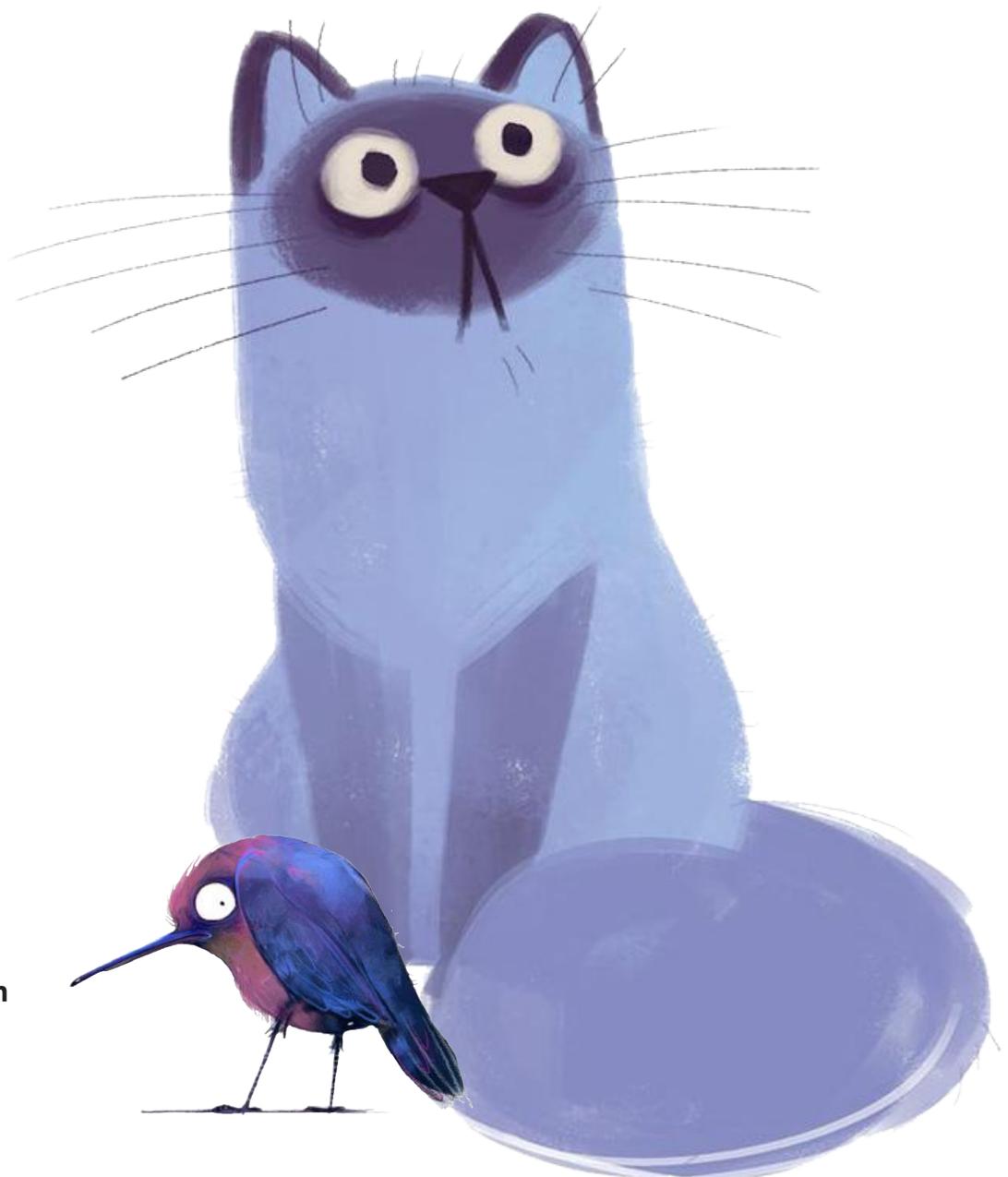


Kayley Green • Daniel Hallquist • Hannah Sewell • Hillary Welch



a  
Public Relations Plan  
for



## Introduction

Welch Media is proud to partner with the Knoxville chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) to execute a public relations campaign with an impactful, conservatory purpose. The society's mission, to promote the enjoyment, research and conservation of birds, is challenged by the harmful impact of Knoxville's growing feral cat population on bird species in the area.

Research presented by the client indicates roughly 82 percent of cats in the United States are feral, with an estimated 60,000 more born each day. Because feral cats are often unsocialized and generally unadoptable, they are left free to roam urban areas such as Knoxville in "cat colonies" - groups of 10 to 200 cats. While cat colonies often go unnoticed by the public, their natural instincts lead them to prey upon birds, some of which are threatened or endangered species.

With a six-month campaign, Welch Media aims to help Knoxville's TOS chapter achieve its mission to conserve bird species by lessening the negative impact of feral cats who prey on them.

