



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **It's Kitten Season! Spring flowers are in bloom, and so are the kittens!**

**(MIAMI, March 14, 2018)** – March is the official start of kitten season—the time of the year when most kittens are born and Miami-Dade County Animal Services (Animal Services), and shelters nationwide, are busiest with incoming newborns.

Because there are so many kittens born outside, it is not uncommon to find nests of what appear to be unattended or abandoned newborn kittens. Many times, well-meaning people pick up the newborn kittens not realizing that they may actually be separating them from their mother on whom they are totally dependent to stay alive.

Before jumping to the rescue, Animal Services advises residents to consider the following recommendations to ensure the best chances of survival for the kittens.

### **WHAT TO DO SHOULD YOU FIND A LITTER OF KITTENS**

- Resist the urge to immediately touch them or move them. Instead, observe the kittens quietly from a distance for a period of 12 to 24 hours as the mother may simply be out looking for food or a better place to move them to and is likely to return to care for them. **Very young kittens cannot fully feed themselves and need their mother's milk to survive until they are fully able to eat on their own or weaned off the mother.**
- You can put out cat food for the mom and a box that the mother could use to keep her kittens in (don't put the kittens inside it, just put it near them). Don't disturb the kittens as this may discourage the mother from returning to them, or she may move them away from you.
- If you sense the kittens are in immediate danger or a dangerous area, such as underneath a car, in an area that is flooding due to rain, etc., look for the nearest

safe area to which you can move them—close enough to the original spot— that will still allow the mother to find them. Place them in a sheltered area, away from direct sun, rain or traffic and continue to watch for the mother.

- Only take them in if you have observed the kittens for 12 to 24 hours and are SURE the mother is not likely to return. Get tips on how to care for them at home by visiting [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)

## **OTHER WAYS TO HELP**

The best way to reduce the overwhelming number of unwanted cats is to spay or neuter your cats as soon as they have turned 4 months old. Miami-Dade Animal Services offers low cost spay/neuter surgeries as well as a free Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program for community cats.

For information on low-cost spay/neuter surgeries or free TNR call 3-1-1 or visit [animals.miamidade.gov](http://animals.miamidade.gov)

**Become a Kitten Cuddler** foster parent at Animal Services. The Kitten Cuddler foster program provides training on bottle feeding and the general care of newborn kittens. Kitten Cuddlers also receive newborn kitten care kits that include heating pads, feeding bottles and kitten milk replacer.

For information on becoming a Kitten Cuddler, email [asdfoster@miamidade.gov](mailto:asdfoster@miamidade.gov)

### **About Miami-Dade County Animal Services**

Every year Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department (Animal Services) provides care and refuge for 28,000 to 30,000 unwanted dogs and cats. Every day, Animal Services staff and volunteers work diligently to find life-long homes for these abandoned animals by facilitating onsite adoptions, hosting off-site adoptions at events and locations throughout the community, and working collaboratively with over 100 rescue organizations and partners helping us to meet and maintain a 90 percent save rate.

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