

# Trapping Protocol to Achieve Optimum Success

## BEFORE YOU TRAP

### Establish a Feeding Schedule

Feed the cat the same time and place every day and remove any uneaten food after 30-40 minutes. Early morning or dusk is the best time to feed; the cat quickly learns this routine. Remove empty food bowls to keep other animals like skunks and raccoons away from the feeding area; always provide fresh water for the cat. Advise your neighbors not to feed the cat and to keep their pet cats indoors as much as possible while you are actively trapping.

Place the un-set trap near the feeding station with the door tied open using a bungee cord, piece of rope or a zip tie. You want the trap to become part of the landscape. Place cardboard or a small towel inside the trap up to the trip plate; be sure not to interfere with the chain or the trap may not close properly. Choose a material that will not blow in the wind. Since cats like consistency use the same material throughout the entire trapping process.

At feeding time when you place food in the dishes, place an enticing “treat” food like mackerel, herring, tuna or chicken, in the trap behind the trip plate. Cats are curious and food-motivated. They will enter the trap for the “treat” food without being trapped, thus losing their fear as well as receiving a tasty treat. When you see the cat has started eating the treat food inside the trap, call SCRUFF [518-526-3372](tel:518-526-3372) and schedule your TNR appointment.

### Prepare a Holding Area and Transport Vehicle

Prepare a warm, environmentally-controlled area like a bathroom, basement or garage to hold the cat before and after surgery. A cat cannot regulate its body temperature after anesthesia. A good rule of thumb is if the room is too hot/cold for you, it is too hot/cold for the cat. Never set the trap on cold or slippery surfaces. If all you have as a holding area is a basement or garage, elevate the trap on pieces of wood, a wooden pallet, or a low table. Line the floor with a tarp, shower curtain liner, newspaper or puppy pad liners; also protect your vehicle in the same manner while transporting the cat to and from the TNR clinic. If necessary secure the back of the trap with a [carabiner clip](#) for additional safety. Always remove soiled materials and replace with fresh newspaper.

## TRAPPING

### Bait and Set the Trap

Ideally you want to trap the cat the night before your appointment. Make sure no other food is available while traps are set. Remove the bungee cord, piece of rope or zip tie. Place cardboard or a small towel inside the trap up to the trip plate and be sure not to interfere with the chain or the trap may not close properly. Choose a material that will not blow in the wind. Place a tiny amount of bait food outside the trap then a little leading inside to more food behind the trip plate. The cat must go to the back of the trap to step on the plate to trip the trap. Set the trap. Traps must be on level ground or they may prematurely close and scare the cat away. After you set the trap, leave the area so you are out of the cat’s view and wait.

### Check Traps Frequently

While trapping, never leave traps unattended! A trapped animal is vulnerable and could get injured inside the trap. Never leave a trap set overnight; never trap more than one cat in a trap, as two frightened cats may cause injury to each other. **DO NOT** trap without a spay/neuter appointment set up.

## YOU TRAPPED A CAT!

Once the cat is trapped, immediately cover the trap with a sheet, towel, or blanket. Covering the trap will reduce the cat’s stress and prevent it from thrashing around in the trap possibly causing injury. If the trapped cat has a tipped ear or if a wild animal has been trapped by mistake, release immediately. Otherwise, move the trapped, covered cat to the prepared holding area.

## **Limit Food and Water**

Hold the cat in the trap until your appointment. The night before surgery withhold food and water after midnight. Cats like small enclosed spaces and a covered trap provides security. A cat will usually remain calm as long as it is covered. Check on it periodically.

## **Do Not Handle the Cat**

A cat that feels threatened may scratch and bite. Don't allow children or owned pets near the trap. In order to prevent potentially spreading any contagious diseases, after trapping wash hands and change clothes and shoes before handling pets. All animal bites are serious! If bitten, seek immediate medical attention and do not release the cat because it will need to be quarantined.

# **TRAPPING MULTIPLE CATS**

## **Monitor all the Traps**

If using multiple traps, spread the traps out. Once a cat is trapped, the activity inside the trap may disturb other cats encouraging them to keep their distance. As cats are trapped, cover the traps quickly (calming the trapped cats) and move them to an area away from the other traps and/or cats (reducing the likelihood that additional cats will become too nervous to be trapped).

Be careful when moving trapped cats. The cats can move back and forth quickly inside the trap making it difficult to handle. In some instances, moving the cats will be more disruptive than leaving them where they are (which is one reason some people prefer to trap with a trap cover already in place). Use your best judgement.

You may want to consider using a [drop trap](#) if there are multiple cats to be trapped. This type of selective trapping might be desirable if you're after young kittens, a pregnant female, an injured cat, or the one colony member you missed when you trapped the rest.

## **How To Trap A Feral Mom And Her Kittens**

What do you do if you find a mom cat and her kittens? The best thing is to have the mom cat spayed and then the kittens when they are old enough. For more detailed information on trapping a feral mom cat and her kittens check out [Trapping Mom and Kittens](#) and [Humane Trapping Kittens and Moms](#) as well as [Trapping a Feral Mom](#)

*Additional information provided with permission from Alley Cat Allies and Feral Cat Focus.*

# **SURGERY DAY**

Arrive at your scheduled appointment to drop off the cat. You will receive a call from the clinic when your cat is ready for pick up.

# **AFTER SURGERY**

Congratulations on successfully trapping and bringing a community cat to be spayed/neutered and vaccinated! You have not only made this cat's life better, but also helped prevent additional litters from being born. Please refer to SCRUFF's [Discharge and Recovery Protocol](#) for instructions and follow up actions.

# **RETURNING LEASED TRAP**

Per SCRUFF's lease agreement, in order to receive your full check or cash deposit back, traps must be returned undamaged and in **clean condition**. Traps should be lightly sprayed with disinfectant, rinsed off with a hose, and allowed to air dry. If you don't have a hose available, traps can be cleaned using disinfectant and a power hose at a car wash. Bleach is not recommended.