## Campaign Goals

- An informed community with an understanding of the issues and implications.
- Heightened awareness about the plight of feral cats and at-risk birds.
- A clear path forward that leads to a positive resolution.

Welch Media will implement issue-centric strategies and tactics to communicate awareness, education and positive solutions to the Knoxville community and specific audiences within it.

## Key Audiences

- Cat owners
- Veterinarians
- Farmers
- Local volunteers/animal activists

## Objectives

The campaign objectives expand on the overarching goals of the campaign and are tailored to the identified key audiences. Benchmarks for objective measures are based on primary research conducted by Welch Media, which is referenced later in the plan.

- Increase the Knoxville community's awareness that keeping pet cats indoors reduces chances of breeding with feral cats from 60 percent to 75 percent by June 2018.
- Have three local veterinarian clinics support Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) efforts by providing free spaying/neutering to feral cats between January – June 2018.

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- Recruit five farmers by June 2018 who agree to allow the final "release" stage of TNR on their farms to help with rodent/pest control.
  - Increase number of volunteers and monetary donations each by 30 percent by June 2018 to expand TNR and feeding efforts.

### **Primary Strategy**

Use a combination of digital media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and traditional media (radio, television, newspapers and printed materials) to educate the Knoxville community about the feral cats and birds issue, pet safety and TNR/volunteer efforts.

### **Budget Recommendations**

With a budget of \$25,000 for a six-month campaign, Welch Media will gear most spending toward paid media space (both digital and traditional) and printed materials (i.e. fliers, brochures). We also hope to reduce costs by acquiring earned media space, such as feature stories and TV news segments. Ultimately, Welch Media is committed to wisely allocating the society's funds to stay well under budget while still accomplishing the campaign's objectives.

### **Evaluation Plans**

The campaign's success will be measured by:

- Number of veterinarians who agree to participate in spaying/neutering efforts
- Number of farmers who allow release of spayed/neutered feral cats on their property
- Change (increase) in number of activists and financial contributions for the cause
- Over a more extended period of time (one calendar year), an overall decrease in Knoxville's feral cat population

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### Industry Overview + Review of External Environment

The Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) is a nonprofit organization specifically dedicated to bird conservation efforts. TOS is a statewide birding organization with four chapters including Knoxville, Bristol, Nashville and Memphis. Knoxville's TOS chapter is the only organization of its kind local to the area.

A secondary industry that plays an important role in this campaign also falls within the nonprofit sector: organizations committed to saving feral cats from euthanasia. In Knoxville, some of the main ones include the Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee, Feral Feline Friends and Alley Cat Allies. These groups focus on feeding feral cats and Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs to reduce further breeding. Public education is also a component of many of their mission statements. Feral Feline Friends specifically includes statistics on its website about feral cats and provides options for citizens to positively impact the overpopulation issue. Like many nonprofit organizations, they rely heavily on volunteers and donations to be successful in their efforts.

Both of these industry segments, bird and feral cat groups, are important to understand as they can be strategically utilized to accomplish the overall campaign goals.

Outside of the main two industries, the Knoxville area is also home to several animal shelters: Young-Williams Animal Center, Young-Williams Animal Village, Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley, Blount County Humane Society and smaller niche organizations. Young-Williams (nonprofit) is a well-known "no kill" shelter with two locations in Knoxville. The shelter takes in animals of all kinds, including strays, nuisance and surrendered animals. For this campaign, Young-Williams can be especially valuable for multiple reasons. First, Young-Williams requires that all adopted animals be spayed, tested for diseases, microchipped and examined for a vet. Secondly, the volunteers at Young-Williams provide educational pet care information to the community on a regular basis. The organization also humanely euthanizes homeless, unwanted, sick and injured animals. Lastly, the organization began a spay/neuter program in 2007 and has spayed more than 54,000 dogs and cats since then. It offers \$45 spaying options for cat owners via a clinic or a mobile spray shuttle that makes regular visits around the community. The organization also has a large social media following, with Facebook holding more than 64,000 user likes. Partnering with influential animal shelters like Young-Williams is another plausible option to satisfy the campaign goals of combating endangered bird species and overpopulation of feral cats.

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## **Client Profile**

The Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society was founded in 1924. According to the chapter's website, the organization was formed to "promote the enjoyment, scientific study, and conservation of birds." The members take part in multiple activities every month, such as meetings, field trips, and clean up projects. They also do seasonal bird counts to record how the wild birds in the area are doing. The organization is supported financially by membership dues, which also ties in with membership of the statewide organization. The Knoxville Chapter's membership also includes a monthly newsletter, which members receive by mail. These newsletters are also available, free-of-charge, on the organization's website.

