

# HUMANE TRAPPING TIPS

## GENERAL TIPS

**WITHHOLD FOOD** 24 hours before trapping, but continue to provide water. This will make the cats hungry and more likely to enter the traps. Be sure to remind all caregivers to withhold food too.



**TAG EACH TRAP** with your name and phone number and the exact location where you are setting the trap. This will help you return the cat to the right location and will help surgery service providers manage your animals.

**KEEP AN EXACT COUNT OF YOUR TRAPS** at the beginning and end of your trapping day, and before and after using surgery services.

**NEVER LEAVE TRAPS UNATTENDED.** Check the traps frequently from a distance. Observe from where you are far enough away to give the cats a sense of safety, but close enough to see them. In larger colonies with multiple trapping locations, bring trapping buddies to help. If you are trapping alone don't put out more traps than you can keep an eye on.

**NEVER OPEN THE TRAP OR TRY TO TOUCH THE CAT** even if the cat appears friendly.

**REMEMBER TO LOCK THE REAR DOOR** before setting the trap.



## BAITING

Place approximately one tablespoon of wet food or a small handful of dry food at the very back of the trap, so that the cat will step on the trigger plate while attempting to reach the food.

Drizzle some juice from the bait in a zigzag pattern along the trap floor toward the entrance or sprinkle a few pieces of dry food in the same way.

Place a tiny bit of food (about ½ teaspoon) just inside the entrance of the trap to encourage the cat to walk in.

Use a paper plate or piece of cardboard if you want to use a container; never use a container with sharp edges.

## TRAPPING

Place the trap on solid ground and ensure it is stable. Do not place the trap on a hillside or incline.



If you are using multiple traps, stagger them, and face the openings in different directions.

Try to place the traps where they will attract a cat yet be camouflaged, for example, under or near a bush.

Drape a sheet or towel over the back part of the trap before placement so you can easily cover the entire thing after the cat is caught. This also encourages the cat to go inside the trap since it appears to be a covered, safe place with food inside.





After the cat has been trapped, cover the entire trap with a large towel or sheet and move it to the staging area or, if you are transporting to a staging area, into your vehicle. When trapping an entire colony from the same area, partially cover the traps and leave the traps where they are to avoid frightening other cats away but if a cat is severely thrashing around or if the weather is inclement or excessively cold or hot, immediately remove the trap to your staging area or vehicle.

It is normal for cats to thrash around inside the trap. You may be tempted to release a thrashing cat because you fear that she will hurt herself, but cats calm down once the trap is covered. Most injuries from traps are very minor, such as a bruised or bloody nose or a scratched paw pad.

## FOR HARD-TO-CATCH CATS

**GET THE CATS USED TO EATING OUT OF THE TRAP.** Take a break from trapping but feed cats in unset traps for about a week or more before trapping again. (Remove the back door of the trap and/or use a cable or twist tie to hold open the front door of the trap.) Feed in the same place and time. Start by placing the food outside at the entrance of the trap, then over a period of time a few inches inside and gradually closer to the back. Monitor the traps to ensure they are not stolen or a cat is accidentally trapped. The hard-to-catch cat will see other cats safely eating inside the traps. When you are ready to trap again, withhold food for 24 hours, attach the back door and remove the tie from the front door, and bait and set the trap.

**TRY USING A LARGER TRAP.** Some cats may be more comfortable entering a larger trap, which has a taller opening and wider sides. This includes various sizes of humane traps designed for canines.

**MAKE THE TRAP MORE ENTICING** with the most attractive bait. Here are some recommendations from experienced and successful trappers in our area:

- Jarred baby food (turkey or chicken, never any food containing onions)
- Catnip or catnip spray
- Thigh meat from Kentucky Fried Chicken
- "People tuna" in oil
- Fishy canned cat food (tuna, shrimp, salmon)
- Anchovies or sardines
- Cat treats

**USE DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES** to help coax the cat onto the trigger plate such as hanging a piece of cooked chicken from a string above the trigger plate. The cat will likely need to step on the trigger to reach the chicken. (Be sure to position the bait so that there is no slack in the string that might entangle the cat.)

**PLACE A RECTANGLE OF CARDBOARD** over the trip plate so that the cat triggers the mechanism sooner or **COVER THE TRIP PLATE LENGTHWISE** with a folded sheet of newspaper.

**CAMOUFLAGE THE TRAP.** Move the trap to a quieter or more protected location or blend it with its surroundings. Hide it under a bush, under a leaning piece of wood, or in a box so it resembles a dark hole. Cover it with branches, leaves, camouflage material, burlap or other natural materials. Cover it with dark cloth or a towel or place it in a black garbage bag (with holes punched in the back). Be sure your technique doesn't interfere with the trap door closing.



**WITHHOLD FOOD FOR UP TO TWO DAYS.** Do not withhold food for any longer and never withhold water.



**MANUALLY SPRING THE TRAP** by propping the trap door up with a piece of wood or soda bottle and tying a pull string to it. When the cat enters, pull the string to close the trap. Practice first!

**USE A DROP TRAP,** which does not rely on a trigger plate to close the trap door. Most drop traps allow you to catch a cat without having to force him into a confined space. These traps are generally large, mesh covered squares that, when triggered by you with a rope, fall down over the cat. Another configuration uses a drop door; you acclimate

the cat to eating inside the larger box then, in advance of your scheduled appointment, trigger the door to slide shut with the cat inside.

All drop traps allow you to easily transfer the cat from the drop trap to a regular metal trap or approved transport cage for staging and transporting. You will want to have a trapping buddy to use a drop trap to ensure that cats don't escape or that the time and effort it takes to transfer them creates unnecessary stress. The foundation has drop traps you can borrow if needed.

