

HUMANE TRAPPING METHODS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Feral Cat Program

Preparation for Trapping. Get the target cat(s) used to being fed at the same place and time of day. Do not feed the cats for 24 hours before you are going to trap.

Practice setting and tripping the trap at home: There is a small hook attached to the right side of the trap top. It hooks onto a tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door. Open the trap door by pushing the top of the door in and pulling the bottom of the door upward. The hook holds the door open, which raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the trip plate, the hook will release the door and close the trap.

Plan to trap so that you don't have to keep the cat too long before surgery. Prior to transport to the veterinary clinic, hold the animal in an area that is sheltered, not too hot or cold, and ventilated.

Plan your evening of trapping carefully. If you trap an animal and need to release it prior to surgery, it is unlikely that you will be able to catch it again.

Setting the Trap: Dusk is the best time to set traps and evening is the best time to catch cats. Set traps just before or at the cat's normal feeding time.

Because cats do not like walking on the wire surface, line the bottom of the trap with a thin layer of newspaper just to the point of covering the trip plate. Place the trap on a level surface, because cats are less likely to enter if the trap wobbles.

Use smelly food to bait the trap. Canned mackerel or a sardine is very effective and relatively inexpensive. Do not put any bowls in the trap. Place a small amount of food directly on the wire at the back of the trap. Do not place a water bowl in the trap. After baiting the trap, secure the door in the open position.

After setting the trap, cover it with a large towel or dark material. Fold the material at the front end of the trap to expose the opening while still covering the top, sides and back of the trap. The cover helps to camouflage the trap and serves to calm the cat after it is caught.

Waiting for Success. Do not leave the trap unattended in unprotected areas. Do not hang around within sight of the cats or you will scare them off. Check traps every 30 -60 minutes. As soon as the cat is trapped, lift the cover and check that you indeed have a feral cat (is it scared, hissing, trying to escape?). If you have caught a tame cat or a feral cat with its right ear tip squared off (it has already had surgery), release it immediately. If you have a feral cat without its ear squared off, completely cover the trap with the material and remove it from the area.

Holding Procedures. Place the cat in a cool, dry and well ventilated holding area. Do not attempt to feed or water the cat. Trapped feral cats are extremely adept at escape or may try to bite or scratch. Also, cats should not eat for 12 hours prior to surgery. Keep the trap covered so the cat will remain calm and quiet. Do not put fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the trap. These cats are wild and will try to defensively bite or scratch.

ALL CAT BITES ARE SERIOUS! IF YOU ARE BITTEN, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION AND DO NOT RELEASE THE CAT. CALL ANIMAL CONTROL (532-5966) TO REPORT THE BITE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS. IF THE CAT IS RELEASED FROM THE TRAP, YOU WILL HAVE TO UNDERGO RABIES VACCINATIONS. Neither Pets Barn Valley Feed Pet Food Centers nor the Pets Alive – El Paso, Inc. Feral Cat Program will be held responsible or liable for any injury or subsequent medical treatment received while trapping or transporting feral cats.

The next morning, call a participating veterinarian to make a special appointment and transport the trapped cat to the veterinary clinic. A health status evaluation, surgery and rabies vaccination will be performed at no cost to you, if the cat is deemed acceptable for release. You, the trapper, will pay for any optional blood tests, medical treatment or vaccinations.

Releasing the Cat. When you pick up the cat, you will be provided with a handout called Important Discharge and Recovery Information. Read it carefully and ask your veterinarian any questions you might have.

It is very important that you release the cat in the same place that you trapped it. DO NOT RELOCATE THE CAT!

After releasing the cat, hose the trap off and return it. You must return the trap to the Pets Barn Valley Feed Pet Food Center that you borrowed it from to receive your deposit.

Helpful Hints. Bring a flashlight with you when trapping at dusk/night. It will come in handy for setting the traps and checking them from a distance.

Bring a piece of wood or a bungee cord to help hold the trap door open.

If you trap an opossum or skunk, approach and inspect the trap quietly and calmly. Slowly open the door so as not to startle the animal or place it in a defensive posture. Prop the door open to allow escape and leave the area immediately.