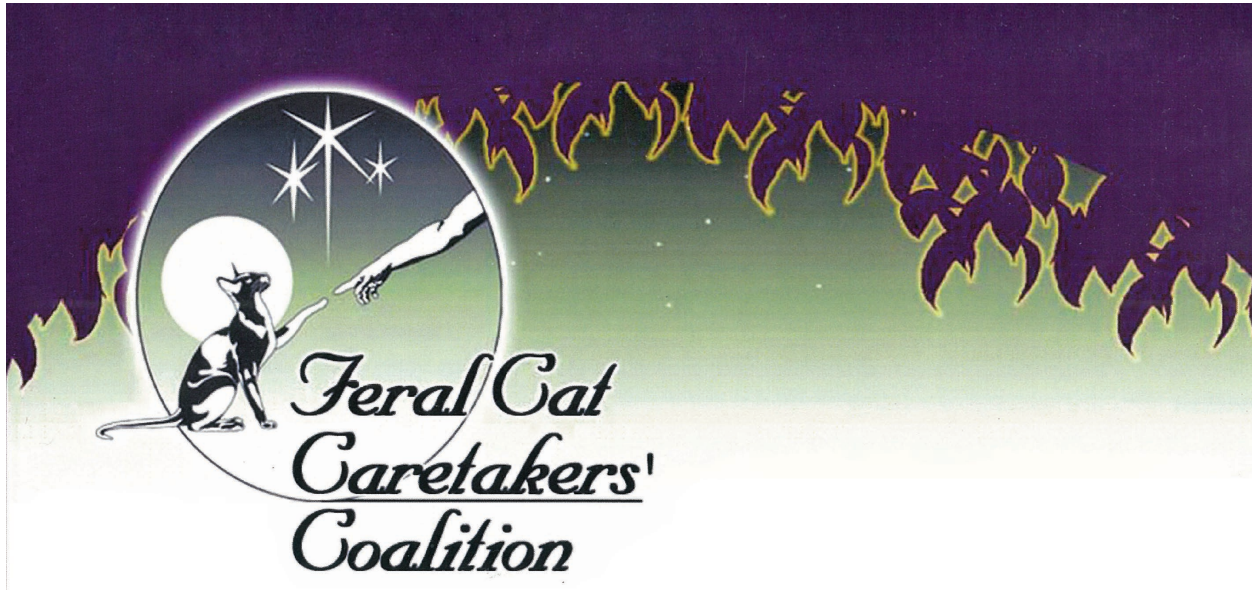


INSTRUCTIONS FOR HUMANE TRAPPING OF FERAL OR RESCUED CATS AND KITTENS AND POST-OP BOARDING



THE CURRICULUM AS TAUGHT IN OUR FERAL CAT COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS (See photo of trap and boarding set-up at end of document)

DISCUSSION: The following information provides the basis for humane trapping. It by no means covers the many situations that can arise. Since trapping takes place in various circumstances and locations, adjustments will need to be made. Information has been included from many resources, so you will have a broad scope of knowledge. We have endeavored to focus on the welfare of the cats and kittens as our first priority.

Responsible planning and attention to detail is essential for successful trapping. Your compassion and commitment during the process of trapping and surgery can impact upon how the cats and kittens adjust during foster care, adoption, post-surgical confinement and upon return. You can make a difference by the quality of care you provide. Go over each detail of the process until you have a clear and concise understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

If the area to be trapped is not cat friendly, you will need to negotiate and educate those persons who do not understand the trap-neuter and return program. This can be a major concern and obstacle for the Caretaker. You may require assistance with this very important undertaking.

Caretakers: A Caretaker who is feeding may have valuable information. They can help identify the cats, give histories of those already neutered, pregnant females, if kittens are present, numbers, descriptions, if shelter is available or other pertinent information that would assist in trapping and long-term managed care. Ask for their support with the trapping or other tasks, such as transporting to the veterinarian, post-operative care, help with adoption of kittens if present, foster care as well as continued commitment to feeding. Reach out to see if there are other persons in the area who are cat friendly. They may want to be involved. Organizing trap, neuter and return with persons already on the premises can be very helpful. They may be familiar with TNR. Inexperienced persons may also be willing to learn. Get the neighborhood involved!

Veterinarians: Chose a veterinarian and/or spay/neuter clinic that has experience with feral/stray and rescued cats and kittens. All cats and kittens should be examined before surgery as they may require vet care. If you have chosen a spay-neuter clinic, a full service veterinarian may not be available. It is important for you to know of a full service veterinarian who has experience with feral and rescue cats and kittens, in advance of trapping. Treatment for worms, ear mites, vaccinations, micro-chipping, flea treatment and long-term antibiotic are minimum requirements.