## **Audience Analysis**

The main audiences that we wish to connect with are cat owners, veterinarians and volunteers. Cat owners that allow their pets to wander are not only putting their own pets in danger, but if they are not spayed or neutered, they could be a risk for unwanted breeding within the feral cat population. The resulting kittens could end up being adopted through the owner, but more commonly are placed with a shelter or dumped and added to the rapidly growing feral cat colonies.

Volunteers are needed to assist with TNR efforts, feeding programs and other tasks related to the feral cat issue. Targeting potential volunteers with emotional messages can be useful when seeking aid in the form of time and/or monetary donations. This audience is especially important if the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society and Young-Williams Animal Shelter choose to increase TNR efforts. The retention of current volunteers is likely to be successful via internal communication efforts from their respective organizations, while new volunteers will need to be targeted and recruited through social media campaigns, websites and traditional media like fliers and print ads.

The veterinarians are a key audience because they are looked to by pet owners for information about animals. Not only are they knowledgeable about transferable diseases illnesses within the feral cat community; they would also be integral as influencers within a social media campaign for pet owners and volunteers in the future. The community is more likely to listen to trusted veterinarians when disseminating information about pet health. Additionally, we hope to facilitate partnerships between local veterinarians and animal conservation groups to create free or reduced-cost spay/neuter initiatives (for both domestic cats and TNR efforts for feral cats).

## **Goal 1**

An informed community with an understanding of the issues and implications.

### ***Objective 1:***

Increase the Knoxville community's awareness that keeping pet cats indoors reduces chances of breeding with feral cats from 60 percent to 75 percent by June 2018.

## **Goal 2**

Heightened awareness about the plight of feral cats and at-risk birds.

### ***Objective 2:***

Increase number of volunteers and monetary donations each by 30 percent by June 2018 to expand TNR and feeding efforts.

## **Goal 3**

A clear path forward that leads to a positive resolution.

### ***Objective 3:***

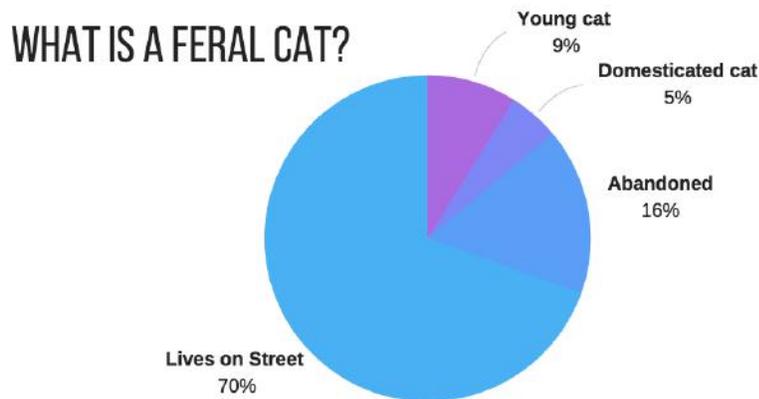
Have three local veterinarian clinics support Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) efforts by providing free spaying/neutering to feral cats between January – June 2018.

### ***Objective 4:***

Recruit five farmers by June 2018 who agree to allow the final "release" stage of TNR on their farms to help with rodent/pest control.

Our team at Welch Media surveyed 78 people by asking six questions that would help guide our team on how well Knoxville residents understand what a feral cat is and how it affects their life. The online survey was distributed on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter and via email.

We found that most people, 70 percent, know what a feral cat is. The chart below demonstrates this.



More than half of the surveyors understood that a feral cat is one that lives on the street and cannot be socialized, although almost 20 percent believed them to be recently abandoned cats. We think this is an important detail for the Knoxville population to become educated on, as they should understand that feral cats are highly likely to never become socialized or adoptable, while recently abandoned cats are very different.

On the second question, we asked surveyors to choose what most represents the livelihood of a feral cat: lives in a colony with anywhere from 10-200 cats, generally avoids human contact, independent and does not interact with other cats, or both A and B. Out of 78 people, 63 knew that feral cats live in a colony and avoided human contact. Although this proves that the majority of people understand that cats live in a group, it is important to help people understand how relevant these cat colonies are in one's own city.

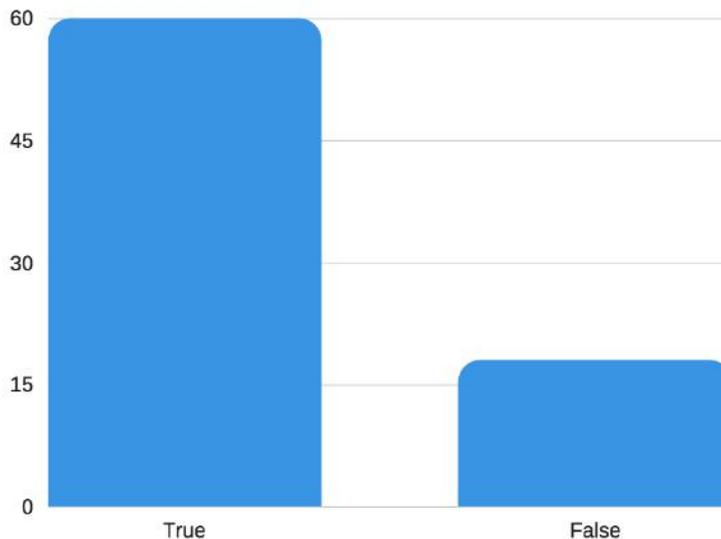
This brings us to question three, "Feral cats are overpopulated in many urban cities, including Knoxville." 72 people agreed with this statement. This shows that 92% of people agree feral

