

## **SUCCESSFUL TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) TIPS**

### **PRIOR TO TRAPPING**

- Make an appointment and arrange to check out traps ahead of time.
- Establish a regular feeding routine. Feed at the same time and place every day.
- Train the cat. Tie the door of the trap open several days before your spay-neuter appointment if the trap is located in a safe place where it won't be stolen. Start feeding **ONLY** in the trap; put enough for all to go in and eat. Canned food helps attract the cat on trap day.
- 24 hours before setting the traps, feed lightly.
- Prepare your holding area before setting the trap. You will need a quiet, protected spot to keep the trapped cat before the clinic appointment and after the surgery. It should be a place where the temperature is mild as anesthesia renders cats unable to regulate their body temperature.
- Prepare the **ENCLOSED** transport vehicle (not open bed of pickup!). Use a tarp or plastic sheeting with towels or some other absorbent material to catch any waste.

### **TRAPPING DAY**

- No more than 12-24 hours prior to your appointment, set the trap.
- Fold a towel or cloth lengthwise and insert it to cover the wire bottom of the trap and the trip plate so the cat will be comfortable and won't have to lie on the wire grate.
- Insert a small plastic bowl that will be used later to provide water.
- Put canned cat food at the very back of the trap. Sprinkle just a few bites of dry food leading into the back of the trap.
- Put the trap on a stable surface where it will not rock or tip.
- Set the trap by using the lever to catch open the trap door. The trip plate should be at an angle so it triggers the trap door when the cat steps on it. Stay away from the trap so the cat will come around to eat.
- As soon as you set the trap, put a blanket or towel over the trap leaving the door area uncovered. The cat may thrash when trapped, but will likely become quiet if you keep it covered.
- If using multiple traps, stagger them and face the openings in different directions.
- Check the trap often, especially in hot or cold temperatures. Do not leave the trapped cat exposed to the weather. They can die if left in the sun or freezing cold. Take the trapped cat to your holding area.
- Keeping your fingers and face away from the trapped cat. Peel back the cover enough to fill the lid or bowl with water from the top. If the lid or bowl is upside down, use a blunt stick or screwdriver through the bars to turn it over. Under no circumstances should you open the trap or stick your fingers inside. You can pour some kibble in from the top if the trap doesn't have a sliding feed door on one end. Withhold food approximately 10 hours before surgery, but don't attempt to remove food from the trap. Provide water.
- Make sure the cat is covered, but with a portion open for ventilation. Adjust according to outside temperatures.
- Feral cats will have one ear tipped-3/8" to show from a distance it has been fixed. The only exception is kittens that you are taming for adoption. If you catch more than one cat in a trap, don't worry. Bring an empty trap along so the clinic can separate cats after surgery.

### **AFTER SURGERY**

--Follow the post-surgery instructions for feral cats until time to release the cat. It should not be confined in the trap for more than 24 hours after surgery. If more time is needed, set up a large wire cage that includes a litterbox.

--You can provide food and water after the cat is fully awake, but not before.

--It is not advisable to relocate cats unless there is no other choice. If you must rehome the cat, release the cat in an enclosed shed, garage, or room. Allow them to acclimate to their new surroundings for 4 weeks before releasing them to the outdoors. Make sure the owner is prepared to acclimate properly so the cat won't run off and get killed. The new owner should provide daily cat food, water, and shelter; otherwise, look for a different home!

### **CHANGING SOILED TOWELS**

--If you have an extra trap that has the sliding door on one end, you can butt the ends together to move a cat from one trap to the other so you can change out soiled towels. Hold both traps in place securely during the transfer so the cat doesn't escape. Cats will usually move easily from one to the other if you uncover the one they are in and cover the one you want them to move to. Tap on the side of the trap to get them to move.

### **TARGET TRAPPING**

--If you need to trap a specific cat, you can use a drop trap (Google that!) or use a regular trap like a drop trap. Put plenty of food in the trap for other cats that may go in first. Prop the trap flap up with a stick (slightly angled toward you) with a long string attached to the bottom. Sit some distance from the trap and wait for the target cat to go in. Pull the string! Voila! Practice a few times first!

### **STOP THE BREEDING**

--Many, many cats are euthanized every year because there aren't enough homes. Please stick with your trapping routine until every last cat has been fixed; otherwise, more feral cats will breed costing you (and the clinic) more time, effort, and money in the long run.

### **DONATE**

--Community low cost spay/neuter programs are funded by grants and donations. If you're in a position to donate, please *spay it forward* so these programs can continue to serve stray and feral cats.

### **THANK YOU FOR CARING**

--Thank you for caring for ferals and allowing them to live out their lives.