

# Trapping Animals 101

## Skunk Trapping Info and Guideline

Skunks are usually mild tempered, nocturnal creatures, moving about at night. They are sensitive to light so days they stay in their dens. Skunks, for the most part, don't spray unless they are cornered or attacked. If they are sick, there's a greater chance to get sprayed. If you see a skunk in the daytime, this is cause for concern as the skunk is probably diseased. During mating season, you may see an occasional male during the daytime. Skunks go through a series of warning motions before they spray. They will erect their tails and stamp their feet and hiss. At this point, move, walk away fast as the skunk is going to spray. A skunk can spray as far away as 12 feet and as many as 8 times. When dogs come home full of spray, they've usually been sprayed more than once. Skunks will go under out buildings, houses and porches to den and have their young. You might see holes where they have dug under a building or smell the musky odor of the skunk as they do mark their territories. Lawns will have holes in the morning from the skunks digging for grubs and other insects. Skunks will usually ignore people and other animals unless they are disturbed. As the human population moves to more rural areas, into the skunks territory, more people are having to trap and remove the creatures.

### Choosing the right animal trap.

An enclosed trap is preferable to catching skunks. Make sure you check the trap often, trap at night when they are out and the weather is cool. In hot weather, any animal caught in an enclosed trap can become over heated and can die very quickly. There's no guarantee that the animal in the trap is a skunk. It might be your neighbor's cat, so please check often.

The smaller the skunk trap, the less chance you have of being sprayed. Skunks need to raise their tails to spray. Many people use a water hose in warm weather to spray the skunks tail to keep the skunk from spraying.

Baiting is very important. Skunks are omnivorous but their diet mostly consists of insects. They also like fruit and bird eggs. They are scavengers and will eat almost everything, dog and cat food outside will draw them in. A boiled egg is a good bait to use, the scent draws them in. Bacon grease is another good bait but will bring in other animals ,too.

When transferring the skunks to a new home, make sure that there's a food and water supply available. If not, you might have your uninvited guests back. If you can relocate them near a river or reservoir, the chances are less they will be back. Don't be surprised if the skunk doesn't run right out of the trap when released, it needs to feel safe to leave the trap. You can use a long pole to turn the gravity trap over onto its top, the door automatically opens allowing the skunks to walk out.

If you chose a spring load skunk trap, other precautions need to be taken. They are more difficult to use as the door must be manually manipulated to be opened. You should place a piece of canvas over the one half of the trap so the skunk does not notice you approach the trap. Make sure you cover the opposite half of the trap, leave the end that you need to open uncovered. The skunk will try to hide and will stay under the covered part of the trap. You need to be able to open the door quickly to reduce the risk of being sprayed. Approach the trap with a large piece of canvas. Canvas is quieter than using a plastic tarp and affords protection from spray. Gently place this large canvas over the entire trap. If you can, take a quick peek to see if

the skunk is at the opposite end of the trap before you open. After you open the door (use gloves), quietly get up and walk away taking the larger piece of canvas with you. The skunk will leave the skunk trap when he feels it's safe to do so.

Try not to intimidate or threaten a skunk. Crouch to make yourself small, sometimes talking gently will calm them down. Skunks tend not to spray if they can't see. Shaking, bumping, banging, handling the trap in a rough matter will encourage the skunk to spray.

This information is only a guideline and is not all inclusive about skunks or trapping. We encourage you to research more about skunks and wish a happy trapping experience.

## Guidelines for trapping Armadillo

The armadillo is the only mammal that has bone plates in its skin. Their color ranges from khaki to a pebbly grey. They grow to the size of an average housecat, can weigh 8 to 17 pounds and to 30 inches in length counting their long tails. The average life span is 12 to 15 years. They are known for their destructive feeding and burrowing habits. They are known for tearing up yards and gardens foraging for food, insects, grubs, worms, etc. They produce a musky odor that some people find repulsive. They are often hit by cars at night as they feed on road kill.

**Armadillos are a nocturnal creature, eating and doing their damage by night. Taking care of an armadillo problem can be quite tedious.** They are hard to trap.