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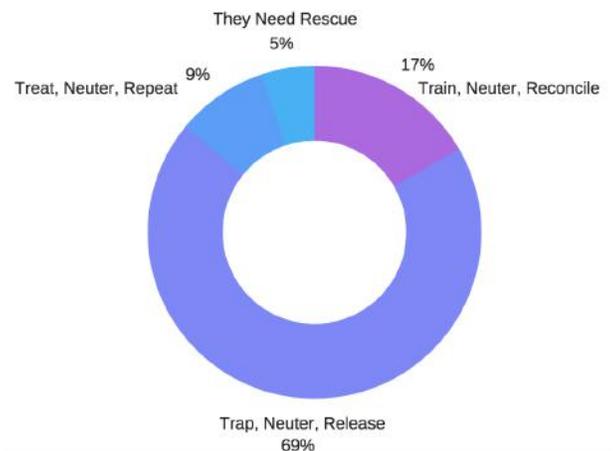
cats are overpopulated in Knoxville, which means our group can focus on showing people why this is an issue and how they can help.

### Keeping pet cats indoors lessens the likelihood of breeding with feral cats



To test whether Knoxville residents understand how their domesticated feline may be affecting the problem, we asked a true or false question. We found that the majority of people - approximately 60 percent - are aware that keeping pets indoors helps lessen breeding with feral cats.

The last question we asked was whether respondents knew what TNR, trap neuter release, stood for. This is the most widely used method to control feral cat populations, so it is not surprising that the majority of people were able to answer correctly; however, it is important for us to help educate Knoxville residents on why this is so important in the city. Here are the results of what respondents believed TNR stood for.



Overall, our team found that Knoxville residents are aware of what a feral cat is and that they are overpopulated in Knoxville. We believe that there is a general understanding of the most well-known methods of decreasing the cat population, like TNR, and that unspayed domesticated cats may be making an impact. This information helps us understand that we may focus more on “what you can do to help” rather than “what a feral cat is.”

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## Strategies & Tactics

From background provided by the Knoxville TOS, along with primary and secondary research concerning the feral cat overpopulation issue, Welch Media has developed five campaign strategies. Each strategy has corresponding tactics that will drive Knoxville TOS closer to achieving its objectives. Visual mock-ups and details of each tactic are found in the appendices of the campaign plan.

**Strategy 1 :** Create Twitter and Instagram accounts for Knoxville’s TOS chapter

- Tactic: Use Twitter to spread awareness about the effects feral cats have on local bird species by sharing links to relevant, educational articles.
- Tactic: Post a photo on Instagram of a different bird species local to Knoxville each week, and include fun facts about the bird with a call-to-action to volunteer.

**Strategy 2 :** Utilize paid media space (social and traditional) to boost awareness of the organization and its mission.

- Tactic: Create sponsored Facebook posts targeted at specific demographics in line with the campaign’s key audiences.
  - Example: A post directed at Knoxville cat owners encouraging them to spay/neuter their pets and promote free initiatives by local veterinarians.
- Tactic: Purchase radio space on local stations to promote volunteer opportunities, donations and spay/neuter events.
- Tactic: Advertise volunteer opportunities and spay/neuter events in local newspapers.

**Strategy 3:** Utilize shared media on all three social media platforms.

- Tactic: Create Facebook and Twitter polls with feral cat and bird facts to gauge the interest and understanding of followers and engage with them.
- Tactic: Post organic (non-paid) content on Facebook once a day, Twitter once a day and Instagram three or four times a week.

**Strategy 4:** Target local media outlets for earned media space.

- Tactic: Write a press release following the first TNR-to-Farm release event in February.
- Tactic: Pitch a radiothon segment to local radio stations to create an opportunity for fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

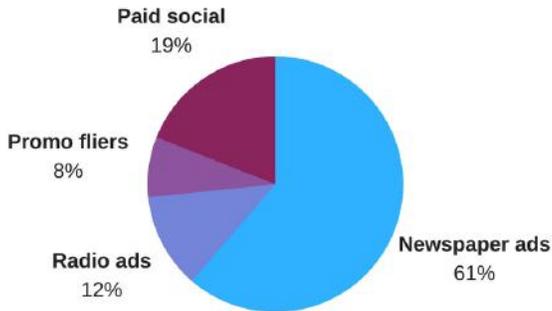
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- Tactic: Invite media to cover all three spay/neuter events.
  - Tactic: Seek out bloggers in the area who write about volunteering, conservation, etc. to spotlight the organization and its efforts.

