



TRAPPING 1-2-3

Do you occasionally have an hour or two to spare, any time of the day, any day of the week? Can you carry 15–20 pounds a few yards? Most important, can you possess your soul in patience, sitting or strolling for cat time, which goes much slower than trapper time? If so, you're a natural for trapping cats for TNR!

1. Scouting: The more you know about the cats' habits, the easier it will be to trap. Try to find out:

- The times the cats are seen
- Where they hang out
- How many cats there are
- What each looks like
- Their food preferences—this may involve trial and error.
- Are there unweaned kittens? If so, consider waiting until the kittens are eating on their own.

2. Trapping:

- **Materials you'll need:** Traps, trap covers, solid material for the floor, great bait and a fork or spoon, and, if you're trapping early or late, a good flashlight. Put plastic and absorbent material on the floor of your car where the trap will go; a big garbage bag works well.
- **Traps:** Standard traps are fairly small. Larger traps may work better for hard-to-trap or bigger cats. Drop traps can capture several at once, and can also fool the trap-savvy cat into being caught.
- **Time of day:** You should plan on trapping at the cats' convenience, that is, when they are likely to show up. If a regular feeding schedule can be established, it will make trapping much easier. For bait, begin with any food you have heard they like. Some popular bait choices, separately and in combinations: smelly food (Fancy Feast Fish and Shrimp, sardines, mackerel, tuna, warmed TJ canned chicken in broth), catnip, a dangling strip of bacon, dangling or feathery toys.
- **Setting the trap:** If it's an open area, begin by leaving the trap uncovered. If you're putting it under bushes or at the end of an enclosed space, cover it with a cloth. You'll want to put a floor, so that the cats aren't having to walk on wire. It can be paper, but I recommend thin cardboard or heavy cloth, which won't flap in the breeze and scare the cat. In any case, secure the flooring at the back end or use more than one piece of material, so that the cat can't drag the whole setup out and eat at leisure. Finally, make very sure the trap springs shut easily.
- **Waiting:** Stay nearby, but out of range of the cats—not necessarily completely out of sight, but far enough away that they don't connect you with the trap. Listen for the sound of a trap shutting and a cat banging about in it; grab your cloth and cover the trap quickly, which calms the cat. Remember, all food must be removed or eaten 12 hours before the scheduled surgery.
- Most recently trapped cats will avoid being caught again. If you have a repeater, try to give him some food before you start trapping: you don't want the shyer cats frightened away because he sprang the trap.

3. Recovery and return: Recovery usually takes 24 hours for males and 3 days for females. Pregnant cats may need up to a week to recover.

- Keep them warm after surgery, in a safe, small enclosure. You can, if necessary, recover them in the trap or in two traps joined with cable ties.
- Give water the night of surgery, food next morning.
- Watch for bleeding, especially the first 24 hours.
- They should be eating, drinking, and up and about before release.
- Return the cat exactly where you trapped her, if possible. Uncover the trap and give her a chance to reorient herself before you let her go.

