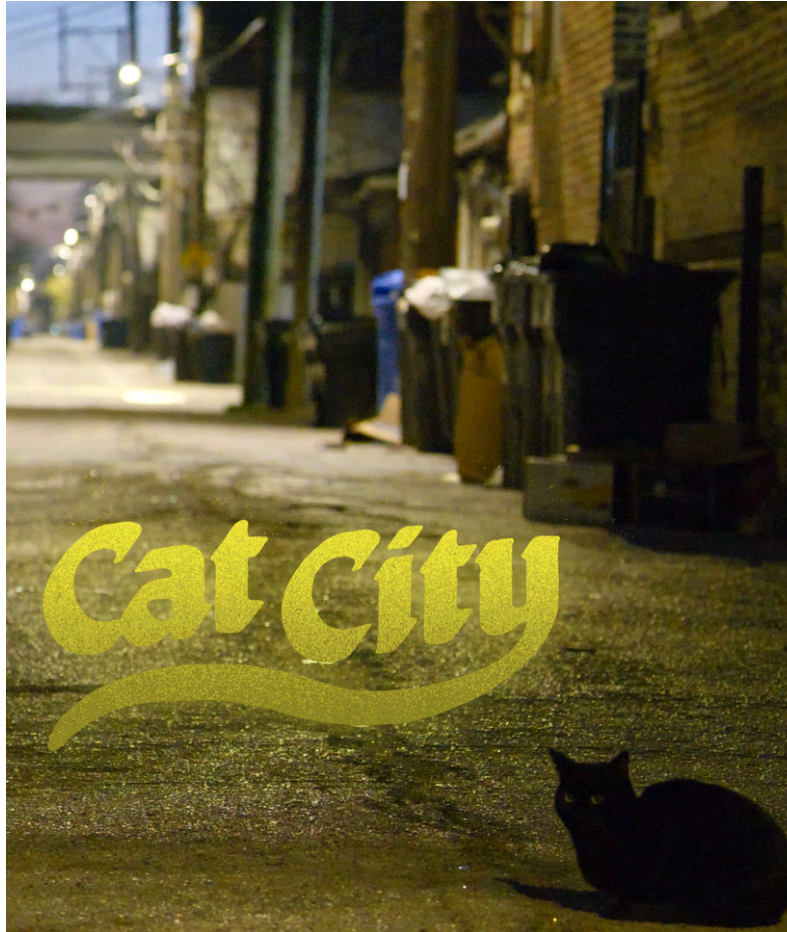




TRUTH & DOCUMENTARY

present

CAT CITY



KEY IMAGES

75 minutes // 2023

Website: cat-city.org | Social: @truthanddocumentary

Contacts

Sophia Rhee
Communications Manager, Truth & Documentary
sophia@truthanddocumentary.org

Ben Kolak
Director, Truth & Documentary
ben@truthanddocumentary.org

CAT CITY | LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS



LOGLINE -

Cat City chronicles Chicago's love/hate relationship with feral cats.

SYNOPSIS -

A ground-breaking 2007 ordinance protects feral cats in Chicago that have been trapped, neutered and returned (TNR) to their neighborhoods. Dubbed community cats, they control rats, enable government to avoid the cost and perception of catch and kill policies, and provide love and meaning to their caretakers. There are now thousands of cat colonies in Chicago, many with only a single cat, but some with more than 40. These colonies are fed by volunteer caretakers that report on their well-being yearly. Many ferals succumb to the elements, are hit by cars, or catch diseases, but the most hardy, tough and careful survive many seasons and become legends in their neighborhoods.

While the TNR community advocates for feral cats, birders see Chicago's ordinance as an abomination that protects a non-native species that kills billions of birds each year. In pursuit of a better approach, in 2019, animal scientists came together to conduct the Washington DC Cat Count, the most rigorous study of feral cats ever attempted, creating science to inform better policy. Could this new science change Chicago's policy? Public opinion researcher Anne Beall doesn't think so, as policy is based on popularity, not science, and people love cats.

Cat City is informed by the rich stories of Chicagoans who play a part in the city's feral cat policies. The film features Autumn (aka Castleblackpaw) - a TNR activist supporting marginalized caretakers; Julia Kilgour - an animal scientist at Purdue University and the Lincoln Park Zoo; Stacey Williams - an army veteran and apartment manager on Chicago's westside; Annette Prince - a bird advocate saving birds that collide with Chicago's skyline - and many more intriguing humans and animals.

Through an ensemble story and cinematic style, *Cat City* presents a holistic portrait of the many feral cat issues and interventions, to inform better outcomes for all people and animals.

CAT CITY | MEET THE CATS



CAT CITY | MEET THE SUBJECTS



Autumn Cirrus aka Castleblackpaw, is a TNR activist supporting marginalized cat caretakers.



Julia Kilgour is an animal scientist at Purdue University and the Lincoln Park Zoo. She is also a part of the DC Cat Count research team.



