

## How to live trap an animal for rehabilitation

We are happy to admit injured or sick wildlife if it can be contained and brought to the wildlife center; however, even with the best of intentions, it can be difficult to capture many species. Trapping can be the best option in order to avoid injury to the animal and the people involved. Wisconsin trapping laws prohibit the public from setting a live trap without a trapper's license unless the landowner deems an animal a nuisance. Landowners are allowed to trap nuisance animals on their property, and through this clause the landowner can trap an animal for treatment. Dane County Humane Society (DCHS) does not rent out live traps for use with wildlife, but live traps may be purchased from many home improvement stores (Home Depot and Menards) or agriculture supply stores (Blain's Farm and Fleet). Live traps should be purchased in a size appropriate for the species you are attempting to capture.



This document is strictly for the use of trapping an injured or sick wild animal for rehabilitation. DCHS does not recommend trapping and relocating wildlife that have become a nuisance. Studies show that relocated animals rarely survive and relocating adult animals during the baby season can leave babies to starve. Relocation is also not a long-term solution, as oftentimes animals in surrounding areas will disperse into the location where a nuisance animal has been removed. For information on humane exclusion techniques, please see our document on Nuisance Wildlife.



*A typical live-trap design*

### Species we often recommend using a live trap to contain:

- 1) Adult Woodchuck
- 2) Adult Fox
- 3) Adult Coyote
- 4) Adult Squirrel

All of these species except squirrels are considered rabies vectors. Although still a small chance, rabies vector species are more likely to have the rabies virus and transmit it to people or pets through contact with their saliva (usually due to a bite). For this reason, live traps are a preferred method of capture, as it lessens the risk of being bitten by one of these animals.

### Requirements for setting a live trap:

- 1) Own the land the trap will be placed on.
- 2) Be available to check the trap at least twice a day in summer and every two hours in the winter.
- 3) Be willing to release any non-target animals (feral cats, opossums, raccoons, skunks, etc.) as soon as possible and on the same property on which they were trapped.

Trapping is most likely to be successful if the trap is set in a place where the animal is often seen. Generally we recommend baiting traps to entice the animal to enter; use a smelly wet cat or dog food for carnivores, and fruit, nuts, or vegetables for herbivores. If possible, set up a feeding station with a trail camera before setting the trap to monitor if the target animal will eat the bait outside of the trap. If the animal won't eat the food outside of the trap, it is unlikely to enter the trap for the food.

The trap should be hidden under natural materials in order to make it look more like a dark burrow rather than a metal trap. Set the trap alongside a wall or other object in the area they frequent, cover the trap with a dark colored tarp, then cover the tarp with leaf litter, brush, or other natural materials in the area. Place some natural materials on the floor in the front of the trap as well.

Call us at 608-287-3235 to set up an admission appointment after you have trapped the animal. We do not accept healthy, live-trapped nuisance animals as patients.



*A camouflaged live-trap will increase your odds of catching the animal.*

We understand not everyone is able to place a live trap, and some species such as fox and coyote are extremely difficult to catch in a live trap, so in some cases the animals simply become so sick they can eventually be caught with a net or box. If you are unable to catch the animal with a live trap, please continue to monitor the animal in your neighborhood. If an animal is debilitated enough where it is unable to run away, you can attempt to place a cardboard box over the animal and slide a stiff piece of material under the box slowly to contain the animal. We recommend this method because it does not require direct handling of the animal. This reduces stress and the chance for injury to you and the animal. If you are able to contain the animal in this manner, call us at 608-287-3235 to set up an appointment to bring the animal in.

If you are in **Dane County** and are able to approach an animal that appears injured or sick, you can also call Dane County Animal Services Officers at (608) 255-2345 and they may attempt to contain the animal and transport it to us for care. If you are **outside Dane County** and are unable to live trap or otherwise contain an animal as explained here, or if you have other questions feel free to call DCHS's Wildlife Center at 608-287-3235.