

Never leave a trap unattended- Unwatched traps place cats at the mercy of strangers, animals and weather.

Do not trap blindly. Know the cats you plan to trap before beginning any project. If you are trapping for another caretaker, then get the following information from that person well before you begin to trap. Get a count of the colony members. Find out who is a nursing mom and who is about to give birth, and find out who is sick or wounded. Have a written description for each cat, and give each cat a name. Naming each cat will help you keep all the solid black cats straight, and it will help you identify all the brown tabbies. If you are feeding on a daily basis, you should already have this information.

Do withhold food the day before you trap. You want cats to be hungry; otherwise they will have no incentive to walk into your trap!

Set up the trap on a stable and level surface. You don't want the trap to shake when the cat walks inside.

Set up the trap out of the wind, and locate it along a fence, a building or another existing structure. You don't want the cat to feel insecure, to see anything moving from the wind, as he walks inside this strange contraption. Additionally, setting the trap parallel to a structure will make the trap look like it is a part of the wall, the fence, the tree or whatever object you choose.

Use a smelly product for trapping; one that will be carried on the wind. Canned tuna in oil, canned sardines, or mackerel all work well.

The only food you should place out, on a trapping day, is the food you place directly inside the traps. If food is available elsewhere, cats will have no reason to walk inside the traps. Place a small portion of your bait (~1 teaspoon) in front of the trap opening, drizzle some juice and scant particles of food along the length of the *cardboard trip plate, and place a larger portion of food at the back of the trap beyond the trip plate.

*Extend the length of the trip plate in the trap. Do this to outsmart any clever feline who plans to walk in, have a bite, and leave. See instructions below.

Making a cardboard extension to the metal trip plate

1. Cut a piece of corrugated cardboard so that it will be 12 to 18 inches long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch narrower than the inside width of the trap.
2. Use masking tape or painter's tape to secure this cardboard rectangle to the top of the trip plate.
3. Use another piece of tape to secure the base end of the cardboard loosely to the wire mesh near the trap door opening. This piece of cardboard extends the length of the metal trip plate. It is essential for catching the crafty feline who walks into the trap, and then delicately places one paw over the trip plate, contentedly eating the nice snack you have left for her. Next she cautiously backs right out of the trap without ever setting it off, and getting a tasty meal in the interim. When the cardboard platform covers the trip plate, and the wire mesh at the opening of the trap, the feisty feline does not notice that there is a certain point along the path to the food whereupon she will actuate the trip plate.

When possible and practical, set up the trap close to the normal feeding location.

Multiple Traps

If you are dealing with multiple traps, you may want to move the traps a short distance from the normal feed spot. You may not want to set multiple traps next to one another. The rationale for spreading them apart is

that some cats will see their mates in traps. If a trapped cat is especially fractious, then other cats will be disturbed by the activity, and they may keep their distance. You don't want to clue them in as to what is going on, but it is not always possible to hide your activity.

Have the trap covers sitting nearby: so that you may quickly fling them over a newly trapped feline.

Once you have trapped a cat, immediately cover the trap with a towel. Covering the trap can help to calm a fractious kitty; it may help him to relax.

Now move the cage to a secure location:

- Away from the trapping activity
- Away from wind
- Out of the cold air or hot sun
- Into a quiet sheltered location- preferably inside a temperate building.

Another trapping strategy

If you are trapping in a secure location, you can try this strategy. Familiarize the cats with the traps before you are ready to start trapping. Do this several days to a week in advance of trapping, by wiring the traps to stay open, and placing their normal daily meals inside the traps. Once colony members are used to walking in and out of the traps, and once you have your trapping day planned, you can remove the wire you're using to hold the traps open, and you can then bait the traps and set the trap mechanisms.

Once you have caught your cats, follow the remaining trapping instructions, that is, immediately drape the traps with covers and move the cats to a secure indoor location.

About Pregnant cats and Nursing mothers and Kittens

Cats that are pregnant can readily be spayed. We take extra care with them, and supplement the surgical procedure by replenishing bodily fluids with subcutaneous fluids as directed by the veterinarian.

If you suspect a female may be a nursing mother, you need to locate her litter, and determine how old they are. Young kittens need to nurse frequently. Very young kittens may die without their mother's care. If kittens are but a few weeks old, and you successfully trap the mother, please gather up the kittens to keep them with the mother. We can set nursing moms up in large traps and carefully place kittens in the trap with their mom. She can nurse them up until it is time for surgery. We can put them back with her when she is fully awake. Please plan ahead. A spayed female can and will still nurse her brood.

If her kittens are older than 3 or 4 weeks, then they should still be picked up, as they need the protection and warmth of an adult. They should be kept warm and fed while mom undergoes surgery. The family should be reunited after the queen wakes up from surgery.

If the kittens are 8 weeks old, healthy and weigh 2#, then we can spay or neuter them as a part of the TNR project as well. These feral kittens will be vaccinated and ear tipped like the adults, and will be released to live with the rest of the colony. Generally speaking, friendly 8-week-old kittens may be placed into adoption programs. This should be arranged prior to trapping.

One last strategy Use a laser beam, as you would use it to play with a friendly cat. But in this case, use the laser to emulate the movement of an insect, to draw the cat's attention inside the trap.

Trap with a partner to keep watch on the traps and the local community & trap safely. For the cats, Peg Nemoff