



What is Allied Cats?

Allied Cats is an Ecology Action Centre program aimed at generating a network of cats that lead healthy, safe, and happy lives indoors, or with controlled outdoor access (eg: via a catio, or on a leash, under the watchful eye of their humans). These cats and their humans are helping to protect millions of birds and other wildlife that are otherwise injured or killed in Canada each year by free-roaming cats.

Who are we?

The Ecology Action Centre's Bird Conservation Committee, formed in 2007, works closely with a number of community partners to help preserve Nova Scotia's resident and migrating bird species. Partnering with Bird Studies Canada, Nova Scotia Bird Society, Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, and Nature Nova Scotia, *Allied Cats* aims to address the joint issue of declining bird species, and cat welfare, through education and community outreach.

Good for cats and birds:



Indoor cats that have controlled and accompanied access outdoors live longer than cats that go outside¹. They don't run the same risks as outdoor cats of being injured or killed by vehicles, wildlife, other cats, or people, or succumbing to cold, disease, parasites, or poisons. Unneutered cats kept indoors don't contribute to the overpopulation of stray and feral cats. In Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada research² has determined that outdoor cats kill 100 million birds each year. Allied Cats protect our community birds and other wildlife that are vulnerable to predation by cats.



¹Pers. comm. Dr. Helene Van Doninck, Feb 2016.

²Blancher, P. (2013). Estimated Number of Birds Killed by House Cats (*Felis catus*) in Canada. *Avian Conservation and Ecology*, 8(2):3.

Benefits to Allied Cats:

- Are safe from vehicle strikes and do not need to seek warmth near a car engine.
- Will not become scared and lost, and end up in animal shelters, separated from their families
- Are protected from serious illnesses and diseases such as distemper, feline leukemia or immunodeficiency virus and rabies
- Run a lower risk of contracting parasites like fleas, ticks, or worms. Some, like the parasite "toxoplasmosis", can be transmitted to humans and livestock
- Are sheltered from poisonous chemicals, like antifreeze, lawn fertilizers and pesticides
- Are safe from harm by wildlife such as raccoons or coyotes
- Can live on average 3-4 times longer than outdoor cats
- Healthy cats means less expense at the vet



Bird Photography courtesy of Bruce Stevens owl@marmot.ca.

Birds are vulnerable to cats:

- There are more than 250 species of birds found across Nova Scotia and 15 are endangered, threatened or vulnerable³
- Healthy populations of birds control pests, distribute seeds, eliminate weed seeds, pollinate crops and gardens, and tell us about the state of our environment in general
- There are an estimated 90,000 pet cats in HRM and possibly the same number of stray and feral cats
- Cats have strong survival instincts and well-fed house cats will hunt birds and small animals and they often do not bring their prey home
- Some birds do escape cats, yet many may die after an attack from internal injuries
- Free roaming cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 33 bird species⁴
- Fledglings, and birds that have not mastered flying are susceptible to predation- and losing juveniles affects populations dramatically
- Birds live in many habitats that make them vulnerable to outdoor cats (ground nesters, low lying nests)
- Bells on cats have not proven to be affective, as birds have not 'learned' that the sounds signals danger, and bells have even less effect on other wildlife



³<http://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/biodiversity/species-list.asp>

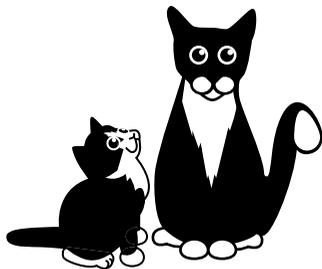
⁴Winter, L. & Wallace, G., (2006). Impact of Feral and Free-ranging Cats on Bird Species of Conservation Concern. *Other Publications in Wildlife Management*. Paper 28.

What can you do?



As a responsible cat owner, spay or neuter your cat to help avoid unwanted or mistreated animals that are often abandoned. If you keep your kitten indoors from the start they will not usually show interest in the outdoors as adults. Your cat can be a happy and healthy indoor cat with time and patience. Try these tips to transition or keep an indoor cat happy:

- Play with your cat at least once a day and otherwise engage them with interactive stimuli such as puzzle feeders, or simple toys like a paper tubes, boxes, or ping pong balls
- Cat trees and scratching posts will help your cat to exercise, give options to lounge, and deposit scent
- Install perches near windows so your cat can view the outdoors
- Plant cat grass in a box to help your cat enjoy the outdoors from inside
- Clean litter boxes regularly, ensure it is large enough, and provide a minimum of one per cat
- Check out the indoor pet initiative at Ohio State University for more ideas: www.indoorpet.osu.edu/
- Provide a safe, outdoor alternative like a screened porch, window box, or other cat enclosure: Catos 101 - www.vetstreet.com



How does my cat sign up?

By becoming an Allied Cat, your cat is joining a network of cats across Nova Scotia that are ensuring their own safety as well as that of birds and other wildlife in your neighbourhood, by leading healthy, safe, and happy indoor lives with controlled outdoor access (e.g., in a catio or on a leash under the watchful eye of their humans).

- Your cat will receive a personalized certificate documenting their commitment
- You will receive a window decal identifying that you have an indoor Allied Cat in your home

Become an Allied Cat

Fill out our online form today:

<http://bit.do/AlliedCatsForm>

OR fill out the form below and mail it with a photo of your cat to:

Allied Cats c/o Ecology Action Centre,
2705 Fern Lane, Halifax,
NS, B3K 4L3

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Your Cat's Name: _____

If you wish not to send a photo, we will send you a certificate with your cat's name.



BIRD STUDIES
ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX CANADA



This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada.

Canada

Facts and resources for this brochure were provided by Environment Canada, the American Bird Conservancy, Keep Animals Safe, and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (Canada).

For more information contact:

www.ecologyaction.ca/alliedcats

www.keepanimalsafe.ca

www.abcbirds.org



ALLIED CATS:

**GOOD FOR
CATS AND
BIRDS.**



Allied Cats

Building a network of indoor cats
to protect cats and birds.