

What would **YOU?** do in the following case

by Masayo Furuki

A CERTAIN MAN FOUND THAT a stray cat was messing in his garden so he decided to take action. He caught it in a trap, then bludgeoned it with a stick and finally choked it to death with a piece of wire. He was sent to the public prosecutor's office under the Animal Protection and Control Law. Because this ineffective law is the only one for the protection of animals in Japan, news of this kind of case is also valueless. The man explained that the reason he resorted to such violence was because the cat was using his garden as a toilet on its way to the adjacent house where it got fed.

Recently many similar cases have been reported. Mainly conflicts between cat lovers and local inhabitant over the problem of stray or homeless cats in the neighbourhood. At ARK too we receive many phone calls about feral cats.

Although each case should be judged separately, the underlying problem exists; some people love cats, many are troubled by them and others hate them. How can we solve this dilemma amicably?

We have to explain to people, especially cat haters, why there are so many feral cats in our society. These animals are here through no fault of their own. Their origin lies in humans' irresponsibility in throwing them away in the first place. Since these same irresponsible people failed to neuter them, it is natural that they breed and increase. They have as much right to exist in this world as we humans have.

However we cannot place all the blame on those who don't appreciate cats as we do, cat lovers also have a duty to work towards a better and more understanding relationship with local inhabitants. Here are few simple rules we should follow:

1. Cleaning up

You should clean up any uneaten cat food. If the cat excretes where it isn't supposed to, put down an odour eliminator or something to deter the cat from using that spot.

Put a cat toilet somewhere else. (in a hidden place) If the cat is friendly show it where it is and encourage it to use it by putting a bit of urine soaked paper in the bottom.

Needless to say this toilet should be cleaned regularly and thoroughly.

2. Neutering

The cat should be neutered as soon as possible and found a home in order to reduce the number of stray cats. Pregnant cats need urgent neutering.

If the cat is semi-wild, you will need a cat trap to catch it. (ARK can lend these on request).

3. Action speaks louder than words.

People who feed cats regularly in public places such as parks and housing complexes should not only clean up as described above but also show a genuine community spirit by helping keep the general area clean in order to soothe the other inhabitants. If people start to complain about your feeding the cats, explain that you are not just doing out of pity for the cats but that you also want to help the community by keeping the cats healthy and well-fed so that they don't cause trouble.

Feeding and caring for homeless animals involves a lot of time and work. If you are not prepared to take on this responsibility 100%, don't start it. Irresponsible feeding leads to a lot of trouble with others. At the best you will be forced to stop feeding the cat, in the worst case somebody may take revenge on you or more likely on the cat. It is the animal that suffers in the end.

Taking action

If you find somebody ill-treating, abusing, teasing or killing any animal you should report the case in full detail to the police. If the police handle the case prefactorily, saying "it's just a cat or a dog", you should write a letter of prosecution. (see example in box on next page).

Details include: Prosecutor's name and address, Who committed the act? Where? When? What? How it happened?. These details should be described succinctly and clearly and be accompanied by detailed evidence such as photographs. When a letter of Prosecution is handed over to the police, they are more likely to take measures to meet the case.

Although the present Law is inadequate and ineffective given the widespread cruelty that exists in Japan, it is the only one we have for the time being, so we should use it as much as possible. Instead of turning away because we think we can do nothing, we should be prepared to act and to write letters of Prosecution.

あなたはこんな時
最後まで保護者に
なってくれますか?

～ホームレスキャットをめぐる人々～

古木 昌代

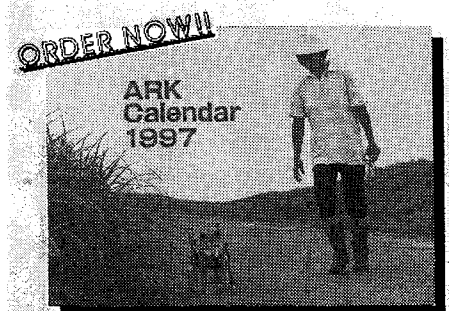
自

宅の庭を荒らす野良猫をワナを仕掛けて捕獲し、棒で乱打したあげく針金で首を締めて窒息死させた北海道の男性が9月下旬、動物の保護および管理に関する法律違反容疑で書類送検されたと新聞で報じられました。こればザル法にも等しい動物保護法しか無い現在の日本に於て、充分とはいえないまでも評価できるニュースだと思います。隣家で与えるエサを食べに行く途中、かの男性の庭に糞をするなどの被害を受けた末の惨劇とのことですが、昨今ホームレス猫をめぐる愛猫家と付近の住民とのトラブルはあとをたちません。アークにもこの種の相談が多数寄せられています。

対策としては個々の事情により、ケースバイケースで考えねばなりません。一般論として考慮すべきことは、住民の中には猫が嫌いな人や実際に猫による被害を受けている人も存在するということです。不幸にしてその人達とトラブルが起きた場合、やはり穏便な話し合いで和解するのがベターでしょう。この世の中は人間だけのものではないこと、ホームレス猫はもともと無責任な人間によって造られたもの、そしてこれらの猫たちにも生きる権利があること、また間接的にネズミの駆除にも役立っていると思われることなど誠意をもって説明し、少しでも相手に理解してもらうことです。

もちろんそのためには、こちら出来る限りの義務と責任を果たさなければなりません。

1. 食べ残したエサや糞の後始末は毎日きちんとすること。されては困る所に糞をする場合は、動物用消臭剤を捲いて糞臭を消すとか物置いてその場所では排便が出来なくなるようにし、他の目立たない場所にトイレを作ってやり



ARK CALENDAR 1997

Appealing black and white photographs taken by Masao Mochizuki, portraying the day to day life of the animals at ARK and the volunteers who take care of them.

毎年ご好評をいただいておりますアーク・カレンダー。おだいり1997年版を販売中です。毎月正夫カメラマンの腕力あふれるモノクロ写真がぞくぞくアークの動物たちや彼らと共に生きるボランティアスタッフの日々の様子はまさにアーク・スピリットそのものです。

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