



Trapping Guidelines

Purpose To humanely trap cat(s).

Introduction Welcome to the world of animal rescue, and thank you for choosing the humane solution of trapping, neutering and lifetime feeding of the abandoned, stray or feral feline(s) in your neighborhood, workplace or local community.

Acknowledgement The trapping and recovery guidelines in this document are provided by The Contra Costa County Animal Welfare Department with special thanks to Feral Cat Foundation and the Contra Costa Humane Society Coalition.

The formatting has been edited to conform to Information Mapping principles for improved readability.

Overview

| Topic | See Page |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Preparation Prior to Trapping | 1 |
| Common Sense Basics of Trapping | 3 |
| Trapping Procedure | 4 |
| Trapping Considerations for mothers and kittens | 5 |
| Recovery and Return | 8 |
| Post Recovery Options | 10 |

Preparation Prior to Trapping

Your decision to trap a cat must be synchronized with:

| Step | Action |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Obtain a humane trap. <i>Note:</i> Traps can be borrowed from a rescue group (usually with a refundable deposit), or purchased in feed stores, large hardware stores or online. Tomahawk is the preferred brand because its design is easiest to use, but Hav-a-Hart is also effective. Stores may call them raccoon traps, but they are the right size for adults. For kittens use smaller “squirrel sized” traps. |
| 2 | Obtain a recovery cage. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For ferals, have a recovery cage prepared at home to transfer the feral cat into.• Tame cats can be recovered in a cage, bathroom, or other small room that can be isolated from the rest of the household. |

| 3 | <p>Schedule a veterinary appointment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the vet that the cat may be feral and is being brought in a trap. If you know the gender, let the vet know ahead of time. • Verify the drop-off and pick-up time. • As a minimum, schedule the cat to be spayed/neutered. Request dissolvable stitches or glue for females. • For the cat, it would also be best to have it vaccinated, checked for earmites, treated for fleas with Advantage or equivalent, and FeLV tested (if it tests positive, it should be euthanized and not released to the outside world for risk of spreading the disease). • If you are unsuccessful in trapping the cat, you will promptly advise the veterinarian’s office that you cannot keep the appointment. <p><i>Tip:</i> Ask for a “rescue discount” for ferals. Many vets will help you in your humanitarian effort. Or see our Spay/Neuter Assistance page for additional resources.</p> | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 4 | <p>Determine regular feeding time and location.</p> <p><i>Feeding prior to trapping:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, feed that cat at the same time and location each day until you trap. • If the cat is shy, you can leave the trap unset and covered with a large towel during routine feeding so that the animal will get used to seeing and smelling it in the area. See step 6. • Take the trap home with you after each feeding. | | | | | | |
| 5 | <p>Guess if the cat(s) will be easy or difficult to trap.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="570 1205 1390 1617"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="570 1205 980 1245">If the cat(s)...</th> <th data-bbox="980 1205 1390 1245">Then the cat(s) is probably...</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 1245 980 1430"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes out for the feeder • Greets the feeder • Is waiting for the feeder • Pregnant • Always hungry </td> <td data-bbox="980 1245 1390 1430"> <p>Easy to trap, skip to <i>Preparing for Transport and Recovery</i></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 1430 980 1617"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waits for the feeder to leave before coming out to eat • Has been trapped before • Appears injured or sick, lack of appetite </td> <td data-bbox="980 1430 1390 1617"> <p>Difficult to trap, continue to step 6</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Tip:</i> See the Troubleshooting section for additional trapping tips.</p> | If the cat(s)... | Then the cat(s) is probably... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes out for the feeder • Greets the feeder • Is waiting for the feeder • Pregnant • Always hungry | <p>Easy to trap, skip to <i>Preparing for Transport and Recovery</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waits for the feeder to leave before coming out to eat • Has been trapped before • Appears injured or sick, lack of appetite | <p>Difficult to trap, continue to step 6</p> |
| If the cat(s)... | Then the cat(s) is probably... | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes out for the feeder • Greets the feeder • Is waiting for the feeder • Pregnant • Always hungry | <p>Easy to trap, skip to <i>Preparing for Transport and Recovery</i></p> | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waits for the feeder to leave before coming out to eat • Has been trapped before • Appears injured or sick, lack of appetite | <p>Difficult to trap, continue to step 6</p> | | | | | | |
| Getting the cat used to eating inside the unset trap - takes 3 or more days | | | | | | | |
| 6 | <p>Paper the bottom of the trap by placing a folded piece of newspaper just far enough into the trap to cover the trip plate to encourage the cat to enter.</p> | | | | | | |

| | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p><i>Note:</i> It will prefer to walk on newspaper rather than on the wire of the trap. The newspaper will help disguise the slightly elevated trip plate on the evening the trap is actually set.</p> <p><i>Helpful Tip:</i> In windy conditions, newspaper can flutter; in such conditions, tape the edges of the newspaper to secure it to the trap or use a thin towel or dishtowel.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Lock the trap door open.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Depending on the type of trap, you can either leave it unset and open by removing the sliding back door or, if it is a one-door trap, wire open the entry door with twist ties or a bungee cord.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Set the trap at the regular feeding site.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Make sure it is on stable ground and doesn't rock.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Put some food on a piece of waxed paper or shallow lid right by the entry to the unset trap.</p> |
| 10 | <p>On each succeeding night's feeding, put the food a little farther into the trap until the cat is comfortable eating at the very back.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> On the actual trapping night, the cat will have to go far enough into the set trap to trip the metal plate, which will spring the door shut.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Do not feed the evening before the trapping day.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> For a particularly wary cat, you might not want to feed it for two days/evenings prior to trapping. If others are also feeding cats in the area, ask them not to leave out any food the day or two before you trap.</p> |

Preparing for Transport and Recovery

| Step | Action |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Prepare the vehicle in which you will transport the cat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before you put the trap in the vehicle, put plastic down with several layers of newspaper on top to absorb any urine, feces etc. |
| 2 | <p>Prepare the area where you will keep the cat prior to surgery and for recovery after.</p> <p><i>Caution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summer, unless yours is an air-conditioned one, a garage is too hot a place to leave a cat in daytime. • Late evenings in summer, a garage would be okay for an overnight only stay. • A small, air-conditioned or well-ventilated bathroom or a well- |

| | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>ventilated shed that is in the shade of a tree would be suitable to keep a cat in while it recovers from surgery.</p> <p><u>Cleanliness Tips:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the evening you plan to trap the cat and bring it home before surgery, place two pieces of wood (2 x 4) on top of several layers of newspapers. Placing the trap on the wood elevated above the newspapers allows the inevitable mess of food, urine, and stool to fall through the wire and keep the cat a little cleaner. • Spraying a garage or shed area ahead of time with a cat-safe flea spray (Adams or Ovitrol) might be helpful in discouraging ants. |
| 3 | <p>Set up the recovery cage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • litter box, • food, • water, • bedding, • and cover it with a large blanket or sheet to keep it dark and safe-feeling for the cat. |

**Common Sense
Basics of
Trapping**

| Item | Tips |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Practice setting the trap several times to become familiar with how it works.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Plan to trap the cat the evening or early morning before your veterinary appointment so that the animal has to be in the trap only overnight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not feed the cat on the day or evening you plan to trap. <p><u>Note:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is more likely to enter the trap quickly if it is hungry. Although cats should not eat 12 hours prior to surgery, the small amount of bait in a trap isn't a problem if eaten the morning of the vet appointment. |
| 3 | <p>Bring the following with you to the trapping site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large dark piece of material (blanket, old curtain, beach/bath towel) large enough to cover the trap - top, back end and both sides. • Newspaper and tape, or a thin towel for the bottom of the trap. • Wet food, tuna, canned mackerel, or other smelly bait. (See Troubleshooting Tips for more information.) • Bring a flashlight with you if you are trapping in a poorly lit area. • If you are trying to keep a veterinary appointment and have to trap on a rainy evening, put an old plastic shower curtain or waterproof material under the towel or other cover that the cat is used to |