**Strategy 5:** Capitalize on owned media by creating a Knoxville TOS blog housed on the chapter's website with post links shared on social media.

- Tactic: Write original blog content for at least 2 posts per month.
  - Topic ideas: “5 things you didn’t know your cat was doing”, “How you can help save local birds”, “Unspayed cat? You likely have a lot of grand-kittens”, etc.
- Tactic: Invite guest bloggers to write content for the blog at least once per month.

# Budget Recommendations

2018 Campaign Budget Breakdown



While several tactics of the developed campaign are centered around organic and earned media, others will require monetary input from the organization.

Print advertising pricing in the form of black-and-white newspaper ads is recommended to promote spay/neuter events and volunteer opportunities. The Farragut Press and Fountain City Focus are similarly-priced, at \$13 and \$10 per cubic inch respectively. Welch Media recommends no more than two 4-inch ads per month in each of these papers for six months. Knoxville News Sentinel is significantly pricier at \$150 per cubic inch, so Welch Media recommends a smaller, 2-inch ad only once per month throughout the campaign. These suggestions

amount to a total of \$2,904 for newspaper ads.

To promote the three spay/neuter events happening in February, April and June, Welch Media suggests purchasing five radio station slots to air the week leading up to the event. B97.5 is one Knoxville station that offers 30-second slots for \$38 each. Airing five slots per week before three events amounts to \$570 total for radio advertisements.

In addition to radio space, Welch Media recommends distributing paper fliers to vet clinics participating in spay/neuter events to post among their offices and hand out to pet owners. The cost of 750 fliers (approximately 250 for each of the three events) is estimated at \$360.

Finally, in addition to free, organic social media posts, Welch Media suggests paying to boost social media posts. Sponsored social media posts have the power to reach wider audiences and gain new followers, which directly related to the objective of increasing community awareness. More awareness is likely to contribute toward other campaign objectives, such as increasing volunteer numbers and donations. For each month of the campaign, \$150 should be used to boost posts; this equals \$900 for the duration of the campaign.

The total recommended budget for the six-month campaign comes to \$4,734. Welch Media hopes Knoxville TOS finds these recommendations to be wise decisions for the organization's funds so that remaining money can go toward furthering bird conservation causes.

Tactic	Associated costs
Print Advertising	For a column inch in black and white (per print) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farragut Press - \$13.00</li> <li>Knoxville News Sentinel - \$150.00</li> <li>Fountain City Focus - \$10.00</li> </ul>
Radio Advertising	For a 30 second advertisement: Per Airing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJXB 97.5 FM - \$38.00</li> </ul>
Printed fliers	250 count of 8.5"x11" standard fliers - \$120
Blog posts	\$0

**Objective 1:** Increase the Knoxville community's awareness that keeping pet cats indoors reduces chances of breeding with feral cats from 60 percent to 75 percent by June 2018.

After executing the six-month campaign, Welch Media recommends that the Knoxville TOS chapter re-measures the awareness of the Knoxville community with a follow up survey (see final appendix for survey template). The objective will be met if the second survey indicates awareness on keeping pet cats indoors grows by at least 15 percent.

**Objective 2:** Increase number of volunteers and monetary donations each by 30 percent by June 2018 to expand TNR and feeding efforts.

The Knoxville TOS chapter should evaluate its current number of volunteers and monetary donations prior to launching the campaign developed by Welch Media. Once those numbers are identified, the chapter should measure them again in six months. Growth of 30 percent in each area indicates a successful objective.

**Objective 3:** Have three local veterinarian clinics support Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) efforts by providing free spaying/neutering to feral cats between January – June 2018.

This objective is easily evaluated based on if at least three vet clinics in the community agree to donate their time and resources to spay/neuter efforts. Community participation and number of pets spayed or neutered should be recorded for each event. The chapter should aim to increase participation after each event, as well.

**Objective 4:** Recruit five farmers by June 2018 who agree to allow the final "release" stage of TNR on their farms to help with rodent/pest control.

The fourth and final objective is also relatively simple to measure. The Knoxville TOS chapter needs to identify five farmers in the area who support the release of post-TNR cats on their property. This objective is considered realistic as it requires recruiting an average of less than one farmer per month for the duration of the campaign. If five farmers are successfully recruited by June 2018, Welch Media encourages Knoxville TOS to continue identifying farmers to participate.

Welch Media is a team of pet owners and animal lovers alike who fully support the efforts of the Knoxville chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. We are honored to partner with the organization and have spent our semester developing a public relations campaign we are proud and excited to share.

