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Homeless/Feral Cat Trapping Instructions

Preparation

- ◆ Feed the cats at the same time and same place each day
- ◆ Leave the trap UNSET and covered with a large towel so the cat will get used to seeing the trap and the scent.
- ◆ ONLY trap the night before your scheduled appointment. Cats may eat up until 12 midnight and have water up until 6am on the day of surgery.
- ◆ Prepare a warm and sheltered area where you can hold the cats before and after their appointment. If it is hot and sunny, be sure to have the trap in a shaded area. Lay down newspapers to catch stool, urine and food residue. Discourage ants.
- ◆ Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport the cats. Plastic with newspaper on top is a good precaution.

Set traps

- ◆ Set traps just before the cats' normal feeding time, dawn and dusk are best.
- ◆ Don't trap in rain or heat without adequate protection for the trap!
- ◆ Fold a piece of newspaper to line the bottom of the trap just covering the trip plate. Cats don't like walking on the wire surface and newspaper helps keep their feet from going through when the trap is lifted.
- ◆ Use "smelly" food to bait the trap. Canned mackerel is very effective and relatively inexpensive.
- ◆ Soak a small scrap of newspaper (two to three inches by three to four inches) in the mackerel juice and place it on the ground where you plan to place the rear of the trap
- ◆ Put about a tablespoon of food onto the soaked newspaper scrap and place in the trap as far back as possible. You want the cat to go all the way into the trap to avoid being injured.
- ◆ After baiting the trap, open the trap door by pushing the top of the door in and pulling the bottom of the door upward. There is a small hook attached to the right side of the trap top. It hooks into a tiny metal cylinder on the right side of the door. The hook holds the door in an open position, which also raises the trip plate. When the cat steps on the plate, it will cause the hook to release the door and close the trap.
- ◆ Now, cover the trap with a large towel to camouflage it and to calm the cat.

Wait and Trap

- ◆ Never leave traps unattended or unprotected. Wait quietly where you can still see the traps.
- ◆ When the cat is caught, move the trap to a quiet area and look to see that you have the correct animal and not a pet or previously altered feral cat (ear notch/tip).
- ◆ Cover the cat back up as soon as possible. Uncovered, the animal may panic and hurt itself while thrashing around in the trap.
- ◆ If you have captured a nursing female, check the area for the kittens and remember that this female must be released within 10-12 hours after surgery so she can care for and nurse her kittens! **Release any wildlife or unintended cat**

Hold

- ◆ Hold cats overnight, if necessary, then take them to your appointment at the clinic.
- ◆ Place cats in the prepared and protected area.
- ◆ Keep the trap covered with the towel and check periodically. Usually, they will be quiet. **DO NOT** put fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the traps.
- ◆ Wash and change your clothes before having any contact with your own pets as a precaution against spreading any contagious disease the cat may carry.

Release

- ◆ For post-op recovery care:
 - Many cats will recover from the anesthesia used for their surgery within twenty-four hours. Cats can be returned to their colony if they are fully recovered with coordinated mobility. Some cats may require additional time to allow the anesthesia to wear off fully. If a cat is still wobbly or does not appear to be fully coordinated, it would be best to hold onto the cat for an additional 12-24 hours before returning them back to their colony.
- ◆ **Never** relocate an animal as it will become disoriented and can die.
- ◆ Keep the trap covered until you are ready to release. When ready, simply hold the trap with the door facing **away** from you and open the door. **Never put your hand in the trap.** If the cat will not leave, prop open the door with a stick and leave it for a bit.
- ◆ **After release, hose off each trap and disinfect with bleach to prevent spreading disease.**