



Thank you for being here!

TODAY'S LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Articulate the kitten challenge in North America. Specifically, what do kittens need from us and how many kittens need it.
- Identify the most successful kitten management strategies and understand how and why those strategies are successful
- Define your shelter's kitten philosophy and goals. Engage your community in your kitten strategy.

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

1

What does diversion mean?

- To change course from one direction to another

divert
/dɪˈvɜːrt, dɪˈvɜːrt/

VERB

1. **cause (someone or something) to change course or turn from one direction to another**
"a scheme to divert water from the river to irrigate agricultural land"
synonyms: reroute, redirect, change the course of, draw away, turn aside, head off, deflect, divert, transfer, change

- (if a vehicle or person) **change course**
"an aircraft has diverted and will be with you shortly"
- **reallocate (something, especially money or resources) to a different purpose**
"more of their advertising budget was diverted into promotions"

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

2



To admit or not to admit?

KITTEN INTAKE CONSIDERATIONS FOR ANIMAL SHELTERS

—

Dr. Kate Hurley, DVM, MPVM

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

3

I (we) meant well

- Get lost cats home!
- Find homes for cats that need them!
- Prevent suffering!
- Reduce overpopulation!



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

4

But then I (we) learned more

Tipping Point 2013: Radically rethinking our response to cats



- Get lost cats home!
- Find homes for cats that need them!
- Prevent suffering!
- Reduce overpopulation!

Return-to-field:
Understand how sterilization, vaccination and return to the location of origin provides an alternative to euthanasia for healthy un-owned shelter cats.

DISCOVER MORE

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

5

The right tool for the job



- Sterilize, vaccinate and return for most healthy unowned cats brought to the shelter¹
 - Healthy feral cats to stabilize populations in the community and limit euthanasia at the shelter
 - Healthy friendly stray/free roaming cats to maximize spayed/neutered/vaccinated cats reunited with their families
 - As an avenue to open doors with community members who would not otherwise go to the shelter



- Traditional shelter pathway for owner surrendered cats² and:
 - Social kittens on a pathway to adoption
 - Unhealthy stray/free roaming cats (sick/injured/poor body condition)
 - Cruelty, abuse and neglect cases
 - Interventions for significant nuisance situations/public health or wildlife risk
 - As an avenue to open doors with community members and encourage engagement with the shelter

¹Or divert to TNR/low cost spay/neuter

²When pet safety net/home to home options are not appropriate

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

6

It worked!

Slide 1: Study of the effect on shelter cat intake and euthanasia from a shelter neuter return project of 10,000 cats from March 2010 to June 2014.

- Euthanasia **down 75%**
- Euthanasia due to URI **down 99%**
- Cats picked up dead **down 20%**
- Intake (cat and kitten) **down 29%**

Slide 2: The Impact of an Integrated Program of Pickups, Spay and Neuter, Trap, Neuter, Return on Public Intake and Euthanasia at a Municipal Animal Shelter.

- 11,749 cats sterilized and returned over 3-year period
- Euthanasia **down 84%**
- Calls for dead cat pickup **down 24%**
- Intake **down 38%**

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

7

It worked, really, really well

MILLION CAT CHALLENGE

ONE MILLION LIVES COUNTING ON YOU.

Lives Saved: **2,544,756**

JOIN LEARN DONATE

8/6/20

8

The Final Frontier



9

But what about the babies?



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

10

Let's switch gears



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

11

Oh no!



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

12

Officer Hurley to the rescue!



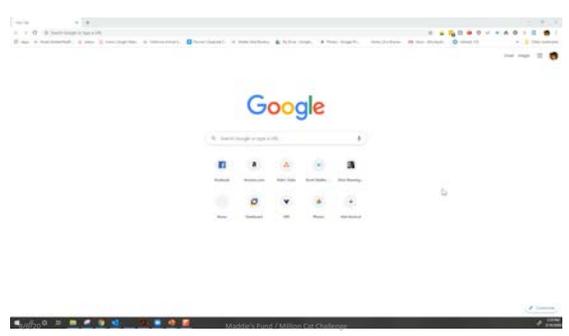
8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

13



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

14



15

It's like they read my mind!

