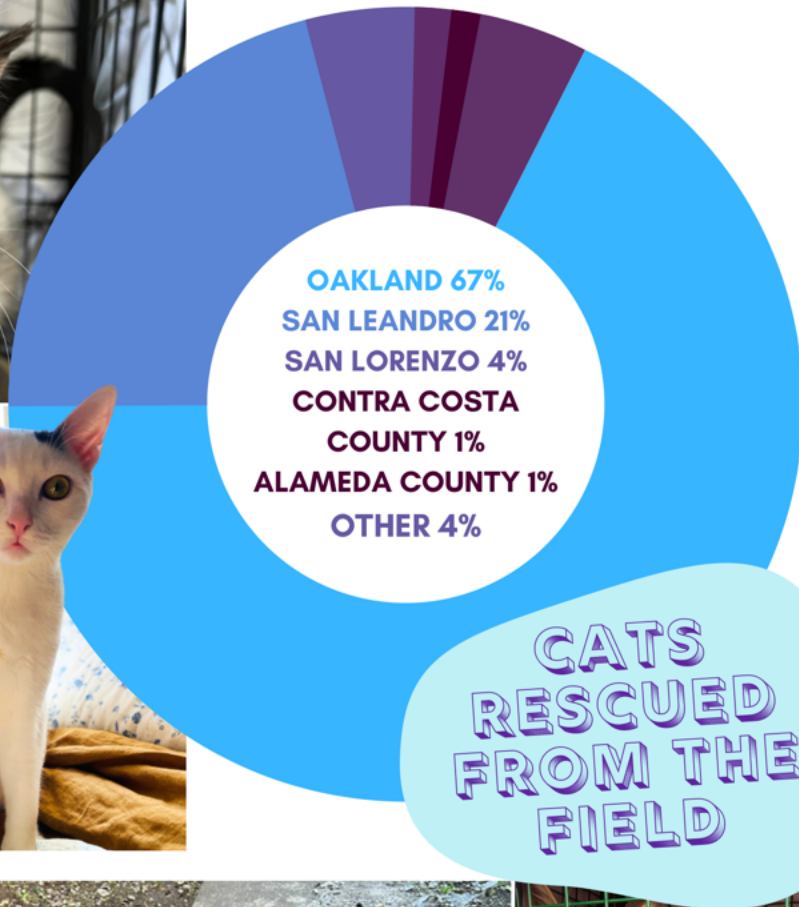
**65**

cats and kittens  
were matched with  
Feral Change  
volunteers



NUMBER OF  
SPAY/NEUTERS BY MONTH

# WHERE IN THE EAST BAY DID ALL THESE CATS COME FROM?!



**TNR**

# COLONY CHRONICLES: BAYFAIR, SAN LEANDRO



In April 2022, Feral Change was contacted by a community member seeking help for a small colony of cats with an undetermined skin infection. The cats were estimated to be less than a year old and were not fixed. Feral Change volunteer Erica went out to the colony located near the Bayfair Center shopping mall in San Leandro. What was originally thought to be a small colony of four to five cats turned into one of the largest community trapping projects Feral Change has participated in!

The first five cats were trapped and taken to Animal Fix Clinic (AFC) for spay/neuter and medical care. The team at AFC determined the cats likely had feline scabies, a parasitic skin disease, and a treatment plan was put in place. Since feline scabies is highly contagious, all of the cats at the colony needed to be treated regardless of symptoms.

The Bayfair colony looked like a lot of the neighborhood colonies Feral Change is contacted about. Typically, there are multiple feeders scattered over an area of a few blocks. Cats don't observe property lines and members of the colony will roam to different houses and feeding outposts throughout the year. Knowing that feline scabies is highly contagious, Feral Change had to work not only with the community member who originally contacted us but also with the other feeders and caregivers in the vicinity.

With the support of a few neighbors, Feral Change volunteer Erica knocked on doors in the neighborhood and followed the cats to where they were feeding and sleeping. The door knocking on one or two streets advanced to Erica's personal number becoming the "Bayfair Feral Hotline" – a development she graciously handled. After extensive outreach efforts, a handful of colony caretakers were identified and systematic trapping could begin.

Wherever there are unfixed adult cats, there are kittens and Bayfair was no exception. Between May and October, 25 kittens were removed from the colony. They were either placed in our foster program or, with Feral Change's support, some of the colony feeders took on the role of foster parent for the first time! The kittens from the colony were all named after various bugs (really keeping on the scabies theme) and fostered by many of our caring and dedicated foster volunteers.



