

## Got Cats?

Charlton Animal Control started to assist with the town's stray cats in 2008. That first year, we took in a whopping 103 cats. A big part of our cat program over the past two years has included education on the importance of spaying and neutering. Being able to offer resources and referrals to Charlton residents is a great way for us to help reduce pet overpopulation.

Here is some interesting information on cats. Cats can go into their first heat as young as 4 1/2 - 5 months of age. Heat lasts about 7 days, but can go on for 3 weeks. Females may go into heat repeatedly until impregnated (or spayed). The average gestation period is 63 days. Cats can get pregnant again while nursing a litter. A common statistic: one female cat and one male cat and their kittens can produce 470,000 cats in seven years. Neutering male cats reduces fighting, roaming, and spraying behaviors as well as the spread of cat diseases such as feline leukemia and aids.

Having your new cat or kitten spayed or neutered, if it isn't already, is imperative to reduce cat overpopulation. Cats 6 months and over are also required to have a rabies vaccination. Spaying and neutering can be expensive, but there are low cost spay/neuter/vaccination programs available near Charlton. Two include: Second Chance Animal Shelter, East Brookfield, MA, 508-867-5525, [www.secondchanceanimals.org](http://www.secondchanceanimals.org) and Worcester Animal Rescue League, Worcester, MA, 508-853-0030, [www.worcester-arl.org](http://www.worcester-arl.org). Other spay/neuter/vaccination information is available on our webpage at [www.townofcharlton.net/animalcontrol.htm](http://www.townofcharlton.net/animalcontrol.htm).

Charlton Animal Control saw an almost 50% reduction this past year in stray cat intakes, and were very pleased to see that there were a lot fewer litters of abandoned kittens. With your help, this number will continue to decrease. Spring is kitten season. Please help us "fix" the cat overpopulation problem and spay/neuter your cat today!

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[www.townofcharlton.net/animalcontrol.htm](http://www.townofcharlton.net/animalcontrol.htm)

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