



IMPACTS OF URBAN CATS IN AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL URBAN CAT POPULATION ESTIMATES

PET CATS: 4.9 million⁽¹⁾

*3.5 million (71% are allowed to roam and hunt)⁽²⁾

STRAY CATS: 0.7 million⁽³⁾

PREDATION TOLL

A pet cat that is allowed to roam and hunt kills an average of 186 mammals, birds and reptiles per year (110 of which are native).

Pet cats living at high density collectively kill 28–52 times more mammals, birds, reptiles per km² in urban areas than feral cats kill per km² in natural environments.

This equates to a substantial toll on native wildlife: every year, roaming pet cats kill 83 million reptiles, 80 million birds and 67 million mammals.

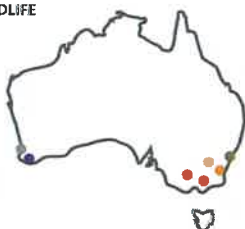
A stray (or urban feral) cat in an urban area kills an average of 449 mammals, birds and reptiles per year (majority native).

CAN YOU SPOT THE HIDDEN CAT?



EXAMPLES OF CASES WHERE URBAN CATS HAVE CAUSED MAJOR LOSSES OF WILDLIFE

- Fairy terns, Mandurah WA
- Feathertail gliders, south-eastern NSW
- Superb lyrebirds, Sherbrooke Forest VIC
- Eastern barred bandicoots, VIC
- Common ringtail possums, Manly NSW
- Olive legless lizards, Canberra ACT
- Skinks, Perth WA

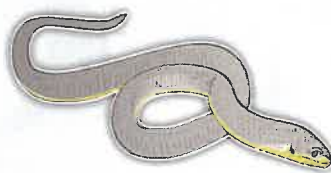


PET CATS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THE GOOD: Pet cats are valuable companion animals, and provide significant physical and mental benefits for owners.

THE BAD: Roaming pet cats pose a major threat to native wildlife. Roaming cats can kill and eat mammals (possums, bandicoots), birds (honeyeaters, silvereyes, rosellas, fairy wrens, willie wagtails, magpie-lark, bush stone-curlews) and reptiles (blue-tongued lizards and other skinks).

THE UGLY: Roaming pet cats can get into fights, get injured or killed by other animals, be hit by vehicles. They may pick up diseases that can affect native animals, livestock and people.



OLIVE LEGLESS LIZARD



BLUE-TONGUED LIZARD



EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT



COMMON RINGTAIL POSSUM



SILVEREYE



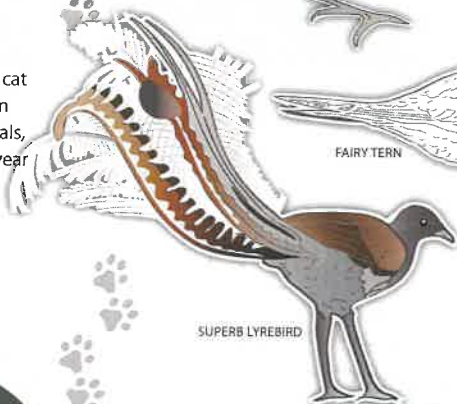
FEATHERTAIL GLIDER



SUPERB FAIRY-WREN



EASTERN ROSELLA



SUPERB LYREBIRD



FAIRY TERN



BUSH STONE-CURLEW

WHAT CAN PET CAT OWNERS DO?

Responsible pet cat ownership involves the following:

- Keep your cat indoors or contained at all times
- Get your cat desexed
- Have your cat microchipped
- Have regular vet check-ups
- Dispose of your litter hygienically
- Register your cat and comply with local government regulations

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FIND A STRAY CAT?

- Please do not feed it-this can make its cat colony bigger.
- Take it to a rehoming centre, or advise your local council.



