

Do's and Dont's of Trapping

Never try to catch a feral cat or kitten by hand—they can bite if they feel threatened or cornered. Some people do not realize how wild a feral cat can be. They have lived with domestic, friendly cats who look exactly like ferals. Remember they are wild animals and you would not think of reaching out to catch a raccoon or opossum by hand. As with all wild animals, they will not attack unless they feel provoked or threatened.

The best results can be obtained by varying the types of traps you use. Use some from Tomahawk (www.livetraps.com / 800-272-8727) and others from Tru-Catch (www.trucatchtraps.com / 800-247-6132).

There are special tricks you can use for hard-to-catch cats:

1. *Tie the door up in the open position and feed out of the trap for about a week.* On the first day, put the food just outside the trap and move it a little further into the trap each day until the food is placed at the back. Then set the trap.

2. *Wash the traps.* Cover them with leaves and twigs. Vary the bait: use people-grade tuna, mackerel or fried chicken. Do not use plates or cans for the bait. Place the food on paper towels, newspaper, small paper plates, or in a peanut butter jar lid. Cover the bottom of the trap with newspapers or paper towels. Make sure the paper will not blow up in a breeze and scare the cat.

If you have tried all of this and still cannot catch the cat, you should consider giving the cats a break from trapping for a while. For the next few weeks, feed only, and try to rebuild their trust.

Do not use dart guns or tranquilizers.

For cats who continually evade being trapped, it is understandable that some trappers may feel desperate. They call Alley Cat Allies (ACA) and ask if they should use tranquilizers.

Tranquilizing feral cats in a colony has the potential for being very dangerous for the cats. The cats will not fall unconscious immediately. It may take some time for the drug to act. The cat may become disoriented and cross busy highways. Some cats need small doses, others need larger doses. You may not be able to judge the correct dose. Cats may fall unconscious in dangerously

exposed places and be vulnerable to any number of threats. Darting cats with a gun or injection needle can also be dangerous for the cat. Even experienced veterinarians have been known to make mistakes and we have heard of cats being permanently paralyzed by a needle lodged in the cat's spine.

Pest control companies have been known to flush cats out of hiding places with water hoses. This is very cruel and dangerous for the cats. It could cause drowning and possibly even pneumonia. Never resort to desperate measures to catch a cat.

A way to trick a mother cat into a trap is to place her kittens in a separate carrier or in a trap placed against the back of the trap you set for her. This could lure her in. One ingenious person recorded kitten cries and played these to lure a mother cat into a trap.

We at ACA have successfully caught many cats by using the Welbourne Cat Catcher (a large net on a pole with a cable) supplied by ACES (1-800-338-ACES or www.animal-care.com). One cat who needed medical treatment was sleeping in her shelter in the alley. I held the net over the entrance while Becky thumped on the back of the shelter. The cat rushed out and right into the net. The net has a handle with a cable that I pulled tight to trap the cat. I then put the cat, still in the net, in a cat carrier and transported her to the clinic. The net is very safe and the cat can turn around in the net without getting entangled.

This net can also prove to be invaluable at a vet clinic for any escapee, or for a cat you need to catch in a room or basement. You need to corner the cat, giving her no escape route except to move into the net.

-Information provided by Alley Cat Allies

~For comprehensive fact-sheets, please visit www.alleycat.org (click "Resources") and www.neighborhoodcats.org (click "Info").



Do's and Dont's Of Relocation

NOTE: Relocation should be used as an absolute last resort, as it can be traumatic for the cats. If they are living in a safe place, they should be trapped, neutered and returned to their outdoor homes.

~Assessment~

Assessment of the colony is very important. Find out how many cats there are. Are they in good health? Are there any kittens? You will need to know this to plan with your veterinarian. Will any cats need medical care beyond just sterilization?

~Veterinary treatment~

Let your veterinarian know that the cats are feral. Many vets have not dealt with ferals. Make sure you tell her what you need done, such as ear tipping and dissolvable sutures. The vet has in all probability not dealt with hands-on colony management, and will not be aware of all the problems you will encounter if, for example, she does not ear-tip. Share with her ACA's guidelines for veterinarians.

~Finding the new home~

Run ads in country newspapers, call friends who live in the country, call local horse stables or farms. The new caregivers must be prepared to supply the cats with daily food and water. They also need to know this requires a long term commitment as the cats could live for 10 years or more.

