



KITTEN SEASON

WHAT IS KITTEN SEASON?

Kitten season, also known as feline breeding season, takes place during the warmer months typically March through October but, can vary depending on location. During this time, kittens, specifically ones under 8 weeks of age, pop up in shelters all over the country. Animal Shelters are not equipped to take on unweaned kittens and often times if a foster is not available these kittens are euthanized.

WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND A KITTEN?

If you happen to find a litter of tiny kittens outdoors, it's natural to want to scoop them up and try to care for them yourself or take them to a shelter. But both of those options may actually place them in more danger. To give newborn kittens the best chance of survival, follow these steps:

- 1.** Leave the kittens alone and try to figure out if their mom is still around. Observe them from a distance every couple of hours for 12 to 18 hours. If the kittens seem content and are not fussing, there is a good chance their mom is coming back.
- 2.** If the kittens are in danger due to their location, move them to a safer spot nearby so the mom can easily find them when she returns.
- 3.** If the kittens are dirty, meowing or appear sick, underweight, or dehydrated, contact Alpine Animal Services, a trap-neuter-return (TNR) community cat program or local Humane Society. They can help you determine if the kittens are at risk and if you should intervene.
- 4.** If you spot the mom, leave the kittens alone. When the kittens have been eating on their own for about four weeks or are big enough for surgery (typically when they are between two and three months old), humanely trap the whole family and have them spayed or neutered. A local TNR program may be able to help you with the trapping process. After the cats are fixed, release them at the location where you found them, as this is the only home they know. TNR works and is the most humane method of preventing cats and kittens from entering the shelter system.

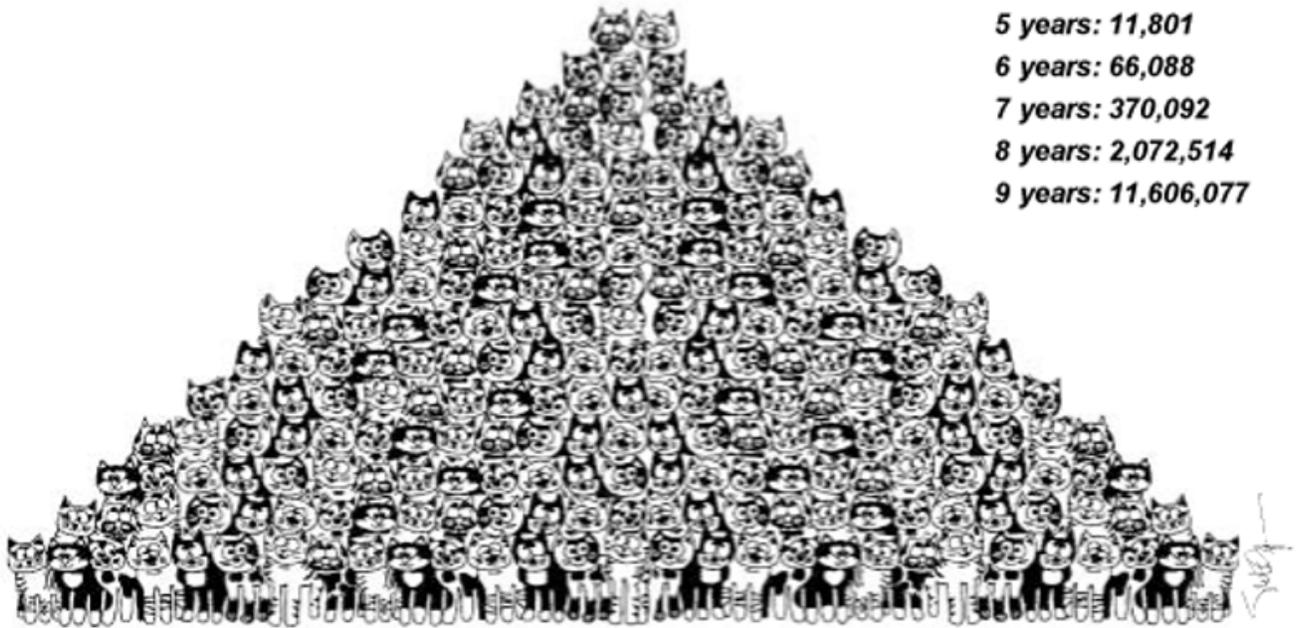
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The most helpful thing the public can do is have their cats spayed and neutered. In 2020 alone Alpine Animal Services had 249 cats and kittens enter the shelter. Only 14 of those were reclaimed by their owner, 136 were tame and adoptable and the other 113 were humanely euthanized due to them being feral and unadoptable. Of these cats that entered the shelter, 99% of these cats were not spayed or neutered when they entered the shelter which means they were out on the streets repopulating and keeping the cycle going.



An unspayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:

**1 year: 12
2 years: 67
3 years: 376
4 years: 2,107
5 years: 11,801
6 years: 66,088
7 years: 370,092
8 years: 2,072,514
9 years: 11,606,077**



Become a foster parent. If you find a kitten that is actually in need of intervention become their foster parent. While they are with you, reach out to the local animal welfare organizations and make a plan for after the kitten is fostered. If you are able to promote your new foster kitten before they are weaned, you may be able to have their new home already lined up. Make sure that if you re-home yourself that you make sure that your foster kitten is spayed or neutered either before they leave your care or set up a plan with their new family to make sure they get it done.

**BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!
SPAY AND NEUTER YOUR PET!**

HELPFUL LINKS:

What Is Kitten Season? | Best Friends Animal Society

<https://bestfriends.org/stories-blog-videos/latest-news/what-is-kitten-season>

Bottle Feeding Kittens | Best Friends Animal Society

<https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/bottle-feeding-kittens>

Leave Them Be® | Alley Cat Allies

<https://www.alleycat.org/take-action/leave-them-be/>

Newborn Kitten Progression & Cat Age Chart with Pictures | Alley Cat Allies

<https://www.alleycat.org/resources/kitten-progression/>



City of Alpine Animal Services · 432-837-3486