ALTERNATIVE POST-SURGERY BOARDING REQUIREMENTS: Several major organizations that provide spay and neuter services for feral cats believe 24 hours post-op boarding is sufficient, absent extraordinary circumstances, due to the stress associated with confinement. Feral Cat Coalition (San Diego), Operation Catnip (Florida), SNAP (Texas) and Best Friends Catnippers (Los Angeles) base their findings on extensive field experience with satisfactory results.

FCCC POST-SURGERY BOARDING REQUIREMENTS FOR FERAL CATS AND KITTENS:

If you have or can create an area, we recommend boarding the males for 24-48 hours and the females a minimum of 3-5 days. If abortion and spaying are performed, a day or two longer to regain their strength. After the stress of trapping, being held overnight, trip to the clinic, the wait, sedation, anesthesia, surgery, vaccinations, Rabies vaccination, flea treatment, shaved belly and other possible treatment, it is our opinion the cats are not at PEAK PERFORMANCE FOR SURVIVAL IN 24 HOURS. BE CREATIVE AND BOARD. MANY CARETAKERS BOARD FOR LONGER PERIODS. Veterinarians recommend that domestic female cats are kept indoors for a minimum of two weeks for healing to take place. Stress vs survival is not a valid concept.

If you cannot board, under any circumstances, BE SURE the cat is not released before the total 24 hour period. For example: If the cat has surgery in the afternoon, then releasing the cat the next morning would not be 24 hours. Find out the time of surgery and at least give the cat a 24 hour period to recuperate. BE SURE YOU PROVIDE PLENTY OF WET FOOD WITH VITAMIN C ADDED TO HELP THEM REGAIN THEIR STRENGTH!

While the cats are being boarded, you are able to observe how they are recovering and if the stools and urine are normal. It is essential to have a safe, warm and enclosed place for recovery and a high quality nutritious wet food with Vitamin C.

Members of FCCC have had personal experiences with cats that have been released 24 hours following surgery and have survived. We have also had experiences where they have not. We established our boarding guidelines according to several veterinarians and other non-profits. We give you the tools and skills to know how to do it humanely. It is up to each person to make their own decisions about boarding. Because of the varying circumstances of trapping, location and return, these decisions will vary. **It is our intention to set standards and offer choices** as to what is possible and teach them how to do it. From our personal experience and in accordance with other feral cat organizations, we offer information, suggestions and guidelines on how to board humanely. The decisions are up to you.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE BOARDING OF FERAL CATS:

Neighborhood Cats @ www.neighborhoodcats.org – Caring for Cats Held in Traps “During the trapping period and following surgery, the cats will be held in their traps – they should never be let out except while at the vet and when they’re being returned to their colony. We have encountered resistance at times from well-meaning people, including animal welfare professionals, who believe it’s cruel to leave a cat in a trap for more than 48 hours. Our experience is quite the contrary. Feral cats don’t act like domestics. Whether they’re in a large cage or a trap, they will tend to remain still in one place. They also prefer to be in tighter rather than wide open enclosures – apparently, they feel more secure. As long as the trap is long

enough (as least 34-36 inches) for them to huddle at one end and eat at the other, and the trap is kept covered with a thin sheet or blanket, they will be fine.

The instructions here are given with multiple cats in mind, but can be applied if you're only dealing with one or two cats for boarding following surgery. See photos at www.feralcatcaretakes.org under Caretaking

Materials needed:

- * Traps large enough to double as cages (recommend 36" long) and with rear doors (a must)
- Trap dividers (at least two), sometimes called trap isolators – they look like small pitchforks
- Newspaper
- Water dishes, small with flat bottoms
- Food dishes, small
- Cotton sheets (for trap covers)
- Towels small
- Plastic ground cloth or tarp
- (Optional) Long craft tables
- Clip ons for water so it won't spill in the trap.

Preparing the holding space:

Spread the plastic ground cloth or tarp on the area where the cat will be boarded. This will protect any urine or other waste from getting on the floor. If you have tables, put them on the ground cloth – using tables to rest the traps on makes it easier to clean and feed, as opposed to having to bend down to the floor. If you use tables, cover them with plastic. Place the traps several inches apart either on the ground or on the table, each one covered with a sheet. Have the rear and front doors of all traps facing the same way.

The holding-boarding space itself should be secure, dry, quiet and warm (*NOTE: In the hours after surgery, the cat's body temperature will drop; so the recovery space during that time MUST be warm. Do not place post-surgery cats in a cold room.*)

1. Use the trap dividers to isolate the cat on one end of the trap. You do this by lowering one divider through the bars of the trap from above, then by lowering a second divider right behind it, also from above. We highly recommend you use two trap dividers until you're comfortable with the process and know each cat. We've seen aggressive cats push aside the tongs of a single divider that wasn't perfectly inserted and escape, especially soon after they were trapped and were still wired. If you want to be even extra-safe, then you can get the cat to move from one end of the trap to the other usually by uncovering the sheet on the end you want to work on. The cat will seek cover at the other end. Occasionally, you might have to poke him or give the trap a little shake to get the cat to move.

