

Madeline Vacanti  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## How would an overpopulation of homeless cats and dogs affect our local ecosystem?

An overpopulation of homeless cats and dogs could affect our local ecosystem in many ways. First, since they are out running around in the streets they might get hit or run over by a car. Too many owners don't use a leash for their dog, and once they sprint in the middle of the road it might be too late. If the dog doesn't have a leash, you can also train the pet. The dog can be trained to stay by the owner's side when a car or any vehicle comes along the road. The owner can also train them to duck down when they get under the car or vehicle.

Another terrible effect of overpopulation of stray animals is that they might bite somebody. Since they are strays, they don't have owners to take them to the veterinarian. They are not vaccinated and checked out by the doctor. Then the stray dogs or cats might bite people and give them rabies or even worse diseases.

Stray animals are hungry, so they might trash your yard by eating your trash. The dog or cat might start munching on your trash in your trash bag and make a huge mess by tipping over your trash cans too. The garbage bag might have a large rip in it when they use their teeth to rip open it to get the junk. A way to prevent this is to use two more trash bags so they won't get in it.

When the dogs or cats need something to eat other than trash, they might devour birds, mice, or other animals. That might lead to a hole in the food chain because the dog or cat ate too many of one species. When one species decreases, another might decrease because the animal gets energy from that animal that's dying off. So now more animals die.

Ways to prevent this is to just help out. Don't abandon your pet, if you can't take care of your pet just give him or her to a shelter. If you see a dog or a cat out in the road, please call an animal control person to take the animal to a better place. If we help our community it will be better too.