

MADISON AREA OWNED AND STRAY CAT RESOURCES

Inna Larsen

Letting your cat enjoy the outdoors safely

Fencing

- My do it yourself cat fence - <http://wicatinfo.weebly.com/do-it-yourself-cat-fence.html> (email me if you want to see my set up) or do an online search on “do it yourself cat fence” for other set ups.
- Commercial cat fence installations – you can do an online search on cat fence. Here is an example of the Purrfect Fence - <http://www.purrfectfence.com>

Catios and other cat enclosures

- You can build your own catio with fencing or kennel materials. As with the cat fence, there are DIY catio projects. Here is an example http://wicatinfo.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/4/1/2541627/cat_enclosure_instructions.pdf and you can do an online search for other designs
- Commercial catios – you can do an online search on catio. Here is an example of a commercial catio <https://www.catiospaces.com/>
- Less permanent are cat tents that you can take outdoors and let your cat hang out – Happy Habitat - <https://www.amazon.com/ABO-Gear-Happy-Habitat-Indoor/dp/B002KWHE1E> and other similar types of set ups that you can search online. These tents are available at local pet stores.
- And finally, the cat stroller. Yes they exist! <https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Pet-Supplies-Cat-Strollers/zgbs/pet-supplies/3024134011>
- There are also leashes and harnesses to walk your cat or let it be on a tie out in the yard. Cats can wriggle out of these and also can climb up a tree and get strangled. So the cat should always be overseen or at least be in an area that does not have any trees, bushes or structures to climb.

Keeping birds safe from cats and having a bird friendly yard

- If your cat goes out, avoid letting it outside during early morning and dusk, when birds are more likely to forage. Also keep indoors during fall and spring migrations. Bells are completely ineffective. The two products below claim to be a deterrent. If you do try these products, always supervise the cat outdoors. It will not be an agile climber with these things on and they may get caught on a branch or a fence.
- Cat bib – www.catgoods.com I have bought it and then made my own prototypes from a thin mousepad and Velcro. It did deter my cats from catching birds, but they still caught small mammals (e.g. mice, chipmunks, voles).
- Bird Be Safe Cat collar - <http://www.birdsbesafe.com/> This is a bright collar that the cat wears. A friend tried it and it did not work on her cat, but that cat was an experienced huntress. Your results may be different.
- One great thing you can do for the birds is to decrease the amount of lawn, eliminate lawn services which are toxic to birds and insects, and replace grass with native plants. Here are a few guides for WI <http://wildones.org/land/wibirdpl.html> and <http://www.plantnative.org/rpl-mimnwi.htm> Invasive plant guides are here - <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/> and <http://www.ipaw.org/> We planted natives and have not had grass in our yard for 20 years and we have an abundance of birds, bees, insects, and small mammals.

Lost/Stray Cat Resources

- If you see an unfamiliar cat, check with your neighbors first. It could be someone’s indoor/outdoor cat or a lost cat. If you have lost your cat or found a stray, utilize the resources below. If possible, take a picture to use for flyers and ads.
- Notify Dane County Humane Society (DCHS) 838-0413 lostandfound@giveshelter.org use subject line Find My Pet. Notify local police department, place a free ad in the WI State Journal, social media, Craigslist, your online neighborhood group such as www.nexdoor.com
- Put the cat on Lost Cats of Wisconsin - <https://www.facebook.com/pg/lostcatwi/> as a lost cat, found cat or a sighting. If you don’t have Facebook, the actual website is http://www.helpinglostpets.com/v2/EditPet_Start.aspx?rc=o963 This also generates flyers that you can post around your neighborhood. You can also generate a flyer through www.pawboost.com where you can generate flyers and put on their facebook page for the city <https://www.facebook.com/LostPetsMadisonWI/> Make your flyers bright and include a picture and details about the cat. Good templates and a lost cat behavior guide is at <http://wicatinfo.weebly.com/lost-pet-resources.html>
- For your lost cat, check in brambles/woodpiles/brush, under porches and decks, in sheds or garages and ask your neighbors to do the same or ask if you can take a look. Most lost cats are within a few blocks of the owner’s house. At times these cats become frightened and may not come to the owner. In that case, you may need to set up a feeding schedule and use a live trap (see below).

Trapping Your Stray/Feral Cat

- If there is a cat that is not owned, it is best to get it off the streets. If the cat is friendly, put in cat carrier and take it to the Dane County Humane Society (DCHS). Call them beforehand, since they do intake by appointment.