### Choosing the right trap.

From what we have gathered over the years from professionals and homeowners is that trapping armadillo is a hit and miss situation unless the traps are positioned correctly. You don't have to use bait and probably shouldn't use bait so you don't have an unwanted catch, such as a raccoon. If you do use bait, a piece of fruit is better than having mealworms or earthworms. With armadillos and traps, it's location, location, location.

An enclosed strong trap such as the Tru-Catch R-24 Resister works very well for trapping Armadillo. The 36D Classic Deluxe, a wire trap is also great. Both are very strong, built to withstand the strength of an Armadillo. Both of these traps are gravity. A strongly built spring load trap will also work. You will need to place the trap near an active burrow. You can literally 'lead' an armadillo to a trap. Because they have poor eyesight, you can use short garden fencing, boards, bricks, etc., to build a road leading up to the trap. To do this, you need to know the route that they take, which burrow is active. And using more than one trap is more effective than using one at a time.

## Guidelines for trapping Red, Gray and Ground Squirrels

Ah, the squirrel. They are so darned cute and such darn pesky rodents, called tree rats by many. They spread diseases, steal food from bird feeders, taunt dogs, and can cause lots of problems in attics and walls. There's the red squirrel, gray squirrel, brown squirrels, ground squirrels, fox squirrels. And all of them can create havoc on homes and pets. Squirrels give birth in the spring and in warmer areas, even the fall. Take this into mind when trapping. If you catch a mom with babies still in the nest, you could have a decaying smell within days. Try to wait until you can see the little ones out and about. Squirrels can be fiendishly clever, relentlessly acrobatic and sometimes even evil. They are so fast they can collect the food needed in about

20 minutes and spend the rest of the day terrorizing pets and birds. Their diet varies with the season and availability, nuts, fruits, flowers, plant buds, also bird eggs and some pounce on small birds at feeders. Several species are known to hoard grain and nuts to eat during the winter.

If you have bird feeders, research ways to make them squirrel proof. Some people have even elected to get rid of their bird feeders in order to get rid of the squirrels.

Before deciding to trap squirrels, please check with your local authorities that this is legal to do in your area.

Are you trapping squirrels that are outside or those that have found a way inside your home, such as your attic? Do you know where they are getting in? The first step is to plug any holes or areas very thoroughly, squirrels can gnaw another hole around patchwork very quickly.

### **Choosing the right squirrel trap.**

We prefer the Tru-Catch 24 Tuffy, the DU09 Durapoly spring trap or any of the smaller traps. The correct size is about 24 x 8 x 9 or slightly larger. For the 24 Tuffy gravity squirrel trap, get a snap ring or carabiner clip and fasten the trap door to the frame. When you are transporting, if you have to hit the brakes and the trap rolls, you could have a squirrel loose in the car with you or loose in your trunk. Keep the snap clipped to the trap for storage so it's always there when you need it. The best bait, hands down, is chunky peanut butter shoved right into the far end of the trigger pan. Then drop a few seeds, nuts, grains, cereals behind the trigger. Make sure that the bait is all in the trap and not sprinkled around the trap. You don't want him filling up before hand or he might not go into the trap. Filbert nuts are a favorite, you don't have to crack open the nuts, leave them whole. Or mix honey or molasses with oatmeal and birdseed. Hand roll them into little balls and use for bait.

When you have your catch, you must quickly transport the little creature to a new home. Cover the trap with a towel or rug and have a piece of carpeting with a plastic bag underneath to set the trap on. This prevents feces and urine in your car or car trunk. I have heard everything from 3 miles to 15 miles for distance. The important thing is that his new home has a food and water supply. Over a river or reservoir is your best bet. Or you could have him coming back to visit you. The squirrel is going to be very verbal on the trip. Make sure you are wearing high quality animal handling gloves to prevent scratches and bites when handling the trap and releasing the squirrel. Usually where there is one squirrel, there are more. It might take a few more trips if you hear walking in the attic or hear the trap go off. Please remember to check the trap often, don't forget you have a baited trap set, sometimes out of sight is out of mind.

### **A few fun facts:**

There are over 350 varieties of squirrels, ranging from four inches in length to over 3 feet in length. The squirrel family comprises approx. 40% of all mammals. Average life span for a squirrel is 3-5 years. There's a wealth of information available online on squirrels, we encourage you to educate yourself with other methods of controlling the squirrel population in your area. We wish you a successful and happy trapping experience.

