

Community Cat Trapping Help and Information:

1. Once you locate a colony of feral cats, see if they are ear-tipped. If they are ear-tipped then someone is taking care of the colony and you can leave them alone. If they are not, determine how many cats are living there. How many are kittens and what are the approximate ages? (Feral kittens between the ages of 5 – 10 weeks can be taken away from the colony, socialized and adopted.) Make sure that someone is feeding the cats. Find out who that is and explain that you'd like to help them out by sterilizing the cats and adopting out the kittens. Normally, people want to do the right thing for the cats.
2. Pick your date in association with a feral cat spay day. (There are two local low-cost, high volume Spay Neuter Clinics in Hillsborough County: **ACT** and HSTB. HSTB is currently doing Spay Monday, so you would need to trap the cats on Sunday). Ask the feeder not to feed the cats the day before. Contact the TNR Coordinator, Mary Ann O'Donnell (813) 625-0910, to reserve the number of traps you need. Invite friends or other feral cat caregivers to help you if it is a large colony. The goal is to TNR 80%; but 100% is better.
3. In the late afternoon, set out the traps. **See photos** (Pg 2 & 3 below) on how to set up a trap. Put a towel over the trap to make it look like a safe place. Use something smelly as bait (canned tuna or sardines). Use one can for multiple traps by placing the food on a small dish. Make sure the dish will not interfere with the spring that closes the door. Leave the area for a while, but don't go far. Read a book in your car or get a cup of coffee. Don't get too excited and run into the area when you hear the trap doors shut. You might frighten off other cats. After a while, quietly go back into the area and see how you've done.
4. Have a quiet place ready to keep the cats overnight. Drape towels over them to keep them calm. Slide a small bowl of water through the guillotine door for each cat.
5. Monday morning, take the cats to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay Spay/Neuter Clinic located at 3607 N Armenia Ave in Tampa, FL. Check in between 7:00am – 10:00am. Feral cats only (not free roaming cats) and they must be in their own trap (one cat per trap). Pick up time for feral cats is between 3:30pm – 5:30pm Monday. You will be instructed at drop off when to come back to pick up later that day.
6. You will need to have a place to keep the cats while they recover. We recommend keeping the males in the traps for 24 hours, & non-pregnant females for two days. Females who have experienced any difficulty in the spay (such as pregnancy) should be kept and monitored a minimum of three days. It is recommended that you use a cage divider to keep the cat on one side while you clean the other side of the cage & give them fresh water and food.
7. Return the cats to their colony and let the caregiver know they are back. Make sure that the caregiver has sufficient food for the colony. If you are the caregiver, make sure you monitor the colony for any newcomers when you feed. Always try to feed feral cats out of the way and please pick up dishes and containers once the cats are done eating. The less neighbors see of the cats, the less likely it is that they will complain about the cats.
8. Last and most important, keep up to date records on the **Feral Cat Database** on how many cats are in the colony and how many have been fixed. It is vitally important for grant purposes to keep accurate information. Grants help lower the costs of sterilizing feral cats for the public!