Help, I've found a baby crow!

You're walking down the sidewalk when suddenly you notice a waddling little mass of black feathers trying awkwardly to hide under a bush or car. When you begin to approach the young crow, it simply stares up at you or perhaps continues on its poorly planned waddle down the sidewalk or worse, into traffic.

Clearly this baby crow cannot fly and has a habit of making bad decisions. Your instinct (and perhaps the opportunity to interact with a baby animal) are tempting you to intervene and "save" this young crow who seems ill prepared to be out of the nest. What should you do?



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

16

Uh oh...

The answer, almost always, is to ignore your instincts and good intentions. I've had many friends and colleagues who are either licensed wildlife rehabbers or who spent summers volunteering with their local rehab facilities, that can attest to the dozens of animals that get brought in during the spring and summer by well intentioned folks who assumed that simply finding such a vulnerable baby meant it needed help. In many of these cases, these animals did not need help and now they've been separated from their parents or mother and stand a much lower chance of surviving once they're released from the rehab facility. So how do you avoid making the same error?

8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

17

Oh my

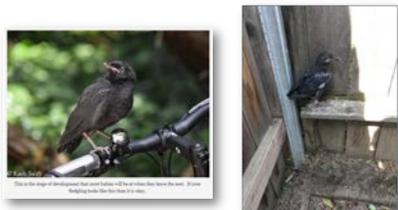
First, understand that corvid babies very often leave the nest before they are completely flighted (usually by about 7-10 days). Evolution has taught them that it's better to be flightless but still mobile on the ground than trapped in the nest where they stand no chance of escape, should they be located by a predator. During this time they are in the care of their parents who will continue to feed and defend them. So finding a flightless baby crow or jay is totally normal between late May and July. Perhaps it would be helpful to gently herd the fledgling away from traffic and under the safety of a bush but, outside of that, most baby corvids do not need your help and are better off (less stressed) if you give them a wide berth.

8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

18

Yep.

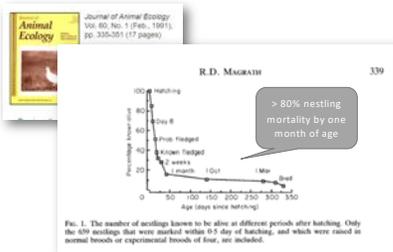


8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

19

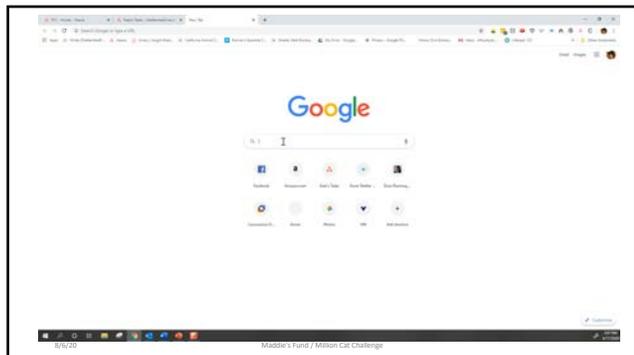
But what about this???



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

20



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

21

Wow it's true



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

25

What does that have to do with these?