## **Guidelines for trapping domestic and feral wild dogs**

Over the years we have heard many sad stories about dogs. For people who lose a pet dog it's like losing a family member, a loved 'child.' We can sympathize as we personally treat our dogs like they are our kids.

I'll address the domestic dog issue first. If your dog has gone missing, call local shelters, animal control, the police, etc. to see if someone has picked up your dog running loose. Many times, the dog is at the pound or animal shelter, waiting for you to pick him up. If not, then put up posters, phone neighbors, have them look in their yards and outbuildings, contact Craig's List, put a lost dog ad in your local newspaper, it's important to communicate as much as you can that your dog is missing. If you receive reports that your dog has been spotted in a certain area, that's where you should concentrate your search. Someone may be feeding the dog or there is a ready food supply that is keeping him or her in a certain place.

### **Suggested Animal Traps to Use**

If you decide to use a trap, make sure it is large enough to accommodate your dog. We suggest the 42D for medium dogs and the 48HD or 60D for the larger dogs. These are made by Tru-Catch, are powder coated brown and close quietly by gravity. Hot dogs are good as bait, if it rains or snows, the hot dog remains intact. Meat of any kind also works but make sure it is fresh or cooked. Spoiled meat or fish can make your dog sick. Don't use raw or cooked chicken with bones. Your dog could choke on the bones. Put a piece of clothing, a favorite toy or his dog blanket in the trap. This scent will be familiar to your dog. Make sure the bait is placed behind the trip plate so he has to walk to the back and step on the trip pan to reach the bait. If your dog is hesitant to go into the trap, tie the trap door up for a few days, baiting in the center of the trap, this gets the dog used to going in and out for food. On the 4 or 5th day, untie the trap door and place the bait behind the trigger. Covering the trap with an old blanket might be more enticing for your dog. The dog might feel more secure if he/she feels hidden. Of course, we recommend using high quality animal handling gloves for your protection against scratches and bites.

Evening at dusk is the best time to trap. The weather is cooler and your dog will tend to come out of hiding to search for food. Make sure other people are absent as the voices and movements might prevent your dog from coming out. You might have to leave and let the trap do its work. Check early in the morning or as often as you can to see if you were successful. You might find another dog in your trap and have to start over with the procedure.

### **Trapping wild feral dogs**

It's very hard, sometimes impossible to tell the difference between a stray and feral dog. Stray dogs have been abandoned or lost and survive by eating human garbage or hunt prey for their meals. If the stray is not spay/neutered, it will breed with another stray or feral dog and then you have true feral puppies. Dogs of this nature tend to pack or travel in groups. They will make homes in old coyote or fox dens, under buildings, even under old abandoned vehicles or machinery. They will prey on livestock, chickens, rabbits, rodents, mice and, of course, garbage cans.

Methods of trapping are the same. But release of these dogs is different. If you can, call your local animal control to come to you to get the dog out of the trap. They have the necessary equipment to get the wild dog out of the trap and handle the dog after it's out of the trap. You cannot trust a feral dog. It has been born in the wild without human contact and can be very aggressive. Only those trained in this area should approach or remove the trapped dogs. If the stray of any pack has been a domesticated dog, there's a chance, with lots of love, care and attention, that this animal can be socialized again and become adoptable. With grown, feral dogs, this is almost impossible. If you trap a stray dog that is lactating, chances are she has a batch of puppies nearby. If feral puppies are caught at a very early age, the chances of socialization are much better and they can usually be adopted out.

The saddest calls of all are the dogs that are raised to fight then are abandoned with horrible wounds and trauma. They are dumped in the country and are forced to live on their own means, if they don't succumb to their injuries first. County animal control most times ends up shooting or euthanizing these dogs to put them out of their misery. These dogs also will pack and can do great damage to the wildlife and livestock in an area. They also cannot be trusted not to turn on humans, especially children.

