

## Trapping – The Basics

Photos courtesy Neighborhood Cats, New York City \* [www.neighborhoodcats.org](http://www.neighborhoodcats.org)



Quickly covering trapped cats calms them down

### Humane Trapping Instructions For Feral Cats

Trapping the feral cats, in order to have them sterilized and vaccinated is the first and most important step in a humane, non-lethal management plan for the feral cats you feed. While trapping may seem intimidating, following these steps will help make your efforts successful.

#### Before You Trap

NEVER even consider trapping until you have a spay/neuter surgery scheduled. Do NOT assume that because you have a cat in a trap, there will be a way to get it into surgery. Surgery takes place on specific days, at specific times and places. A cat must be held in a trap no more than 48 hours prior to surgery to avoid excessive stress from confinement. Such excessive stress can increase the chances of surgical complications and poor recovery.

We recommend that you establish a routine feeding schedule. Feed the cats at the same time and place each day and for at least one week prior to trapping.

#### Withhold Food

You must withhold all food 24 hours before trapping. This will ensure that the cats are hungry enough to enter the trap. Also, surgery will be easier on the cats if they have not eaten for the past 24 hours.

While this may be hard, particularly if the cats appear hungry, remember you are doing what is best for them. Continue to provide the cats with clean, fresh drinking water.

#### Supplies

In order to trap effectively you will need:

- One humane box trap per cat. You will be more successful if you trap as many cats as possible in the first trapping session.
- A can of tuna in oil, sardines in oil, mackerel, or other strong-smelling bait.
- Newspaper to line the bottom of each trap (optional).
- A large towel or cloth for each trap, large enough to cover the entire trap on all sides. After a cat has been trapped cover the trap to calm the cat and lessen the risk of injury.

- Lids or small containers to hold bait (optional). You may also put bait directly on the trap or newspaper.
- Hand sanitizer, jug of water, and gloves for your protection.

*If you are going to transport the cat in your car, it is advisable to place the traps on a tarp/plastic sheet in your car or vehicle to catch any urine or feces. An old towel can also be helpful to absorb any fluids and keep them from running off the tarp.*

### **Start Trapping**

To begin, prepare the traps near your vehicle or away from the trapping site. Place the trap on a flat surface as you bait and set it. Do this so that if a trap doesn't work properly or goes off too easily it will not scare off the cats.

Set each trap and try to trip it by using a pencil or twig pushing down on the trip plate. If you can't trip it easily, the trap will probably not work for a cat and should be submitted back to IndyFeral for service. Few things are more frustrating than watching a cat walk into a trap, eat all your bait and walk out again!

If you use newspaper, fold it lengthwise and place it inside the bottom of the trap, to disguise the wires on the bottom of the trap. Do not use newspaper if it is windy.

Place approximately one tablespoon of bait along the very back of the trap. You can use a lid or container for this if you wish. Now drizzle some juice from the bait along the trap towards the entrance in a zigzag pattern. Place about one-fourth teaspoon of bait at the far end of the trap, past the trip-plate, and one-fourth teaspoon about six inches inside the front of the trap. The cat will move his or her paws trying to get the zigzagged bait, thus springing the trap. It is important not to leave too much bait in the front or middle; this may satisfy the cat and she will leave without setting off the trap.

Now take the traps to the trapping site, most likely the feeding area. Place the trap on the ground and make certain it is stable and will not rock or tip. *(Try to place the trap length-wise against a wall, a fence, etc., and not leave it out in the open.)*

If you are using multiple traps, stagger them, and place them facing in different directions. Try to think like a cat and place the traps where they will be tempting. Move quietly and slowly, and try to remain relaxed so your mannerisms won't frighten cats away.

Set the traps. Leave the area quietly. The cats are unlikely to enter the traps if you are standing nearby. You may want to go sit in your car or take a walk for a while. If you are trapping in your yard you can go inside.

Traps should never be left unattended for more than two hours under any circumstances. It is preferable to quietly check the traps more frequently from a distance. You do not want to leave a cat in the trap for too long. Also, traps may be stolen, damaged, or set off. Someone who does not understand your intentions may release a trapped cat. *(Sometimes it's wise to chain and lock the trap onto a post, a window grill, a pipe, etc., so no one can walk off with the cat.)*

Have your towels or trap covers ready when you check the traps, in case you've caught a cat. Trapping feral cats may take some time. Be patient. Once a cat appears, it may take a few minutes for him to go into the trap. Make sure the trap is sprung, and the cat securely trapped, before you come out to cover the trap.

**If you have questions about clinic scheduling, time of drop-off and pick-up or directions, please contact your Cat Captain directly or IndyFeral at 317.596.2300.**