8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

26

Understanding a prolific species

30-80 million community cats in U.S. 2% sterilized

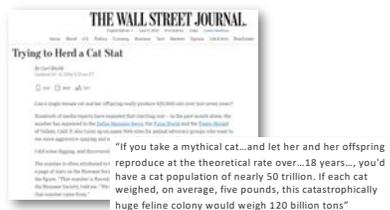


8/6/20

Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

27

Understanding a prolific species



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

28

Risk by design

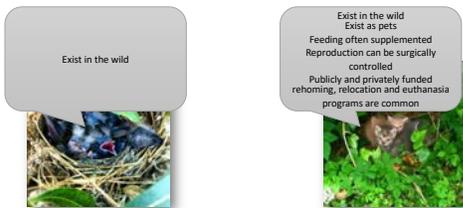
- Many species have a relatively large number of offspring and low survival
- Evolutionary strategy allowing rapid adaptation to changes in resource availability and density
- *Breed to the carrying capacity of the environment*



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

29

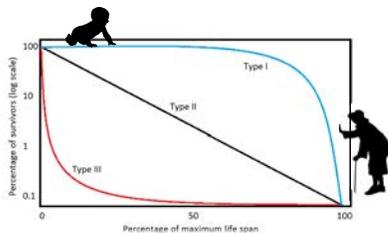
But not quite the same



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

30

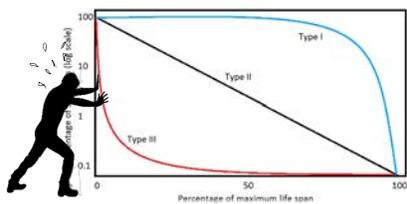
And definitely not *our* way



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

31

How do we bend this curve?



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

32

Here's what *won't* work

Wildlife Damage Management Conference
Proceedings
1-3 2009
Demographic and Spatial Responses of Coyotes to Changes in Food and Exploitation

"Removals brought about a drastic reduction in pack size and a corresponding decrease in density. However... With increasing prey and reduced coyote density, mean litter size doubled in the removal area compared to pre-removal levels."

Effects of low-level culling of feral cats in open populations: a case study from the forests of southern Tasmania

Biller J. Luonala^{1,2,3*}, Nicholas J. Murray¹ and Christopher R. Dickman¹

"Contrary to expectation, the relative abundance and activity of feral cats increased in the cull-sites, even though the numbers of cats captured per unit effort during the culling period declined. Increases in minimum numbers of cats known to be alive ranged from 75% to 211% during the culling period, compared with pre- and post-cull estimates."

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

33

Here's what might work

Think upstream Work in balance with capacity Say no to false dichotomies Recognize human emotions

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

34

What's the smartest place to invest resources?

A Long-Term Lens: Cumulative Impacts of Free-Roaming Cat Management Strategy and Intensity on Preventable Cat Mortalities

(Small text listing authors and affiliations)

This study used a previously developed stochastic simulation model (1) to evaluate the impact of different management options on free-roaming feline and cat mortality over a 10-year period. Three longer-term management scenarios were compared: (1) high intensity removal, (2) high intensity removal, (3) low intensity removal. The number of kittens surviving to adulthood, the number of adult cats that die due to lethal management, and the number of adult cats that die due to natural causes were recorded.

We define preventable deaths as those that could likely be reduced or eliminated using an alternative population management approach, specifically the deaths of kittens under six months that fail to reach adulthood, and the deaths of adult cats due to lethal management.

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

35

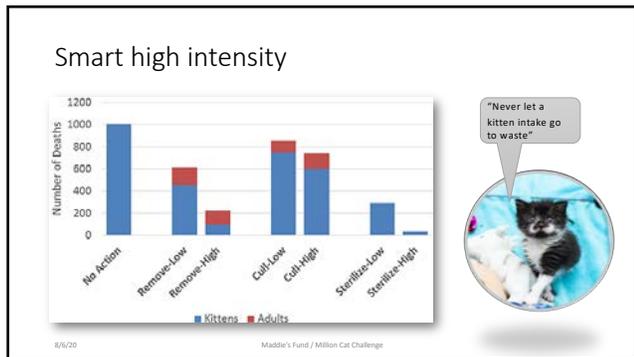
And the winner is...

Scenario	Kittens (Cumulative)	Adults (Cumulative)
No Action	~1000	~1000
Remove-Low	~400	~200
Remove-High	~200	~100
Cull-Low	~800	~100
Cull-High	~600	~100
Sterilize-Low	~200	~50
Sterilize-High	~100	~20

“Cumulative preventable deaths and cumulative kitten deaths over 10 years are much lower for higher-intensity sterilization (TNR) than for all other scenarios.”