We suggest the same traps for stray and feral dogs as the domesticated dogs, the 42D, 48HD and 60D for the very large dogs. These traps are so quiet that if you miss the dog on the 1st try, they will often go back into the trap again and again as the trap does not traumatize the dogs when the door closes. Spring load traps are also very effective for trapping stray or feral dogs. The advantage is that the trap door locks into place so if the trap is rolled, the trap door cannot come open. The disadvantage is that the trap door is noisier than a gravity trap door and could scare the other dogs watching the trapping procedure.

There's also a 48F dog trap that is very popular with animal control agencies. The fact that it folds up like a suitcase for storage and that it fits into a trunk of a car, makes it easier to get the trap to where it needs to be set. This trap does not have a rear sliding door. The TD1 Divider and a catch pole are very handy accessories for this trap. You put the divider through the top of the trap, pinning the dog in the back part of the trap. Open the front door, then take the catch pole and reach through the tines of the divider and loop the dogs neck. Pull out the divider and you have a restrained dog, ready to lead off into animal control vehicle. Make sure you are using high quality gloves to prevent scratches and biting.

Unlike cats, skunks, raccoons, etc., you cannot let the dogs loose in the wild. They must be taken to a shelter to have the vaccines and care that is needed. They will be deemed adoptable or unadoptable. There are TNR programs for dogs and now dog colonies are being set up. A spayed or neutered dog is not as aggressive as one that is un-spayed/neutered. If the colony is fenced in and has excellent management where the dogs are fed, watered and socialized daily, they can spend the rest of their years in the company of other dogs and live a good life.

This information is only a guideline and is not all inclusive on dogs or trapping dogs. We encourage you to research more about feral and stray dogs and TNR rescue programs in your area. We wish you a happy trapping experience.

## Guidelines on trapping a coyote

If you were to ask 50 professional trappers on how to successfully trap a coyote, I bet you would get 50 or more different answers. **The coyote or 'barking dog' can prove to be one of the hardest of all animals to catch.** We do not like nor sell leg hold or snare traps. The web is full of information on how to catch coyote using these types of traps. We only sell and promote live catch box traps for trapping any animal, including the coyote.

The coyote is a relative of the domestic dog and wolf. They are native to North America, a few can be found in some areas of Central America. Coyotes are essentially nocturnal, live an average of 6 to 15 years, they prefer to be alone but have been seen in pairs and packs. They also have been seen eating in the daytime, usually the smaller rodents such as mice. When there is bigger prey, they will hunt in pairs or packs. The parents of coyote pups will stay the

summer with their young, an average of 2 to 6 pups in a litter. In recent years, the coyote has become more brazen and are seen within city limits during the daytime. As man encroaches upon their territory for housing, the problem of coyotes has become more troublesome. Coyotes will prey upon chickens, ducks, housecats, rabbits, etc. This is causing problems for people who are raising these animals on their country property. Coyotes have a broad range diet that allows them to live in many different territories. In some areas of the US, the coyotes don't seem to be as scared to humans as they once were. They have been seen in mall parking lots, on school grounds, in front and backyards of homes, even in the busiest areas of a town or city. The coyote is on the lookout for food and maybe shelter if his home has been built on or destroyed. This shows how adaptable and versatile coyotes are. Even though we see more of them out and about, they are still more afraid of people than we are of them.

#### **Choosing the correct animal trap for coyotes.**

The preferred trap is the Tru-Catch 42D. It is a medium dog trap that is large enough to trap most sizes for coyotes. The 48F is also used, especially if someone is setting up a trap line. The location of the trap is important. Coyotes are creatures of habit and return to the same area. If you know where the coyote is entering and leaving your property, this is where the trap should be set. For best results, the trap must be concealed. Many use straw or hay bales set around and on top of the trap with only the trap door sticking out. This hides the trap and helps mask any human scent. You can use scent deterrents available in the fishing or hunting section of a store. Or spray apple cider around the trap and as you walk away, this takes away human scent. Coyotes will fight hard after being captured. Make sure you have your plan of action of what you are going to do after trapping the coyote in place. Check your trap often so the coyote doesn't harm or destroy your trap. Spring load traps also work for catching coyote, make sure they are hidden well as glint of the sun off of metal may prevent the coyote from entering the traps. As always, wear high quality gloves for protection.