2. While the cat's isolated on one end, line the bottom of the trap on the other end with newspaper. This will serve as "litter." If you try to use regular litter in a pan, the cat will just trash it and create even more of a mess. At the rear door end of the trap, put in the food and water in their dishes. Tomahawk now has an extender for the Feral 36" trap that provides for a litter box. (*NOTE: NO FOOD OR WATER AFTER 12:00 P.M. THE NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY.*) EXCEPT FOR KITTENS.

3. Go to the other end of the trap and isolate the cat against the end you just worked on. Again, line the bottom with newspaper and, if you're at the trap door end, put in the small towel or piece of fleece. The cats like lying on it, especially when it's up against the slanted trap door. If possible, work on the trap door end first and the rear door side last. That way, there's no chance the cat will end up sitting in the food and water after you've just put it in.

4. Ideally, repeat this process twice a day. This will keep the traps relatively clean and the cats calm. Don't try to be perfect – the space will probably end up smelling, but when the cats are released, you just roll up all the plastic, throw it away and the smell will dissipate. While the cats are being neutered, you can replace the ground cloth with a fresh one.”

Fostering a Feral Cat - Neighborhood cats @ www.neighborhoodcats.org – Fostering a feral cat safely means not letting the cat go in your bathroom and hoping somehow you'll get it in a carrier later. Or releasing it into your bedroom then trying to figure out how you'll ever get the cat out from under your bed. Remember that your environment is totally unfamiliar to a feral cat and you are perceived as a threat, especially in this strange new territory. You have to give the cat a space where he feels safe and where it can either learn about the new surroundings, if interested in doing so, or quietly retreat. That's what the Feral Cat Setup allows you to do. In some cases where someone has a good reason for trying to adopt a feral cat, the chances of a successful transition to indoor life are greatly increased by use of the Setup for at least two or three weeks until the cat is visually comfortable, at which time the cage door can be left open for the cat to come and go as he pleases. Note: This method can also be used for extended post-op boarding if the cat is being administered medication or needs extra time to recuperate.

1. Materials needed:

- Cage, at least 36" x 24" x 20"
- Small cat carrier (the smallest)
- Small litter pan (the smallest – can use aluminum baking pan)
- Yardstick
- Am extender
- Cotton sheet
- Newspaper
- Food and water dishes
- Twist tie
- Small towel
- We also recommend using a double Decker playpen for extended stays, see FCCC instructions.

Line the bottom of the cage with newspaper. Place the carrier in one back corner of the cage and then put the litter pan next to it in the other back corner. Make sure the carrier door, when it's open rests against the side of the cage and doesn't swing open into the middle. Put food dish and water dish inside.

2. Putting the cat inside:

- a) Have the vet deliver the cat to you inside the small carrier, or transfer the cat into the carrier from a trap with a rear door. Have the towel already in the carrier.
- b) Place the carrier (containing the cat) inside the cage, in the back corner.
- c) Close and lock the cage door
- d) Slide the yardstick through the bars of the cage so that it securely bars the carrier door from opening.
- e) Open the cage door, but always keep the door between your body and the interior of the cage. This way you can shut it quickly if you need to.
- f) Reach in and unlock the carrier door
- g) Close the cage door
- h) Remove the yardstick, then use it to move the carrier door against the side of the cage
- i) Secure the carrier door open by using the twist tie to tie it to the side of the cage.
- j) Cover the cage with the cotton sheet to calm the cat

4. Feeding and cleaning:

The cat's natural tendency will be to run into the carrier whenever you approach. If he gets bold, you might have to try removing the cotton cover from the cage, making a loud sound or gently poking it with the yardstick. Once the cat is in the carrier, untie the carrier door from the side of the cage, use the yardstick to close the carrier door and then bar the carrier door with the yardstick. You can then open the cage door and do what you have to. Also, you can lock the carrier door and remove the carrier and the cat while you clean.

5. Really uncooperative cat:

If the cat just won't go in the carrier, it's gotten pretty comfortable and is unlikely to bolt out of the cage. In this case, use the arm extender to reach in and pull out the litter pan, food dish, etc. BUT REMEMBER: keep the cage door in front of you at all times so you can close it quickly, and keep an on the cat in case it does try to bolt."

FCCC instructions for trap to trap transfer for post-surgery boarding when 36 or 34" trap and cages are not available and you are using smaller traps without a divider. Rear opening traps are required for trap to trap transfer. You will require someone to help you. Do not try to transfer a cat from trap to trap alone and be sure you are in a closed and secure area. The object is to transfer the cat from a soiled trap into a clean one that has been prepared for boarding. Prepare the clean trap with layers of newspapers and paper towel and place a soft piece of fleece or soft towel against the slanted opening of the trap to make it cozier. You will need a small plastic water bowl and plastic dish for food which you will put in after the cat is transferred.

