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Registered Charity 1169511

Registered in England & Wales

Ear Tipping Feral Cats

Q: What is ear tipping?

A: It is when the end section of ear is removed by a veterinary surgeon whilst the cat is under general anaesthetic, to protect the cat from being trapped and/or operated on again.

Q: Why is a section of the ear cut off rather than just micro-chipping the cat?

A: This makes the feral cats we are dealing with easier to distinguish from a distance; enables us to select which cat to trap when trapping manually, and it also prevents unnecessary trapping. We would have to re-trap the cat to scan it for a chip, which would stress the cat and might mean we didn't trap one that really needed catching.

Q: Does it hurt the cat?

A: This procedure takes place whilst the cat is under a general anaesthetic, which means the cat is not aware of the ear tipping being done. There are very few nerve endings in the end of the ear, so it is believed that there is little or no pain after the op.

Q: Do you tip both / either ears?

A: No, it is recommended practice to tip the left ear, this is widely used by all reputable animal welfare organisations. It is important to be consistent as we sometimes have to decide to trap a cat manually based on only seeing the left ear.

Q: How can I tell if the cat has been ear tipped?

A: The left ear of the cat will have 1cm missing off the tip off the top, it will be a straight line running parallel to the base of the ear. It will not be a 'V' notch or a curved cut.

Q: Will the ear become infected?

A: Experience shows that the ear almost never becomes infected. All of the cats are given pain relief and a long acting antibiotic before they are released, so this will significantly reduce the chance of infection through either the ear or the surgical wounds.

Q: I don't want the cat's ear cut off

A: We understand that it looks unsightly, however this is the best way of making those cats that have been neutered identifiable, the stress that a feral cat would have to endure getting trapped a second time and to potentially be placed under a second operation, would not be good for the welfare of the cat. This also gives other professional organisations a clear sign that the cat has already been neutered as other members of the public might contact more than one organisation. It is important that the cat(s) only endure the one procedure.



Q: Can you just do a little v or nick,

A: These kinds of marks and notches are carried out sometimes by some vet practices and charities who are not familiar with recommended protocols for these cats. Unfortunately, notches and nicks are easily confused with tears and rips from fights. A straight-line ear tip is clearly an artificial mark so not confused for anything else.

Q: What if some of the cats have been done elsewhere and are not tipped

A: It may be appropriate to trap and tip some of these cats to protect them in future, especially if lots of the cats look the same. We will assess this on a cat by cat basis.

Q: Who do I contact if I have any concerns?

A: Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions regarding the Trap, Neuter, Return process. 01228 560082