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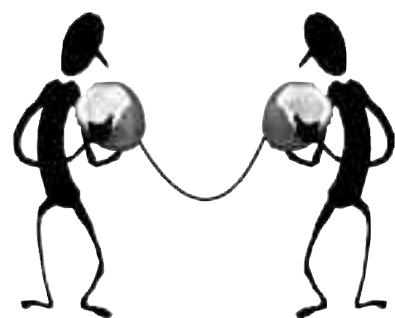
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Editorial: Collar and Release

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) wants to trap feral cats and send them to the Humane Society where they will be put to death. There are several good organizations in the Keys that have been trapping the cats and spaying and neutering them thus reducing the cat population. I myself even did a fundraiser for "Helping Homeless Cats in the Upper Keys" in 2008. In the 20 years I have lived here I have noticed a huge decrease in the feral cat population because of these successful programs.

Now the FWS is saying that we need to drastically reduce the already reduced cat population because the cats are a threat to certain local endangered wildlife species. I guess they didn't learn anything from their previous failure in 2007 where the FWS entered into a \$50,000 trap and kill contract in the Keys which resulted in only

13 trapped cats of which at least 5 of them were owned. That is \$3,846.15 per dead cat! All this to save some rats and birds.

Well, I have a solution... My cat Suki that I got from the Humane Society at mile marker 106 likes to present me with "gifts" of birds and lizards. On more than one occasion, the cat came tearing into the living room with a bird in its mouth resulting in a fine-feathered mess and a freaked out pet owner. My seriously sensible daughter offered a solution "put a bell on the cats collar," she said.

Duh! Why didn't I think of that? It worked like a charm. The bell gives the rats and birds a warning that cat is coming and lets them save themselves. So, all the FWS has to do is purchase a bunch of cat collars with bells on them and dress the feral cats in them.

However, it is a different thing when

dealing with a cat suffering from an illness or a mental problem. Diagnose your cat early, look for these signs your Cat has a Personality Disorder:

- You've repeatedly found him in the closed garage, hunched over the wheel of your running Buick.
- It sits for hours in fascination while listening to Al Gore on the TV.
- Teeth and claw marks all over your now-empty bottles of Prozac.
- It no longer licks its paws clean, but washes them in the sink again and again...
- Continually scratches on the door to get in... the OVEN door.
- You realize one day that the urine stains on your carpet actually form the letters N-E-E-D C-A-T-N-I-P!
- Your stereo and flat screen TV are missing, and in the corner you find a pawn ticket and 2 kilos of catnip.

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Hunk of the Month



**Bob Burgeson
of the
Whistle Stop**

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