Place both traps on an even solid surface with one trap braced up against the wall or something solid. Protect the surface with plastic or newspapers where the traps are being transferred. First, lift the rear opening of the clean trap about 8-9 inches. Place the closed sliding door of the trap with the cat in it, tightly up against the rear opening of the clean trap. Slowly open the rear sliding door of the soiled trap about 8-9 inches, keeping traps tightly together. Once both sliding doors are open and TIGHTLY TOGETHER, prod the cat gently with a ruler so it will run into the clean prepared trap. SHUT THE SLIDING DOOR. Have the food and water ready. Once the cat is against the corner with the fleece or towel, lift the rear door of the clean trap, just enough to slide the food and water in and SHUT QUICKLY AND LOCK. If possible clean the traps and transfer twice a day, depending on the need.

This method can be used successfully for several days of boarding. Be sure to keep the traps covered with a sheet or large towel, depending upon the temperature. Doors must be closed in the room they are occupying and it should be quiet and the temperature comfortable. DO NOT put your face close to the traps or fingers in the traps. Hands should be protected if you are in contact with the cat. Under no circumstances ever board cats in traps out of doors. **You can also connect the two traps for boarding to give more room and easier for cleaning.**

Returning the cat to the backyard where it was trapped: If you are returning the cat to a backyard where it was trapped, you may have the option of boarding it in a secure and safe small room or garage, adjacent to the yard, with a comfortable and secure hiding place, such as a cardboard box, small carrier or other similar type of warm bed with their food, water and a litter box. After the recovery period, they can be let it out into their secure and safe area. If the cat will be using the garage, shed, outbuilding or other structure in the yard as their shelter (where it was being held) be sure to leave a small opening to enter and leave when it is time to be let out. This will be their safe haven and it should be available for safety. If this is not the case, be sure to provide safe adequate shelter in the yard and put the litter and other smells from the area where the cat had been staying, around the outside their new shelter and provide clean bedding inside their new shelter. Feeding stations or scheduled daily feeding need to be provided.

Returning Adult Cats to other areas: The cats must be returned to the place where they were originally trapped (if safe). It is important to return the cat around the same time of day or night it was trapped. Take your time, when you arrive. It may take a while for them to adjust to their

surroundings. They can be disoriented and frightened from their ordeal. Place the carrier or trap near the original place where the cats was trapped, providing it is quiet. If not, move it to a place in close proximity. Carefully open the door of the trap or carrier and step back, allowing them to exit when they feel safe to do so. Some cats will dash out immediately and others may remain longer. Never leave until they are out and safe. Be sure to provide plenty of good food and fresh water at their usual feeding place. Never under any circumstances release a cat back to an unfamiliar area. Never release a cat back to an area where there is no known food source or oversight. Take the time to canvas the area and if it is on private property, be sure you have the consent of the property owners. FCCC considers this cruel abandonment. Be sure the shelters are in place.

Pregnant female: The choice for a pregnant female to have surgery should be considered seriously. The surgical procedure for a pregnant female is performed routinely and with the proper post-operative care, she will do well. We recommend minimum post-operative confinement from three to five days, depending upon the length of pregnancy and how many litters the female has had. Surgery is recommended because of the high rate of euthanasia in the shelters for kittens, both domestic and feral. There are also many high risk factors regarding the kitten's survival, being born of a feral mother in unsafe or hazardous conditions. Kitten mortality rate is about 65%. Many mothers die in childbirth due to inexperience, mal-nourishment or complications of birth and infection. We have personally experienced this on several occasions. Complicated births in feral cats is not uncommon and they are a horrible end for the cat. Consider also, that you may not have another chance to trap the mother or the kittens after they are born.

One complication of trapping when there are mothers and kittens present, is that the kittens should be rescued first. If you can see that the kittens have been weaned and are eating wet food, even then, trapping the mother first can leave the kittens vulnerable unless they are in a safe place and there is someone to watch over them and see to their safety. If the mother is inadvertently trapped and cannot be brought back immediately, continued trapping until the kittens are all trapped is essential. The rule is RESCUE THE KITTENS FIRST. Sometimes, the mother can be trapped immediately after the kittens, by using the kittens to attract her into the trap, or using the mother to attract the kittens. This should be done with help and someone who is experienced in trapping.

Lactating Female: Spaying a lactating female can be troublesome unless the kittens have been identified and are safely being cared for. Following surgery, there can be complications at the surgical site while nursing. Infection and psychological factors could also interfere with her nurturing instincts. Leaving un-weaned kittens unattended for any length of time is not an easy decision. However many rescue groups do spay lactating females and bring them back under various conditions. If the kittens can be rescued with the mother, then she can nurse and be spayed at a later date. We recommend that if a lactating female is inadvertently trapped the above guidelines be considered. If there are females and kittens present at the location where you are trapping, trap in the morning, so the cats can be taken immediately to the veterinarian to see if the female is lactating and not be held overnight and/or rescue the kittens immediately. If the kittens cannot be rescued, her prolonged absence can put the kittens in jeopardy. Knowing the whereabouts of the kittens and their ages can help with your decision. It can be a complicated issue and each situation is unique and needs humane decisions.

