



Effective, Safe, and Humane Trapping

Please read the accompanying materials on safe and humane trap-neuter-return procedures. It is very important that trapping be done in a responsible manner to protect the person trapping, the veterinary staff, and the cats.

Trap at the same time and place that the cats are normally fed. If the cats don't eat at a regular time every day, start them on a schedule by feeding them canned food the same time every day. This will make trapping much easier.

Withhold food for 12-24 hours before trapping. Always provide fresh water.

Set as many traps as you can, especially if there are a lot of cats. You decrease your chances by 20% each time thereafter. Do not trap in high winds or rain due to limited success.

Use tuna or strong smelling canned cat food. Bait the trap at the very back, with a small trail of morsels or juice leading there. Do not put too much food in the front of the trap; a small trail of food leading toward the back of the trap is sufficient. Otherwise, the cat will spend too much time in the front of the trap and may be distracted or scared away before he ever gets to the back. Please do not place cans in the traps because the cats may cut themselves on them. When possible, use paper food trays provided. Make sure the trap is set properly and that the back door is locked.

NEVER LEAVE TRAPS UNATTENDED. This means that you should not set a trap and leave it unattended overnight or even for more than a few minutes at a time. Cats left unattended in traps are vulnerable to the elements and may be released or injured by other people. Note where you place all the traps, and make sure you retrieve all of them at the end of the trapping session.

As soon as the cat is trapped, cover the trap with a large towel or sheet. This calms the cat. Check for an ear tip.

Do not attempt to touch the cat through the trap. The cat will not be comforted, and you risk being scratched or bitten. Keep cats covered and check periodically. Do not stick fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the traps. These are wild animals and therefore, may scratch and bite. All animal bites are serious! If you are bitten, seek medical attention and do not release the cat. The cat will need to be quarantined. Contact your veterinarian for quarantine instructions.

Both pregnant cats and nursing mothers can be spayed. A lactating mother can be released as soon as she is fully awake and continue nursing her kittens. The kittens' main threat is exposure to the elements. Your choices for trapping a lactating mother in winter are:

- wait until the kittens are weaned before trapping her
- wait until the weather warms up, or shoo the mother away from the trap.

Never store traps in the "set" position (door open); animals may wander into even unbaited traps and starve to death.

Containment and Transport

Do not attempt to open the trap. Feral cats are very fast and will take advantage of any opportunity for escape. Put newspaper under the trap for easy cleanup. Do not feed or water the cat the night before surgery since surgery is safer with an empty stomach. If it is necessary to keep the cat overnight prior to surgery, place the cat in a safe, quiet place protected from the weather, such as a basement, garage, or spare room.

Post-Surgery Recovery

Cats need to have a large trap for recovery from surgery. (Do NOT attempt to transfer any feral cat from a trap into a carrier). Lay newspapers and soft towels underneath the trap. To feed the cats, you can slip in small containers of food by raising the door a few inches. As always, be careful not to be bitten or scratched. The cat should be left alone, covered, in a quiet place.

Releasing the Cat

Release the cats at the same place they were trapped. Point the open end of the trap away from any roads, since cats sometimes shoot out of the trap quickly.

Note about Wildlife

If you catch a raccoon, opossum, or other wild animal, release the animal as follows:

- cover the trap with a towel;

- pull the towel back from the releasing end -- animal will retreat under the covered portion of the trap.

- open the door and stand behind the trap;

- pull towel off and the animal should run out of the trap.

If you trap a wild animal, you must release the animal in the same location that he/she was trapped. Many wild animals can't survive relocation. Please respect our wildlife and their right to live.

To deter wildlife from cat feeding stations, only feed at set times of the day and remove cat food at other times. For the health and safety of wild animals, it's best not to habituate them to cat food.