

Facts about Cats who Live Outside

Life Expectancy: The average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just 2 to 5 years, while an indoor cat may survive 17 or more years. Cats who roam are constantly in danger.

Cars: Millions of cats are run over by cars each year. Seeking warmth, outdoor cats crawl into car engines and are killed or maimed when the car is restarted. Motorists risk accidents attempting to avoid free-roaming cats.

Animal Attacks: Torn ears, scratched eyes, abscesses, internal injuries, diseases, and sometimes death result from encounters with dogs, other cats, and wild animals like raccoons, coyotes and foxes.

Human Cruelty: Each year animal shelters and veterinarians treat cats that have been shot, stabbed, or set on fire. Unsupervised cats may also be captured and sold to research labs or used as "bait" to train fighting dogs.

Overpopulation: Unaltered free-roaming cats are the single most important cause of cat overpopulation. As a result, millions of cats for which there are no homes must be euthanized each year.

Disease: Cats allowed to roam outdoors risk exposure to fatal diseases including rabies, feline leukemia, distemper, feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). Vaccines are not 100 percent effective. There is a vaccine for FIV; however, once vaccinated the cat will test positive for FIV even if it is not infected. Until a better test is available, this makes the vaccine of little value.

Parasites: Cats allowed outdoors are more likely to contract debilitating parasites such as worms, ticks, mites and fleas.

Poisons and Traps: Exposure to pesticides, rodenticides and antifreeze poisons kill thousands of outdoor cats each year. Cats are maimed and killed in traps set for fur-bearing animals.

Before letting your cat out, think about the dangers they face and consider making them an indoor companion. You'll have the time to enjoy them more and they will thank you for it.