Notify your veterinarian, in advance, if you decide not to have surgery for the lactating female and must be notified immediately so you can either return her to a safe setting or bring in the kittens to nurse.

In any case, when you bring her back, if you do not know the whereabouts of the kittens, take notice of where she goes, which will probably be directly to the kittens. Keep an eye on her during the next weeks and set up a separate feeding area just for her and the kittens close to where she returned. In this way, you may be able to keep an eye on her and the kittens and

they will be easier to capture. It is always a difficult choice to make and the circumstances may vary. You can also capture the Mom and her kittens and bring inside to nurse until weaned for adoption. If the Mom is feral, she is to be returned to a safe place with food and oversight.

Humane Trapping: Trapping can be more effective if the cats are being fed at a certain time and place. If you trap in the morning, food should be withheld the night before. If you trap in the evening, withhold food 8-10 hours prior to trapping. Under most circumstances, it is not advisable to withhold the food longer than 24 hours unless there are special circumstances and the area is being closely monitored. When cats and kittens go for longer periods, they tend to leave the area in search of food and take risks that could jeopardize their lives. If you are trapping in areas, with random or no regular feeding schedule in place, we recommend before you begin to trap, you first organize a feeding schedule with persons who will be responsible for long-term care and set up feeding stations and shelter.

Equipment: Various sizes of traps, newspaper, paper towel, large plastic bags, can opener, spoons, aluminum foil, paper food holders, small paper plates, sheets, towels, material to cover traps. Food to be placed in the traps should be of human consumption, such as tuna, mackerel, sardines, chicken, smoked turkey and Kentucky Colonel Chicken.

Traps recommended: We recommend the Tomahawk Live transfer Traps 36" x 10" x 12" with trap the isolator (Kit2 when ordering). A 34" trap can also be used. These traps must be used for post-operative boarding and treating before release. Be sure they are transfer traps. They can also be a temporary holding space for kittens. TO ORDER TOMAHAWK KIT2 TRAP: 1-800-272-8727 Smaller sizes can be used when trapping, but the Kit2 should be used for post-operative boarding care and not smaller traps. *Be sure you order the Isolators (2).*

Preparing the Traps: Line the bottom of the trap with approximately two sheets of newspaper or paper towel. It should not be thick enough to spring the trap. Cats do not like the feel of wire under their feet. Place the food, all the way to the back of the trap. Traps can be made from folded aluminum foil and can be wedged up against the back of the trap and are less likely to move about or be pulled over the pedal. Traps should be placed on even terrain. Movement of the trap will discourage entry and the trap may inadvertently spring. Be sure the traps are steady and the opening is not impaired. Do not put any type of sharp container into the trap, such as a can of food. The cats and kittens could thrash about and injure themselves. Do not use a sedative to trap a cat unless it is an emergency situation and the sedative is being administered and monitored by an experienced veterinarian and staff who will immediately take the cat.

Caution: Under no circumstances, leave the traps unattended. Even if it is your backyard you will need to check the traps regularly and place them in a safe place. Unattended traps, with cats and kittens left inside, is totally unacceptable and dangerous. Traps should be at a safe distance so as not to disturb the cats, but still be easily accessible for viewing. Binoculars can be used to monitor the traps, or if the area is fairly quiet, the caretaker can usually hear the traps spring. They have an all too familiar sound to one with experience in trapping. Checking the traps too often can undermine your trapping success. If you are trapping with uncovered traps remember the cats are completely vulnerable. The longer the trap is left out with a cat or kitten in it, the more they are stressed and this stress signal goes out like radar to the other cats and can make continued trapping much more difficult. Problems can occur when trapping cats and kittens. Someone needs to be present as a constant monitor and traps must be covered immediately. Once the cats are in the trap, remove it to a quiet area away from other traps.

Lift the cover to see if you have the correct animal. Place the cover immediately back over the trap and place it in the vehicle they will be transported in, as this will help to calm them. **Never transport a trapped cat in an open vehicle, under any circumstances.**

Success in trapping: Depends upon many complex issues, which can include the number of cats or kittens to be trapped, the location where trapping is to occur, cooperation of caretakers and others in the area, various unknown conditions under which trapping is to occur and many other factors that can prolong the endeavor and require special conditions and preparations. You may also encounter a cat or two that has become what we refer to as “trap shy”. This usually happens after the cat or kitten has seen others being trapped. In these cases you will need the wisdom of a Solomon and the patience of a Saint and possibly a drop trap.

