6 January 2026

Dear Editors of PLOS ONE,

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled "**Zoonotic endoparasites and Toxoplasma gondii seropositivity in free-roaming cats (*Felis catus*) from an urban environment**" by Viet-Linh Nguyen, Elizabeth Gurtowski, Jiayi Chen, Megan Rosen, and myself, submitted for consideration as a Research Article in PLOS ONE.

Free-roaming cats represent an important interface between wildlife, domestic animals, and humans in urban ecosystems and can serve as reservoirs for a range of zoonotic and veterinary parasites. Despite the large population of free-roaming cats in New York City, data describing parasite prevalence, shedding intensity, and associated public health risks remain limited. In this study, fecal and blood samples collected through a Trap–Neuter–Return (TNR) program were analyzed using parasitological, immunological, and molecular diagnostic approaches to assess gastrointestinal and selected vector-borne parasites.

Our results reveal a high prevalence of zoonotic gastrointestinal parasites, particularly *Toxocara* spp. (54%), and demonstrate that juvenile and male cats contribute disproportionately to environmental contamination through higher parasite shedding intensity. Evidence of exposure to *Toxoplasma gondii* was also identified (8.9%), while selected vector-borne pathogens were not detected. These findings highlight the public health relevance of unmanaged feline populations in densely populated urban environments and support the integration of disease surveillance into TNR programs as a tool for monitoring urban ecosystem health.

This manuscript has not been published previously and is not under consideration by another journal. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript and have contributed substantially to the work.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission. We appreciate your time and look forward to your evaluation of our manuscript.

Yours faithfully,

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