Stacey Williams is an army veteran and apartment manager on Chicago's westside.



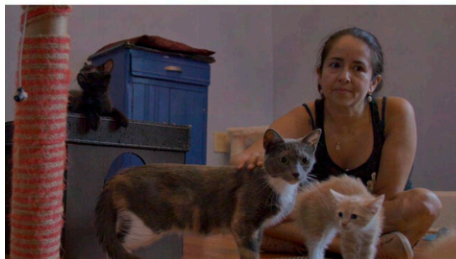
Annette Prince is a bird advocate and saves birds that collide with Chicago's skyline.



Anne Beall, PhD is a researcher and animal advocate. She is the author of *Community Cats: A Journey into the World of Feral Cats*.



Liz & Erica are the co-founders of Cats in Action, a Chicago-based non-profit helping free-roaming cats through TNR.



Dora is a cat colony caretaker in Humboldt Park.



Ruben is a cat colony caretaker in Englewood.



Jeff is a birder and member of the Chicago Ornithological Society.



Elena is a cat colony caretaker and resident of Lanthrop Homes.



Jenny Schlueter is the Development Director of Tree House Humane Society and is a feral cat advocate.



Judy Pollock is a bird conservationist and the president of the Chicago Audubon Society.



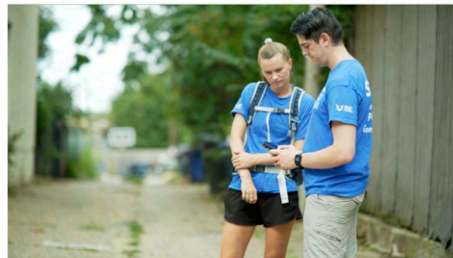
Merlin McFarland is a cat colony caretaker in West Pullman.



Alberto and his family look after outdoor cats in their neighborhood of Humboldt Park.



Bob is an expert trapper and member of the Tree House Humane Society's Community Cats team.



Dan & Sophie are field technicians with DC Cat Count.



John D. Boone, PhD is a consulting scientist for DC Cat Count and a member of the Great Basin Bird Observatory.



Woody, Joy, & Susu make videos about birds and are members of the Chicago Bird Report.

CAT CITY | ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

BEN KOLAK (DIRECTOR / CINEMATOGRAPHER / SOUND)

For over fifteen years, Ben Kolak has worked as a documentary cinematographer and producer, with a focus on education. His work has appeared in outlets including Netflix, PBS, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal.

REBECCA BURNS (RESEARCHER)

Rebecca Burns is an award-winning investigative journalist whose work has appeared in outlets including the Chicago Reader, the Intercept, ProPublica Illinois, and USA Today. Her reporting focuses on housing, finance, and urban policy, and her 2017 story on predatory lending in Chicago won the Association of Alternative Newsmedia's first-place prize for investigative reporting. She is also a contributing editor at In These Times magazine, where she helped launch the Goodman Institute for Investigative Reporting.

KYRA MITCHELL (PRODUCER)

Kyra brings experience producing for WBEZ 91.5 and the National Association of Black Social Workers, as well as leading Spotlight Youth, a nonprofit providing youth of color with film education. She studied social work at The University of Illinois-Champaign and broadcasting at the Illinois Media School.

JOSÉ AGUSTÍN DONOSO (EDITOR)

Augustín Donoso received his MFA from Northwestern University in 2019, and is currently based in Chile, where he runs Iontra.tv as well as Anima Producciones, a production company specializing in educational motion graphics.

MICHAEL DEL ROSARIO (ASSISTANT EDITOR)

Michael is a recent graduate of Northwestern University, where he studied journalism.

KERRY STEVENS (DESIGNER / ASSISTANT EDITOR)

Kerry is a recent graduate of DePaul University, where she studied film and design.

JAMAAL CROWDER (COMPOSER)

Jamaal Crowder is a Chicago-grown composer and musician working across genres. He studied at the City Colleges of Chicago before graduating in 2017 from University of Illinois at Chicago with a degree in music performance. He is currently pursuing a Masters while teaching music to youth at the Chicago West Community Music Center.

HANNAH KOLAK (COMPOSER)

Hannah Kolak graduated from Boston University in 2005 with a Masters of Music in composition, and then promptly moved back to Chicago and ended up with a career in finance. She continues to pursue music as a choral singer, and occasional composer/arranger, especially for the liturgical ensembles at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in East Lakeview. She is also a cat person.

CAT CITY | CREDITS

director & cinematographer
BEN KOLAK

producer
KYRA MITCHELL

researcher
REBECCA BURNS

editor
JOSÉ AGUSTÍN DONOSO

assistant editor
MICHAEL DEL ROSARIO

designer & assistant editor
KERRY STEVENS

composers
JAMAAL CROWDER
HANNAH KOLAK

Partners

DC CAT
COUNT