From the beginning, we identified four key audiences and conducted primary research within the Knoxville community to gauge original awareness levels on feral cat overpopulation (and the implications for local bird species). We interpreted our researching findings to develop specific, measurable objectives that can be achieved by implementing the strategies and tactics outlined in the campaign and its appendices. Deliverables such as recommended social media posts, a media kit, a blog layout and more are all small pieces of the campaign's big picture: to generate more media space (a mixture of paid, earned, shared and owned) and ultimately boost community awareness about Knoxville TOS and its efforts. Executing such a plan in a budget-friendly manner of less than \$5,000 over six-months is an added bonus.

Welch Media thanks the Knoxville TOS chapter for its noteworthy efforts to conserve wildlife in our beautiful state and region. We are also grateful for the opportunity to create this plan for you, and we look forward to continuing professional interactions in the future.

Alley Cat Allies. (2017.) Our Work. Retrieved from <https://www.alleycat.org/our-work/>

Feral Feline Friends of East Tennessee. (2017.) About Us. Retrieved from <http://www.feralfelinefriends.org/about%20us.htm>

Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley. (2017.) What We Do. Retrieved from <https://www.humanesocietytennessee.com/whatwedo/>

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. (2017.) Our History. Retrieved from <http://www.knoxvillebirding.org/history.html>

Young-Williams Animal Shelter. (2017). Our Story. Retrieved from [www.young-williams.org/](http://www.young-williams.org/)

## Knoxville TOS 2018 Campaign Timeline

Strategy/Tactic	January	February	March	April	May	June
Vet-sponsored spay/neuter day						
Radio advertisements for spay/neuter promo						
Media advisory for spay/neuter event						
TNR-to-Farm release day						
Press release about first TNR-to-farm						
Paid social media posts						
Newspaper ads for volunteer recruitment						
Radiothon fundraiser						
Radiothon pitch to radio station						
Seek guest bloggers						
Post original blog content						

## Sample social media posts

 **TOS Knoxville Chapter**  
Sponsored Like Page

Feral cats can kill up to 2.4 billion birds a year.



**Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society**  
We welcome anyone to join us - even if you have never birded before.  
[HTTP://WWW.KNOXVILLEBIRDING.ORG/](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org/) Learn More

  72 12 Comments 15 Shares

Like Comment Share

**Instagram**

 **TOS Knoxville Chapter** Sponsored



[Learn More](#)

**147 likes**

TOS Knoxville Chapter Feral cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 33 species. #savethebirds #knoxvillebirding #feral

 **TOS Knoxville Chapter** @KnoxvilleBirding · 

Feral cats can kill up to 2.4 billion birds a year. Cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 33 species. #savethebirds #knoxvillebirding #feralcats



  82  145 

 Promoted

### Social media poll mockup

Twitter allows for four poll options, 25 characters each.

- What do you know about cats? #Trivia time! How many birds a year in the U.S. do feral cats kill?
  - 1 million
  - 2.4 billion (correct answer)
  - 1.5 billion
  - 190 million
- What's the best way to prevent your cat from breeding with feral cats?
  - Spay them!
  - Keep them indoors
  - Both
    - Answer: Both! Spaying them is the best option, but keeping them indoors will help. Also, by keeping them indoors, you prevent cats from killing local wildlife like birds!
- Feral cats are used to humans, therefore they are kind.
  - True
  - False
    - Answer: False! Feral cats have never had human contact, making them most often unadoptable.
- Cats only kill birds when they're hungry
  - True
  - False
    - Answer: False! They kill because of their natural predatory instincts.

**Radio ad script:**

*“Knoxville Animal Clinic is partnering with the Knoxville Chapter of Tennessee Ornithological Society and Young-Williams Animal Shelter and Tennessee Valley Humane Society in the hosting of a free spay/neutering event for cats on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. We will be located at our permanent residence at 5312 Homberg Drive and services will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. The purpose of this spay/neutering is to prevent the further population of feral cats within the Knoxville area. If your feline friend is an outdoor adventurer and isn’t fixed, we encourage you to come by and allow us to help you ensure that they do not breed unexpectedly. Pain medication is covered as well to make sure the procedure is comfortable for your cat. We look forward to seeing you and your feline friends!”*

*Sample of newspaper advertisement*

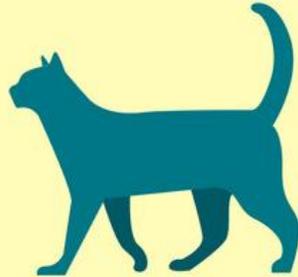
# They need someone to look up to...

Volunteer with local animal-friendly  
organizations to work toward  
ending feral cat overpopulation in  
Knoxville.

Visit [www.knoxvillebirding.org](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org) for  
upcoming events.