#### **Baiting for a Coyote**

So many baits but we suggest the most simple first. Coyotes are known for destroying whole watermelon patches. They love the taste and are after the liquid. Use cut watermelon pieces for your first choice of bait. Put a few tidbits leading up to and just inside the front door. Put the main course behind the trap plate so the coyote steps on the plate to get the bait. Stick it a little under the trip pan so he doesn't grab and run. You can even put the bait underneath the trap at the end where you bait. This way he cannot grab and run. If using old meat, rub the sides of the trap down to scent up the area. Put a few tidbits before and just in the trap. Do the same thing with the old meat. Place a little under the trap pan, underneath the trap at the back of the trap or wire it to the back of the trap.

Out west, where we live, livestock owners have had difficulties with coyotes for years. They will prey upon newborn livestock, lambs and calves. Live food is more appetizing for coyotes than dead animals, although they are seen on highways eating road kill. Some serious folks have found that building or buying a bait cage to put at the rear of the trap works well for coyote bait. They will use a live chicken in the bait cage. The coyote goes into the trap thinking it can get to the chicken by going through the trap. The chicken, although being scared out of its wits, won't be harmed and you will have a catch. Rotten eggs are also supposed to be good bait for coyotes. If you do an online search, there are 100's of products that say they will serve as excellent bait for catching coyote, we will leave this up to you.

Please be sure and contact your local authorizes or game warden to find out if there are any rules or constrictions to trapping coyote in your area. Find out the releasing procedures. If there are none, take the coyote as far away as possible, the males can travel 15 miles in one day.

They need a food and water source available. Assistance from your game warden will help you in this area.

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## Guidelines for trapping feral and domestic cats

We have been selling to and working with TNR groups for almost 14 years. Through this time we have learned many things about trapping cats, feral and domesticated. There are many different techniques and procedures for the successful trapping of cats. Not all people agree on any one approach so I will give just brief guidelines which work most of the time on most cats. You will occasionally run into the difficult cat that seems impossible to catch. But with time and patience you can even be successful with this scenario. We recommend searching the internet as there is a wealth of information on feral cats, cat colonies, TNR techniques, etc. We can only touch on the tip of the problem and the solutions.

### **A few facts about wild, feral cats.**

Cats that are born and raised in the wild are true feral cats. They have not had human contact as kittens. Many of these feral's are from domesticated or semi domesticated stray cats that were dumped by the side of a road and left to survive on their own. If the kittens are born near a home, in a wood stack or an out building, it's easier to catch them if you start a feeding program after they come out exploring. Some say never to feed a stray as this encourages them to stay. But if your goal is to TNR these kittens when they are ready, it's important to keep them from wandering so you will be able to trap in the future. Regular feeding also tames the cats somewhat and there's a chance that these cats can become adoptable in the future.

Unfortunately, most of the stray cats that are discarded are not spayed or neutered. This adds to the increasing population of feral's in this country. The kittens of these cats are unvaccinated and are prone to disease. Besides spaying/neutering, these kittens need vaccines to prevent disease.

Cat populations – One pair of breeding cats and their offspring can exponentially produce over 400,000 cats in seven years. The population statistics are staggering. More and more rescue groups are starting in order to help curb this problem. Hopefully, more towns and cities are going to get serious about the cat problems in their communities and start addressing this problem, helping with the TNR programs.

### **What is a TNR program?**

TNR stands for Trap, Neuter and Release. This method has been very successful and somewhat controversial, especially by bird lovers. The feral cats are caught, spayed or neutered then released back into the wild. Or put in cat colonies where they are fed and vaccinated on a regular basis. This gives the cat the freedom to live a happy life without breeding, creating more feral cats. Studies have been done that show that even though cats are efficient hunters and do kill birds, the population of the birds can withstand these levels of predators. If not, the birds would have disappeared long ago. Other causes of bird deaths are much more threatening – poisoning of the habitat and food sources due to deforestation, urban sprawl, large shopping complexes and lawn care and farming pesticides have much more impact on song birds than feral cats.

