



LCHS offers the use of its humane traps as well as guidance and support in the humane trapping of and post-surgical care of altered feral cats and kittens.

LCHS staff and volunteers also provide advice and assistance to novice caregivers in their guardianship of feral cats in their neighborhoods. This package of information will provide you with all of the information that you need in order to participate in this program

What is TNR?

TRAP - Humanely capture feral cats who can't be handled. Take them to the vets who treat their injuries and diseases.

NEUTER - Spay or neuter the cats and confine them safely until they recover.

RETURN-MANAGE - Return the cats to the original habitat/trapping site and provide for feeding and monitoring by volunteer caretakers.

Trap-Neuter-Return, the humane method of feral cat population control, is more effective than trap and kill, and it is more reflective of a caring human community. Feral cat populations are gradually reduced. Nuisance behaviors associated with breeding, such as the fighting, yowling and spraying are virtually eliminated. The spread of disease and malnutrition are greatly reduced. The cats live healthy, safe, and peaceful lives in their territories.

What Defines a Feral Cat?

Total Feral-No positive human contact. Hidden and mistrusting.

Semi Feral-Some positive human contact. Afraid of human touch.

Converted Feral-Past positive human contact. Scared, abandoned pet.

Ear Tipping

Cats that are altered will be ear-tipped. It is the universal symbol that a cat is from a managed colony and has been spayed or neutered. The ear-tip procedure removes the tip of the cat's left ear while the cat is under anesthesia so there is no pain.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supplying or borrowing humane traps in order to trap the cats.
- Ensuring that you trap the cats the night before or day of their surgery
- Transporting the cats to and from LCHS's SOS Spay/Neuter Clinic.

- Allowing the cats to recover in their traps for 24-48 hours after surgery in a sheltered, warm, dry safe area.
- Providing food and shelter and any necessary medical care for the cats for the remainder of their lives.

All feral cats (this includes any cat that cannot be picked up and handled by the general population) must be transported and presented to the clinic in a trap. There are three reasons for this requirement:

1. It is safer for the veterinarians and their staff.
2. It is safer for the cat...as it is easier to give them anesthesia.
3. The cats can be returned to the traps so that they can be taken home for safe recovery after surgery.

LCHS maintains a pool of humane traps for safely trapping and transporting feral cats to and from the surgery clinic and for post-operative recovery. You should plan to pick up your traps at least 3-4 days prior to the cat's spay/neuter surgery. You will need to complete the Equipment Loan Agreement and bring it with you along with a check made out to Licking County Humane Society for the trap deposit amount when you pick up your traps.

LCHS loans traps free of charge. A refundable deposit of \$50 per trap (check or charge) is required upon loan of traps. The money will not be deposited or used by LCHS, but will be returned to the borrower upon timely return of trap/s. Traps must be returned clean and in good working order. Trap deposits will not be refunded if the borrower fails to return the trap within the agreed upon time frame, or upon request of the LCHS representative. If a trap is lost, stolen or damaged, the borrower agrees to pay for any repair up to and including the cost of replacing the trap if necessary.

Do not bring your feral cats to the clinic in carriers!

Preparation for Trapping

If possible, get the cats used to being fed at the same place and time of day. **You should feed the cats in the trap with the trap unset and covered with a large towel for several days prior to the surgery so that the cat will get used to going in and out of the trap without fear.**

Don't feed the cats the day/night before you are going to trap so the cats will be hungry. Be sure to notify others who may feed the cats not to leave food out either.

Plan to trap so that you don't have to keep the cat too long before surgery. Trap the day/evening before or the morning of the surgery is the best approach. If trapped the day before, do not feed them after midnight.

Prepare the area where you will be holding the cats before and after the clinic. A garage or other sheltered, warm, protected area is best during warmer months. *During colder months plan to use a bathroom/laundry or mudroom for recovery where the temperature is between 68-74 degrees. This is vital, as the cats cannot regulate their body temperature for 24 hours after surgery so they must remain warm and free from drafts. They could die if recovered in an unheated space!* Lay down

newspapers or pee pads to catch the inevitable stool, urine and food residue. You may want to use pieces of wood to elevate the traps off the newspapers. This allows the mess to fall through the wire away from the cats.

Prepare the vehicle you will use to transport the cats as well. Plastic may be an additional precaution. But remember that you will need to use newspapers or some other absorbent material in addition to the plastic. Urine will roll right off of the plastic.

