

Humane Trapping Guidelines

Read Ten Steps to Trapping and Altering Your Feral Cats

Please plan what you are going to do with the cat you are trapping BEFORE you trap. Your plan should be one of the following:

Important Notes:

Option One: Make an appointment at one of our weekly Spay/Neuter clinics. You can always cancel your appointment if you are not successful trapping the cat, but we can't always guarantee you can get in to one of our clinics if you don't call ahead and make an appointment. We DO fill up and aren't equipped for "drop-ins". Additionally, by making an appointment at one of our clinics you have access to all the tips and tricks we have as a result of our 25+ years of experience in TNR and feral cat spay/neuter.

Option Two: Make an appointment with a private veterinarian. Let them know that this is a wild cat and ask them for specific instructions regarding their requirements.

Watch our trapping videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF06lhxhvPk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9vwxdISKLE>

Preparation for Trapping

If possible, get the cats used to being fed at the same place and time of day. You might try leaving the trap unset during routine feeding so that the animal will get used to seeing and smelling it in the area. Don't feed the cats the day/night before you are going to trap so the cats will be hungry. Be sure to notify others who may feed the cats not to leave food out either.

Plan to trap either the day or evening (preferred) BEFORE surgery. It is inhumane to keep a cat in a trap days before the surgery. (If this happens, call us immediately!) Cats should not eat 12 hours prior to surgery.

Prepare the area where you will be holding the cat in the trap before your appointment. A garage or other sheltered, warm, protected area is best. Lay down a thick layer of newspaper so the cat has some insulation from the ground or concrete.

Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport the cat as well. A plastic tarp with something absorbent on top of it or puppy pad is good to put underneath the trapped cat to protect your car.

Remember that if you trap an animal and release it for some reason, it just makes it that much more difficult to trap the cat a second time. They learn very quickly to avoid the trap if they've already experienced being caught.

If there are young kittens involved, they should not be removed from the mother before 5 - 6 weeks of age. If you are trapping a lactating female, **wait** until you have located the kittens and the kittens are old enough to be without their mother. **OR**, remove the kittens first and then trap mom afterwards. If you wish to tame and foster the kittens to adopt out, they should be taken from the mother once you see they are eating on their own (mom will bring them to the food bowl) or if you know that they are 5 - 6 weeks old. If you wait until the kittens are older than this before trying to tame them, you will find the job progressively harder as they age.

Setting the Trap

To be successful, we recommend that you feed your cats out of the UNSET trap at least one week prior to the trap date. Twist tie the door open so that it will not go off and let them get used to this new contraption where their food is normally found. First place your plate of food just outside the opening of the trap, then gradually move it further and further into the trap so that they grow accustomed to this new feeding method and will go right in when you want them to! The best time to trap is when they usually come for food! Don't trap in the rain or the heat of the day without adequate protection for the trap. **Never EVER** leave the trap unattended.

Procedure:

- 1 Fold 1 sheet of newspaper lengthwise and place on floor of trap
- 2 Place small mound of tuna at sliding-door end of trap **right up next to door**
- 3 If you have a "double door trap", make certain the closed end of the trap is properly locked
- 4 Set trap door. Place small trail of food from outside of door to just inside the trap to lure them in if necessary

Waiting for Success

Never leave trap unattended! Leaving a trap unattended is very dangerous for anything that ends up inside the trap. If you aren't there to monitor, wildlife can enter the trap, your neighbor's cat can enter the trap or worse yet, someone can easily pick up the animal, cause it harm, release it or steal the trap itself. Wait quietly in an area where you can still see the trap without disturbing the cats. You can often hear the trap trip. As soon as the intended cat is trapped, completely cover the trap with a large towel or sheet and remove the trap from the area. When you get the captured cat to a quiet area lift the cover and check for signs that you have the correct animal and not a pet or previously neutered cat. Forgotten Felines and most veterinarians tip the ear of every wild cat we alter, so we can avoid repeat trappings. If you note that you have captured a lactating female, check the area for kittens and remember that this female must be released 10 - 12 hours after surgery so she can care for and nurse her kittens. Cover the cat back up as soon as you've done your inspection. Uncovered, a feral cat will likely panic and hurt itself thrashing around in the trap.

There is always the chance that you will catch a wild animal attracted to the food or an unintended cat. Simply release the animal quietly as stated in the releasing procedures here.

Holding Procedures

After you have finished trapping, you will probably have to hold the cat overnight until you can take it to your appointment, unless you have made previous arrangements.

Keep cats covered and check periodically. They will probably be very quiet as long as they are covered. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the traps. These are wild animals that will scratch and bite if given the opportunity. ALL animal bites are serious. If you are bitten, seek medical attention and do NOT release the cat. It must be quarantined for ten days. Forgotten Felines can often help in these circumstances or contact the animal shelter that serves your community. If the cats seem ill, as a precaution, wash your hands and change clothes before having contact with your own pets.

Always get feral kittens checked out by a vet and isolate them from your own pets. Some illnesses and diseases can incubate without symptoms. Check with Forgotten Felines or your veterinarian and use caution.

Releasing the Cat

When cats are ready for release, (the morning AFTER surgery and fully recovered from anesthesia) return the trap to the exact area in which they were captured and release them there. **It is against the law to take an animal to an alternate location and abandon them.** Even if you know the cat is welcome there or there is another feral cat colony, there are certain protocols that have to be followed for a "humane" relocation. Ask us for this information if your intention is to release the cat anywhere other than where it was trapped.

Make sure the spot you pick for release does not encourage the cat to run into danger (like a busy street) to get away from you. When ready, face the trap in the direction where you want the cat to run, open the door and remove the cover. The cat will most likely bolt immediately out of the container. If it is confused or frightened, just give it time. It will eventually leave the confines of the trap. If after several minutes it needs some encouragement, you can slightly tap the back or tilt it a bit. Do NOT scare the cat out of the trap.....the reason it isn't leaving the trap is because it is frightened. Just be patient, keep the door open and retreat. Once it senses that you are gone, it will run away.

After releasing the cat, hose off the trap and disinfect them with 50% bleach and 50% water. Never store traps in the "set" position (door open). Animals may wander into even un-baited traps and starve to death.

Helpful Hints

- Bring a flashlight with you if trapping at night. It will come in handy for checking traps from a distance and might help you avoid a twisted ankle.
- Some kittens can be caught without a trap but are still too wild to be handled easily. Use a thick towel to pick up the kitten to help protect you from scratching and biting. This also helps prevent the kitten from squirming away from you. Always have a carrier or trap handy to place them in.
- For advice regarding the trapping, taming and/or fostering of feral or orphaned kittens, contact Forgotten Felines of Sonoma County at 707-576-7999.

Watch our trapping videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF06lhxhvPk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9vwxdISKIE>