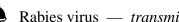
FERAL CATS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

A **feral cat** is: A domesticated cat that has returned to the wild, or the offspring of such a cat. It is distinguished from a *stray cat*, which is a pet cat that has been lost or abandoned. Only animal care professionals should handle stray/feral cats, as they can become quite dangerous when cornered.

Potential zoonoses transmitted by feral cats:



Rabies virus — transmitted through bites



Parasites — transmitted through handling feces, i.e. Toxocara, Toxoplasma,

Cryptosporidium, Campylobacter



• Cat Scratch Fever — transmitted through bites/scratches



To prevent disease and to keep families healthy, you should:

Avoid contact with feral cats

Report any abnormal cats to the local Animal Services

Seek medical advice regarding any bites or scratches and report all bites/scratches to the County Health Dept.

Unwanted pets should be taken to appropriate facilities rather than abandoned.

Wear gloves when gardening to prevent fecal-oral transmission

Covering litter boxes and practicing good personal hygiene, such as frequent handwashing.

Populations particularly at risk for diseases transmitted by feral cats:

Children

Pregnant Women

Imunocompromised Individuals

The Florida Dept. of Health supports responsible pet ownership including good preventive/medical care and permanent ID with a registered microchip. Unwanted pets should be taken to appropriate facilities rather than abandoned.



References:

Centers for Disease Control http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/animals/cats.htm

American Veterinary Medical Association www.avma.org

American Association of Feline Practitioners www.aafp.org