



Lollypop Farm
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How to Trap Feral Cat(s)

Step One: What is the situation?

Determine how many cat(s) you think need to be trapped and if you think you can maintain the colony. To find out what maintaining a colony involves, see our handout "Maintaining a Feral Cat Colony".

Step Two: Before you trap

It is recommended that you establish a feeding routine if you have not already. Feed the cat(s) at the same time and in the same place every day. It is even more helpful to place the food inside of a box to acclimate the cat(s) to eating inside of something.

Step Three: Get the traps

Buy, rent or borrow a humane trap such as Havhart® Traps. Traps should be large enough to hold a raccoon, do not trap cat(s) in a small humane trap designed for a squirrel. Lollypop Farm has a limited number of traps to rent. Please call in advance for availability to our Admissions Department at 223-1330 ext. 275.

Step Four: Other supplies

You will need small paper plates to put inside of the trap with an enticing food piled on top. We recommend that you use something that is oil based because it is less likely to freeze in the colder months. Tuna, mackerel or sardines are all good choices.

You will need something to cover each trap with a towel/sheet/blanket. You also need to have a warm, dry place to keep the cat(s) until you can bring them to Lollypop Farm. Inside a garage/shed/barn is a good place to keep them safe from predators.

Step Five: Preparation for Trapping

Plan to trap around their normal feeding time. You will want to get the traps ready all at once in a location away from where you will be placing them. Set the trip plate by lifting the door and securing it in place along the top of the cage with the "catch". Place your enticing food in the middle of the back section. To make the trap more comfortable for the cat you can line it with a piece of newspaper.

When you are ready, quietly begin taking the traps into the space where you want to catch the cat(s). It is best to place them as close to existing structures as possible. For example, place them along the side of your garage, house or shed but make sure nothing will interfere with the door. If it is winter time look for tracks in the snow and place the traps where you can see that the cat(s) travel. It needs to be on level ground. Stagger them and put the openings in different directions. Make sure to leave the door accessible.

We suggest you try "trap training", by leaving the trap unset (use twist ties or zip ties to hold trap door open) and cover with a large towel for at least a week. Begin feeding the cat(s) inside the trap. Feed only inside the trap to get them accustomed to the trap. Cat(s) will not have any incentive to enter the trap if there is food available outside it. Start by putting the food in front of the trap and working your way back each day during routine feeding so that the cat(s) will get use to seeing and smelling the trap in the area.

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Step Six: Trap the cat(s)

Set the trap to close the night prior (be sure to remove the twist ties or zip ties that were used to hold the trap door open). **Do not feed the cat(s) the day/night before you are to trap.** The cat(s) will be hungry, thereby increasing the chances of them entering the trap. Be sure to notify others who may feed the cat(s) to withhold food before trapping. If you have a TNR (feral cat trap-neuter-release) surgery scheduled, trapping should be done the night before the surgery appointment.

Never leave the traps unattended! This is a waiting game and you need to keep your eye on the traps. The cat(s) will be fearful and you will want to get them into a quiet space as soon as possible. Don't be alarmed if the cat is highly agitated. When you see that you have trapped the cat, slowly walk up to the cage and cover it with a towel/sheet/blanket. This will cut down on the trapped cat's stress and it *will* settle down. Move the cat(s) to a safe location such as a garage/shed/barn. This will reduce the stress/distraction for the other cat(s) you are trying to trap.

****Safety** Never stick your fingers in the cage!** Always use the handle and wear gloves to protect yourself. Never try to grab a feral cat if he/she is escaping or open to the trap to feed or touch the cat.

Step Seven: Other Considerations

Lactating Females/Kittens – If you catch a female you believe to be lactating she still needs to be spayed but it is important to get her back to her kittens as soon as possible if you do not catch them as well. One technique is to place the caged mother cat behind another empty trap to attempt to lure the kittens into it. Vice versa, you can lure the mother by putting her kittens in a cage behind an empty one. Mother cat(s) can still lactate after being spayed.

Unwanted Guests – You may catch local wildlife that is looking for a free meal. Skunks, raccoons and opossums are all possibilities. Opossums may hiss at you but will waddle away when you open the door. Skunks will not spray through your towel/sheet/blanket. Raccoons can be dangerous and you should call animal control.

Step Eight: Bring the cat(s) to Lollypop Farm

For the Feral Cat Program:

Per the arrangements you have made with us, transport the cat(s) to Lollypop Farm to be admitted or for their spay/neuter surgery. Drop off time is at 8am the morning of your scheduled appointment. Refer to your appointment reminder for instructions.

For Admission:

It is advised that you call ahead to notify the Admission Department that you will be bringing in a feral cat for admission at 223-1330 ext. 275. Normal business hours are Tuesday-Friday, 11am to 6:30pm and Saturday-Monday, 10am to 4:30pm.