MORE INFORMATION

- (1). Animal Medicines Australia, 2021
- (2). Legge Sarah, Wolnarski John C. Z., Dickman Chris R., Murphy Brett P., Woolley Leigh-Ann, Calver Mike C. (2020). We need to worry about Bella and Charlie: the impacts of pet cats on Australian wildlife. Wildlife Research 47, 523-539
- (3). The impact of cats in Australia <http://www.nesppthreatenedspecies.edu.au/publications-and-tools/the-impact-of-cats-in-australia>
- (4). Wolnarski, J. C. Z., Legge, S. M., & Dickman, C. (2019). Cats in Australia: Companion and Killer. CSIRO Publishing.



CAT IMPACTS IN AUSTRALIA

CAN YOU SPOT THE HIDDEN CAT?



NATIONAL CAT POPULATION ESTIMATES

- Pet cats: 4.9 million⁽¹⁾
- Feral cats in urban areas (stray cats): 0.7 million⁽²⁾
- Feral cats in the bush: 1.4 million in dry conditions, and 5.6 million after widespread rain⁽²⁾
- Cats occur in 99.9% of Australia's land area
- The total number of native animals killed by feral and stray cats each year in Australia is staggering: 596 million reptiles, 316 million birds, and 500 million mammals.

FAVOURITE SNACKS

Animals at greatest risk of cat predation are arid zone reptiles, birds on islands, in the size range 60-300g, ground nesting/foraging birds and mammals in low rainfall areas, non rocky areas, of intermediate size (35-5500g).

Illustrations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Great desert skink (<i>Muliyaniiti, Tjakura, Tjalapa</i>) | 11. Crest-tailed mulgara (<i>Ampurta, Papanyiti, Talimarlu</i>) |
| 2. Malleefowl (<i>Gabiny, Ngarnamarra, Warntu</i>) | 12. Kowari (<i>Kariri</i>) |
| 3. Squatter pigeon | 13. Greater stick-nest rat (<i>Karnanyuru, Kuranta, Wopilkara</i>) |
| 4. Partridge pigeon (<i>Ragul</i>) | 14. Plains mouse |
| 5. Hooded plover | 15. Dibbler (<i>Madoon</i>) |
| 6. Painted-button quail | 16. Sandhill dunnart |
| 7. Plains wanderer | 17. Southern brown bandicoot /eastern barred bandicoot |
| 8. Western ground parrot (<i>Kyloring</i>) | 18. Central rock-rat |
| 9. Night parrot (<i>Pullen pullen</i>) | 19. Dusky hopping-mouse (<i>Wilkiniti</i>) |
| 10. Spotted quail-thrush | 20. Red-tailed phascogale (<i>Kenngoor</i>) |

OTHER SNACK FOODS

Cats have also been recorded killing and consuming many threatened species in Australia.

Illustrations

- | |
|---|
| 21. Fairy tern |
| 22. Golden-shouldered parrot (<i>Alwal</i>) |
| 23. Bristlebirds (eastern and western) |
| 24. Orange-bellied parrot |
| 25. Black-footed rock-wallaby (<i>Arrewe, Warru</i>) |
| 26. Yellow-footed rock-wallaby |
| 27. Quokka (<i>Bungeup</i>) |
| 28. Greater bilby (<i>Angkaye, Ninu, Tjalku, Walpajirri</i>) |
| 29. Mountain pygmy possum |
| 30. Leadbeater's possum |

SNACKS-ALL GONE

Cats have played a major role in most of Australia's 33 mammal extinctions. These are some extinct mammals for which cat predation was a major contributor.

Illustrations:

- | |
|-------------------------------|
| 31. Pig-footed bandicoot |
| 32. White-footed rabbit rat |
| 33. Crescent nailtail wallaby |
| 34. Desert rat-kangaroo |
| 35. Lesser stick-nest rat |

MORE INFORMATION:

- (1) Animal Medicines Australia (2021)
 (2) The Impact of cats in Australia
<https://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/publications-and-tools/the-impact-of-cats-in-australia>
 (3) Woinarski, J. C. Z., Legge, S. M., & Dickman, C. (2019). Cats in Australia: Companion and Killer. CSIRO Publishing.



NESP project 1: 4 cat impacts and management: knowledge exchange for stakeholders. This project received support from the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Programme.



National Environmental Science Programme

