



### What is a community cat?

Community cats are the free roaming cats that do not belong to any person. The reality is that there are millions of un-owned cats living outdoors in North America, in addition to the many owned pet cats who are allowed to roam outdoors (often unaltered, which allows them to mate with community cats and add to the population). Cat overpopulation isn't a Windsor or Essex County problem, it's an issue Canada-wide



Note: anyone who acts in violation of the Windsor by-laws may have to pay a penalty not exceeding \$5000. A full reading of the by-laws are available on the City of Windsor website



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# Feeding Community Cats



What's allowed?





**Can I provide shelters for stray cats?**

Yes – but, there are certain things that you should take into consideration.

Windsor by-laws state that you can only keep (i.e., be the owner of) 4 cats per household, no matter how many people are living there. If more than 4 cats start to show up in the shelters you provide, it could be seen as a violation of Windsor's by-laws: someone might think that you are now the owner of these cats because you are providing both food and shelter.



Winter cat shelter

**Can I leave food out for stray cats?**

Yes! But it's important to be doing so in a manner that won't attract nuisance animals like rats or skunks. Ideally, getting the cats used to being fed once a day and then picking up any leftover food will ensure that you are only feeding the cats and not all their wild friends.

**I live outside of Windsor. How many cats am I allowed to have?**

Animals limits are set by each individual municipality, and some don't have any limit. Please check with your town hall about the limits in your community.



**Why might having a shelter and providing food for strays look like a by-law violation?**

You are absolutely able to feed strays. Problems may arise if you do that in addition to providing shelters for the cats. This can look like animal ownership because you are exercising a certain level of care and control for these animals – in other words, the general responsibilities of a pet owner. If a by-law officer sees this kind of behaviour, they might think that you are the owner of the animal.

**Is there anything that I should be concerned about if a by-law officer thinks that I am an owner of the stray cats?**

By-law officers are typically concerned with the number of cats that you appear to be the owner of and ensuring that feeding the stray cats does not attract other nuisance animals.



It will not often be the case that a by-law officer will assess whether you are exercising the requirements of an animal owner. If you are curious about the requirements of pet ownership, the Ontario SPCA Act requires that owners do not cause or permit their animals to be in distress.