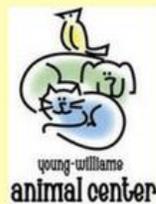
*Sample flyer promoting free spay and neuter*

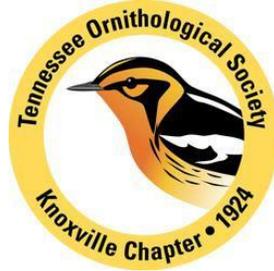


**FREE**  
**SPAY + NEUTER DAY**  
**FOR YOUR FELINE FRIEND**

**Feb. 10, 2018**  
**Knoxville Animal Clinic**  
**5312 Homberg Dr, Knoxville TN, 37919**  
**8 am - 4 pm**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:**



**MEDIA ALERT**

February 8, 2018  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:  
Hillary Welch, Director of Communications  
(864) 967-0200 Ext. 221  
HWelch4@vols.utk.edu

**Knoxville Animal Clinic Hosts Free Spay/Neuter**

Knoxville Animal Clinic is partnering with Young-Williams Animal Shelter and Tennessee Valley Humane Society in the hosting of a free spay/neutering event for cats.

**Who:**

Knoxville Animal Clinic  
Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society  
Young-Williams Animal Shelter  
Tennessee Valley Humane Society

**What: Knoxville, TN** – Services will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. The purpose of this spay/neutering is to prevent the further population of feral cats within the Knoxville area. If your feline friend is an outdoor adventurer and isn't fixed, we encourage you to come by and allow us to ensure that they do not breed unexpectedly. Pain medication is covered as well. We look forward to seeing you and your feline friends!

**When:** Saturday, February 10 from 8 am-4pm

**Where:** 5312 Homberg Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919

**Why:** This event allows owners of outdoor cats that are unfixed to be spayed or neutered and prevent the growth of the already overwhelming population of feral cats in the Knoxville area.

**How:** Spay and neutering will be done at a first come, first serve basis. Sign in at the front desk of Knoxville Animal Clinic and wait to be called.

###

*Sample pitch to radio station*

To: B97.5 staff (use contact form on <http://b975.com/contact-us/>)

From: kgreen@knoxtos.org

Subject: Bird-a-thon fundraiser pitch

Hi 97.5 team,

My name is Kayley Green, and I am a public relations specialist for the Knoxville chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS). This non-profit organization's main focus is to preserve bird species in the area, which includes protecting them from being preyed upon by a growing feral cat population.

In order to conserve the beautiful birds that call East Tennessee home sweet home, we support humane Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) efforts for feral cats. This process ensures that feral cats receive vaccines and are spayed/neutered to prevent further breeding. TNR efforts require money and manpower, and that's why we are hoping you can help us by allowing a radiothon on your station in April this year. We feel that your respectable reputation as a family-oriented radio station, plus your wide reach across the Knoxville community and beyond, make your station a wonderful platform for this worthy cause.

To occupy airtime during the radiothon, we propose bringing in representatives from our chapter and across the state who are experts on the bird and feral cat issue to discuss and answer questions from callers.

We also frequently partner with the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley, Young-Williams Animal Shelter and local veterinarians for free spay/neuter and other volunteer-based activities. We would be glad to have representatives from each group come to speak and share success stories as well.

Our goal is to raise approximately \$3,000 during the radiothon, with plans to allocate the funds raised directly toward TNR projects and spay/neuter efforts in the Knoxville community.

If you are interested, we can provide more details and discuss time allotments and specific dates. Please contact me anytime at (865) 555-1020 or by email with any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kayley Green  
Knoxville TOS Public Relations Specialist

Contact: Kayley Green, public relations specialist  
Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society  
Knoxville, Tenn.  
(865) 555-1020  
kgreen@knoxtos.org



**Feb. 5, 2018**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Trauma organization study reveals statewide on-call physician shortages**

Knoxville, Tenn. – In many urban areas across the United States, including Knoxville, feral cat populations are growing rapidly and following their natural instincts to prey upon native bird species in their surrounding environments. The Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS), in partnership with local farmers, is aiming to find a greater purpose for feral cats who are adapted to the wild and therefore not easily domesticated.

Knoxville’s TOS chapter, along with the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley and Young-Williams Animal Shelter, has launched a new campaign this year to combat the feral cat issue by offering free spaying/neutering through local vet clinics. Another major effort TOS is involved with is called Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR), which involved humanely trapping feral cats, providing them with vaccines and then spaying/neutering them before releasing them back into the wild. From the campaign came a new solution: identify local farmers who would allow the “release” component of TNR to happen on their property.

Local farmer Jerry Davis of Alcoa says he was approached by Knoxville TOS members and at first was skeptical. “I didn’t think a bunch of feral cats on the farm would be a good idea,” he said. “But then I realized they would be a great way to manage mice and other pests in the barn.”

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Davis is the first farmer to participate in a program Knoxville TOS is calling “TNR-to-Farm,” but the organization hopes he will not be the last.