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

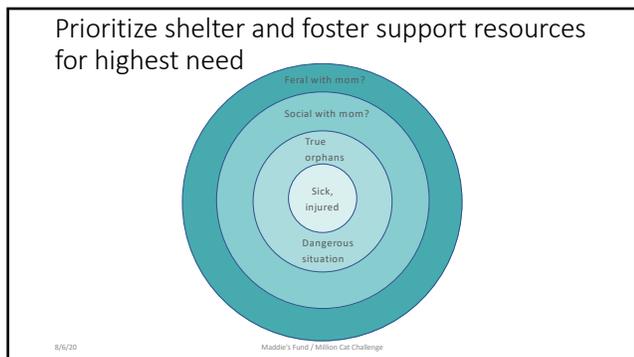
36



37



38



39

Replace false dichotomies with win/win solutions

The kittens will die if they don't come into the shelter!

Open admission shelters can't turn animals away no matter how full they are!

This is our only chance to sterilize the mom!

Can you provide mom with food, water and shelter where she is?

All our foster homes are full right now. Can we help you hang onto them for a few days?

Can you care for mom until the kittens are weaned and then bring her in?

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

40

Basic principles

Kittens are better off with their mother and mothers are better off with their kittens until the kittens are old enough for weaning

Social cats and kittens are better off in homes than in cages – even really nice cages!

Un-social community cats may be better off with a little help staying safe outside than stressed inside a home

Shelters are the place to triage sick and injured kittens, facilitate adoption of friendly weaned kittens, and provide spay/neuter services

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

41

But what about the human emotion?

- Understand the deep roots of the human desire to protect little ones
 - But remember that mother cats have been subject to the same evolutionary pull
- Know that you won't make all the people happy all the time
 - Might as well be criticized for doing the right thing!



8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

42

What about the human emotion?

- Validate people's impulse towards heroism
 - Some of us are no exception ;-)
- Explain from the cat and kittens' perspective in simple clear language
- Give people positive steps to take no matter what
- A link to campaign resources will be emailed with your OnDemand link

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

43

The Feline Superhighway

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

45

- Kitten care resources for your volunteers and adopters
- Easy peasy foster recruiting: Connect with volunteers that want to foster and area already preparing!

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

46



Royal Canin Crown Partners for Shelters and Rescues:

Designed especially for shelter and rescues, Royal Canin Crown Partners program gives access to all the innovative Health Nutrition formulas with really great perks including...

- Everyday shelter pricing - average 25% off MSRP (even more on large bags)-
- Crown Credit Rewards - where you can earn free food every quarter- Free shipping - all orders - no minimums/no contracts (This is big, buy as much or as little as you need!)
- Exclusive large sized bags - 17lb Mother and Babycat and 30lb Kitten bags at massive savings-
- More special discounts and promotions If you're currently buying your Royal Canin Mother and Babycat products in store or through online retailers,
- Sign up for a Royal Canin shelter account and start feeding more kittens with your existing food budgets.
- Best part, if you're new to Royal Canin, use code SAVE20 on your first order over \$400 and save 20% off your first order! Expires at the end of 2020.

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

47



Thank you, Maddie's Fund!

Maddie's Fund

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

48



Join us next week, same day, same time, same channel.

Next week: Support for Kittens in the Field

Supporting kittens and their families starts before they show up on your intake counter. Find out what field officers, volunteers and fosters are doing to give kittens the best chance of survival while streamlining operations and expanding safety nets outside shelter walls.

Join us on Thursday, August 13 at 12n Pacific / 3pm Eastern for a 60-minute presentation and plenty of time for Q&A with Million Cat Challenge co-founder Dr. Julie Levy.

8/6/20 Maddie's Fund / Million Cat Challenge

49