Do not trap in inclement weather. Cats and kittens in traps are traumatized and are susceptible to heat stroke. Rain and stormy weather is not recommended for trapping unless you have an emergency situation.

Trapping Kittens: We recommend that if the mother is present, the kittens be trapped or taken by hand before she is trapped. Her presence is essential to their survival. Kittens should be at least partially weaned before they are taken, unless they have been abandoned or are in jeopardy. They will need to be bottle fed or the mother brought in with the kittens if present. Special care of un-weaned kittens is essential and because of their age, trapping may not be necessary. At four-six weeks they will not be entirely weaned, but generally feral and rescued kittens are easier to domesticate between 4-8 weeks of age. There are really no set rules. Each little soul must be considered separately and given every chance for a better life.

If the kittens have never had human contact, they will be easily frightened and stressed in the trap. Special care must be taken, due to various circumstances that may have transpired prior to trapping. It is not unusual to hear a mournful cry from the mother as she sees her kittens taken. They may also pace back and forth in stress, not knowing what is happening to their kittens. Mother cats have also been known to charge and attack. It can be a very difficult situation for everyone. Mother cats have been known to call and look for their kittens for several days.

If you can manage to trap at least two kittens (if there is more than one); it works out better for the kittens as they can comfort each other. If you get one, always stay and try for at least one more or more....

If the mother is present, it might be possible to set a trap up against the trap the kittens are enclosed in and trap the mother. Or, you can put the kittens in a carrier with fleece to keep them warm and then set the trap up against the carrier to see if the mother will go into the trap. Many Moms have been trapped in this manner. Be sure the kittens are warm and put some fleece bedding inside the trap or a heating disc. if they are to remain there as bait for Mom. The length of time the kittens can remain to lure the Mom will depend upon their age and circumstances.

Discuss with your veterinarian: - the best time to spay and neuter the kittens. There is pertinent data that recommends surgery as being safe at 8-12 weeks or a weight of two to three pounds. Surgery should be performed by a veterinarian **with experience in this field**. Make sure the kittens are not debilitated or sickly as they may need special nourishment and care before surgery can be performed. You and the veterinarian can decide what the best treatment for them .

Post-surgical confinement for kittens: Kittens need to be in a safe, warm and protected place following surgery in preparation for domestication and adoption. A quiet room away from noise and drafts while recuperating is essential. A bathroom is a good first home following surgery. Ask your veterinarian how to care for the kittens post-operatively and what to look for if treatment is indicated. See Domesticating Kittens on our web site www.feralcatcaretakers.org under Caretaking. They must have a good quality of wet food, nutritional milk supplement and make sure they are eating and pooping. Since you will be there feeding them personally until they adjust to you and their surroundings, their care is in your hands. Ask the experts!!

“Ideally, all trapped kittens should not be returned. However, this may not always be possible, especially with older kittens. Make sure the kitten is being returned to a safe, place with responsible long-term care with plenty of food and someone to watch over them. If they have relatives at the return location, this will help.” **We do not recommend that any kitten live outside if there is a possible humane alternative.**

Documenting the number of cats and their status at the home site.

Complete the Questionnaire for the site to be trapped. It will point you in the right direction you will to implement the TNR program. For example, if the cats are located in an alley adjacent to businesses and private property or in a public place, you will need to assess the feeding and sheltering available at the site, as well as persons who are feeding and cat friendly or, you may need to better organize the feeding and shelter locations and persons involved in the care.

Getting the neighborhood involved. Put together a flyer or simple letter. This may include business or private property owners. If there are people feeding the cats, you will need to elicit their trust and involvement. Bring together as many cat friendly people as you can to organize and assist with the endeavor. All persons who are interested and cat friendly should be given pertinent documents relative to the project.

Under no circumstances enter properties without the proper consent and cooperation of involved parties at the location. The exception to this rule is if you see a cat or kitten in need of immediate care or abusive situations. Immediately notify a neighbor or other persons in the vicinity or call local authorities and file a report as to what has taken place. Be sure to keep a record of the event. Other, more drastic measures may need to be taken.

Agreements – Before entering any property, even if it is a backyard, some form of agreement should be agreed to and signed. You can use an Agreement, a legal document or create a simplified version of the agreement tailored to the situation. Your permission to enter the property and implement TNVR should be agreed to by a responsible party. Agreements can also offer you an opportunity to solicit funds for the project, allow you to enter and trap on the property in question and have it become a document of your endeavor and success.

Where do we find feral cats and kittens? Single family dwellings, apartment houses, workplace, businesses, large industrial sites, parks, campuses, backyards, behind restaurants, hotels, alleys, under houses, in abandoned buildings, on the periphery of airports, marinas, vacant lots, medical facilities and in neighborhoods, are a few places that feral cats congregate for survival. In most situations, there is usually more than one person feeding the cats, although it is rarely enough for their survival. If the cats are foraging in dumpsters and garbage cans for food, it will not sustain them and they will look very sickly. Even if the area is an open field, feeding stations and long-term managed care will need to be provided. Do all that you can to make contact with responsible and cat friendly persons so your project will be protected and successful.

