

The Trap, Neuter, Return Process

1) *Identify the Colony*

- Record the names and addresses of individual caring for the feral cats
- Identify the number of cats in the colony and how long the colony has been occupying a particular location

2) *Provide for a Regular Feeding Pattern*

- Begin feeding the feral cat colony two weeks prior to trapping, at the same time and place, so that the cats develop a predictable habit
- Make note of the number of cats seen, and identify whether there are sick or injured cats in the colony

3) *Trap the Cats*

- Withhold food for 24-48 hours so that the cats are hungry enough to enter the set traps
- Place baited traps in the location of the regular feeding
- Return for trapped cats
- Humanely transport the cats to a holding facility by covering trap cages with a sheet
- *The majority of a normally sized colony should be trapped within the first day*
- Care for cats in a holding facility until they are to be spayed/neutered

4) *Spay/Neuter the Trapped Cats*

- Sedate the cats while they are still in traps
- Spay and neuter the cats
- Administer rabies vaccines, flea treatment, and ear mite treatment
- While each cat is still under anesthesia, mark with a straight-line, ¼ inch cut off of the tip of the left ear (this is called "ear tipping" and is the universal mark of a spayed/neutered feral cat)
- Care for cats post-surgery and monitor for surgical, anesthesia-related, or other complications, for 24-48 hours

5) *Return Cats*

- Humanely return cats to their original location

6) *Care for and Monitor the Colony*

- *Once the cats have repopulated their original location, a colony care-taker must care for the cats for the rest of their lives, including: feeding, providing water, housing when needed, monitoring for sick or injured cats, and monitoring new cats entering the colony*