



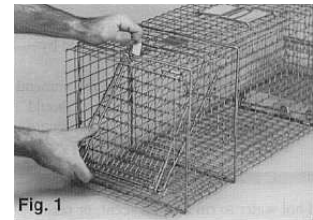
RCACAC TNR process

Once you have decided to participate in the Rancho Cucamonga Animal Care and Adoption Center (RCACAC) Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program, we will help you every step of the way. Helping you helps us by making our community cats healthy and preventing unwanted litters of kittens.

1. **Read the information, ask questions, and understand what is expected of you as a feral cat caretaker.** If you want to participate, please read further.

2. **Do you have a humane trap?**

They look complicated but humane traps are very simple to use and provide an easy and efficient way to capture feral cats (we have a cheat sheet for you!). Be aware, for every cat you do see, there are probably another 5-10 that you don't. Often times, once residents start trapping, they learn how many cats are truly in the area.



The Rancho Cucamonga Animal Care and Adoption Center provides humane traps for those who want to participate in the TNR program for a \$50.00 deposit.

3. **When and where do you set the trap?**

Cats are nocturnal (active at night) and because of Southern California's hot summer weather, trapping must be done at night. Don't worry, you can set it and head to bed without worries. In the morning, check the trap for a cat. Feral cats tend to move along edges/perimeters and not so often out in the open, so set your trap along a fence line or near a woodpile or shed. And make sure to use extra smelly food, such as tuna fish or fish-flavored canned cat food – we have found that many caretakers have success drawing in cats with this type of food due to the strong odor. Please remove the food from the can as the edges are sharp and can severely injure a cat's mouth/tongue. Paper plates are easy and disposable.

Make sure to cover the trap while leaving the entry open. Cats prefer to go into dark den-like areas for protection and will be more likely to go in to the trap if it is dark and protected. This also acts to calm the cat once trapped. Cats will become very upset and might toss themselves around to try to escape. They are very vulnerable when in the trap, so a cover provides protection and most important, a visual block for them, which also acts as a form of security.

Be aware that you may catch owned cats and/or wildlife in your trap. If this is the case, you can simply open the trap and release them and try again.

4. What do I do when I catch a cat?

Ok, so you wake up and see “Mr. Kitty” in the trap. He is not happy but looks uninjured. Keep the trap covered with a lightweight cover (bed sheets work great). Be aware that heavy towels and blankets can inadvertently suffocate cats or make them overheat.

You have 2 options for getting the cat to the Animal Center.

First option: Starting at 8am, 7 days a week, we have a dispatcher on site for the Field Officers. Make sure to alert them that this is a cat for TNR. Their direct contact is 909-466-7387 ext. 2084. The Field Officer will come to your house to pick up the trap and cat the same day. During the busy months (summer), the Field Officers can only commit to picking up one trapped cat per residence per day. If you trap a second cat the same day, it is at the Officer’s discretion if they can do another call, however you can always bring the second trapped cat in yourself. There are some things to consider if you choose to have the Officer’s pick up a trapped cat:

- Although an Officer will be out that day, their duties are based on priority calls, so that if there is a call for an injured or aggressive animal, those calls are taken first. It may be many hours until the Officer arrives. As you are considered the temporary caretaker of the feral cat, you are responsible for his/her well-being and you need to consider how long the cat has been, and will be, in the trap, what the temperature/weather is, and what stressors exist (i.e dogs, other cats, wildlife, children etc).

Feral cats become much more stressed when forced to be out during the day as they are more vulnerable. If you note panting, twitching, fur loss, bleeding from the paws or face, or any type of trauma (i.e broken bones, severe

lacerations/abscesses) these are all signs that the cat is stressed and needs to be dealt with quickly.

It is common that some feral cats injure themselves in traps by trying to escape – these are often minor scratches on the face or torn nails, which can cause bleeding on the feet. If you note a more serious injury, please alert the dispatcher and an Officer will be out as a priority call. Please be considerate to the Officers and do not say the cat is injured when he/she is not to get an Officer out quicker as this may result in the failed response to a true aggressive animal or an injured one that needs our help.

The other factor to consider when using the Officer pick up is that if you have more cats to trap, you will need to come to the Center to pick up the trap again unless the Officer can successfully transfer the cat in the field. This is difficult and per the Officer's discretion.

Second option: bring the cat in yourself. The Center is open 7 days/week (with the exception of city holidays), Monday-Friday 1-7pm and Sat/Sun 12-6pm. Simply inform the front desk staff that the cat is for the TNR program. They will put the cat in the system and transfer the cat on site to a feral box and return the trap to you if needed. They can also make the spay/neuter appointment while you are at the Center as well. Either option is available to you.

