

FERAL CAT FOCUS

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TIPS FOR FERAL CAT TRAPPING

***For More Trapping Tips and Tips for Hard to Catch Cats Visit
www.feralcatfocus.org***

Use appropriate size humane trap for cats. Feral Cat FOCUS box traps are 30" x 11" x 12".

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 cat can from hypothermia or heat stroke when confined in a trap outside. 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.

Handle humane traps with care. Wear thick leather gloves when you handle an occupied trap to prevent self-injury. Take all necessary precautions to avoid being bitten/scratched by any animal.

Always use a humane trap that is in good condition. A couple of days before actual trapping, place the trap where the cat is normally fed (this will help "trick" the cat). Do not set the trap (the trap door should be held open (with a twist tie) so that the cat can go in and out of the trap without the door closing. With the trap door held open, place food inside the trap. Doing this will increase your success when actually trapping because the cat will be used to going inside trap for food.

With kittens and small cats, it is important to set the food all the way at the back of the trap in the right hand corner so the kitten or cat will be forced to put its full body weight on the trip plate, thus setting it off.

Place trap in a location that is out of sight and safe. This will help protect the cat and keep people from disturbing or taking the trap. Cats are also more likely to enter the trap when it is not in a wide open area.

Sardines and tuna work best for bait. Smelly canned cat food may be used if canned fish is unavailable. Place the food on a plastic lid or small paper plate. Do not leave the actual can of food inside the trap because the cat can cut its face and paws on the can.

In cold weather, try warming the food to make it smell better or use dry food. Canned cat food will freeze within a few hours in cold weather. Leave a little food outside of trap for the cat to smell and taste.

Make sure the trap functions properly before setting it. A little WD-40 (or PAM cooking oil spray) can be added to the lever to make the mechanism operation more easily. You must be sure that traps are properly "locked". The back door on some traps can be lifted open and must be checked so that it is truly locked with the bar down. As a precautionary measure, secure the back flap with twist ties to make sure that it can't be opened.

A piece of fabric/plastic should be placed on top of the trap in case of rain or snow.

Traps must be covered with a trap cover immediately after trapping cat. Keep trap covered until you release the cat following surgery. Trap covers are necessary to keep cats calm when in the trap. Without a trap cover, cats can become agitated and injure themselves trying to escape.

Cats Are Extremely Vulnerable Once They Are Trapped

- Once a cat is trapped, place the trap somewhere safe, secure and warm overnight. Do not open the trap once there is a cat inside.
- Never place the trap where a contained cat will be in the hot sun, direct wind or in an unsafe location.
- Once the trap is set, check the trap every two hours. DO NOT leave a trap set overnight.

TRAPPING IS TOUGH LOVE! It's normal for cats to thrash around inside the trap. You may be tempted to release a thrashing cat because you fear the cat will hurt itself, but cats calm down once the trap is covered. Remember, you are doing this for the cat's benefit. If cat is released, you may not be able to trap her again and she will continue to breed. Also, most injuries from traps are very minor, such as a bruised or bloody nose or a scratched paw pad.

Check the cats in the traps. If you trap a cat with an "ear-tip" release it. It has already been spayed or neutered.

Cats can usually stay in a trap for 24 hours without jeopardy to their health. Cats are very smart! Do not trap a cat and then release it (unless it is ear-tipped). You may never be able to trap that cat again.

Be sure that an occupied trap is level and is in a secure position when placed inside a car/van for transport so that the cat can rest comfortably and the trap will not tip over. Place plastic and fabric underneath the trap in case the cat urinates while being transported.

You can use kittens to catch the mother but DO NOT put kittens in the humane trap set for the mother! If the mother becomes frightened in the trap, she could seriously injure the kittens. Instead put the kittens in a closed trap or a small cat carrier. Set the trap exactly where you found the kittens. Place another trap directly in front of the carrier, like a train. Cover both traps with a sheet EXCEPT for the trap door of the empty trap. The mother will hear and/or smell her kittens and, looking through the door of the set trap, see her kittens at the end of the "tunnel" in the other trap. Thinking she can get to her kittens this way, she may enter and spring the set trap.

If a cat will not go into a trap after repeated attempts, take a break for a week or two (except in the case of an injured cat). The trap-shy cat needs to be reconditioned to not be afraid to go in the trap. It is important to stop trapping until you have trapped the trap-shy cat. Continuing will most likely result in the cat becoming increasingly reluctant.

Feral Cat FOCUS uses "box" and "drop" humane traps. Drop traps are helpful because they allow you to selectively trap a specific cat, since you determine when to spring the manually operated trap. A drop trap is helpful for trapping shy or savvy cats that have caught on to the ins and outs of the box trap. If after repeated attempts at trapping without results with a box trap, call and ask us about borrowing a drop trap.

If you continue to have trouble trapping a cat, call us for more ideas and suggestions.

If you are bitten or scratched seek immediate medical attention from a physician and report the incident to your county's health department. Do not release the animal that has bitten or scratched you before receiving instructions from the health department. Feral cat trappers and caregivers should consider receiving a pre-exposure series of vaccinations against rabies. Contact your physician or county health department for more information.