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The Georgia Peaches: The Great Escape

Wed, 2014-04-09 18:37 — Robin Olson

"Running on empty." That's how I'd describe the last month or so. Kitten Season is here and in full swing with no end in sight. All my rescue friends are reporting they are inundated with pregnant cats. I'm stunned since I thought we had a tough winter and didn't expect things to ramp up so fast.

Meanwhile, [Kitten Associates](#) [1] is slowly but surely growing into what I'd call a "real" rescue. We have a new foster home, another on the way. We have some other folks who can help foster from time to time, expanding our efforts to five homes and mine being the sixth. Because we can extend our efforts, I'm willing to forgo the "break" from rescue I was hoping to take (after 4 years of NO break) and plunge headlong into the craziness of the season.

There's SO MUCH to tell you I have to break it up into separate stories that cover a total of 20 cats!

First up, is a long overdue story of escape as winter slowly lets go of its grip in southern Georgia...

Far off in the distance you can hear them barking. To many people, the sound would not be considered anything to worry about, but to a colony of feral cats in rural southern Georgia, it means death is near. They're not just any dogs barking. These dogs are feral, hunting in a pack and hungry for their next meal.



©2014 Warren Royal. Can you help me save some kitties? Which ones can you take? How about ALL?

For a colony of 12 feral cats, the sound of the dogs terrifies them as they do their best to hide from danger. They may skip the meal left out for them by a lady who owns the farm where they live. She does her best for them, but she doesn't understand that to fully care for these cats, they need to be vetted-especially sterilized. She's not a cat rescuer. She's a kind soul who just wants to help these poor creatures and feeding them, in her mind, may be all that is required.



©2014 Warren Royal. *The buff long haired cat is sick, with what we don't know but those crusty eyes look like a bad URI at least. I fear the worst for this baby. I hope he or she will be okay.*

She may not even know where a vet IS in her part of the state. It's probably too far away and she doesn't have access to traps. She loves the cats, but in this case love is not enough. The cats hide in the barn, behind bales of hay, under the porch. The farm spreads across 40 acres and beyond that there isn't much of anything, certainly no services for animals. The dogs can roam anywhere without fear of animal control. There just isn't anyone to bother.

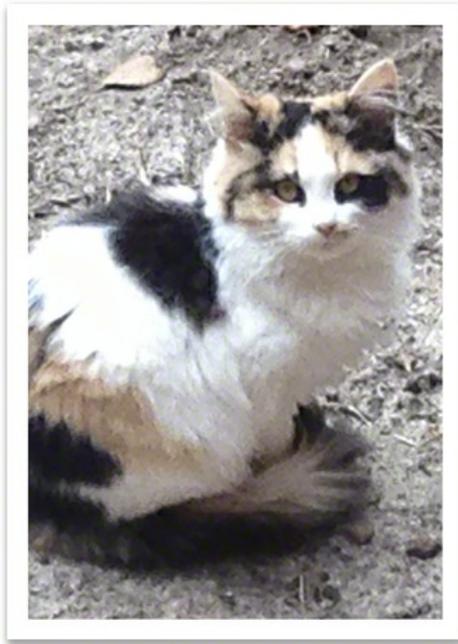


©2014 Warren Royal. *What a handsome boy...which I later found out was a GIRL who we named JuneBug.*

One by one, the cats began to fall prey to the dogs. The original number of 12 goes down to 7. The woman's husband doesn't fuss over the cats, but he does care that his wife is upset. They don't have the resources to provide proper vet care for such a large number of cats or to work with them so they will no longer be feral and could be adopted. They don't hang out on Facebook and get tips from rescuers in their area or have ever heard of Petfinder or Alley Cat Allies or any other resource that might make a difference. They do what they know to do. They feed the cats and hope for the best.

Feeding the cats has given them a chance to live, but what these well-meaning folks didn't realize is they were also getting fattened up to be a better meal for the wild dogs.

Something had to be done before all the cats were killed.



