

Before returning a borrowed cnycc trap, please wash thoroughly with soap and water, then disinfect with 1 part regular clorox bleach to 32 parts water, then rinse. A toilet brush works very well for scrubbing inside the trap.

CNY Cat Coalition Feral Guidelines / Trapping Tips

- Trap/Neuter/Release or TNR is a proven method of reducing the feral cat population in the most humane way. A feral colony should have a caretaker who provides food and water daily and appropriate shelter. The cats should also be monitored for any illness or injury and for any new cats that might need to be altered and vaccinated.
- Even though a cat may seem to be friendly by rubbing around your ankles, picking him up to put into a carrier is quite another thing. Use of a humane trap is advised for both the safety of cat and human!
- To better guarantee trapping a cat on the night before a surgery appointment, use the trap as a feeding station for about a week prior to the appointment. Feed at the same time each day, preferably in the early evening. **Do this training only if the trap is safely in your yard or is under constant surveillance by you.** Other people can activate the trap and make off with a cat—more likely than not, to do it harm. If you are trapping in a place other than your own property, do not be obvious or bring attention to yourself. Other people can be a distraction to the ferals, disrupting their routine and your success.
- Try to observe your colony to learn which cats are female, pregnant or nursing. Remember that calicos (white, orange, black) and tortoiseshells (orange and black) are always female. Muted or dilute calicos/torties are white, tan/light orange and grey. Most orange cats are male, but treat unknown orange cats as possible females.
- If kittens are young enough, they might be able to be socialized and adopted. They can be taken from their mother when they have been weaned and are eating soft food at about 4-5 weeks old. Any older and it gets harder with each passing day to socialize them for adoption.

Preparation

- Securely tie the trap door open, so there is no chance of it being activated. Use twine, a bungee cord or even a stick pushed through the wire openings under the door.
- Place it on level ground. If it rocks or tips when a cat tries to enter, the cat may get scared and not go in.
- If the trap is not under cover (garage, covered porch, etc.), use a 30 gal. plastic trash bag, or similar covering, to protect the food and cat. The plastic should be secured over the top and two sides with bungees or twine - tape may not survive in the rain. If you use bungees, don't let them make the trap wobble. A towel helps on top of the plastic so the rain will be "softened" and the plastic won't flap too much. Placing a towel under the trap can help to keep it steady and protect the cat when there is snow.
- A couple of pages of newspaper can be cut to fit over the floor wires to make it more inviting for the cat to enter. Do not have the paper roll up the sides of the trap or interfere with the footplate or door.
- Sometimes placing material from the surrounding environment inside the trap and partially on the trip plate itself helps to encourage the cats to enter. A towel or small piece of blanket works too. Use care not to obstruct the action of the trap.
- Ideally, all food should be placed in the trap when using this system to "train" the cats to not be afraid of going in. This can be difficult when there is a large population and you are using only one

trap. As a caretaker, you know your cats better than anyone else. After catching the more friendly ones in the colony, you will need to feed those already neutered cats away from the trap. Locate the trap where the more feral cats to be caught are more likely to be. Water should be available outside the trap at all times.

- Do not change anything about the routine of using the trap to train or using it to actually trap. The cats will become suspicious!

Trapping

- Do not trap until you have a vet or clinic appointment for the cat(s). Do not feed the night before or the day of trapping. The day before you want to actually start trapping do not feed as much as normal, so they will be hungry. Use only a small amount of food when you actually set the trap. Most of the food will go to waste when the trapped cat is upset and too afraid to eat. Best to trap in the early evening (if that's their regular feeding time) so the cat does not have to be in the trap excessively long.
- The evening before the appointment, remove the twine, bungees or stick from the door and set the trap.
- Do not place any food inside the trap. Instead, place the same wet food normally fed on a FLAT paper plate or several 6" square sheets of newspaper. Don't surprise the cat with sardines only on that night or you may find you have the only cat who won't touch it! And you'll have blown a vet appointment.
- Place the plate of food on the ground and then lower the back of the trap over the food, so the food comes through the wires into the trap. The food should be located as far to the rear of the trap as possible, so the cat will have to step on the footplate while trying to get at the food.
- Observe the trap from a safe location so as not to upset the cat.