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | seeing over the trap. (You do not want the cat to get soaked in the trap if you are checking on it only every 30-60 minutes.) |
| 4 | Don't trap in the heat of day. |
| 5 | Set the trap at the cat's normal feeding time. |
| 6 | Cats are vulnerable in traps - they can be attacked by raccoons or other animals, be released or harmed by someone, or suffer from exposure to the elements. |
| 7 | If you must leave and the trap is in a secure place (such as your yard), check the trap at least every hour to see if it has been sprung. |
| 8 | Traps in public or vulnerable areas must not be left unattended and certainly not left out overnight. (Late night trapping can catch raccoons or skunks.) |

Trapping Procedure

These instructions refer to night feeding and trapping. Cats should be trapped at the time they are use to feeding.

| Step | Action |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Paper the bottom of the trap by placing a folded piece of newspaper just far enough into the trap to cover the trip plate to encourage the cat to enter.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> It will prefer to walk on newspaper rather than on the wire of the trap. The newspaper will help disguise the slightly elevated trip plate on the evening the trap is actually set.</p> <p><i>Helpful Tip:</i> In windy conditions, newspaper can flutter; in such conditions, tape the edges of the newspaper to secure it to the trap or use a thin towel or dishtowel.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Place the trap on a level surface close to where you normally feed the cat.</p> <p><i>Trapping Tip:</i> If the surface is uneven, press down on each corner of the trap to determine where it wobbles. Shim those areas with cardboard, small stones, twigs – whatever you can find – to prevent the trap from triggering with the cat only partway in. Premature triggering can allow the cat to escape or the door might injure it.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Bait the trap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave a short trail of little bits of food just outside and leading into the back of the trap encourage the cat to go far enough inside to trip the mechanism the first time you try. <p><i>Trapping Tip:</i> A little strong-smelling food (such as mackerel or chicken) placed on a piece of waxed paper or small shallow lid at the</p> |

| | back of the trap might get the cat trapped on the very first attempt. Alternatively, you can soak a small piece of newspaper in mackerel juice, spoon a little food onto this paper, and put paper on the ground where you plan to place the trap. Put the back end of the trap on top of this paper so food squishes through the wire – this makes the cat work harder to get the food, tripping the trap. | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | <p>Stay in the vicinity, keep watch and listen for the sound of the trap snapping shut.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> You may encounter trap-wary cats that will not go in no matter how hungry or are able to get the food without triggering the trap. In such cases, call a rescue group for advanced trapping strategies.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | <p>When the trap is tripped, move to the trap and quickly cover it with the large dark material.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The darkness will quickly calm the cat down. Keep it covered during transport in the trap.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | <p>If possible, check the cat...</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="568 940 1388 1375"> <thead> <tr> <th>If...</th> <th>Then...</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The cat already has a notched ear</td> <td>It has already been fixed and can be released immediately.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>You are concerned that it might be a nursing mama</td> <td>Rock the trap to it's side and get the cat to walk on the side of the trap without newspaper; tip it up and look underneath her for exposed nipples from nursing.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>If it is a nursing mama</td> <td>Release the mama, unless you have already found and caught the babies.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Caution:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the cat a wild animal - unless you know it to be a recently discarded or stray pet. • Do not try to pet the cat or get your fingers near it. • Do not let the cat out of the trap - you will likely never get it back in again. • When you have trapped the cat and have brought it to a safe place for the night prior to surgery, if you think you can raise the door of the trap just enough to put a tiny dish of water inside, do so, but if you are at all unsure—then do not even attempt this. Do not put water in the trap in cold weather; the cat will likely spill it and have to sit in a wet trap all night. | If... | Then... | The cat already has a notched ear | It has already been fixed and can be released immediately. | You are concerned that it might be a nursing mama | Rock the trap to it's side and get the cat to walk on the side of the trap without newspaper; tip it up and look underneath her for exposed nipples from nursing. | If it is a nursing mama | Release the mama, unless you have already found and caught the babies. |
| If... | Then... | | | | | | | | |
| The cat already has a notched ear | It has already been fixed and can be released immediately. | | | | | | | | |
| You are concerned that it might be a nursing mama | Rock the trap to it's side and get the cat to walk on the side of the trap without newspaper; tip it up and look underneath her for exposed nipples from nursing. | | | | | | | | |
| If it is a nursing mama | Release the mama, unless you have already found and caught the babies. | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Drop off the cat, in the trap, to the veterinarian at the appointment | | | | | | | | |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify services: neuter, vaccinations, testing, flea treatment, earmites, etc. • Verify pick up time. |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Trapping Considerations for mothers and kittens

