



# Community Cat Program

Humane Society of Huron Valley's  
Trap-Neuter-Return(TNR) Program

Andrew Newton  
Andrewn@hshv.org or (734) 661-3523  
Humane Society of Huron Valley

# Today's Presentation



# Community Cats

## Feral Cats

- ❑ Do not vocalize
- ❑ Do not approach humans
- ❑ May hiss/spit/growl
- ❑ Appear well groomed
- ❑ Do not eat until humans leave

## Stray Cats

- ❑ May approach people and food
- ❑ May vocalize
- ❑ Not suited for indoor lifestyle
- ❑ May look dirty or unkempt

**Community Cats are free roaming, feral, or semi-feral cats and may be social with their caregiver, but require an outdoor lifestyle.**





# What About Kittens or Social Cats?

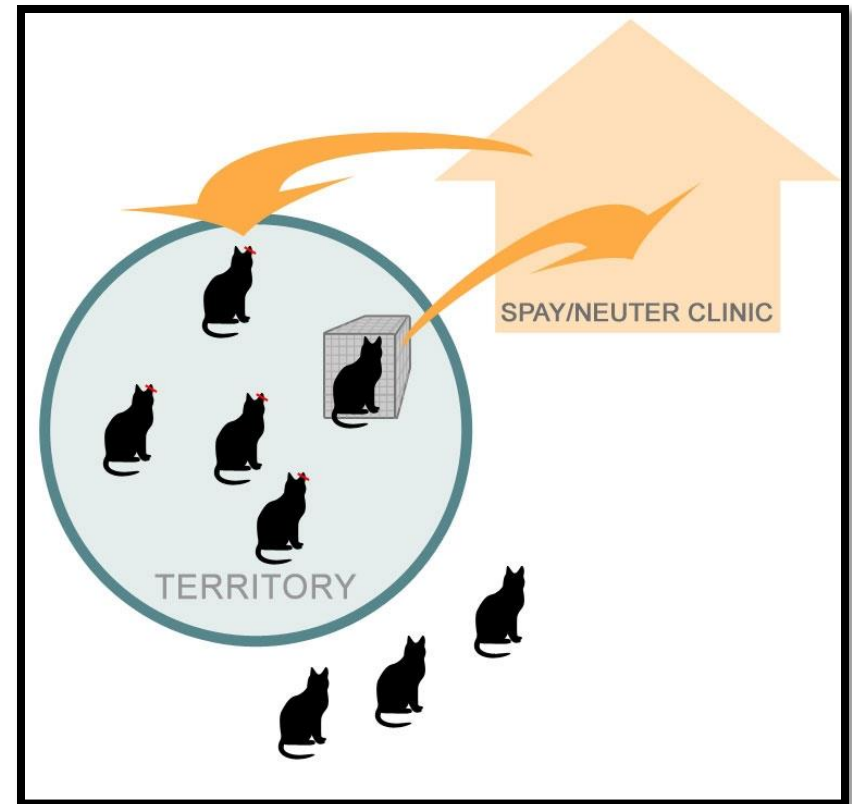
- Kittens-
  - ▣ Socialize until ready for adoption , up to 8 weeks, age/resources
  - ▣ Should stay with their mother until at least 4 weeks of age
  - ▣ Try handling and working with kittens as early as 10 days
- Abandoned Domesticated Cats
  - ▣ Behaviorally assessed in TNR room, if space is available, accepted for intake and set up for adoption





# What is TNR

- Trap
  - ▣ Cats are humanely trapped in live traps
- Neuter
  - ▣ Cats are sterilized, ear tipped for recognition, and vaccinated against Rabies Virus
- Return
  - ▣ Cats are given sufficient time to rest post surgery and then returned to their original habitat
  - ▣ Volunteer colony caretakers continue to provide food and monitor health of colony



# No Effective Alternatives

## Trap & Kill Does Not Work!

- ❑ The leading cause of cat death in shelters is euthanasia.
  - ❑ All cats have not been caught
  - ❑ Continue breeding
  - ❑ Temporary

## Do Nothing Does Not Work!

- ❑ Cats will continue to breed
  - ❑ Lack of food, cats start to become destructive
  - ❑ Cats and their offspring become very ill



# Before & After





# Relocating

- ❑ Hard to catch all of the cats
- ❑ Already aware of surroundings
- ❑ Not 100% successful
- ❑ HSHV does not relocate colonies





# Advantages of TNR

- ❖ No kittens
- ❖ No odors
- ❖ Less Noise
- ❖ Rodent Control



# HSHV's Policy Evolution

- ❑ Like many shelters, we used to accept feral cats for euthanasia.
- ❑ Created the TNR program in 2007.
- ❑ In 2007 we accepted over 1,200 feral cats for euthanasia, in 2008 we accepted over 500, and in 2009 we accepted 2.
- ❑ We no longer accept free roaming cats for euthanasia.
- ❑ **13 yrs! Since 2007 we have sterilized over 15,000 community cats!!**





# 5 Steps to TNR

1. Working with Community
2. Prepare for trapping
3. Trap
4. Surgery
5. Recovery and release



# *The First Step*

## Working with Community



# Community

- Resident/Business owner etc..contacts me.
- Collect info/ facilitate project
- Educate neighborhood
- Providing long term security





# Good Relations with Community

- ❑ Educate yourself on TNR
- ❑ Get to know your neighbors , let them be aware of what you are doing.
- ❑ Hand out info sheets, people like a lot of info
- ❑ Some neighbors may come forward that they also feed and care for the same cats and didn't know anyone else did



# Dealing With Hostility Towards Cats

- ❑ Be understanding (neighbors are living with the noise and odor)
- ❑ Never argue!
  - Be professional in your approach...  
“I understand your frustration...”



# What About The Birds?

- ❑ Cats have been an active member in the wild for a long time
- ❑ Silver lining in what they hunt





# Legally Speaking

- ❑ Currently there are no state or federal laws addressing community cats
- ❑ In the laws eyes they are mostly treated as pet cats
- ❑ Ruling on community cats falls on HOA's or management/landlords



# *The Second Step*

## Prepare For Trapping



# *Different Types Of Trappings*

- Private Trapping
  - ▣ Caregiver rents trap or use their own, catch cats, bring in on their own
- Volunteer Trapping
  - ▣ Volunteers are scheduled to assist with private trappings of 1 + cats
- Coordinator Trapping
  - ▣ Community Cat Coordinator (with caretaker and/or volunteer assistance) performs large scale trappings





# *Preparations For Trapping*

- Establish A Feeding Pattern
  - To facilitate the trapping, train the cats to eat at the same time and place
- Count the cats
  - Need an accurate count to know how many traps are needed and when the trapping is finished!
- Determine a holding space
  - Some arrangements can be made for trained volunteers to drop off in TNR room off-hours (usually Sunday evening)



# Equipment



Have more  
traps than cats!!



# *The Third Step*

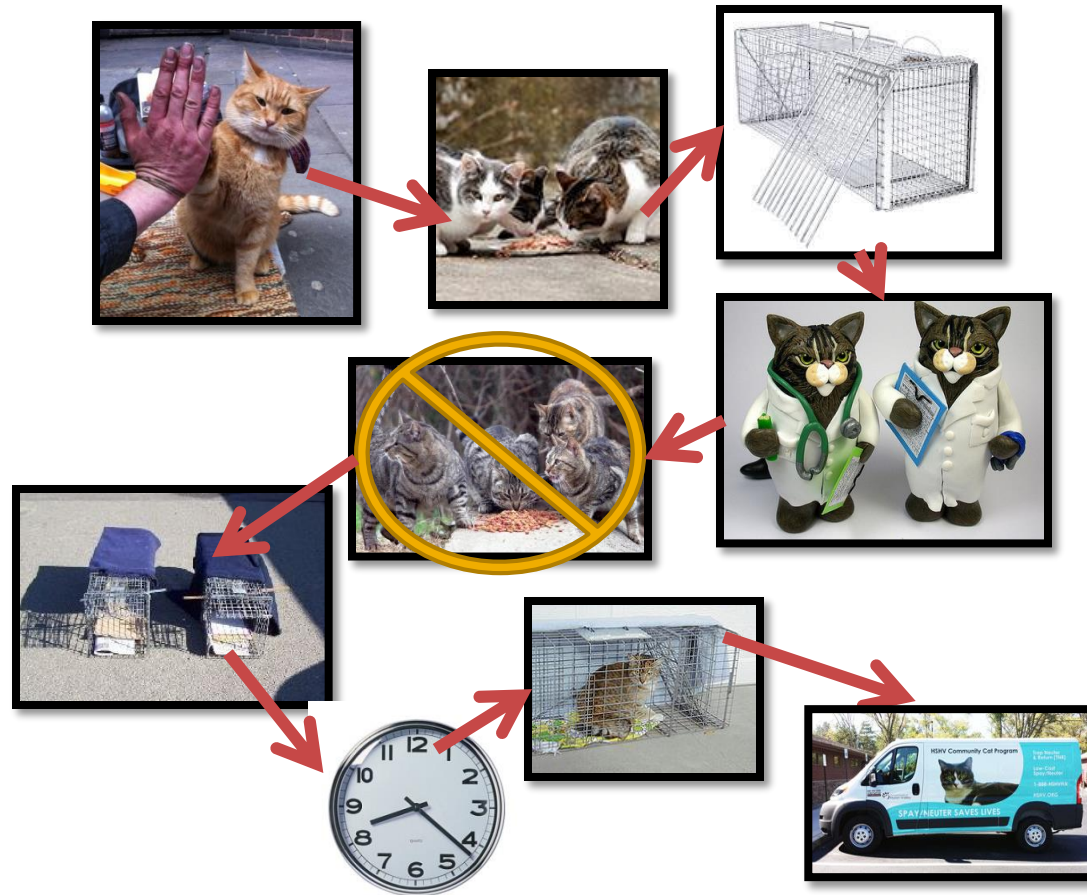
Trap



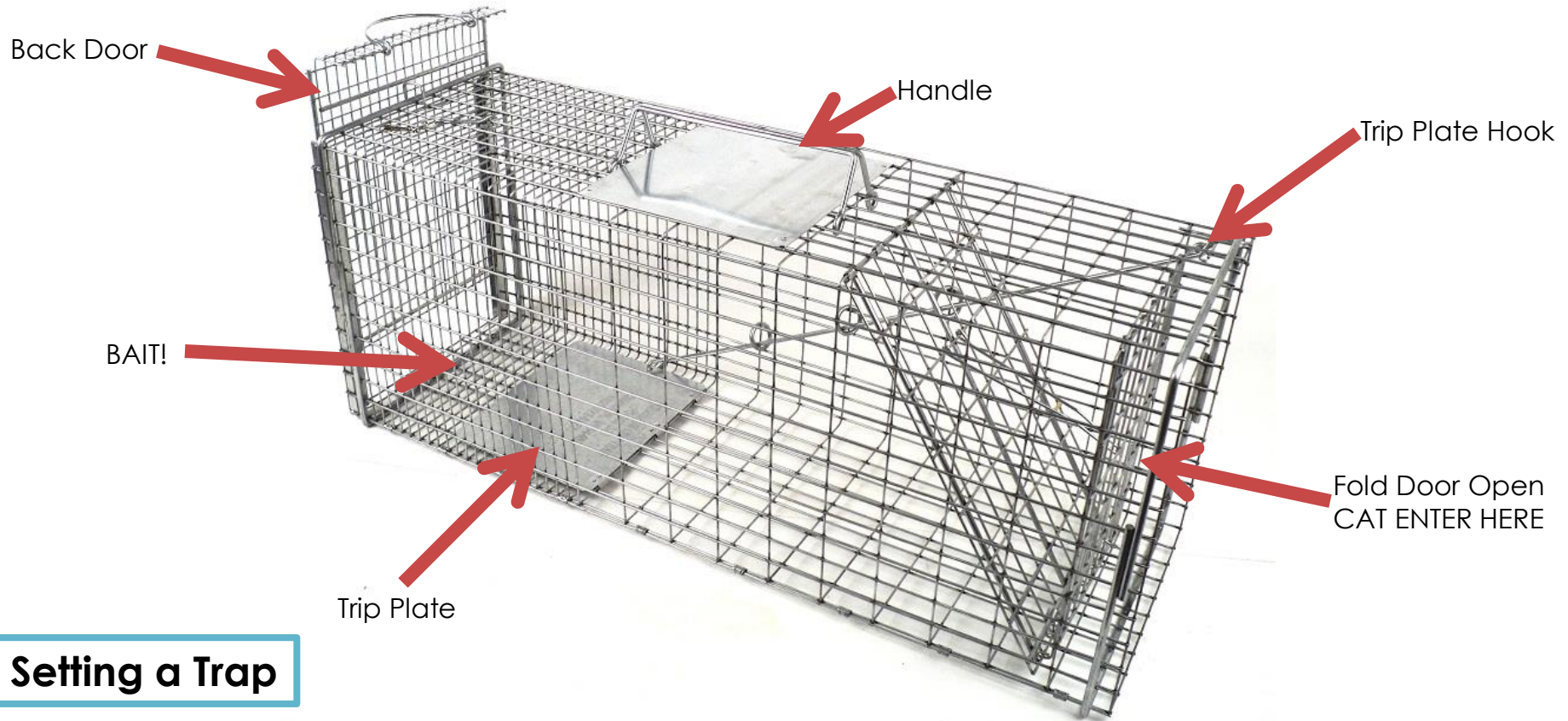


# Trapping Process

- Build good community relations
  - Establish a feeding pattern
  - Obtain equipment
  - Plan surgery date
    - HSHV TNR drop off M-W 8am-6pm
- 
- Withhold food 24-48 hours before
  - Bait with tuna and set traps, cover with sheet/towel
  - WAIT
  - Transport trapped cats for s/n



# How To Use The Trap





# *So You Trapped A Cat?*

- ❑ If the cat becomes frantic, cover and move the trap out of sight of the other cats (dark, quiet place)
- ❑ If the cat is calm, leave the trap alone while trapping is underway
- ❑ Place a new trap where the old trap was





# Note About Wildlife

- If you catch any wildlife, release the animal immediately
  - ▣ Point the back sliding door in the direction you want the animal to go, lift door, and stand back
  - ▣ Don't leave traps unattended at night



# *The Fourth Step*

## Surgery



# Bringing the Cats to HSHV

- **TNR drop off is Monday through Thursday between 9am and 12pm, Love Train dates are posted**
  - Each cat must be in their own live trap covered with towel/sheet
  - No appointment
  - Call me before planning large trapping
- Cats should be left in your vehicle (weather pending)
  - Check in at clinic front desk
  - Fill out appropriate paperwork
  - Get ID card for each cat
- Cat should be taken to TNR door where a clinic staff member will meet you
- Plan to pick cats up the day after they are sterilized 9am-12pm
  - We will not notify you when they are ready for pick up, will call if unable to get surgery done that day
- Keep your ID card after sterilization
  - Will show gender of animal and have any additional notes about care, acts as vaccination record
- **Cats should not be at HSHV longer than 2 days**
- If not picked up the day after surgery, a boarding fee of \$25 will be added for each additional day here.





# Waiting for Surgery

- A busy day can be upwards of 30 cats!
- It's important to cover them to make them feel safe



# Sterilization

## Spay

- Female cats
  - ▣ More invasive so penicillin injection administered to help with healing

## Neuter

- Male cats
  - ▣ Less invasive
  - ▣ Both Males and Females get Metacam injection to help with pain.



# Surgery Process

- ❑ Cat is brought to TNR room and identified with a cage card and surgery log number
- ❑ Surgery tech administers sedation medication to cat while in trap
- ❑ Once cat has been sedated, it is prepped for surgery
  - ❑ Vaccinations are administered – always given rabies vaccine
  - ❑ Cat's ear is tipped
  - ❑ Cat's stomach is shaved and cleaned for surgery
- ❑ Cat is sterilized and returned back to its trap to recover





# *The Fifth Step*

## Recovery and Release



# Recovery

- ❑ Cats do fine with recovering in their trap.
  - ❑ Do NOT attempt to transfer any feral cat from a trap into a carrier
- ❑ An absorbent pad is placed under the trap
  - ❑ Given food and water once fully awake
  - ❑ As always, be careful not to get bitten or scratched.
- ❑ The cat should be left covered, quiet place
- ❑ ***Any time you are in the TNR room, please respect the dim light and make as little noise as possible. Feral cats stress easily.***



# Release

- All cats will be held overnight for recovery
  - ▣ If awake and alert, cats found lactating will be immediately released
  - ▣ Plan on picking cat(s) up the following day, post surgery





*I'm Outta  
HERE!*



# *Long Term Care*

Food, Shelter & Weather



# Medical Care

- We do offer special care to community cats, any concerns go through the TNR program not our vet clinic
- Care is very limited due to the nature of the cats





# Food

- ❑ Feeding station
  - ❑ Should be completely open on at least one side to prevent dominant cats from excluding others
- ❑ Location
  - ❑ Ideal spot has low visibility and good access for cats
- ❑ Types of food
  - ❑ The best you can afford



# Feeding Stations



# Shelter

- A properly outfitted shelter offers warmth in winter and protection from a cat's worst enemy: rain
  - Several do it yourself options – rubbermaid container with insulation or simple wooden box shelter
  - If possible it is best to cut out 2 holes , so cats have an escape route.
  - Try to keep off direct ground, use pallets/bricks.





# Shelters



# Winter Tips

- ❑ **Rubbermaid Bins**

Line the bins with Styrofoam, cut out a doorway . Instant shelter.

- ❑ **That's Heavy, Man**

Use sheets of plywood to weigh down lightweight shelters made from plastic, cardboard, Styrofoam, etc.

- ❑ **Cuddling Kitties**

Cats rely on body heat to stay warm, so keep your shelters small for colonies with just a few cats. For more populated colonies, go with multiple shelters of a larger size.

- ❑ **Warming Trends**

Because it resists moisture, straw is the top choice for insulation and bedding in your feral cat shelters. Avoid blankets, which absorb moisture like a sponge.

- ❑ **Not Worth Their Salt**

Use caution with salt, it's designed to melt snow near your colonies. It can be toxic when licked off paws or ingested from melting puddles, and can hurt a cat's paw pads.

- ❑ **Sugar is sweet**

Sprinkle a small amount of sugar in your cat's water bowl to lower the freezing temp

- ❑ **Fill 'Er Up**

Note that extreme cold weather can increase a cat's energy and nutritional needs. Don't forget extra water to prevent dehydration.

- ❑ **Water** Freezes fast, change often, use deeper bowls, no metal/stainless steel.





# Ways To Help

- ✓ Become a TNR volunteer trapper
- ✓ Foster
- ✓ Take care of a colony
- ✓ TALK to people about TNR
- ✓ Refer people to us
- ✓ Sew covers

 **WANT TO HELP THE CATS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

HSHV TNR program is looking for volunteers to:

- Perform trappings and offer transport (we will train you!)
- Assist with trap cleaning and maintenance
- Post flyers about Community Cats and Barn Buddies around town
- Post yard signs and distribute flyers in rural areas
- Feed and care for local colonies
- Become an advocate and speak at local events
- Donate to TNR (just \$20 sterilizes and vaccinates a community cat!)
- Foster!

Call (734) 661-3523 or email [ttnr@hshv.org](mailto:ttnr@hshv.org) for more information.



 **SOME PREFER TO LIVE OUTSIDE**

**CAN YOU PROVIDE A HOME FOR AN OUTDOOR CAT?**

The Humane Society of Huron Valley urgently needs suitable homes for a number of outdoor cats. They will require shelter, food, water and a caretaker to keep an eye on them. They may be good mousers and would be willing to earn their keep. These cats will be FREE to good homes and will be spayed/neutered and up-to-date on vaccinations at no cost to you.



---

**TRAP, NEUTER & RETURN (TNR)**

These cats are domestic cats but require an outdoor lifestyle. Most have had little or no contact with humans. They are fearful of us and cannot be adopted. They have a home—the outdoors. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), is a program that ends reproduction, stabilizes feral cat populations, and improves individual cats' lives. If you are feeding/caring for a colony of outdoors cats in Washtenaw County please call us.

**CONTACT OUR COMMUNITY CAT COORDINATOR AT (734) 661-3523 OR [BRITTANYK@HSHV.ORG](mailto:BRITTANYK@HSHV.ORG)**





# Ways to Help

**May I borrow your bathroom?**



**It's just for a few weeks until I'm  
old enough to get adopted.**

**To you, it's a few weeks.  
To her, it's a lifetime.**

**Become a foster parent and help save lives.**



# Crate Set up





# Questions?