After the Cat Has Been Trapped

- Once trapped, immediately place a sheet over all sides of the trap to calm the cat down.
- Observe each cat after trapping. If it has a "tipped" ear, it has already been spayed or neutered. A tip is a clean, straight cut removing just the tip of one ear while the cat is under anesthesia. This is a universal, global sign for being altered. Unfortunately, some vets do "notching" which can appear like an injury from a cat fight rather than a surgical cut. If an ear looks notched, take the cat to the vet anyway.
- If a cat is trapped, and it has already been spayed or neutered, release it and reset the trap. If it is a cat which should be altered, but not the specific one you wanted, take this cat anyway to the vet. If you release it and try to catch it later, it may not go in the trap again.
- The exception is a nursing mother cat. She must be released until her kittens can be found and caught. Sometimes you can tell if a female is lactating if, when observed from underneath the trap, the fur around each nipple is matted down. If you can't tell, observe the cat again from below in about 8-10 hours; her mammary glands should be swollen with milk if she has nursing kittens.
- Move the trap, sheet and all, to a safe protected location under cover for the night. Set plastic on the ground or floor first, then newspaper, then wood blocks (2x4s), so that feces and urine will drop through the trap floor. See that there is a bit of airflow under the sheet while still keeping the trap covered.
- This method creates an automatic fast for the cat before surgery, as the food should drop out of the trap when it's moved. And there is no dish or bowl inside to injure the cat.

- It is important to act quietly around ferals – during transporting, at clinics and in their recovery care. Take care not to bang the trap or carrier into things, limit stacking traps on top of one another and, overall, take your time when working around these very scared animals. This will help to reduce the stress on them.
- Remember, once you have caught a cat, put out more food for the rest of the colony.
- When transporting the cat and trap to the veterinarian, keep the sheet loosely over the trap. Hold onto the door end and the handle, so the trap won't rock back and forth and upset the cat further.
- Use plastic and newspapers, towels or a flattened cardboard box in your vehicle to protect the interior. DO NOT place the trap in a trunk or open pickup bed. This is too dangerous for the cat.
- Bring a cat carrier with a clean towel to the appointment, as the cat will be placed in the carrier while still under anesthesia. The towel may not be returned if it gets soiled and has to be changed at the clinic. It's best to have the carrier cleaned before use. Cats are very sensitive to the odor of previous occupants of a carrier or cage. So wash them with hot, soapy water, rinse and allow to air dry. If you are unsure of the health of a previous cat in the trap/carrier, disinfecting is advised using a mix of 1 part bleach to 32 parts water prior to washing with soap.
- Be sure to label the trap and carrier with your name and phone number so they can be easily returned to you.

Releasing a cat

- Before you start to trap, become very familiar with how the door opens, so, if you have to release a cat or other animal, you can raise the door quickly without it getting stuck part way open. The cat will attempt to get through the small opening and could injure itself.

Wildlife

- It is common to catch raccoons, possums, skunks, rabbits, and even squirrels, especially if you're in a rural area. To release an animal, orient the trap door facing away from any potential danger, such as road traffic, etc. Stand to the side or rear of the trap, open the door swiftly and use a bungee cord to hold the door open while you make a rapid get-away! Leave the trap alone until the animal exits on its own. Do not attempt to rush this and upset the animal any more than it already is. Depending on the area, you might have to leave the trap with the door held open for quite a while.

To trap a trap-shy feral cat

- Try using a small towel dosed with catnip in the back of the trap. The downside is that the cat may rub against the outside of the trap so vigorously that the door may snap shut from the trap's movement.
- Use an empty gallon or half gallon plastic bottle to prop up the door of the trap. Place the top of the bottle under one of the front corners of the door. The bottle can be used even while training and the door tied up. The cats must become used to the bottle during the training period. The trap door must be secured open in addition to the bottle use during this phase.

To trap a specific feral cat

- Tie non-stretchy twine around the bottle handle and stand or sit far enough away from the trap for the cats to go into the trap to eat. When the specific cat that you want is in the trap, use the twine to pull the bottle away from the door, which will close as it normally would. The door should be untied prior to the actual trapping. Ahead of time, practice several times pulling the bottle away fast so you know it will not get caught on anything and you know how much force you will need.

Use of a drop trap

- These can be used when a cat is trap-shy. It works to drop down over the cat rather than having the cat walk into an enclosed space. These can be built by a handy person but a folding version is now available for purchase online from Tomahawk (www.livetraps.com - DT1-Neighborhood Cats Drop Trap) for about \$100. They are 36" x 36" x 14" high. Follow the same procedures as for a regular trap but make sure the cat is well within the space before activating the drop trap. The web has great instructions on how to use this type of trap.

