

What to do if you have feral or stray cats

1. Assess the situation

How many cats? How many kittens? How old are they?

Make a list of cats by color so you can check them off as they are fixed.

Are they wild or friendly (feral or abandoned pet)? Are you feeding them regularly?

2. What are your goals?

Spay/neuter cats to prevent more kittens from being born?

Trap kittens to be socialized?

3. Make appointments to have your cats spayed & neutered

Contact the clinic or shelter to make an appointment. Check with OCC for low cost options.

If using the Return to Home program at the Idaho Humane Society (IHS), you will not need an appointment.

You can take 3 cats per week to 4775 Dorman St. Boise.

Kittens must be 2# or 8 weeks to be fixed.

If you are in Ada county, kittens can be surrendered to IHS.

If you are NOT in Ada county, depending on their age, you will need to make arrangements for TNR (trap/neuter/return), fostering &/or taming after being fixed.

4. Borrow traps to trap cats 4-5 days before the appointments.

You MUST have a spay/neuter appointment to borrow our traps.

Contact our trap manager to make an appointment to pick up traps. (Beulah - 208.608.2946)

Manager will teach you how to use the traps, including using them as "feeder traps".

Practice setting traps multiple times to ensure they work.

5. FEEDER TRAPS: If you are using them as feeder traps for 4-5 days before trapping day:

Place the traps in a place the traps can remain until the cats are trapped.

Traps should be set in the feeding area.

Tie the front flap open with zip ties, heavy string or a bungee cord so the trap doesn't trigger.

Place a towel/cover over the traps. Cats like to go in tunnels.

Feed ALL cats in the traps and ONLY in the traps, using the back door to feed.

Feed the cats at the same time everyday.

If the cats don't want to go in, begin by placing the food just inside the trap and then move the food farther back each time you feed.

6. Day of trapping (day or night before your appointment):

Untie the flap and set a small amount of food in the back of the trap at the normal feeding time. Place a piece of cardboard or towel inside the trap for cats to sit on. Set the trap to trigger.

Put carabiner on the back door to make sure it doesn't accidentally open.

Leave the traps alone. (Watch from inside or farther from traps so cats will go in.)

If trapping multiple cats, leave the trapped cats where they are until all traps are filled.

If trapping a mother and kittens, do not use individual towels on traps, but use a blanket over all of the traps so cats can see each other from inside. Place traps side by side with mom or kittens in the middle and two empty traps on either side...cover over all. Change from the blanket to individual towels covering traps when transporting traps to keep them calm.

Once trapped, cats will be upset at first, but usually settle down and become quiet.

If a cat is particularly aggressive, carefully secure front door of trap with a zip tie.

If you don't trap them all, if the weather is mild, leave the traps set into the night.

Cats are nocturnal and they will probably go in them during the night.

Never leave a trapped cat in the sun or hot/cold temperatures. Cats will die of heat stroke and freezing!

7. Once trapped:

Check the cats' ears to make sure that you haven't trapped a previously fixed cat that

has an ear tip or notch, especially if you have already been trapping in this location. Place a tarp on the floor of a sheltered place where they will remain for the night. Move each trap, which is covered with a towel, carefully one by one onto the tarp in a protected area. The covered trap helps to lower their anxiety level. If it is a mama and kittens, remove the blanket from one trap at a time and put towel on each trap as you move them, especially the mama.

8. Day of spay/neuter:

Put tarp in car (they are likely to go to the bathroom, so protect your vehicle)

Place cats in car with towels covering the traps.

Be on time; clinics start on time and close their doors after check in. If late, they won't take you.

If at IHS for the Return to Home program, you can take the cats in at any time. Daily 8-5:30 3 cats per week.

(Be sure to wait for them to bring your trap back to you at IHS, RTH). You're responsible for the trap.

Check into clinic before bringing cats in to fill out paperwork. Decide if you want pain meds, vaccinations, flea/tick treatment, wormer or microchip before

you fill out paperwork. Additional fees for these will apply.

Bring cats/kittens into the building and put them where instructed.

Check to see when the pick up time is.

9. After surgery:

Pick cats up at agreed upon time.

Put cats into a sheltered and warm area for the night.

Give cats water and a small bit of food if they are fully awake.

Only open the back door a tiny bit by carefully sliding the back door open... just enough to slide in food/water.

You can give them more food later in the evening as the anesthesia wears off.

Be sure to re-lock the back door with the carabiner.

Keep cats in the traps overnight. Females need 24 or more hours until release.

After surgery, cats are unable to regulate their body temperature and are vulnerable to predators, so it is important that you keep them sequestered for the night. They need to rest in a quiet, safe, warm place.

10. Kittens:

If you have trapped kittens who are to be tamed, they can now be put in a kennel for taming or taken to a foster or shelter as previously arranged.

11. Releasing fixed cats:

When the morning weather warms up, 24 hours after pickup, it is time to release your cat/s. Males can be released in the morning if it is warm, but females need extra time.

Line traps up near the cats' hiding place (outbuilding? Front porch?). Towels on.

Once all traps are lined up, one by one, open the back door. If the cat doesn't run out right away, slowly remove the towel. Don't rush them... it's stressful enough for them.

12. Traps:

Hose out traps and then spray with a solution of 10% bleach & water. Use a brush on the trap to remove feces.

Wash towels, adding a little bleach. Do not use dryer sheets. (cats don't like the smell).

Contact our trap manager (Beulah 208.608.2946) to arrange a time to return traps within 2 days.

13. PRO TIPS:

If you need to trap a specific cat, attach a long string to the bottom of a stick and prop up the trap flap. Put enough food in the trap for all cats to go in to eat. Sit several feet away from the trap (or watch from inside your house) and when the cat you are targeting goes into the trap, pull the string.

THANK YOU for being willing to help these unfortunate animals. Your efforts count!