~Transportation to the new site~

Remember to take with you: food, litter, and food bowls. Bird food dishes are good, as these can be hooked onto the side of the confinement cage. Take confinement cages with you.

Temporary confinement in a cage IS VITAL for a safe relocation. The cats need to be caged outdoors in a shed, garage or barn, where they can retreat when the new environment seems overwhelming (your house or basement will not do for confinement). Most barns are NOT cat escape proof, so cage confinement is a must. Cover the top of the cage so that the cats will feel safe. The cats need to be kept confined for three weeks.

~Follow up~

Call to find out if there are any problems you need to address. Stay in touch. Not only will this help the cats, but this site may be a good one for future relocations. You can relocate several cats from different colonies to one site, if you introduce them to each other slowly by initially confining the new cats in cages next to each other.

TIPS ON FINDING GOOD HOMES

How to Screen Potential Adopters

When people respond to your notices, it is important that you thoroughly screen each potential adopter. Although this is not an exhaustive list, here are some questions to ask:

- Do you have animals now? If so, how long have you had them?
- Have you ever had animals in the past? If so, why are they no longer with you?
- Why do you want an animal? (Be aware of those who are only looking for a cat to keep their yard mice free. Ask this person if s/he would keep the cat if the cat ends up not catching mice at all.)
- How long do you plan to keep the animal?
- Are you prepared for the possibility of a twenty-year commitment?
- What if your life circumstances change, e.g. you move; get married or divorced; have a child; get a new roommate; you or someone you live with develops allergies? What would you do with the cat?
- Mention the adoption fee and explain that it covers veterinary care, food, litter, etc. (Always require an adoption fee - even if it is nominal. People generally don't value a free "offer." If the potential adopter can't afford the adoption fee, s/he probably can't afford to care for the cat.)

When to Say "NO" and How to Say It

Say "no" to whomever you are not sure of. Say "no" whenever you get a "bad feeling." Rely on your intuition. Remember, there are people who make money from selling animals to research labs - you can never be too careful. Take notes on the attitude of the person. If they are hesitant to give information, cut the conversation short.

Say "I'm sorry, but someone else decided to take her/him" or "I'm sorry, I'm not adopting this cat only as a mouser" or "I'm sorry, but you must keep the cat confined for at least four weeks or she'll run away." Please remember, animals deserve loving homes - their lives are literally in your hands.

When the Adopter Looks Good

Once you decide that the potential adopter passes this minimal screening, ask her/him to complete the attached adoption application. Explain that you will review the application and get back to them within a specified period of time. Call the references on the application during this time period.

If you are comfortable with the answers to the questions and the reference checks, contact the potential adopter and invite her/him to meet and visit with the cat. As the person interacts with the cat, observe how each responds to the other. Ask to take a picture of the person and the cat before the visit ends. If the person refuses: they may be lying about information they have provided you.

Assuming that the visit has gone well, the final step would be for you to bring the cat to the potential adopters home.

Once the home checks out, the visit concludes and you are satisfied that this is a good home, have the adopter complete the adoption contract. Sign it, giving one copy to the guardian and keeping one copy for your files. If everything else has checked out up to now, but you are uneasy for any reason with the home visit, by all means, discuss it with the person. Do not leave the cat simply because you feel that since you have come this far, you really should. Your obligation is to the cat, not the potential adopter.

Confirm that you will be calling to see how everyone is doing and remind them that if they cannot keep the cat at any time for any reason, you will take the cat back. Please call at regular intervals and visit if distance allows. If distance prevents you from home visits, try to find someone nearby who can stop in from time to time.

**PLEASE REMEMBER, YOU CAN NEVER ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS OR BE TOO CAREFUL.
KNOWING SOMEONE OR KNOWING SOMEONE WHO KNOWS SOMEONE
DOESN'T GUARANTEE A GOOD HOME!**

BARN CAT ADOPTION APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Driver's License #: _____ State : _____

Social Security Number: _____

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Work Phone Number: _____ How long employed here? _____

Please complete all the information on the following pages. By signing below, you certify that you understand the following:

1. It is the agency/individual's right to refuse adoption to anyone.
2. The information contained within this application is accurate and not misleading in any way.
3. It is agency/individual's right to contact individuals on this form.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Please give careful consideration to adopting an animal. Animals are not toys or short term commitments. Make sure your lifestyle allows the time, patience and expense this animal will need over the years.