Posting trap notices – Check with your shelter to see if a permit is indicated and what the guidelines are. If a permit to trap is not indicated, it is still important to notify the neighbors that you are trapping so they can keep their domestic free roaming cats indoors during the time trapping occurs. If a domestic cat with a collar inadvertently goes into the trap, it can immediately be released. However, if there are free roaming domestic or abandoned cats without any identification this can present a problem in deciding whether to take the cat in and have it neutered.

Finding a low-cost spay-neuter clinic or veterinarian – Pick up a Pet Press at your local pet stores, contact animal welfare groups in your area, local veterinarians, spay/neuter clinics and spay/neuter events can be a good source. Get all the necessary information before bringing cats to spayed or neutered. Adoption venues can also be a good source for spay/neuter

information, but remember that you will be inquiring about feral/`stray cats and kittens. **Contact us at feralcatcenter@aol.com for resources and other online information.**

Veterinary services for feral cats and kittens – Chose a veterinarian or clinic that has experience with feral and rescued cats and kittens. Upon examination, the cat or kittens may not be healthy enough for surgery and will require medical care. If you have chosen a spay-neuter clinic, a full service veterinarian may not be available. It is important to know of a full-service veterinarian who has experience with feral and rescued cats and kittens in advance of trapping. Ask for a courtesy rescue discount.

We recommend the following treatment be given to each feral cat while being spayed or neutered. Vaccinations, micro-chipped, treatment for wounds, worms, ear mites, fleas or any other obvious problems that need attention. The ears should be cleaned. Dental assessment and blood analysis, if indicated. Additional tests can be discussed with your veterinarian or clinic. Older cats will need blood tests and dental evaluation.

Making advance preparations for post-surgical care and return – Refer to Instructions

For Humane Trapping of Feral or Rescued Cats and Kittens – In all circumstances, preparations for post-surgical care must be organized in advance. The more prepared and informed you are the smoother it will be for you and the cats. The options and guidelines are outlined in the trapping instructions for the feral cats. We recommend the boarding days as minimum required. Preparation and planning is essential for successful recovery and return.

Foster care for adults – Adopting a Feral Cat – In some cases an adult feral cat cannot be returned to the original site due to construction or hostile situations or has become friendly and can be considered for foster care and adoption, usually by persons involved in the trapping. Most feral cat caretakers have feral cats they have taken into their homes under numerous circumstances and some have bonded during colony caretaking. Volumes could be written about the stories of caretakers and their feral cats and how they found their way into their homes. This should be recognized as a special consideration. Most trapped feral cats will not meet the requirements for a standard adoption venue, but will adapt to living inside with the caretaker or a safe sanctuary. If their lives are in jeopardy, sometimes the only option they have is the option of these suggestions. If you do not want a lap cat, then consider bringing in a feral. Follow our guidelines about caring for them indoors and you might be surprised at what happens! Adopting a feral cat document is on our website www.feralcatcaretakers.org

Is the cat feral or stray? An excellent way to determine this is while the cat is being boarded post-surgery. A stray cat will usually act less frightened during boarding, but can be very aggressive. During boarding, is the perfect time to assess the cats and kittens reaction to humans. We have had 5 month old kittens who have been ready for adoption in 4 weeks and tiny ones that are still hissing after 2 weeks. It is not a one size fits all situations. Each cat and kitten must be evaluated separately by more than one person before a decision is made for their lifetime care and safety.

Relocation: Do not attempt to relocate cats unless you are fully informed as to what steps need to be taken. We have successfully relocated cats that are in jeopardy and also into safer situations. Refer to Managed Care document available in the Feral Cat Packet. See photo of relocation cage.

The Criteria for Return and long-term Management: Responsible and committed long-term care should be in place and organized before returning cats or kittens back to their home site. It is inhumane to trap-spay and neuter a cat and knowingly return them to an unsupervised or low maintenance situation that is not monitored with no caretaker in place. This does not infer that they should not be trapped, nor does it suggest that they be trapped and euthanized. We strongly believe in their right to life and in doing so, we honor the cats by recommending committed care. It is up to us to make the effort and right decisions – whether they are in or out

of the traps. Responsible, long-term commitment is what feral cat caretaking is all about. We are their voices and guardians. **NEVER BRING A CAT BACK FROM SURGERY TO AN UN-MANAGED CARE SITUATION. The cat will starve and become sick and flea infested. The neighbors will taunt and sometimes kill the cat and worse.**

This is not how TNR should be introduced to our communities. It only creates hostility and places the cats in jeopardy!

