

Removing kittens - the consequences

Interesting and informative report from Dr Shelagh Hahn. Please forward.

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Many people, either in a misguided effort to ‘rescue’ unweaned kittens, or in a heartless attempt to get rid of unwanted feral cats, remove suckling kittens and either ‘get rid’ of them or dump them on animal welfare organisations. Here are the consequences of what you do:

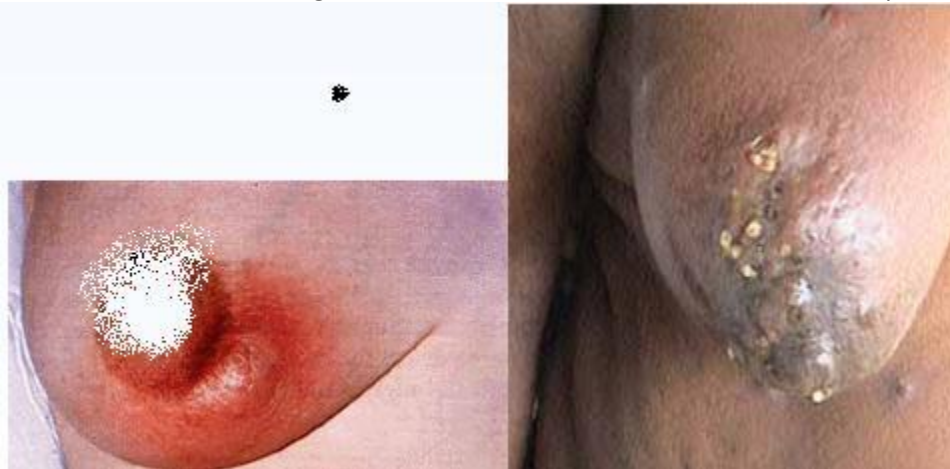
1. INCREASE fertility! If the mother cat survives the mastitis that she will suffer from suddenly not being suckled, she will come on heat again sooner and have kittens again sooner than if she had fed for a normal 8week lactation. So even if you are just trying to reduce cat numbers, you are working against yourself.

MASTITIS. The kittens actually have a mother. Its amazing how many people, even women with children, don’t even think about her. The mother cat, apart from the emotional distress

2. of finding her babies gone, will get engorged teats and possibly even fatal mastitis
- 3.



4. For those who can’t imagine how these cats suffer, here is the human equivalent.



5. **KITTEN MORTALITIES AND STUNTING.** Even with the most skilled and dedicated human fostering, bottle-raised kittens have a 50% mortality rate. And you are sentencing the fosterer to bottle feeding every two hours, day and night.

6. Please take note of the kitten on the left below - a 4 week old bottle kitten, one of two survivors from a litter of 5. The kitten on the right is a two week old raised by its mother, all surviving.



IF YOU FIND UNWEANED KITTENS, LEAVE THEM. Put food at the nest to confirm that mom is alive and well. Only take the kittens if the food isn't touched overnight and the kittens are crying in the morning. Take the mother to be sterilised, enlisting the help of one of the charities that does feral cat trapping if she is too wild to catch. Handle the kittens when mom is not around, so they grow up tame. When they are eating solids, remove them ONE BY ONE to go to their new homes or to an animal shelter for homing.

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