



How to Trap Feral Cats

Step One: What is the situation?

Determine how many cats you think need to be trapped and if you think you can maintain the colony. To find out what maintaining a colony involves, see our handout “Maintaining a Feral Cat Colony”.

Step Two: Before you trap.

It is recommended that you establish a feeding routine if you have not already. Feed the cats at the same time and in the same place every day for at least a week. It is even more helpful to place the food inside of a box to acclimate the cats to eating inside of something.

Step Three: Get the traps.

We have a list of places where you can rent and/or buy humane traps. If there is no way that you can do this, Lollypop Farm has a limited number of traps to loan. Please coordinate this with Lollypop Farm at 585.223.1330 ext. 249. You will also need to make an appointment with Lollypop Farm for the best trapping dates by calling the same number. If you are doing a TNR we will need to schedule spay/neuter appointments with our clinic.

Step Four: Other supplies.

You will need small paper plates to put inside of the trap with an enticing food piled on top. We recommend that you use something that is in oil because it is less likely to freeze in our cold climate! Tuna, mackerel or sardines are all good choices. Don't forget a spoon or fork and a can opener.

You will need something to cover each trap with-a towel, sheet or blanket.

If you are trapping at night you will need a flashlight.

You also need to have a warm, dry place to keep the cats until you can bring them to Lollypop Farm. Inside your garage is a good place and put the traps on newspaper or plastic.

Step Five: Withhold Food.

You must withhold food from the cats for 24 hours before you plan on trapping them. They have to be hungry enough to venture into the traps.

Step Six: Set the Traps.

Plan to trap around their normal feeding time.

You will want to get the traps ready all at once in a location away from where you will be placing them. Set the trip plate by lifting the door and securing it in place along the top of the cage with the “catch”. Place your enticing food in the middle of the back section. To make the trap more comfortable for the cat you can line it with a piece of newspaper.

When you are ready, quietly begin taking the traps into the space where you want to catch the cats. It is best to place them as close to existing structures as possible. For example, place them along the side of your garage, house or shed but make sure nothing will interfere with the door. If it is winter time look for tracks in the snow and place the traps where you can see that the cats travel. It needs to be on level ground. Stagger them and put the opening in different directions. Make sure to leave the door accessible.

Never leave the traps unattended! This is a waiting game and you need to keep your eye on the traps. The cats will be fearful and you will want to get them into a quiet space as soon as possible. Don't be alarmed if the cat is highly agitated. When you see that you have trapped the cat, slowly walk up to the cage and cover it with a towel/sheet/blanket. This will cut down on the trapped cat's stress and it *will* settle down. Removing it will reduce the stress/distraction for the other cats you are trying to trap.

****Safety** Never stick your fingers in the cage!** Always use the handle and wear gloves to protect yourself. Never try to grab a feral cat if he/she is escaping or open to the trap to feed or touch the cat.

Step Seven: Other Considerations.

Lactating Females/Kittens – If you catch a female you believe to be lactating she still needs to be spayed but it is important to get her back to her kittens as soon as possible if you do not catch them as well. One technique is to place the caged mother cat behind another empty trap to attempt to lure the kittens into it. Vice versa, you can lure the mother by putting her kittens in a cage behind an empty one. Mother cats can still lactate after being spayed.

Unwanted Guests – You may catch local wildlife that is looking for a free meal. Skunks, raccoons and opossums are all possibilities. Opossums may hiss at you but will waddle away when you open the door. Skunks will not spray through your towel/sheet/blanket. Raccoons can be dangerous and you should call animal control.

Step Eight: Bring the cats to Lollypop Farm.

Per the arrangements you have made with us, transport the cat(s) to Lollypop Farm to be admitted or for their spay/neuter surgery (usually at 8am the morning of their surgery).