

Neighborhood Cats

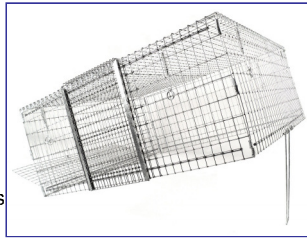
the feral cat experts

Hard to Catch Cats

It seems like every colony has at least one in the crowd who just won't cooperate, no matter how much food you withhold or how much money you spend on roasted chicken, mackerel, sardines, solid white tuna or rare roast beef. Before you give up and try to find somewhere to live where there are no feral cats (good luck!), here's a few tried and proven methods:

1. The Drop Trap

The drop trap falls down over a cat, eliminating the need for kitty to step into a narrow opening. Since the cat's natural wariness about moving into a confined space isn't triggered, drop traps are highly effective. Neighborhood Cats has worked with Tomahawk, leading manufacturer of humane traps, to design the first-ever drop trap on the market. The durable, collapsible Neighborhood Cats Drop Trap is now available directly from Tomahawk. For pricing, specifications and ordering info as well as "how-to" instructions for those who prefer to build their own traps, [click here](#). (Basic woodworking skills are needed to construct.)



To learn how to use a drop trap safely and effectively, download the [pdf file of our full instructions](#).

2. The Camouflage Trap

The concept is simple - disguise the trap so that it blends in with its surroundings. This can be done by draping burlap over the sides of the trap (though not the rear - the cat needs to see all the way through) and on the trap floor. Then cover the burlap with leaves, branches - anything that will add to the camouflage. Along these same lines, sometimes even simpler things work, like putting the trap inside a cardboard box (with the rear door not covered), or leaning a large board against a wall and putting the trap behind it so it's hidden. Even draping a sheet over the sides might do the trick.



Success!
The camouflage trap in action.

3. Training the Cat

Cats can be trained to go into traps as follows: With a stick or wire, secure the front door in an open position. Then place the trap in the cat's territory, preferably near the normal feeding spot.

Begin by placing the cat's daily meal on a small plate a few inches in front of the front entrance to the trap. Once you see the cat is eating from this location, then the next meal, move the plate a couple of inches just inside the front of the trap. When the cat is eating from there, then move the food again, this time a few inches further into the trap. Continue this process of gradually moving the food inwards until the cat is going far enough in that you can set the trigger and the cat will step on the plate.

This process can take a couple of weeks or more. Unless the location where the training is taking place is extremely secure, the rear door of the trap should be removed so that no one can come along in your absence and catch a cat. Loosely tape a clear piece of plastic or even a piece of paper to the rear of the trap instead. It's a good idea, too, to chain and lock the trap onto an immovable object, like a pipe or fence. If possible, hide the trap in a way where it won't be easily seen by others by placing it behind something or camouflaging it in some way. Obviously this method won't work in a public area if the threat of theft or vandalism is too high.

4. Lure into a Confined Space

If you can draw the cat into an indoor space (with no exit, holes in the wall, etc.) and close the door behind him, he's yours. Once confined, you can take the patient route by setting a normal trap and otherwise depriving of food (though this can take days). If you can't or don't want to wait, then before you lure the cat in, take out of the space everything the feline could hide behind or under. Leave only a single large board (approx. 5 ft. long, 3 ft. wide) leaning against one wall, creating a triangular space. Place a set trap on the floor at one end of the board and block off the open space right above the trap with a sheet. When the cat enters the room and is frightened, he'll run behind the board, sometimes straight into the trap. If he doesn't go right in, gently poke a broomstick into the non-trap opening of the board to encourage him to move forward. If it doesn't work, withdraw, let the cat calm down, then try again later.



Set up board with trap

Cover openings with sheet

5. Little Things

Before going to the lengths of the methods described above, be sure you've tried all the small tricks which sometimes make the difference. These include using a variety of baits at once, leaving a trail of bait leading into the trap (crumbled Pounce is excellent for this), placing the trap against a wall or fence rather than out in the open, and most important of all, making sure the cat is hungry and has been deprived of food for 24 to 48 hours.

6. Picking One Out from the Crowd

Sometimes the problem isn't that the particular cat is wily, but that he's the only one you want out of a crowd of others who keep going in ahead of him. If that's the problem, the solution is to bypass the trigger/trip plate mechanism of the trap and go to manual control. Prop the front door of the trap open on top of a full water or soda bottle. Tie a long string around the neck of the bottle then stand some distance away. When your cat of choice finally goes in, yank the string, pulling the bottle away and shutting the door. Be sure to first practice the method at least once so you get the right feel for it, and wait until the cat is far enough in (up to or past the trip plate) before you pull the string.



Note: Nets & graspers

We don't recommend ever using a net or graspers to catch a feral cat. These are difficult to use and, if you actually succeed in nabbing the cat, it's dangerous to then extract or transfer him into a cage or trap. This kind of equipment should be used only by experienced professionals.