Depending upon the circumstances and the amount of cats, it can take several weeks or longer to achieve a stable group of healthy cats and bring the population under control. Any new cats will need to be trapped, spayed-neutered and given proper treatment and post-surgical care. The basics of long-term managed care should include daily feeding, fresh water, provision of safe, waterproof, warm, insulated sheltering with continued monitoring and responsible caretaking.

Our recommendations are from our personal experiences and embody our vision for feral cats and their caretakers. They may change or be modified with time, research and experience. The challenge is to reduce the population by saving lives and increase the quality of the cats and kittens existence. If we do our work honorably, the numbers will be reduced by humane population control with long-term managed caretaking by responsible and committed caretakers.

We sincerely understand the caretakers will do their best to insure the survival of those entrusted to their care and that their decisions and actions will be implemented according to their circumstances and heartfelt commitment. We are all, always learning and innovating.

A prayer for trapping feral cats: Dearest ones. I am here with a loving heart so that you may have a better life. I know you are frightened. I embrace you in the light of spirit and love. Your experience will be over soon and you will feel much better. Everything will be OK!

A prayer for returning feral cats: Do not be afraid dearest ones. Today, I am returning you to the place where you were born so that you may thrive and be healthy under the watchful eyes of your caretaker. It is not the perfect place I would have chosen for your home, but for now, it is all I can offer you. You are dear to my heart and special in my life. I embrace your spirit and know that you will be lovingly cared for in the years ahead.

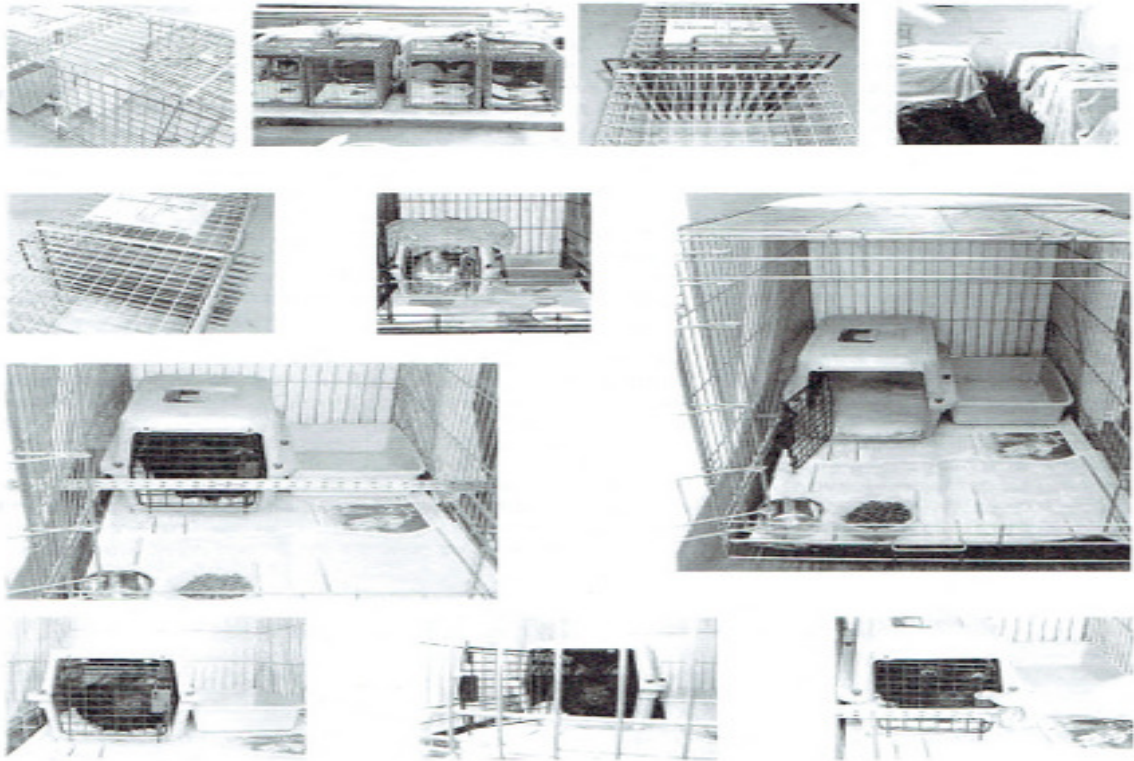
Be safe and hearty and know that you are not forgotten.

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**SCROLL DOWN TO NEXT PAGE - FOR TRAPPING
AND BOARDING PHOTOS**



Photographs:
Our thanks and acknowledgement for the photographs presented in the Third Class,
Preparations Prior to Trapping, Trapping and Arranging for Post-Surgical Care.

To:
Meredith Weiss: p.66, p.67 top, p.70 in the Neighborhood Cats TNR Handbook 2004.
Bryan Kortis, Neighborhood Cats NY for the balance of the photos included in this class,
originally for the Neighborhood Cats TNR Handbook 2004.