

## **FERAL CAT FOCUS**

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### **BEFORE YOU TRAP**

***For More Trapping Tips Visit [www.feralcatfocus.org](http://www.feralcatfocus.org)***

Understanding the Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) process thoroughly before you trap is essential. Familiarize yourself with the TNVR process and plan your trapping in advance. You will be successful if you follow the step-by-step instructions below.

#### **POST SIGNS**

Post Notification of Trapping signs copied on bright colored paper and placed in areas where there are people and/or neighbors. This sign notifies people that humane trapping is occurring on certain days and that house cats should be kept indoors during this time. Trapping signs should be posted a couple days before trapping begins.

#### **PAY ATTENTION TO THE WEATHER**

Never trap in extreme temperatures, hot or cold. They are dangerous conditions for cats to be in without food and exposed to the elements. A simple guideline—if it is too hot or cold outside for you, then it is too hot or cold for the cats. Never trap in pouring rain.

#### **ASSESS THE CATS**

While feeding, start a log of each cat and kitten you see. This will help you monitor the number of cats and their health, determine their approximate age, and help you determine the number of appointments and traps you will need. It will also help you identify if some cats are stray—friendly to humans—and may be candidates for adoption into homes or if you will need to be prepared for trapping and fostering kittens. Know the number of cats and their description to ensure that all of the cats have been trapped. Photographs of the cats might help!

While assessing the colony, you will also have to consider their specific circumstances and safety. Feral Cat FOCUS does not recommend relocation. It should be done only under extreme circumstances when the cats' lives are in eminent danger. The best way to protect the cats is to ensure they are spayed or neutered; then consider other plans that may be necessary.

#### **FEED ON A SCHEDULE AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO TRAPPING**

To get the cats used to coming out and eating while you are there (and help with your assessment process), establish a set time and place to feed the cats every day. Pick up the food after about 30 minutes. The cats will quickly adapt to the feeding time and will come at that time each day. This is essential to making sure that they all come to eat when you plan to trap.

Position the feeding station in area free of human traffic and is inconspicuous. Feed cat in the unset trap for one to two weeks prior to the trapping day. This gets cats used to seeing and walking into traps. Remove the back door, or rig the trap so it stays open. Remove traps after the cats eat so there is no risk of theft, damage, or a cat accidentally being trapped.

#### **COORDINATE WITH A FERAL FRIENDLY VETERINARIAN OR CLINIC**

BEFORE YOU TRAP line up clinic or veterinary appointments. You don't want to successfully trap cats and then have nowhere to take them. Plan your trapping session so that the cats are transported to the veterinarian or clinic as soon as possible.

## **BE PREPARED FOR THESE SPECIAL SCENARIOS**

- **Kittens and/or Nursing Mothers**: You may come across kittens and/or nursing mothers in your trapping efforts. There are many factors to take into account before you decide what your plan of action will be, including the presence of the mother, the kittens' age, and your own resources.
- **Injured Cats**: Plan ahead to ensure you can provide immediate care to, and make decisions about, an ill or injured cat. Have the phone number on hand of a private-pay veterinarian who works with feral cats—and whose practice will be open while you are trapping.
- **Socialized Cats**: Have a plan in place for how to help socialized cats. For instance, will you find potential foster or adoptive homes or include them in your colony?

## **SETUP YOUR HOLDING/RECOVERY AREA**

Choose a dry, temperature-controlled, safe overnight holding/recovery area for use before and after the cats' surgeries. Make sure it is quiet and inaccessible to other animals and children. Ensure that all entries in and out (doors, windows, ceiling tiles) are closed at all times in the unlikely event that a cat should escape from his trap.

## **GATHER ALL APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT BEFORE GOING OUT TO TRAP**

It is best to have at least one trap per cat. In addition to traps, you will need a few essentials:

- Bait for traps (several cans smelly bait such as tuna, mackerel, or sardines – oil packed)
- Plastic forks or spoons (to scoop out the bait)
- Paper plates cut into quarters to place bait on. You can also use small Styrofoam plate or a small piece of cardboard.
- Trap covers – big towels, blankets, or sheets to fully cover each trap after cats are caught
- Labels for traps - with room for date, cat description, exact location where the cat was trapped, and room for any observations, such as noticeable injuries.
- Small food storage container (big enough to hold open cans of tuna and prevent spillage)
- Dry & canned cat food and water (to leave after trapping for cats not trapped)
- Trash bags (for tuna lids, used plastic silverware, etc.)
- A roll of paper towels
- One pair of thick gloves per trapper (wear for your safety while carrying cats in traps)
- Antibacterial hand wipes, baby wipes, or antibacterial gel (cleaning yourself, traps, etc.)
- Tools such as pliers and WD-40 or PAM cooking oil spray for traps that might not work properly
- First-aid kit
- Bungee cords (to secure traps in your car so they don't slide around)
- Cardboard, plastic trash bags, towels, to line inside of your vehicle should there be accidents.
- Flashlight
- Feral Cat FOCUS brochures (to pass out to people who ask what you're doing)

## **PRACTICE SETTING TRAPS AHEAD OF TIME**

If you have never set a trap, doing it near the trap site on the day-of is not the best place to learn. Be comfortable with your equipment, for your own peace of mind and the cats' safety.

## **LABEL THE TRAPS**

Label trap with your name, phone number, and information on what you are doing (ex: Humane trapping for spay/neuter in progress. Cats will not be harmed and should not be touched). Waterproof the sign by enclosing it in a plastic covering or bag.