

## Humane Trapping of Feral Cats for Spaying/Neutering and Longterm Caregiving

**What you will need:** • a humane trap • newspapers • an old bath towel, sheet, curtain, or blanket • smelly, wet cat food (fishy ones best) • an old shower curtain or tarpaulin • appointment with a veterinarian who understands you are trapping a feral cat, i.e., you may not be able to make the appointment if Kitty doesn't cooperate.

**Note:** Do not trap a nursing queen. Trap a queen only after her kittens are old enough to survive without nursing from her.

- 1) **Starve Kitty.** If you trap in the a.m., do not feed the night before. If you trap at night, do not feed that morning. (You want a hungry Kitty so your trapping will be successful. Also--like you when you're about to have an operation--Kitty must have an empty tummy.)
- 2) **Place the trap.** This should be where she normally eats, close to her feeding place, or on a route she travels to get to where you feed her, preferably camouflaged among bushes.
- 3) **Set the trap.** The paw-plate rises as the trigger mechanism is set. If the trap has a back that can be opened, be sure the back is securely fastened shut.
- 4) **Disguise the bottom of the trap.** Lay several sheets of newspaper carefully--to avoid tripping the trap--so that they cover the entire bottom of the trap but don't weigh the paw-plate down. (Cats don't like the feel of the wire mesh under their paws so won't go inside.)
- 5) **Drop about a teaspoon of the smelly bait at the back of the trap, beyond the paw-plate. Place a dot of smelly bait at the entrance to the trap.** (You want to entice Kitty to taste--not eat--that first morsel so that he will venture farther inside to the fud at the back and step on the paw plate, thus triggering the trap.) You are NOT feeding Kitty.
- 6) **Hide,** but don't go so far away that you won't hear the trap when it snaps shut. **DO NOT LEAVE THE TRAP UNATTENDED--**raccoons & coyotes are about! If Kitty doesn't cooperate in an hour, you can refresh the fud with a smidgeon more.
- 7) **As soon as you hear the trap snap shut, check on it.** Cover the trap immediately--top and all 4 sides--with an old sheet, curtain, blanket, or towel. This will calm Kitty--she will thrash about and hurt herself otherwise.
- 8) **Place Kitty in trap in a SAFE, PROTECTED place--**secure garage, shed with door closed--where other animals cannot get at him and he's protected from the elements until your appointment to take him to the vet--later that day or the next morning. If you're worried about overheating or ventilation or the weather's hot, you can fold the cover up at one end of the trap once you've placed it in the safe, protected place.

9) **Take Kitty to the vet either on the back seat or floor of a car or in a canopied pickup.** Keep the trap covered. If you're worried about poo, place an old shower curtain, tarp, or stack of newspapers underneath the trap. However, since Kitty should be empty, there shouldn't be much mess, if any. Ask the vet to change the trap newspaper.

10) **Tell the vet to clip Kitty's ear.** This is very important regarding feral cats. It is the only way to tell if Kitty has been altered. If the ear is not clipped, Kitty could be trapped again by somebody else. Then Kitty will be not only starved and trapped once more, but also anesthetized; and, in the case of queens, cut open only to discover she's already been spayed! A waste of money, time, and effort for all humans concerned--and horrible for Kitty.

**Note:** Queens should be kept in the trap in a safe place overnight following their op. Toms may be set free the same day, as long as they're fully awake. You may drop a little water into the trap, but no fud--do NOT open the trap! Do not leave a bowl of water in the trap--Kitty might drown if not fully conscious! As with us, anesthetic could make Kitty vomit any fud. Do NOT attempt to put Kitty in a carrier or remove from the trap--she is a wild animal and could scratch and bite you in fear or escape, hiding in an inaccessible place (ferals have been known to hide inside house walls for weeks!).

**To release Kitty:** Keep the trap covered and put it back where you trapped Kitty. Open either front or back. Move away. Kitty may or may not rush to freedom--some are so traumatized, they sit a while; others explode out of the trap immediately.

**Last step:** Please clean the trap--remove newspaper, hose down, and spray with bleach (not ammonia!) to avoid cross-contamination with the next Kitty. Return the trap asap.

**Note:** You may not see Kitty for a couple of days after release. However, be sure there's enough clean water for him--he'll be thirsty--and fresh fud as soon as you release him.

**Keep an eye on Kitty for infection.** If she's listless, off her fud, or you can approach her closer than you used to be able to, she might have a post-op infection. This is rare, but not unknown--pet cats are confined for a week after their spay and neuter; ferals must go back out into the wild among the dirt right after theirs. If you suspect Kitty has an infection, you must contact the vet immediately for antibiotic treatment.

*You have done a very kind deed, trapping/neutering/returning (TNR) your feral cat. Many people don't care so don't bother. The 48 hours of fear and discomfort the feral suffers when trapped pale by comparison with the life of an intact feral--endless, debilitating pregnancies; tomcats dying agonizing deaths following battle; kittens perishing from starvation, exposure, and disease. You are truly a compassionate and caring person who has prevented and alleviated animal suffering. Thank you!*