| Step | Action |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Suggestions for trapping pregnant cats or mothers with young kittens | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a cat is pregnant, the sooner you can trap her, the better. You must alert the veterinarian that you will be bringing in a pregnant female. Some veterinarians will not abort if pregnancy has gone a certain length. • If the cat you want to trap is a mother with young kittens, you must trap them all at the same time. The kittens under 6 weeks old will starve without their mother. • Trapped kittens can be kept in a cage, large carrier, crate or box at your home until you get their mother back from the vet. • A spayed mother cat needs to be reunited with her nursing kittens within 12 hours. • Ideally, the trapped mother should be kept with her kittens until they are at least 6 weeks old. You will have offered them solid food at 4–5 weeks and can then separate them from the mother. Vets prefer that mothers’ milk dries up for 10-14 days before spaying. • It is easier to tame (handle) kittens when they are 6 weeks or younger. |
| Suggestions for trapping kittens and mother cats | |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrow two traps - one should be a small kitten-size trap. • Bring a cat carrier with you when you try to trap. • Bring someone to help you with the kittens. • Bring a thick towel to grab very young kittens with. • Bring a flat piece of heavy cardboard a little bigger than the large trap opening. • If you catch the mother first, keep the trap covered except for the entry, which you will place up against the kitten-trap. Then you will pull the cover to extend over the kitten trap also - or add a cover if the first one is not long enough to cover both traps. • You want the kittens to be able to peer into the trap and see their mother at the far end in her trap – their only access to her will be through the trap’s door. • The kittens will have scattered when they heard the first trap closing and their mother thrashing around, but they will return when she quiets down and will go into the trap looking for her and for food. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you catch a kitten first, you should remove it from the trap into the carrier so that you can re-use the trap to get the other kittens. (If there is only one kitten, then leave it in the trap and place it against the larger trap, as detailed above, so that the mother must enter the large trap to reach her babies.) • If the kittens are fairly young, 4-5 weeks approximately, you can use the help of the person you brought with you to transfer them into the cat carrier (that's when you need the thick towel). |
| Transfer older kittens from the trap to the carrier with the help of another person | |
| 1 | Place the front of the empty carrier, with door open, right up against the door of the trap with the kitten(s) in it. |
| 2 | Instruct your helper to hold the carrier firmly against the trap. |
| 3 | Slide open the door of the trap and bang against the trap so that the kitten will move out of the trap away from the noise into the carrier. |
| 4 | Before removing the trap from the carrier door, slide the cardboard between trap and carrier opening. <i>Note:</i> This keeps the kittens in the carrier while you move the trap away and close the carrier door. |
| 5 | Once you have the kitten or kittens in the carrier and the door closed, set the trap for the mother right up against the carrier and she will go in very quickly to get close to her kittens. <i>Note:</i> The trap will have to be covered, of course, so that her only way to see or reach them is through the trap's door. |

Recovery and Return

| Step | Action |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>If possible, leave a recovery cage or a cat carrier (if the cat is not feral) with a clean towel in it at the vet's to put the cat in after surgery.</p> <p><i>Note:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is awkward to put a cat back in a narrow trap, although this can be done with an experienced helper. • If the cat is a male and you plan to release him within 24 hours, then you might as well keep him in the trap. |
| 2 | <p>Plan to recover the cat for the specified time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover males for 3 nights before release; although they can be released 24 hours after surgery if necessary. • Recover females for 5 nights or 7 nights if she was pregnant or in heat. |
| 3 | Transfer the cat from the trap or carrier into the recovery cage |

(unless already placed in it at the vet's).