### **Choosing the right cat trap**

The humane live catch gravity trap is hands down the favorite for trapping cats. The door comes down by gravity and cannot harm any animal standing in the doorway when the trap door comes down. We have heard too many sad stories about kittens following mom into the trap and having a spring load door come down on them. The gravity door is very gentle and will either

boot the babe into the trap or allow the kitten to back out. By far, the best traps for feral or domestic cats are the Tru-Catch traps. The 30D and 30LTD are the two most popular for trapping cats. Many people also use the 36D as it affords the room for the big toms who can be reluctant to go into a smaller trap. It also is big enough for recovery after spay/neutering of the cats. A trap divider is an excellent tool to divide the trap so you can clean the trap without the fear of the cat escaping. We recommend 24 to 48 hours recovery time for the males and 2 to 3 days recovery time for the females. They then can be released back into their former environment or at a monitored cat colony.

Covering the trap during the trapping phase is also recommended. Cats like enclosed areas and feel safer and are quieter if the trap is covered. You can use old blankets, towels, sheets, etc. We also carry trap covers that stay in place during bad weather, allowing sheltering from the elements. These covers stay in place through the procedure of transferring to vet or shelter. When feral cats are covered, they are less likely to become wild in the trap. Bottoms are also available to protect your vehicle from feces and urine during the transport. We recommend a snap ring or carabineer clip be attached to the trap, securing the trap door to the frame in case the trap rolls. The catch and release Tru-Catch traps will come open when the trap is rolled upside down. There is a rear door for easy transfer to a carrier or a holding cage. These also are used for releasing the cats when they are ready for the wild again. Spring load traps are also used for trapping feral cats but sometimes the nose of the trap door coming down can traumatize the cat in the trap and other cats watching the trapping procedure. If using a spring load, use ones with a rear door for easier baiting and transferring of the cat to a carrier or holding cage.

#### **Bait for cats**

Almost anything meaty or fishy will draw in a cat. Some swear by chicken nuggets nuked awhile in the microwave to bring out the scent. Another good bait is sardines. Get a can, poke some holes in the top with a nail and hammer, dribble the juice up to and just inside the trap. Put the unopened can behind the trigger. The cats will lick at the oil on top trying to get to the meat and there's a high probability of a catch. This is also good if the cat is scheduled for surgery the next day as there needs to be as little food in their stomach as possible. The sardine can be used over and over, until the smell is too overwhelming for the trapper.

The Tru-Catch traps are powder coated to protect the trap from rusting in the elements but the biggest advantage is that they close very quietly. Some cats continue eating, not even noticing that the trap door has come down. It doesn't traumatize the cat in the trap or other cats that may be watching the procedure. Many people successfully trap the same cats again and again for medical purposes such as vaccinations or wound treatment.

For those hard to catch cats, tie the trap door up a few days with it baited. Get the cats used to going in and out to eat. Then untie the trap door, this method catches many hard to catch cats. Traps can also be camouflaged with sticks, branches, etc. Many untrusting feral's have been caught this way.

Before trapping the cats we believe they should get used to eating in the same place at the same time of day. Some believe that the cats should be shut off from food so they are hungry and will enter the trap more often to get food. We feel you will risk losing the cats if they are prevented from eating. They will travel someplace else to find a food source. Plan you're trapping carefully, it's best to trap the night before they are scheduled for surgery. Also remember that the kittens need to be old enough to be on their own and not nursing anymore. If the kittens are still nursing from mom, if you can wait, the better chances of catching the mom

and the kittens. Kittens are old enough to be spay/neutered at 4 months of age.

Remember that trapping at dusk is the best time, especially in hot weather. Keep the traps in the shade and check them often. The floor of the trap, if on grass, does not need newspaper. In fact, the crinkling of newspaper can scare the cats and they won't walk into the trap. A piece of old carpeting or carpet sample works and is quiet.

Make sure you wear high quality long gloves when handling the cats. They will literally climb your arm and will scratch and bite. This is best left up to the experts at the vet clinic, the animal shelter or the experts of a TNR rescue group. Cat bites can be very serious. Thick towels are best for kittens, wear gloves at the same time.

If you have barn cats, which are used to reduce the mouse and rodent population, please make sure they are also spay/neutered and their vaccines are kept up to date. Many people move every year leaving their cats to survive on their own. This causes the deaths of many of those cats due to starvation, disease and dying in animal shelters as there are so many, they are euthanized. We have at times more of a people problem than a cat problem.