©2014 Warren Royal. *Even though I had no idea if we could socialize these cats I could not say NO to this face!*

As a small rescue, my group, Kitten Associates can get a lot done by working in partnership with others. When I heard about the cats, I wanted to do something. The cats weren't fractious from what I was told. They were young, maybe a few months old and they'd had some contact with their caretaker, so possibly in time we could socialize them enough to help them find homes.

I also felt badly for the dogs, but I have no resources to help them and I didn't know anyone who could even trap them, let alone know what would they do with them.

It's not the dog's fault that they weren't cared for. They were surviving as best they could. I'm sure they'd never touch the cats if they had a decent meal, but they must have been in a very bad way to have to make those choices.



©2014 Warren Royal. *After being trapped, three of the rescues head off to the vet. The dilute calicos are with [Good Mews](#) [2] now.*

Our friend Warren volunteered to drive 4 hours to get to the location and once he arrived he got to work quickly trapping 5 of the 7 remaining cats. On a Sunday, not near any familiar Vet, Warren spent a lot of money getting the kittens snap tested so we could accept them into our program. Our amazing foster in the area, who had asked me to take a break from fostering, decided she needed to help these kittens regardless of how tired she was. She got her foster space prepared for them, dropping the other things she hoped to accomplish for that day.

I contacted [Good Mews Animal Foundation](#) [2] and asked for help. They stepped up and offered to take 2 of the kittens as long as they were friendly. **It was a big risk because we were worried they'd need too much work. I told Warren that the friendliest cats should go to them.** We would take the 3 timid long-haired cats (*considering I'm a freak for the long hairs, I almost didn't care how much work they needed anyway*) and Good Mews would get the sweet short haired calicos. The 2 remaining cats we would try to get as soon as possible, but for now getting most of the cats out was a big win for us all.



©2014 Foster Mama. Headed to our vet, then to their new temporary home. We have two girls and a boy.

We named the kittens Maggie Mae, JuneBug & Purree. Thankfully none of them were aggressive and at worst, they were scared of their new mom but allowed her to pet them. She would work with them for the next few weeks and if they improved we'd move them to Connecticut to either continue working with them or put them up for adoption.

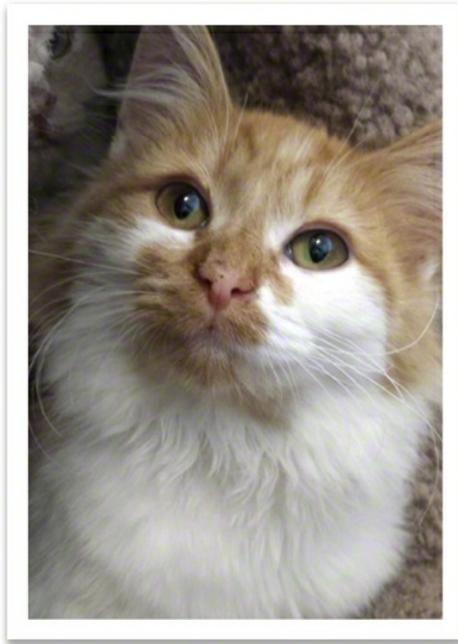
Good Mews reported that the 2 kittens they received were very sweet and they didn't have any concerns about finding them great homes. If it wasn't for Good Mews, we would have had a problem, because our foster mom doesn't have space that's big enough for 5 cats.



©2014 Foster Mama. Lovely Purree, an artistic interpretation.

Now was the time to focus on continuing getting the vetting done on the cats, get them spayed/neutered, their vaccinations, de-worming. Maggie and Junie began to allow their foster mom to pet their bellies. Purree was a bit more shy but still not aggressive. He'd come around in time, so we could take a moment out to appreciate that things had gone so well.

Some time later I learned that the remaining 2 cats did not have to worry about being safe. Their caretaker was considering taking them into her home and getting them vetted. **At about the same time, I heard the heartbreaking news that her husband, wanting to protect her and the cats, shot and killed the pack of feral dogs.** I had no idea he would do that, because it just never occurs to me it could happen. Guns? Shooting dogs? I'm not even sure how to make sense of it.