Plan your day of trapping carefully. Remember that if you trap a cat and release it for some reason, it is unlikely that you will ever be able to catch it again....they learn very quickly.

If there are young kittens involved, remember that they should not be weaned from the mother before 4-6 weeks of age. If you are trapping a lactating female, you should wait until you have located the kittens and they are old enough to wean. If you wish to tame and foster the kittens to adopt out, they should be taken from the mother at 4-6 weeks. If you wait until the kittens are older than 4-6 weeks before trying to tame them, you will find the job progressively harder with age.

HOW TO TRAP FERAL CATS

Setting the Traps

Plan to set traps just before or at the cats' normal feeding time. Plan to set one trap per cat that you are trying to catch. They should be staggered....with the openings facing different directions. Never set a trap overnight, as you will most likely trap other wildlife including skunks!

Don't trap in the rain or the heat of day without adequate protection for the trap. Cats are vulnerable in the traps and could drown during storms or suffer from heatstroke in the sun. Use common sense!

Fold a single 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 the paper helps to keep their feet from going through when you pick up the trap.

Plan placement of traps on a level surface in the area where the cats usually feed or have been seen. Cats are less likely to enter the trap if it wobbles. If trapping in a public area, try to place traps where they will not be noticed by passersby (who may not understand that you are not trying to harm the cat). Bushes are often places where cats hide and provide good camouflage for the trap.

Use smelly food to bait the trap. We find that canned tuna is very effective and relatively inexpensive. It is best not to put any bowls inside the trap to hold food since the animal can easily hurt itself on it in a panic or while recovering from anesthetic. Instead place a tablespoon or two at the far end of the trap and then sprinkle some crumbs or juice towards the entrance of the trap to encourage and entice the cat to enter. Make sure the "rear" door is locked in place and the locking lever is closed.

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 onto the

trap top. 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.

After setting the trap, cover it with a large towel or sheet. 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 will help to camouflage the trap and serve to calm the cat after it is caught.

Waiting for Success

Never leave traps unattended in an unprotected area, but don't hang around within sight of the cat (or you will scare it off). A trapped animal is vulnerable. Passersby may release the cat or steal the trap! Wait quietly in an area where you can still see the traps without disturbing the cats. Check traps every 20-30 minutes. As soon as the intended cat is trapped, completely cover the trap and remove the trap from the area if other cats are not in sight. You may consider putting another trap in the same spot if it seems to be a "hot" one.

When you get the captured cat to a quiet area away from the other traps lift the cover and check for signs that you have the correct animal and not a pet or previously neutered feral (check for a tipped left ear). *If you note that you have captured a lactating female check the area for kittens and if you cannot find the kittens, we suggest that you release the female to care for the kittens. (If the kittens are under 4 weeks old, they will need to nurse every 2-4 hours...and could die if the mother is not released.)* If you have trapped one of the cats scheduled for surgery, cover the cat back up as soon as possible. Uncovered, the animal may panic and hurt itself thrashing around in the trap.

Of course, there is always the chance that you will catch some other wild animal attracted to the food or an unintended cat. Simply release the animal quietly as stated in the releasing procedures here.

General Precautions

If you need to open the trap to slip water in or for any other reason, take EXTREME CARE as the cat may try to lunge and could bite. Wear heavy gloves and open the trap only enough to slip the dish in. Never try to grab a feral cat if he/she is escaping. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the trap. These are wild animals and will scratch and bite. Any bite or scratch should be taken seriously- seek medical attention immediately.

HOLDING PROCEDURES

After you have finished trapping, you will probably have to hold the cats overnight until you can take them to the surgery clinic. Place cats in the prepared protected area. It is best to resist the urge to feed the cat once you have trapped it- most are so scared they will not eat. Keep cats covered and check periodically. They will probably be very quiet as long as they are covered. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or pets near the traps.

RECOVERING CATS AFTER SURGERY

HOLD CATS AFTER SURGERY

Leave the cats in the traps or carriers in which they were placed after surgery. Do not try to move them to a larger cage. Keep the doors locked at all times unless performing one of the emergency or caregiving tasks that follow.