Don't corner a feral cat. It is more afraid of you than you are of him and will try to run from you. Feral cats can serve as a barrier to disease by killing rodents. But cats, like any animal, can become diseased by rabies, distemper and other diseases, are susceptible to fleas, can be injured in cat fights and infections can set in. There are also maimed cats that have been hit by cars and some that are born with birth defects that need special attention.

Feral cats can be very destructive to gardens, lawns, landscaping, outdoor furniture and vehicles. They will spray, urinate and defecate on expensive landscaping. The mating yowls and cat fights also disturb people's sleep. Not everyone is a cat lover and will do what it takes to make sure the cats don't do any further damage, most times they end up in shelters and are euthanized.

I salute all the volunteers that are working hard to reduce the cat population by TNR. And those who are educating the public and local governments on how to effectively control the cat population.

This information is only a guideline and is not all inclusive on cats or trapping cats. We encourage you to research more about feral cats and TNR rescue programs and we wish you a happy trapping experience.

## Info and Trapping Guidelines for Raccoon

Raccoon, a masked, stealthy and cunning creature of the night. There are 30 some species and subspecies of raccoon. A raccoon's coat is varying in color and thickness and he lives, well camouflaged, in a wide range of environments and climates. Raccoons do not hibernate during the winter although they will sleep for several days in a row. The raccoon thrives best in the regions where it can freeload on human garbage and crops, including gardens, garden ponds and the garbage can area of dwellings. They will eat about everything they can find but have a special 'sweet tooth.' This helps with the baiting for a 'raccoon catch only' as other animals tastes are not for the sugary foods as a raccoon are.

Raccoons are nocturnal animals and prefer hunting for food at night. You will often see them up in trees sleeping during daytime hours. Be sure to put outside pet food inside at night as they love the free feast. Mom will often bring her little ones to porches for the free food left outdoors. Raccoons can carry rabies, as most wild animals. If cornered, a raccoon will hiss to warn you away, especially if they are protecting their young. Raccoons rarely charge people, they are more scared of you than you are of them. But take caution, move slow, don't threaten them. A rabid raccoon is more likely to be seen during the day, will display signs of sickness and could charge. Please don't approach, call your local authorities and have them come to you.

Raccoons 'dab' their food in water if available, they don't wash their food. This helps enhance their sense of touch and helps them find food under water by feeling. You don't need to put water in the trap. They will snack on the bait without needing any water.

### **Choosing the right raccoon trap**

We have found that both gravity and spring load traps work well for catching raccoon. With the gravity animal traps, there's no need to reach down and unlock the trap to remove the raccoon, you merely roll the trap onto its top and the raccoon runs out. Or lift the rear door of the gravity trap (Tru-Catch gravity traps) and you don't have to roll. Remember to wear a good quality leather or Kevlar lined gloves when handling the trap and releasing the animal. Raccoons have very sharp teeth and claws.

If you chose a spring load animal trap, other precautions need to be taken. They are more difficult to use as the door must be manually manipulated to be reopened. You should place a piece of canvas over the one half of the trap so the raccoon does not notice you approach the trap. Make sure you cover the opposite, leave the end that you need to uncovered. The raccoon will try to hide and will stay under the covered part of the trap. You need to be able to open the door quickly so you can let the raccoon out as quickly as possible. After you open the door (use gloves), quietly get up and walk away, some climb back into the vehicle. The raccoon will leave right away, they are not known for hanging around a trap long. They usually don't charge as they are happy to be free and are going to scoot as fast as possible to a hiding place.

### **Baiting the trap for a raccoon**

Many people use the same bait as what the raccoon is eating at the scene. Corn cobs, cat food, etc. But the baits that really work and target in on catching just raccoon are sweet foods. Place a small, heavy bowl behind the trip plate and put an assortment of sugary goodies for them. Marshmallows, strawberry licorice, breakfast bars with jam, sweetened cereal, these are just a few of the choices for raccoon bait. Placing several things encourages them to touch everything and increases your chance of a catch.

If you are relocating your uninvited guest, make sure you take them to a place that has a food and water source. Near or over a river or reservoir would be the best choice or you might have them back free loading.

This information is only a guideline and is not all inclusive on raccoon or trapping raccoon. We encourage you to research more about raccoons and wish you a happy trapping experience.