5. **Once the cat is at the Center, what happens next?**

California State Law says that we must hold stray animals for 4 business days, so even the feral cats must be housed at RCACAC for that time period. We use feral boxes (see picture) to assist staff in cleaning and provide a hiding place for the people-shy cats. They are kept in cages that are isolated from the public to minimize stress and are provided food/water, a blanket and litter pans. Most do quite well and eat voraciously during their stay. Any feral cats with obvious serious medical concerns are sedated under the direction of a veterinarian and examined/treated if possible.



The TNR program Director will contact you, often a few days after the cat has arrived, with a date for spay/neuter surgery. We use a number of local vets and will begin spay/neuter on site once our surgery center opens in mid-summer 2008. Each feral cat

will be sedated prior to surgery and tested for feline leukemia (FELV) and Feline AIDS (FIV). Because feral cats are not handleable, we cannot do an exam during their stay at RCACAC, which means that when they are transported to the local vet or surgery center for sterilization, they are sedated and a full exam is conducted at that time. Each cat is tested for FELV/FIV. Because FELV is fatal, there is no cure and it can be passed to pet cats, so it is RCACAC policy and recommended by veterinarians to euthanize cats that test positive for this disease. Our current policy is to humanely euthanize for FIV positive cats as well, however, this policy may be re-visited as more data is collected as to the survival rate and quality of life feral cats have with FIV.

Every feral also receives a FVRCP (commonly called Feline Distemper Vaccine) and Rabies vaccination. If fleas are detected, the cat is given a topical flea/tick preventive. Each cat also has one ear (typically the left) notched. This is for ID purposes. Because it is difficult to tell cats apart in colonies that are probably an extended cat family of similar looks/colors, the ear notch allows caregivers to know which ones have been altered if any new cats have arrived. Similarly, for those cats that may move out of the area and may be inadvertently trapped by another resident, we then know at the Animal Center that the cat is part of a feral colony and we will make every attempt to return the cat to the area.

During the surgery, the veterinarian will use surgical glue and/or dissolvable sutures so that there is no need to re-trap the cat to do suture removals. And both males and females will be ready to be released back to the area the same day of surgery. The only possible change to this would be if a cat were pregnant or in heat (see below for more information about pregnant/ in heat cats).

6. When can I get the cat?

You can pick up the cat on the day of surgery from the veterinarian. A staff member will alert you of the day of surgery and contact information for that vet. You are then responsible for coordinating pick up at that vet. Keep in mind, some vets close earlier than others so if you cannot pick up the cat on the date assigned, you will need to arrange to have the cat boarded overnight at your expense. We can be somewhat flexible but due to the high number of animals coming in to our Center we need to move cats out as quickly as possible, so we make appointments for spay/neuter in the next available spot.

For pregnant females, RCACAC may arrange to have the cat stay overnight at the Center to allow for a longer recovery time for the more difficult surgery. Keep in mind;

we may not be aware the cat is pregnant until the day of surgery. We will transport the cat to the vet the day of surgery.

7. What do I do once I get the cat back?

When you pick up the cat from the vet, you will be given the cat from the vet in a feral box. The cat should be awake and alert – if the cat is still groggy from anesthesia, please alert the medical staff AT THAT VET. They will discuss with you options to either come back later or house the cat overnight on site or at your home, if you are willing. You should never release a cat that looks lethargic or groggy.

If the cat appears healthy and awake, that cat can be released back to the wild the same day. Cat neuters are very simple – often taking no more than 10 minutes. Males recover quickly. Spays are so commonly performed that most run smoothly and the cat will be ready for release that same day. The only factor affecting this is pregnancy or another underlying medical condition. And just like with humans, surgery is always a risk and some cats do react poorly to anesthesia. The chance of something going wrong during surgery is slim but it is a fact we want all caretakers to be aware of.

When you arrive back to the area for release, find a quiet place, preferably at dusk to release. Put the feral box on the ground and slide up the plexi-glass front. It is a good idea to have some canned food provided near the box.

Some cats will dash out quickly, while others will sit in the box for up to hours. Both are normal reactions. If the cat chooses to hide in the box, leave the box open and undisturbed, without distractions from dogs/kids etc. The cat will eventually come out on his/her own. Then you will need to return the feral box to the Center. The feral boxes are very expensive and we trust that the caretakers will return them to us. Without them, we cannot humanely care for the feral cats at our Center.

8. So, what happens next?

Well, that's up to you. After returning the box, you may have to trap more cats, or you may be done, having only needed to spay/neuter 1 cat. You may see that cat every day or you may never see that cat again. Cats do set up territories, however, male cats tend to be nomads and move on quickly. Females tend to stay in one area and being spayed with a food source, there is often no reason to move on. However, if you do see some new cats move in to the area, don't hesitate to call us. Helping you spay/neuter feral cats helps us too!

The life of a feral cat is not easy but it is a life and thanks to you, this cat will survive and help control the rodent/lizard populations, prevent unaltered cats from coming in to the area to breed, and hopefully provide you with the feeling that you did something great for another living creature.

Thank you for your support! If you have any further questions, please contact Amy Carson at 909-466-7387 ext. 2071.