*** Please turn and complete the reverse ***

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - THANK YOU

Animal:

Species: _____

Breed: _____

Color: _____

Age: _____

Name: _____

Vaccines given: _____

Date: _____

Spayed/Neutered: yes _____ no _____

Date: _____

Reference checks: _____

Adoption Agency/Individual:

Approved: _____

Method of Donation: _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

Is this your first experience with a companion animal? yes / no

Do you have other animals at home? yes / no If yes:

Species: _____ Male: _____ Age: _____ Altered: _____ Vaccinated: _____ Lives: _____
/Female: _____

dog / cat / other _____ yes / no yes / no in / out

dog / cat / other _____ yes / no yes / no in / out

dog / cat / other _____ yes / no yes / no in / out

Do you presently have a cat/kitten who has been tested for Feline Aids and Feline Leukemia?
yes / no Results: positive / negative

3a. Have you ever had any cats in your household with Feline Aids +/- Feline Leukemia? _____

If you don't have animals now, have you had any in the past? yes / no cat / dog / other

How long did you have your last animal? _____

What happened to your last animal? _____

5. Have you ever suffered the loss of a companion animal? Yes/No. If yes, please explain the circumstances of the death(s): _____

6. Who is/was your veterinarian? How long? _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

7. How long have you resided at your present address? _____

8. Where do you currently live? house / apartment / other

9. Do you own or rent? (circle one) If rent, does your lease allow animals? yes / no

Landlord's name _____ Phone: _____

10. How many people live in your household? _____ Do all the adults know you plan to adopt?
yes / no If there are children in the household, list ages _____

11. Does anyone in your household have any known allergies to animals? yes / no

12. Are you financially prepared to give this animal routine and emergency medical care? yes / no

13. Would you object to a visit or call from us to see how you and your new family member are doing? yes / no

14. List two references with name, relationship, phone number. Do not list family members.

(Examples of references are: neighbor, employer, co-worker, friend)

1) _____

2) _____

15. In the event you become ill, who will be responsible for the care of your animal(s)? _____

BARN CAT ADOPTION CONTRACT

**Give one copy to adopter.
Keep one copy for yourself.**

I, _____, adopt this animal and release the adoption agency from all claims for personal injury and/or property damage to myself or others associated with this adoption. The welfare of this animal will be my sole responsibility. I AM NOT ADOPTING THIS ANIMAL FOR ANOTHER PERSON. This animal will not be used for breeding, medical or experimental purposes. I understand that in the event I give false information or do not follow the terms of this contract, the adoption agency may remove this animal from my household and start legal proceedings against me at my expense and may assess damages in the amount of \$2000.00 against me.

- 1) After adoption, this animal's health becomes my full responsibility. I will make sure this cat stays healthy and will provide licensed veterinary care in case of serious illness or injury. I will keep rabies vaccinations current. All other vaccinations are left to my discretion. I understand that cats living outside should be wormed a minimum of once a year, ideally in cold weather.
- 2) I will make a serious effort to find this cat if he/she becomes lost by: a) filing a report with local authorities; b) filing a report with local shelters; and c) calling the adoption agency for more assistance.
- 3) I agree to keep fresh water and food available at all times after release, and for the rest of this cat's life. I will also provide a warm, dry, comfortable and safe place for the cat to sleep.
- 4) I understand that this cat must be properly acclimated to his/her new home by residing in a crate or other confined area for three (3) to four (4) weeks prior to release. I will provide fresh water, food and litter twice a day.
- 5) If I can no longer keep this cat, I MUST telephone the adoption agency to arrange for re-adoption. I will never abandon this animal or give him or her to a shelter or another person. In the event I must give up this animal, I will abide by the terms of this contract and allow the adoption agency sufficient time to arrange for re-adoption or foster care.
- 6) I understand that I will be contacted for further verification of the animal's welfare and will cooperate by providing whatever information is requested which could include a visit into my home by the adoption agency. The adoption agency reserves the right to investigate into the living conditions of any animal adopted and may remove such an animal being kept in violation of the requirements in this contract.
- 7) I do not hold the adoption agency responsible for errors in the information provided to me about this animal.
- 8) I understand that the donation made as part of this contract is a gift and not a payment for a value received. This donation is not refundable. Amount of donation - \$_____.
- 9) I accept all responsibility and liability for this animal at the date of adoption.

This agreement executed at _____, _____.
(city or county) (state)

Date: _____ (adopter) _____

Date: _____ (adoption individual/agency) _____

Keep this contract with your cat's medical records

Adoption Agency/Individual: _____

