TNR: TRAP • NEUTER • RETURN

CAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION • PET PARENT SERIES

WHAT IS TNR?



Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is a humane approach to managing community cat populations by preventing reproduction and returning suitable outdoor cats to their familiar environment.

HOW DOES TNR WORK?

1. TRAP — Cats are safely captured using humane live traps.
2. NEUTER — Cats are spayed or neutered, vaccinated against rabies, and typically ear-tipped for identification.
3. RETURN — After recovery, cats are returned to their original outdoor territory, where caregivers can provide ongoing support.

WHY DOES TNR MATTER?

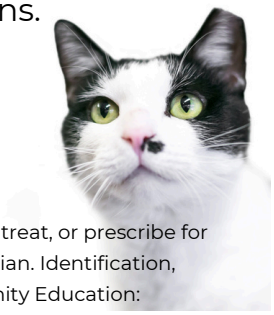
- Prevents unwanted litters.
- Helps stabilize community cat populations over time.
- Reduces mating-related fighting, roaming, and spraying.
- Provides an opportunity for veterinary care.

WHAT IS AN EAR TIP?

The surgical removal of a small portion of an ear while the cat is under anesthesia. It is a widely recognized sign that a community cat has been sterilized.

BEFORE YOU TRAP: A successful TNR effort starts with a plan!

- Schedule First: Arrange a spay/neuter appointment before trapping.
- Use Humane Traps: Only use traps designed for safely capturing cats.
- Monitor Closely: Never leave traps unattended for extended periods or expose trapped cats to extreme weather.
- Plan for Recovery: Prepare a safe, temperature-controlled location for cats before and after surgery, following veterinary instructions.



REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- Alley Cat Allies. Trap-Neuter-Return for Community Cats: The Basics. alleycat.org
- ASPCA. A Closer Look at Community Cats. aspca.org
- Neighborhood Cats. TNR Handbook. neighborhoodcats.org

Educational disclaimer: General educational information only. This handout does not diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any animal and does not replace examination or individualized advice from a licensed veterinarian. Identification, licensing, collar, and travel requirements may vary by location and circumstance. CAC Community Education: General pet-parent education only. Not a substitute for individualized advice from a licensed veterinarian.