

DATAW ISLAND FELINE FOUNDATION AUGUST 2015 NEWSLETTER



After a beautiful, lively, well attended, annual tea at the home of Dory Ingram in January DIFF had experienced a very quiet year of feral feeding at four locations on Dataw: Marsh Colony, Gleason's Colony, Pool/Tennis Courts and Odingsell Colony ... until !

In late June we were notified there were 2 newborn kittens under a front porch on Longfield Drive. DIFF began leaving food for mom cat; however, after a few days mom became suspicious and moved the family to an unknown location. DIFF left messages to be on the lookout for the group in message boxes in the surrounding area and lo and behold 2 weeks later they showed up in a garage on Dataw Drive. DIFF volunteers began feeding them and made plans with the owners to trap all as soon as possible.

That was, of course, a three ring circus with growling and spitting and escaping cats. After a week momcat and K1 were captured, taken to Beaufort Animal Shelter for neutering and inoculations and returned to Dataw. A DIFF board member offered her porch for all three until we could socialize them and take them to Tabby House for adoption.

K2 remained at large in the garage for many more days as she was so teeny she could not be found, but would sneak out to eat as soon as we were out of sight. DIFF's forever determination befuddled the kitten (we learned she was barely 1 pound and could squeeze out of the gravity trap very easily). As she fattened up she was able to trip the trap and bingo ! Off to the shelter for a spa day and reunited with her family.

For 3 weeks DIFF vols worked in 3 shifts a day trying to teach the kits to play and mom cat, now named Zena, to learn humans were not all bad. Decision was made it was time for K1 and K2 to hit the big time for adoption at Tabby House. Zena had other ideas. Through the Dataw cat network we learned a couple Reeve Court residents wanted a feral hunter to resolve their rat and mouse problems. At this writing Zena is being acclimated to the area and a cadre of DIFF volunteers and neighbors are feeding her and doing all the necessary chores. Hopefully Zena will go along with this idea and become a stellar ratter.

DIFF sadly lost our dedicated treasurer, Lee Schlorff, to cancer in the spring of '15 and his wife Eileen, a forever DIFF volunteer moved from the island to be closer to her children. Tom Hurley graciously accepted the position of treasurer after a short stint as interim by Jim McCornock.

The remainder of the Board for 2015 follows: Dale Martin, Executive Director; Pat Ashton, Assistant Executive Director; Roberta Gunderson, Secretary and Fred Houle, Head Trapper.

We have many new volunteers who make the feeding, tracking, healthcare and general well being of Dataw's single roaming feral cats (examples are Momcat at Security, another, Pong of ICW and more) and colonies lighter work.

Dataw's feral cat count is approximately 30, which is stable. Pat Ashton and Dory Ingram have created both visual and digital tracking charts which can be viewed on request.

Other DIFF activities include outreach to other catnetworking communities (Carol Morgan, also deceased this year, was DIFF's outreach chair and will be sorely missed). We have been asked to speak at an OLLI session this fall explaining how community feral cat organizations work. Roberta Gunderson will talk on methodology and how Dataw is unique in feral care; fundraising; 501C3 incorporation and state financial reporting; collegiality with veterinarians (Port Royal Veterinary is Dataw's go to: we receive excellent discounts); Beaufort County animal care organizations, etc. as well as our close ties with Tabby House in Beaufort, soon to be an independent volunteer organization and Dataw's Security team.

Should you want to become a DIFF volunteer please contact Dale Martin or Roberta Gunderson. We welcome all interested parties. Now, having stated this was a quiet year, I expect all craziness to break loose and more fun to begin in our catdom.

Dale Martin
Executive Director