**30+ VISITS**  
**145 HOURS**  
**52 FERAL CATS**  
**25 KITTENS**

With a colony as large as Bayfair and an infection as contagious as feline scabies, the likelihood of more cats (and sick cats!) in the coming years is high. So, once the majority of cats were fixed, the colony caretakers were taught how to use feral traps, transport and care for recovering cats, and given a long-term plan for how to deal with a scabies outbreak should another arise. By teaching the neighborhood how to trap for themselves, Feral Change ensured that the colony remains stable, sustainable, and self-sufficient.

The Bayfair colony resembles all of the colonies that Feral Change are asked to help out with. Rarely is there just one singular cat that needs to be fixed or one lone kitten without a mom cat. Where there is one unfixed cat there will always be more. Because of volunteers like Erica, Feral Change's new team of coordinators, and community members who want to put in the work, we are able to enact real change in these cats' lives.



Mr. Burns, a six-year-old male resident of the Bayfair colony had skin cancer on his ears. With the assistance of AFC, Feral Change was able to get Mr. Burns a complete pinnectomy (removal of the ears) and safely release him back to his home after recovery.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**RACHAEL**

## WHAT DO YOU DO WITH FERAL CHANGE?

I like to foster harder-to-socialize older kittens and higher behavioral needs cases. Since 2019, my partner and I have fostered 42 cats and kittens plus hosted tons of short-term feline guests through Feral Change. I also take on TNR projects and am making a real effort to get new people to join me to learn how to trap and feel comfortable actually doing it. At least eight people have joined me so far!

## TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR MOST MEMORABLE TRAPPING PROJECTS?

One of my favorite moments was returning to my first TNR project and seeing the impact our TNR work made. My first project was a big colony at the Crawford Trailer Park in Oakland. It involved crawling under RVs for sick kittens amidst the smell of cat pee and poop, dealing with abandoned neonatal kittens, and providing food for the low-income feeders. It was a real crash course! At least 30 cats and kittens were either fixed or adopted out in the end. I remember catching this big orange cat that had a huge abscess and was in rough shape. When I eventually returned, the area was much cleaner, the cat pee smell was gone, and the now fixed and vaccinated "Big Orange" looked like a completely different cat, with a beautiful coat and healthy eyes. This wasn't just a cat transformation but a community one.

## WHAT'S ONE THING PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT TNR?

Feral Change is primarily focused on TNR yet having a foster program is almost inevitable given the nature of the work. When trapping, we almost always find cats and kittens that cannot or should not be returned to their trapping location. Trying to TNR a colony is rarely a straightforward process and means that Feral Change ends up trying to meet the unique needs of felines off the street that the cat shelter world doesn't always have the capacity for.

## HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH FERAL CHANGE?

I was born with a passion for animals and animal welfare. I've been involved in TNR for 22 years, starting with the colony that was inhabiting my yard and then helping to TNR about 30 cats in my neighborhood. I found out about Feral Change in 2019 when I was volunteering at Oakland Animal Services. The COVID shutdown ended my shift at OAS, so I contacted Feral Change to see if I could do transport. I'm disabled and use a wheelchair so this is something I can do easily and my modified van is an ideal feral cat limousine!

## WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

It's so satisfying to deliver a van full of newly fixed felines. I just love it because I'm supporting an important cause that benefits not only the feral cats, but also wildlife that can fall prey to them. Incidentally, I also do transport for Yggdrasil Urban Wildlife Rescue.

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT FERAL CHANGE?

Feral Change is a small organization with a network of dedicated, tenacious volunteers that have a huge impact! I'm really proud of the work we do and I'm honored to be a part of it. For every cat that gets fixed, literally dozens of cats are prevented from being born and we are that much closer to ending the cycle of homeless cats.



**JUDY**



**JESS**

## HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH FERAL CHANGE?

I was volunteering at Cat Town for several years and through the people there, I learned about the TNR work that Feral Change was doing in the community. When my husband and I found a litter of kittens in our neighborhood, Feral Change and Cat Town helped us rescue and foster these kittens. During the pandemic, we began fostering for Feral Change regularly. I also transport for Feral Change.

## CAN YOU SHARE AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE?

The most memorable moment during my time with Feral Change was when we were fostering two ringworm kittens in our bathroom, Pirate and Hazel. They had apparently worked all night to get the heat register off the floor and were under the house in the vents! I called volunteer Laura, hysterical and panicked. With her calm support and the assistance of the HVAC company, we were able to lure them back out safely. Not funny at the time but in retrospect, the amount of mischief from these two is pretty funny, all while we were treating them for ringworm.

## ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

The work that Feral Change does is essential. Meaningful cat rescue comes from different aspects of the community. A single shelter can't solve all the problems themselves and I feel like Feral Change is at the core of making a difference. If community members are given the information and tools to TNR then there are fewer cats suffering and in need of rescue.

# THANK YOU

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