



Winter Trapping Tips

Trap, Neuter, Return can pose more challenges in areas with colder climates. During the winter months, it is important to take some extra precautions to ensure the well-being of the feral cats when temperatures dip below freezing.

- Use “Snuggle Safe” microwave discs under your traps. This not only keeps your bait warm it can keep the cat warm too after it has entered the trap. The discs stay warm for hours. Hand-warmers also work to keep bait warm, but give off considerably less heat so will not keep a cat appropriately warm. “Snuggle Safe” discs are terrific for warming cat shelters as well. See below for purchasing information.

If your ferals do not have a warm, dry environment available to them after surgery, male cats should be contained 24-48 hours and female cats should be held four-seven days after surgery in a warm/dry environment before releasing. In order to contain feral cats appropriately you need the following:

A wire cage- not plastic crate

Newspaper

Small litter box

Bowls for food and water

Duct tape

Feral Cat Handler (optional but highly recommended) or smaller cat carrier

Wooden dowel about 36” long or yard stick

You can put a small cat bed or towel in carrier/handler. If so, duct tape the bedding to the bottom of the carrier to secure it.

- The crate/cage should be large enough to accommodate a place for the cat to curl up, litter box at least as big as a shoebox lid or bigger, and food dishes. I recommend 24 x 36 x 27 at minimum. Basically the larger the better. It is very important that the spacing between the wire mesh is no more than 1” by 2” for adult cats and 1” by 1” for kittens. The 1” square cages are more expensive but in the long run are much more versatile. My favorite cage is the large Kennel-Aire Professional Fold & Carry Cage 9N-9009 found at the following link or by calling **1-800-381-7179**

http://www.drsfostersmith.com/product/prod_Display.cfm?siteid=12&pCatId=1137

- Many people who cannot afford to purchase a new cage have found them at garage sales or have contacted a local animal rescue group or shelter to borrow one.
- When setting up a wire cage make sure the tray on the bottom is securely in place, many cages have a latch that holds the tray in place. Sometimes cats will attempt to push the tray out and escape.
- A Feral Cat Handler is the perfect device to use for a hidey hole, and they can be purchased from Tomohawk Live Trap Co. at <http://livetrap.com/> or call 1-800-272-8727. Feral Cat Handlers make daily cleaning and releasing the cat a breeze. You can also use a small cat carrier. Situate the carrier so that when the carrier door is open, it rests against the side of the cage, and be certain to read Neighborhood Cats, *Fostering a Feral Cat*.*
- If you can't find a small plastic litter box, Tupperware type containers or aluminum pans can work well as a substitute. Remember, the larger the box, the more comfortable the cat will be.
- Food/water dishes that attach to the wire mesh are very handy. They are less messy and are easy to reach for refills even without opening the cage. If you do not have attachable dishes, use duct tape to secure dishes in place near the front of the cage to the floor tray.

Many caregivers do not have an appropriate place to set up a feral cat recovery cage in their home but ask about setting something up in an unheated garage. A plastic heated kennel pad or use of a "Snuggle Safe" heating disk is required for this type of set-up. Heating disks need to be microwaved every 8-12 hours. Both can be purchased from Valley Vet <http://www.valleyvet.com/> Telephone number 1-800-419-9524. The best heating pad is red hard plastic item number 20917 (small) or item number 20918.

Never attempt to touch a feral cat and ALWAYS maintain a "hands off" approach.

See Neighborhood Cats, 'Fostering a Feral Cat' handout to learn how to safely handle feral cats in cages.

<http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/info/fostering.htm>

All information provided in this handout is for informational purposes only.

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