



## Feral Cat Trapping

### Trap Placement, Baiting, Monitoring Traps and Disposal

Feral cats have contributed to the disappearance of many ground dwelling birds and mammals in the arid zone and continue to threaten the success of recovery programs for endangered species. As a result, they are listed as a key threatening process under the Commonwealth EPBC Act 1999.



#### Materials:

- **Cat trap:** Can be borrowed from the Alice Springs Town Council (Ph 08 8950 0500) or Land for Wildlife (Low Ecological Services; Ph 08 8955 5222).
- **Shade cloth**
- **Bait**
- **Bowl of water**
- **Flashlight** (if trapping at night)

**Trap door:** The front of the trap where the cat will enter.

**Sliding door:** The back door you will use to release the cat. You will also use the back door to slide in cans of food and/or water. Some traps do not have a sliding door.

**Trip plate:** Located  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to the back of the trap, this is what cats must step on in order to trigger the trap to close.

**Handle:** Handle located on the top of the trap or on the ends. Always lift trap by handle to avoid being bitten or scratched.



## Step 1: Trap Placement

- Trapping for cats may be more successful in the cooler months due to the reduced food supply in the landscape (i.e. reptiles) during this time.
- Trap on your own property. If trapping elsewhere, you must obtain written permission from the property owner.
- Place traps out of the full sun. Shade cloth should be attached over the roof of the trap to give trapped animals protection from the sun during the warm months and to create curiosity for cats to enter at the entrance.
- Avoid catching during periods of rain unless there is adequate protection for the trap (both on top of the cage for rain and below the cage for flooding).
- Use tent pegs to hold the trap down if it is placed in an insecure location. Note that the pegs should be able to be removed from the outside of the cage easily if the trap is to be transported with the catch.
- Consider building up vegetation/mulch around the sides, leaving the entrance unobstructed. This will guide cats to the trap entrance, as the entrance is a more obvious open area. Alternatively, cover the outside of the trap with shade cloth. This will help keep the animal calm after trapping and during transport.
- It is thought that cats are less likely to walk on the cage floor, due to the texture of the mesh, so try covering with soil, sand, or vegetation.
- Place traps in areas that are frequented by the target species to reduce the impact on non-target species. Free-feeding before trapping can assist in identifying the likelihood of capturing non target species, as well as 'training' feral cats to feed and feel comfortable around the trap site.
- Ensure the trap cannot be interfered with by dogs or other animals that may cause stress or harm to a trapped cat.
- If you are continually catching other animals, try moving the trap to a different spot or discouraging others from feeding from the trap site.

## Step 2: Baiting

- Bait your trap with fresh bait (chicken, raw meat or liver, smelly tinned fish).
- Provide clean water

## Step 3: Checking the Trap

- Check the trap regularly.
- Dusk is the best time for trapping as this is when cats become active. If you are only available to trap during the day, be sure to check the trap first thing in the morning before the weather gets warm. Setting the traps in the evening will also help to avoid accidental by-catch of native wildlife during the day.
- Be sure to check the area nearby if you catch a lactating female cat, as there may be kittens nearby that they cannot be left alone at the site for ethical reasons. You may wish to try and catch the kittens first.
- Be sure to free any native birds or other animals immediately, and avoid handling or approaching the trap too frequently.

## Step 4: Disposal of Cats

Use gloves to pick up the cage and don't allow fingers to go inside the cage where they are at risk of being bitten or scratched. To transport the cat, leave it in the trap with a blanket or towel covering the outside to help calm the animal. When releasing the feral cat into the holding cage, be sure to face the trap away from you so avoid injury.

**Take them to the Alice Springs Animal Shelter (Ph 08 8953 4430):** We strongly recommend that all feral cats are taken to the Alice Springs Animal Shelter. Feral cats delivered to the Alice Springs Animal Shelter are kept for a period of time to ensure that they are not collected as domestically owned cats; and if unclaimed, are euthanized humanely.

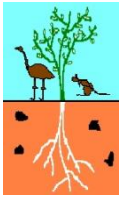
**Call Land for Wildlife or Low Ecological Services (Ph 08 8955 5222)** and we may be able to deliver them to the Alice Springs Animal Shelter for you.

## Step 5: Post-trapping

- After releasing the cats, clean the traps and disinfect them with bleach.
- Do not store the traps in the 'set' position with door open as animals may become trapped inadvertently. Remember to deactivate traps if you are unable to check them when required.
- It is also recommended to clean your clothes after handling feral cats to prevent spreading of any contagious diseases they may have.

## Step 6: Make the Most Out of Your Trap

- Share your trap with friends or neighbours, ensuring that you contact the relevant trap source to update the trap location details.
- If your trap begins to slow on catch numbers you can try moving the trap to a different place on your property.



### **Land for Wildlife & Garden for Wildlife Central Australia**

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