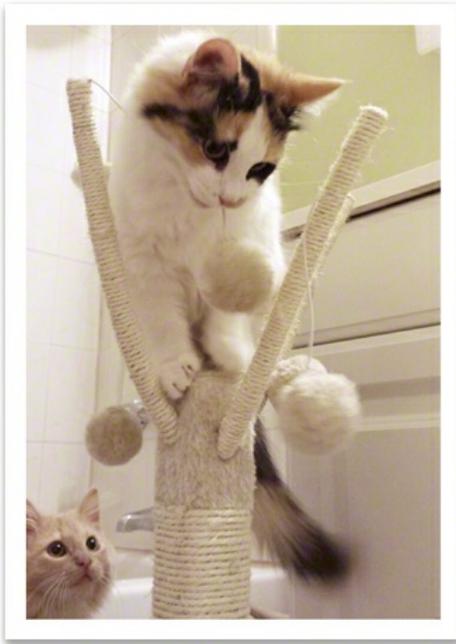
©2014 Foster Mama. JuneBug makes me swoon.

I would have tried to do something to save their lives if I'd known, but in truth I had to wonder what sort of life they would have had without him intervening. I'm not sure there was any way for their story to end happily. Picked up by Animal Control they would be euthanized. They would not be suitable or safe to be around kids. **I am not qualified to vilify this man for what he did. I AM "qualified," however, to be busted up that any animal died. I sincerely mourn their passing.**



©2014 Foster Mama. Maggie waits for a wonderful home now that she's safe.

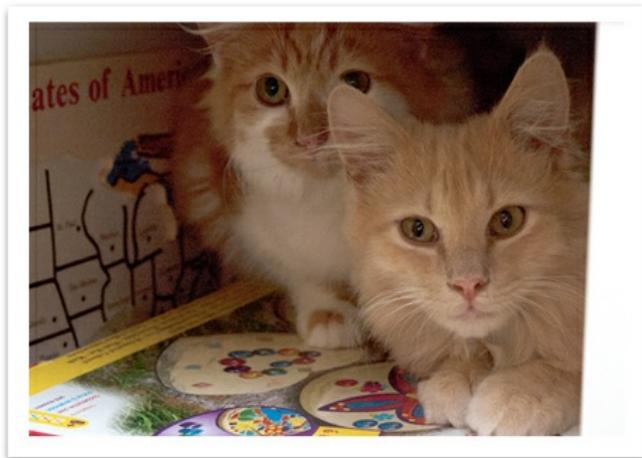
For our little Georgia Peaches, they made a great escape. They escaped death at the fangs of feral dogs. They escaped being thrown into a tiny cage at animal control and being euthanized due to gross overcrowding. They escaped living a miserable life, outdoors, living on scraps, flea infested and probably diseased and repeatedly impregnated.



©2014 Foster Mama. After a few weeks struggling with shyness, the kittens emerge to discover the delight of playing with toys.

Instead, thanks to a few very hard working, generous souls, these cats can begin their story with us. We pick up their tale as they complete their thousand-mile journey to Connecticut and into the home of Jame and her daughters Frances and Grace, where they will complete their socialization and begin the journey to find their forever homes.

To be continued...



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. We were able to save more lives because we have a new foster home with Jame and her family.

You can watch Maggie, JuneBug and Purrcree on [SqueeTV Ch 3!](#) [3]

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Sun, 2014-04-13 01:52 — [Felissa \(Two Li... \(not verified\)](#) ^[10]

What a sad and beautiful ^[11]

What a sad and beautiful story. I am so happy these lovely Georgia Peaches are safe and onto their forever homes. But it makes me so sad to know the feral dogs died. I don't judge the man for trying to protect the cats, but it does sadden your heart to know they died in such a way.

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Links

- [1] <http://kittenassociates.org/>
- [2] <http://goodmews.org/>
- [3] <http://dropc.am/p/CjzObY>
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