

# ***SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS***

*(In association with R.S.P.C.A. England) Patroness: LADY Y.P. McNEICE*



20 January 2009

Straits Times  
Forum Online

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **What SPCA is doing about stray cats at East Coast Park**

I REFER to letters on the issue of stray cats at East Coast Park and former Big Splash (Jan 16 and 20).

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is aware that there are a number of stray cats in the vicinity of East Coast Seafood Centre and the former Big Splash. It is unfortunate that the cats there are viewed as a threat, as our experience with these animals is that they are quite docile and may even approach humans for a pat or interaction. It is extremely rare for cats to 'charge', unless, for example, a mother cat is protecting her kittens from potential danger.

One has to consider the root cause of the problem of homeless stray animals existing in any location. For decades, cat populations have escalated due to pet abandonment. Unsterilised, the abandoned animals have multiplied. Cats breed prolifically - up to four times per year.

The SPCA has sponsored the cost of sterilisation of many cats in the area from carparks B to D. The left ear of each sterilised animal is tipped. For a number of years now, volunteers have fed and cared for these cats, and have taken responsibility for transporting them for sterilisation.

The SPCA acknowledges that there will be people who may be fearful or intolerant of strays, but we ask for a little empathy - to 'live and let live'.

The choice to have these cats sterilised so they can live out their lives without breeding is, in the SPCA's opinion, the more humane and effective way to ultimately reduce the stray population. Removing them all because they are perceived as a nuisance will not solve the problem because, wherever there is an abundant food source, abandoned pets and strays will converge. Taking away the sterilised cats from East Coast Park will ultimately result in new (unsterilised) cats taking their place. It will also mean the death sentence for the sterilised cats if they are rounded up by the authorities and culled.

The SPCA is liaising closely with the authorities and volunteers on this matter and steps will be taken to ensure that the cats are fed a distance away from the areas mentioned in Ms Serene Tan's letter. At the same time, we urge the public not to feed stray cats while eating at the restaurants as that would in turn encourage strays to frequent the area.

Deirdre Moss (Ms)  
Executive Officer  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals