



# Trapping Checklist for Lost Cats

**IMPORTANT!** Trapping with a humane trap is one of the most effective methods for recovering an escaped indoor-only cat or displaced (lost away from home) outdoor-access cat. However, if you set a humane trap and do not monitor it properly, you risk possible injury or death to your cat or other animals (including other peoples' pets). Potential risks include hypothermia, heat stroke, injury from a wild animal or loose dog, and theft/rescue by a person. To reduce this risk, it is recommended that you conduct constant surveillance of the trap either in person or via remote surveillance such as a trap alarm, video monitor or wireless wildlife camera. If this is not possible, then you should frequently check the trap at least every four hours. In extreme heat or cold, you should check the trap more frequently and provide adequate water and/or shelter.

## 1. Selecting a Trap

For more information, visit: <https://lostpetresearch.com/2018/06/best-humane-cat-traps/>

- Make sure that the trap is big enough! If your cat steps on the trip plate, will their entire body be inside the trap? If not, the trap is too small, and your cat will likely escape the trap and may not return.
- Is the trap made of quality material? Cheaply made traps often bend and may allow your cat to escape.
- Does the trap have a sliding rear door? Not necessary, but it makes baiting and releasing wildlife much easier!

## 2. Supplies Needed

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Humane trap</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bait for the trap</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small bowl or plate for bait (Don't use a can)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dark towel or small blanket to place over the trap</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tarp or trash bag if rain is possible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper, cardboard, rug fragment or small towel to line the bottom of the trap</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cable lock or chain to prevent theft</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor for the trap (e.g. driveway alarm, video monitor or wireless camera)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lost Cat Sign to place near trap</li> </ul> |
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## 3. Where to Place the Trap

- Cats prefer to travel where there is good cover or places to hide. Place traps parallel to a building and behind bushes. Other good locations are under decks, alongside thick bushes, near sheds or in open sheds/garages.
- For an escaped indoor-only cat, place one trap near the point of escape.
- Do not place the trap in an open area. Lost cats are often frightened and prefer to stay under cover. This also reduces the chance of a person seeing the trap and stealing it.
- If trapping somewhere other than your own yard, make sure to get the property owner's permission.

## 4. Setting the Trap

- Make sure the trap is level and does not wobble. This may scare your cat!
- Line the bottom of the trap with a folded newspaper, piece of cardboard, rug fragment, small towel or natural material (e.g. dirt or grass). Some cats do not like walking on the wire. If used, make sure this does not move when stepped on or blow in the wind.
- Cover the top and sides of the trap with a dark colored towel or small blanket. Do not cover the back of the trap. Some cats are more comfortable entering a trap if it looks like a tunnel that they can walk through. Covering the trap will also make your cat panic less when captured.
- If rain is possible, cover the top and sides of the trap with a tarp or (unscented) trash bag. Place this under the towel or blanket so it does not blow in the wind or make noise.
- Test the trap. Make sure that the trap liner (if used) and food bowl do not interfere with the trip plate going down and/or the trap door fully shutting. This is very important!
- Use a cable lock or chain and padlock to secure the trap and prevent theft.
- Place a note or lost cat flyer nearby or attached to the trap. Example: "Trapping lost cat. Please do not disturb. For more information call (your phone number)." Put inside a page protector if rain is possible.

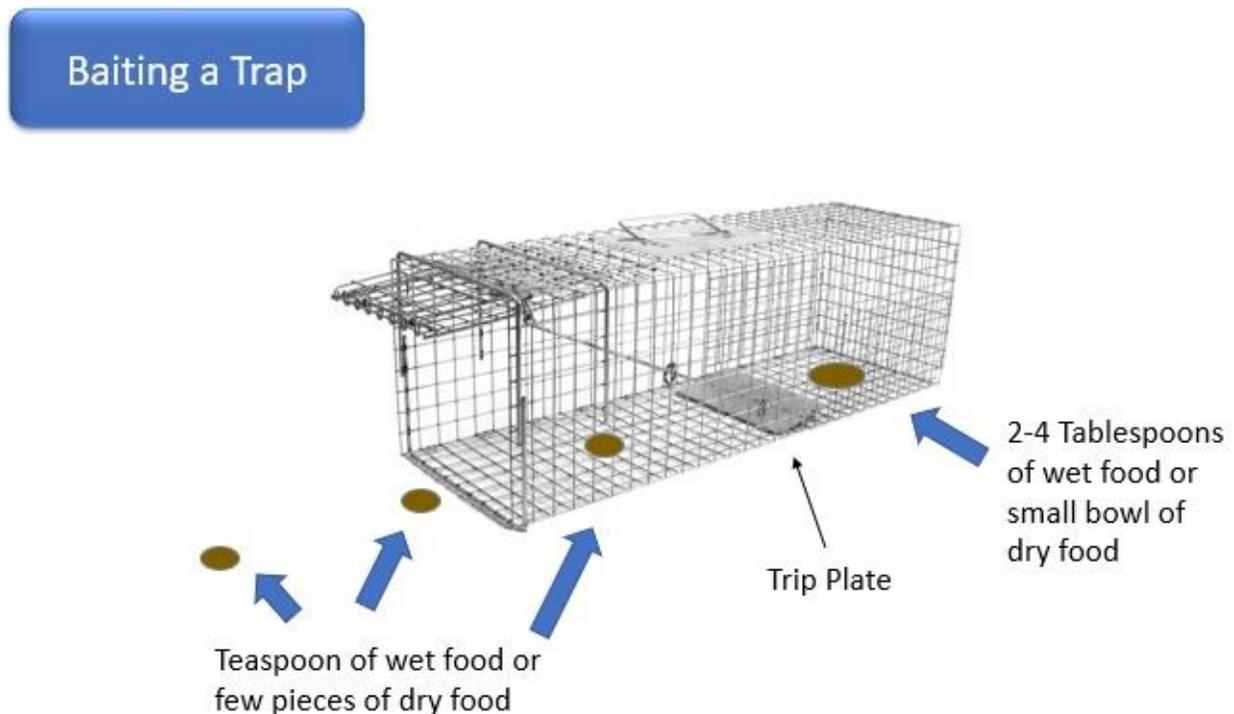
## 5. Baiting the Trap

- Use food that you know your cat really likes, but preferably moist or stinky food.
- Place a teaspoon of wet food or several pieces of dry food about 1-2 feet in front of the trap, right in front of the trap and halfway inside the trap (Figure 1). This will help lure your cat inside.
- Place several tablespoons of wet food or a cup of dry food behind the trip plate in the back of the trap. Put the food in a small bowl or on a piece of paper plate or cardboard. Don't just leave the food in a can as this may injure your cat.
- Make sure that the plate/bowl does not touch the trip plate or prevent it from going down. If possible, make sure that the food is not too close to the back of the trap or animals may pull the food out through the wire. Some traps have extra-small wire openings in the back of the trap to prevent this problem.

## 6. Important Notes!

- Have a plan for releasing wildlife before you catch anything. Traps with sliding rear doors are easiest. Release wildlife where it is caught. It is against the law in most states to transport wildlife and release them elsewhere.
- Most cats (even your cat) are likely to panic when trapped. When you catch your cat, fully cover the trap to reduce their panic. Even if your cat appears calm, take the trap inside before opening it!
- If your cat was missing for more than a few days, seriously consider taking them to the vet for a checkup. Cats that have not eaten for a while can suffer from refeeding syndrome and become very ill within a few days of starting eating.

Figure 1.



*Release of Liability: Lost Pet Research & Recovery accepts no liability for the consequences of any actions taken on the basis of information provided in this checklist. By reading and using this checklist, you are releasing Lost Pet Research & Recovery and the distributors of this plan from all liability and accepting full responsibility for the search of your lost cat.*

**Are you having difficulty finding or catching your lost cat?** Visit Lost Pet Research & Recovery ([LostPetResearch.com](http://LostPetResearch.com)) for additional lost cat resources and professional search and recovery services.