

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Trap Manufacturers

1. MDC Exports, Unit 11, Titan Court, Laporte Way, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 8EF, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1582 655600
Website: www.mdceports.co.uk They supply automatic and manual cat traps.
2. Tru-catch Animal Traps www.animal-traps.com in the USA. They supply automatic traps. Include a "Divider" in your order to use the trap also for restraint.

Cage manufacturers

1. MDC, as above.
Ask for the "Trap Transfer Restrainer" basket.
2. Metalcote, Unit 14, Bromyard Road Industrial Estate, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1NS. UK
Tel: +44 (0)1531 633704 Website: www.metalcote.co.uk
Ask for the "End-opening Restrainer" basket.

Sources of Information on how to set up control programmes

1. SNIP International: www.snip-international.org Includes an application form for trapping equipment.
2. Worldwide Veterinary Service: www.wvs.org.uk
They can help find volunteer vets and nurses.
3. Cat Action Trust (UK): www.catactiontrust.org.uk
They have articles on adoption, taming and trapping.
4. Alley Cat Allies (USA): www.alleycat.org
They have a long list of useful facts sheets.
5. Feline Advisory Bureau: www.fabcats.org. Contact them to obtain "Feral Cat Manual" (2006) which includes guidance for vets on surgical techniques. In English, Spanish or Italian.
6. The Cat Group: www.fabcats.org/cat_group. includes advice on early neutering.
7. Cats Protection: www.cats.org.uk. How to re-home strays.



HOW TO SET UP A FERAL CAT CONTROL PROGRAMME BY TNR

(TRAP, NEUTER AND RETURN)

SNIP International believes that control of feral cats by killing is cruel and unnecessary. The aim should be to create stable, neutered, healthy colonies.

A stray or abandoned cat can often be re-homed. It should be caught and neutered, then fostered or adopted.

A feral cat is defined as one which was born in the wild and was never handled by people. When adult, it is shy and cannot be handled. **Feral cats** rarely become tame when adopted. The problems they cause - smell, noise and disease - are greatly reduced by neutering (castration of males and spaying of females).

With a cat trap and a trap-transfer-restrainer basket feral cats may be trapped, examined, neutered and returned to site without anyone needing to handle the conscious animal. The method is known as **Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR)**

TNR can be more effective and less expensive in the long term than control through killing.

PLANNING A NEUTERING PROGRAMME

How many cats are there?

What problems are they causing?

Who is feeding the cats, and are they willing to co-operate?

Is there a land-owner whose permission is needed?

Can the cats be returned to their site, or do you need to find alternative sites?

Are some of the cats infirm, injured or diseased?

What is your euthanasia policy?

How is money to be raised to pay for the programme?

Make a Plan

Deal with just one site at a time.

You will need:

- Transport
- A Veterinarian
- Equipment
- A skilled trapper
- People for short-term care
- Cat feeders for long-term care

Costs

Feral cat control programmes are expensive, whether the method is “pest control” or TNR. But in the long run, TNR is cheaper if the programme is successful, and especially if your vet will give you special rates. The main financial costs are equipment, veterinary surgery and transport.

There are also human costs, because the programme requires time, patience and dedication. The rewards of running a successful programme are happy cats and loyal feeders.

Where did the cats come from?

Remember that the main source of feral cats is owned cats which have not been neutered. Talk to the owners!

EQUIPMENT TO RUN A NEUTERING PROGRAMME

To set up a programme you will need:

One or more cat traps. These may be either manually-operated or automatic. Automatic traps must be purchased or donated. Manual traps can be purchased or made locally from wood and wire netting. In either case, the trapper needs to develop the same skills as a hunter.

Cat Grabbers. These are useful for catching a cat which is already inside an enclosed space.

Several Trap Transfer Restrainers. These enable the cat to be easily transferred from the trap for carrying to the veterinary surgery. The movable squeeze panel is used to restrain the cat so that it can be given an intra-muscular injection of a deep sedative such as ketamine. The unconscious cat can then be examined, treated for parasites, anaesthetised and neutered. The cat can be put back into a basket for recovery and for return to its site.

Ear-tipping: It is important to mark the cat so that it may be recognised and not trapped and sedated again. The usual method is to remove 1 cm from the tip of the left ear, using scissors and haemostasis. In some countries it may be necessary to tattoo a number on the inside of the ear. Check local regulations.

Veterinary products: The vet needs sedatives, anaesthetics, surgical instruments, ecto- and endo-parasite treatments, analgesics and antibiotics. Also soluble suture materials, because the cat will not be brought back to have the stitches removed. If the cat is under 3 months of age, smaller instruments and greater control of anaesthesia and temperature will be needed. Anaesthetics are needed for the euthanasia of injured or diseased cats. In some countries, the cats need to be vaccinated.