“Our goal over the next five months is to recruit four more farmers to follow in Mr. Davis’ footsteps,” said Daniel Hallquist, Knoxville TOS Vice President. Hallquist also disclosed that the first release event will take place on Mr. Davis’ 100-acre Alcoa farm later this month. “We are hoping for Saturday, Feb. 24, if the weather permits,” he shared.

In addition to financial donations to support its efforts, Knoxville TOS needs volunteers to assist with feeding feral cats, working spay/neuter events and helping with TNR. To inquire about how you can help, visit <http://www.knoxvillebirding.org/contact-us.html>.

*The Tennessee Ornithological Society was founded in 1915 to promote the enjoyment, scientific study, and conservation of birds. It is also a federation of local chapters, which hold regular meetings and field trips. By 1923, a breakaway group of disenchanted Audubon Society members in Knoxville began to follow suit and felt that a new club, focused more on bird study, should be formed. In January 1924, the East Tennessee Ornithological Society (ETOS) was created (later becoming a formal chapter of TOS in 1942.) The TOS publishes a quarterly journal, The Migrant, and a newsletter, The Tennessee Warbler, and holds statewide meetings.*

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## **Blogger List**

Stephen Lyn Bales - Nature Calling (<http://stephenlynbales.blogspot.com/>)

Local nature blogger

Alan Sims - Inside of Knoxville (<http://insideofknoxville.com/>)

Local blogger of all things Knoxville

Feral Cat Behavior - <http://www.feralcatbehavior.com/>

The Best Friends Blog - <http://blogs.bestfriends.org/index.php/tag/feral-cats/>

Alley Cat Allies - <https://www.alleycat.org/category/beckys-blog/>

## Sample blog post

### Your Cat May Be A Killer

Have you ever noticed a cat around an abandoned building? Did it run away from you without hissing? You most likely encountered a feral cat. Believe it or not, there are likely thousands of feral cats living in your city. These animals have never encountered human contact and are usually unadoptable. They're harmless though, right? After all, they don't bother humans.

Wrong.

Feral cats can kill up to 2.4 billion birds a year. According to the American Bird Conservatory group, cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 33 species.

How can you help? Well, that's what we're here to talk to you about today.

There are around 80 million pet cats in the United States. Although they can be great animals, sometimes these fluffy friends contribute to the killing of birds. Studies show that the majority of people, around 70 percent, allow their domestic cat to wander outside, often unspayed. These cats go outside and breed with the feral cat population.

The first thing you can do to protect the bird population: Neuter your cat!

Cats can begin breeding as soon as maturation begins, which can be as early as three months old. These cats can produce around 12 kittens a year.

The second thing you can do: Bring your cat indoors!

It may be difficult to transition your cat\* , but it's definitely possible. There are many theories as to the best way to do it, slowly or all at once. Cats can be as happy indoor as outdoor, you just have to show them attention! The beauty is, they can't kill any other fluffy animals from your house, unless it's an unwanted vermin!

The last thing you can do: Join our cause!

We care about birds. There are many ways you can help outside of what this blog talks about. Peruse our website and learn about the different ways!

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## Other sample blog post ideas:

- Five things your cat is doing that you don't know about
- Cat vs. Bird
- Why did my cat bring me a dead bird?
- Why should I care about birds?
- Local Tennessee birds
- I feed my cat, why is he killing birds?
- Where does my cat go when outside?

### Your Cat May Be A Killer

November 27, 2016 | Knoxville Chapter of the Ornithological Society



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*Survey template used for research*

## Feral Cats Awareness Survey

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Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q7 Thanks for participating in our survey. We appreciate your feedback.

The survey has 6 questions (multiple choice & true/false) designed to measure Knoxville residents' awareness about feral cats in the area.

Your responses are anonymous and will be used for educational purposes only.

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Q1 What is a feral cat?

- A young cat (1)
  - A domesticated cat (2)
  - A recently abandoned cat (3)
  - A cat that lives on the street and cannot be socialized (4)
-

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Q2 Which of these best describes the lifestyle of a feral cat?

- Lives in colony with anywhere from 10-200 cats (1)
  - Generally avoids human contact (2)
  - Independent and does not interact with other cats (3)
  - Both A and B (4)
- 

Q3 Feral cats are overpopulated in many urban areas, including Knoxville.

- True (1)
  - False (2)
- 

Q4 The overpopulation of feral cats does not have a significant impact on local wildlife species.

- True (1)
  - False (2)
- 

Q5 Keeping pet cats indoors lessens the likelihood of breeding with feral cats.

- True (1)
  - False (2)
-

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Q6 TNR is a feral cat population control method that stands for...

- Train, neuter, reconcile (1)
- Trap, neuter, release (2)
- Treat, neuter, repeat (3)
- They Need Rescue (4)

End of Block: Default Question Block

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