There are several recovery cage set-ups possible:

| Option | Description |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A | <p>Cage with room for carrier inside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have recovery cage large enough to accommodate the necessary food/water dishes, litter pan, and a small cat carrier, you might want to put one inside.• A cat carrier with its door open and tied back onto the wires of the cage gives the cat a place to retreat and feel safe.• When you bring the groggy cat home, you can shake it gently out of its trap or carrier into the recovery cage. It will go right into the carrier inside the cage to seek the security of the darkness and small space.• Do not have cover up the cage until the cat is inside the carrier so that it will automatically seek the darkness of the pet carrier.• A frightened cat will normally retreat into the carrier when you have to remove and replace litter tray, food and water dishes.• When it is time to return the cat to where you will be feeding her, remove the cover from the entire cage and bang on the cage to get her to go inside the pet carrier if she's not already hiding in it.• You will have previously released (from the outside) the carrier door's attachments to the cage, so that you may quickly close this door when she enters the carrier.• You can then take the cat in the carrier to the place of release.• If you happen to need a return visit to the vet with the cat before it is ready for release, the cat carrier method is somewhat easier than handling her in a cage or transferring her back into the trap. |
| B | <p>Small cage with no room for carrier inside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the recovery cage is not large enough to house a carrier as well as the food/water dishes and litter tray, cover up the cage to make it a dark secure place for the cat to enter when you bring it home from the veterinarian's.• When removing litter tray for cleaning or replenishing food and water dishes, you should fold back the cover so that the front half of the cage is uncovered.• The cat will retreat to under the covered part - allowing you space and time to quickly remove, clean and replace the litter tray and food/water dishes.• When the cat has had enough time to recover from surgery (it's a tough world out there for feral felines, remember), take the cage to the place of release and leave the door open for it to exit in its own time - could take several minutes or a split second. |

Some observations of cats in captivity:

- Often they will not eat for 2 or more days even though food is right there for them.

- Remove the food after an hour if it is untouched and replace with fresh food after a couple of hours.
- Often the cat will eat at night when all is still and nobody is around, so put fresh food in the cage before you retire.
- Feral cats don't purr or meow but they will hiss and growl and spit.

Some tips on keeping cage cleaner:

- Place the cat carrier on top of an inverted litter tray if your cage is big enough to keep a carrier in. This will keep the litter and spilled water from going into the carrier.
- If you don't have a large cage, place a clean empty litter tray in the back of the cage with a towel in it for the cat to rest in. This will provide a dry bed for the cat in the event of water spills and it will also keep some of the scattered litter out.
- If you have a mother cat with young kittens, put the food dish for the mother on top of the carrier or else tie a feeding bowl a couple of inches up on the cage wires so the kittens don't end up in the food.

Post Recovery Options

Given time and patience and care from a compassionate person, many feral cats can become loving companions. In fact, they can become the most devoted pets. If this is something you want to do, ask rescue organizations such as CC4C for suggestions.

Consider the following about the cat you have trapped and recovered:

| If... | Then... |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The cat is feral | After the suggested recovery period - or longer if you think you want to fatten up the cat - take it back to where you first trapped it. That's where it came from and where it has a chance to survive if you continue to feed it. <i>Reminder:</i> The cat should be provided food daily, and water at least 5 days per week. In your absence, make arrangements for a substitute feeder. |
| If the kitten is young (under 3 months or 3 lbs) | Tame, socialize, foster and find it a forever home. See our Taming Feral Kittens page for additional information. |
| The cat is tame | Foster and find it a forever home. |

Taming Feral Kittens

Kittens of feral mothers can be tamed quite quickly if they are handled when they are young enough – 2 months or less.

At 3 – 4 months, taming is more difficult and in some cases impossible. Ask CC4C for taming suggestions when dealing with these older kittens or visit our Taming Feral Kittens webpage.

Ferals over 4 months old will probably not tame – unless you have infinite patience and are willing to spend months on the process.