- In most cases, the cat will not be friendly and will be afraid of you and you will have to use a live trap to capture it. Live traps can be borrowed from the DCHS, 838-0413 or Madison Cat Project (MCP), a rescue specializing in feral cats, info@madisoncatproject.org
- Before you trap, set up a consistent feeding schedule. Cats learn very quickly who hands out the food and will come to the same location at the same time. Even if they are afraid of you, they will still wait in the background and then come and eat when you leave. Feed in the morning. Feeding at night can bring all kinds of critters, such as raccoons, opossums, and skunks and you definitely do not want to trap those. If you are not sure who is eating the food, use a trail camera that detects motion and you will have a record of who is coming to feed.
- Once the cat has been eating consistently for a week or two, put the food in the trap but not set it so that the cat is used to eating in the trap. Put newspaper on the bottom, cats don't like the feel of the wire on their paws, and push the food further into the trap each day.
- Before you trap, check with MCP info@madisoncatproject.org and ask them for the optimal time for you to trap and bring the cat to either MCP or DCHS. This depends on whether they have room. For Dane County, most strays will be brought to DCHS and transferred to MCP. When you get a time frame from MCP, call DCHS at 608-838-0413 that you will be bringing in a cat and that you have already talked to MCP in regards to a transfer if feral. Friends of Ferals sterilizes and vaccinates feral cats and relocates them to barn homes. If you can bring directly to MCP, then please coordinate with them on the drop off.
- The day before trapping, don't feed the cat too much. You want it to be hungry. The day of trapping, set up the trap and put something very smelly like sardines on a small paper plate in the trap and set it. I like to set it right past the metal step that springs the trap. That way they have to step on it to reach over to the food. Dribble a sardine trail in the trap and around the trap. It will be irresistible. Then leave and observe from a distance or from the inside. Traps should be checked once an hour. If you don't get the cat, keep trying the next day! Do not trap overnight, you are liable to have a stressed cat or raccoon or possum in the trap and they can die from exposure and stress.
- Once the cat is trapped, throw a towel over the trap to reduce stress. Wear thick gloves and carry the trap to your car, with your arm extended from your body. You don't want to risk a bite. Most cats calm down, but some may be agitated inside the trap. The traps are sturdy and there is no chance for the cat to spring it and escape.
- Call DCHS and tell them the cat is trapped and bring in as soon as you can. Note, if the cat is injured or if it is caught at a time when DCHS is closed, take it to UW Vet School 2015 Linden Dr. 263-7600. They are the contracted clinic to receive injured animals and a stray animal holding facility after hours. Let the intake person at either DCHS, Vet School know that you have coordinated the intake with MCP and let MCP know once you have trapped the cat and taken it to DCHS/Vet School. When you bring the cat in, you will get a booking number. Give the booking number to MCP so they know to expect the cat as a potential transfer.
- You may need to call Animal Control <https://www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/animal/> 255-2345 for tips on how to trap an injured cat or to have them come and pick up a trapped cat. They will do that and transfer it to DCHS. If the cat is a transfer candidate to MCP, let animal control know or call DCHS reception and inform them as well.
- FYI call Animal Control about nuisance or injured wildlife. They will trap wildlife but not cats. Four Lakes Wildlife Center <https://www.giveshelter.org/four-lakes-wildlife-center.html> and Wisconsin Wild Care <http://wiwildcare.org/> are also good contacts for injured wildlife. They rehabilitate and release.

Taming Your Feral

- If you want to try to tame your feral cat, proceed as above with the feeding schedule. Eventually the cat will get used to you and to the sound of your voice. Set out the food and then sit at a distance while it's eating. Each day, bring the food bowl just a little closer to where you are sitting.
- Do trap it to get it sterilized and vaccinated. That will decrease its urge to roam, prevent any litters, protect it against diseases, and facilitate taming by calming down the hormones. There are four places in Dane County where you can get the cat fixed. After the surgery, the cat will need a few days of recovery. You can set up a dog crate in your garage. Have the food and litter set up beforehand. The cat will be growly and hissy and not be happy to be confined. Release it and keep feeding. Food will win over mistrust!
 - Precision Veterinary <http://precisionveterinary.com> (608) 405-3148 \$50 They do surgeries several times a week. When you set up an appointment, explain that the cat is feral and they are flexible about timing.
 - Spay me clinic www.spayme.com 224-1400, \$40 They do surgeries several times a week. When you set up an appointment, explain that the cat is feral and they are flexible about timing.
 - Madison Cat project spayday@madisoncatproject.org have a monthly spay day \$35, or surgeries during the week at the shelter, \$50
 - Underdog Pet Rescue - <http://www.underdogpetrescue.org/vet-clinic> \$50-75
- Have some type of shelter for the cat. We can set you up with a Styrofoam cooler insulated with straw http://wicatinfo.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/4/1/2541627/building_a_cooler_shelter_with_photos.pdf. Please let me know and I can get you one. You can also build your own like that or make one from a plastic bin - http://wicatinfo.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/4/1/2541627/plastic_storage_box_feral_cat_shelters.pdf Always use straw vs hay or blankets, since they absorb moisture and stay damp.

- The goal is to tame the cat enough to get it off the streets and to have it indoors. Some cats may not tame up, but will hang around your yard for food. In that case, a cat fence may be optimal to keep it confined only to your yard. This way it is not a hazard to itself and it minimizes its bird predation.

Questions and Further Resources

This is a lot of information in condensed form and it cannot possibly answer all possible scenarios that may come about with lost or stray cats. For example, if you have a mama with kittens, it will require a totally different trapping strategy from the one I outlined above. Here are people who can help.

- Madison Cat Project www.madisoncatproject.org the resource for feral cats in Southern Wisconsin. Email them info@madisoncatproject.org if you have any questions about trapping, stray and feral cats.
- I also have an extensive resource website that will give you more information on the items I touched upon above – lost cat resources, low cost spay/neuter, trapping cats, cat health and behavior, etc. www.wicatinfo.weebly.com