Surgery recovery

- A cat should be kept confined for a short recovery after being spayed or neutered. This lessens the chance that an infection will develop or that an active female will open up the incision with disastrous results. Follow discharge instructions from the vet or clinic regarding food after surgery.
- A male cat's incision has no stitches and will be similar to an open wound. It will take 2-3 days for this area to scab over, so that bacteria will not be as apt to start an infection. A female cat will have stitches, which in most cases, will gradually dissolve and do not have to be removed. True feral cats would have to be anesthetized again to remove the stitches. The clinic or vet hospital will provide discharge instructions regarding this.
- Keep the cat in a 3-foot-long wire dog cage or small room for its recovery period.
 - Males: 3 days; Females: 7 days or longer if possible.
- If using a cage, have everything set up before putting the cat in it. A towel bed or box on its side should be in the back and a small litter pan (WalMart has one) and non-tip food and water bowls in the front. An alternative to a towel or a box is to use a small carrier with the door braced open and a towel inside. The cat will most likely hide in it, so all that needs to be done to release the cat is to shut the door of the carrier and transport the cat. This is the easiest way to move a feral for release.
- A plastic shoebox can also be used for a litter pan if the cage or large carrier is too small to hold a regular litter pan. Have several layers of newspaper on the floor of the cage but only in the front, in case the water is spilled. Do not put papers in the back, as if they get wet, the cat would have to be disturbed in order to remove the papers. Hope that the papers will contain the spill before getting to the cat's bed. This is another advantage of using a small carrier for its bed.
- Place a sheet over the cage except for the front door, so the cat will be encouraged to hide in the back and not feel so exposed. If not too hot, the sheet can also be pulled down over the front after the cat is inside. That way, it may not try quite as much to get out through the wires of the door.
- Have another person help with the cat's transfer into the cage. While one person holds the closed carrier or trap at the open door of the cage, the other can reach around and open the door. If the cat's in a trap, a bungee is helpful to keep the trap door open, but you have to be quick to release the trap door down or the cat might decide to run back into the trap. The second person can also use a piece of cardboard or similar rigid material to screen the cage door openings around the carrier or trap. This is to prevent the cat from running out of the carrier, turning right around and running out through the space between the carrier and cage. Sometimes it might take a while for the cat to come out of the carrier, as it may still have anesthesia in its system or be very afraid. Have patience and encourage it to walk out. Slow is always better; quick actions may spook the cat into getting loose.

Handling

- While in the cage, most ferals will not be aggressive with their caretakers. Move VERY slowly whenever you are cleaning or changing the food, water or litter. Litter should be torn up newspapers, Yesterday's News or pine wood pellets, as clay litter can stick to the incision.
- Talk softly to the cat as he knows your voice and will feel less upset.
- Never take your eyes off the cat whenever the cage door is open. Open it only as much as you need to remove the items. Keep the water bowl closest to the door (which is also farthest from the cat). Never leave the door unlatched while you retrieve food, water or other items for use inside the cage. It only takes a second for the cat to bolt out the door.
- Use a back-scratcher or reach-it tool if the cat moves anything to the rear of the cage. Do not try to reach in with your arm. If the cat is aggressive, a dustpan can be used as a shield for the hand reaching into the cage. The cat will strike the dustpan and not you.
- Releasing the feral: Initially, try to place the cage in an area where the cat can be let out and go directly outside, or where you can easily move the entire set up (without water bowl) to a door for release. Be careful to hold onto the bottom pan of the cage if you have to move it, as the pan will slide out if the cage is tipped. This lets the cat escape through the larger openings in the bottom of the cage. It is much harder to move a feral from a small room to the outdoors, because you need to catch it again.
- Release the cat from its cage or carrier with the door facing away from you and any potentially dangerous traffic or situations.
- If you notice any problems during recovery, contact the vet or clinic per their instructions.

Relocating ferals

- It is not recommended to relocate ferals to another colony. They can become disoriented in a new environment, driven out, and even killed by area cats.
- If you must relocate a feral to another colony, they must be confined for a lengthy time in order for them to understand that they are in a new home. Most people with suitable barns, farms, stables, etc. will not spend the time or effort to care for ferals in a cage or enclosed space. If you are able to find a perspective property owner, you may have to visit daily to care for the feral during its confinement. It is also preferable to relocate two ferals from the same colony together.

Equipment

- Equipment and accessories should be washed and then disinfected between cats or before returning borrowed items. After a scrubbing with hot soapy water and rinsing, use 1 part Clorox bleach to 32 parts water to disinfect. A toilet brush is a handy tool for cleaning traps. To finish, spray down everything again with water.

Thank you for caring about the cats and taking the responsibility to prevent future litters.