MONITOR AND KEEP WARM

Monitor the cats for bleeding, infection, illness, and appetite. *Do not release the cats that night!* Leave them in the trap. *After surgery, both male and female cats must be kept indoors overnight in a warm, draft-free area such as a bathroom, spare bedroom, basement, or climate-controlled garage.* Cats cannot regulate their body temperature while under anesthesia, so you must ensure that they don't get too cold or too hot. If at all possible, they should be kept in a room heated to about 68-74 degrees. The cats should not be placed on a cold or damp floor, which will induce chilling. Place them on blankets or layers of towels, with a space heater nearby or a heating pad on low placed underneath or on top of the cages. Be careful that the heaters are not too close and can overheat or burn the cats. **CAUTION:** Space heaters are fire hazards and should be monitored when in use.

SAFETY FIRST

Keep the traps/carriers covered with a sheet or blanket. Do not stick your fingers through the bars of the traps or otherwise attempt to touch or handle the cats. Stray or feral cats even when anesthetized may react to strange people, noises, and activity, and you or the cat could be injured. Even if the cats appear unconscious, they may still get out of the trap if you open the door.

CHECK HOURLY

Look in on the cats every hour to check their progress. The cats will be groggy as they recover from anesthesia. The anesthesia may have hallucinogenic effects and cause the cats to overreact to normal stimulation or to become aggressive. The anesthesia will wear off after about 4 to 24 hours. There should be no signs of bleeding.

EMERGENCIES

If a cat is bleeding, vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or not waking up after many hours, call the clinic's emergency line before releasing the cat. If a cat is vomiting, his/her head should be turned so that liquid can come out. This may be achieved by tipping the trap somewhat so that the cat's position shifts. **CAUTION: Only open the trap door or handle the cat in the event of extreme emergency and only if you are confident that you will not be injured in doing so. If you must open the door, do so in an enclosed room and wear thick gloves to decrease possible injury. Do not place the cat back in vomit.**

FEEDING

Immediately after surgery, only feed kittens that are four months old or younger. Do not feed adult cats until at least eight hours after surgery. A small amount of canned food can be placed on a plastic lid with a little water around it. Open the trap door just a crack and slide the lid into the trap quickly without putting your hand inside and always keep an eye on the cat. If the cat moves toward the opening, close the door immediately to avoid letting the cat out. If you are unable to get the canned food into the cat, you can drop some dry food in through the cage grates instead. The cats may not have an appetite or may be too scared to eat.

RELEASING THE CATS

The morning after surgery, check to see that the cats are alert, clear-eyed, and not displaying any signs of illness. ***If the males appear healthy, they may be returned to where they were trapped 24 hours after surgery (barring inclement weather or extreme outdoor temperatures). The females need more time to recover, and should be held for an additional 24 to 48 hours if they are not acting too stressed.***

The cats do not need to return to the clinic for suture removal as dissolvable sutures were used.

If you must keep the cats longer than one night, continue to provide food along with water. Moist food is preferable because it is more easily digested. Feed small amounts of food at first.

When cats are ready for release, return to the area in which they were captured and release them there. Do not relocate the animal! She/he will be disoriented and could die or be driven away by other cats in the area.

Provide fresh water and food. The cats may disappear for a few hours or days, but will return after they have calmed down.

Be sure that the cat will not run into danger (like a busy street) when you release him/her.

When ready, simply hold the trap with the door facing away from you and open the rear door. The cat will probably bolt immediately out of the trap. NEVER PUT YOUR HAND IN THE TRAP. If the cat still will not leave walk away for a while.

If the cat does not seem to be recovering well from the surgery, contact SOS's emergency line (740-817-2725) as soon as possible so that we can have our veterinarian look at him/her before releasing.

CLEANING & RETURN of TRAPS

After releasing the cat, hose off the traps and disinfect them with bleach (1 part bleach to 30 parts water). Allow this solution to sit for an hour, then spray liberally and scrub with clean water to remove the bleach solution. Residual bleach - wet or dry - is harmful to cats. Return all borrowed traps promptly so that they may be used for the next trapper. Your \$50 per trap deposit will be returned when the trap(s) are returned in *good condition*. Never store traps in the "set" position (door open) as animals may wander into even un-baited traps and may die.

Other Resources to Learn More About Feral Cats

Alley Cat Allies-The Nation's Leading Feral Cat Advocacy Program
www.alleycat.org

New York City Feral Cat Initiative
www.nycferalcat.org

Pet Promise City Kitty Program
www.petpromise.org