

# Cats and Wildlife – A deadly combination - FACT SHEET---13

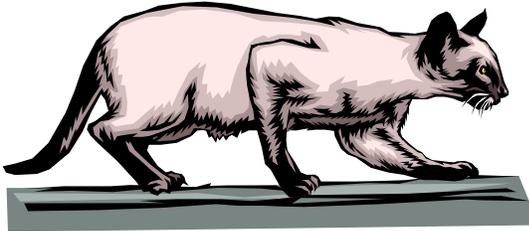


## Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc.

(WILVOs) [www.wilvos.org.au](http://www.wilvos.org.au)

If you need assistance with native wildlife call our 24 hour hotline number

**5441 6200** This fact sheet contains information sourced from WIRES and EPA Qld



Many people don't give a second thought to what their cat gets up to once they've locked them out at night. What they don't realise is that even the most docile of cats will prey on and kill native wildlife because of their natural hunting instincts.

### But my cat wouldn't hurt a fly!

There are more than 2,600,000 domestic cats in Australia and a recent survey showed that the average domestic cat brings home 16 mammals, 8 birds and 8 reptiles a year. Some more, some less. It is estimated that domestic<sup>1</sup> cats kill 3.8 million native Australian animals each year.

That's a lot of native wildlife falling victim to the family cat! Feral cats are also a huge problem when it comes to wildlife. It is estimated that there are 12 million feral cats across Australia, many of which were once someone's pet until they were dumped or ran away. Wildlife face many dangers, but cats are probably one of the easiest for us to control. Domestic cats should be kept inside, particularly at night and be fitted with a collar with at least three bells attached. Never, ever dump an unwanted cat.

### Isn't it cruel to keep a cat inside all day?

It is easy, and humane, to confine a cat. If it's a well behaved cat, you may be happy to give it the run of the house (remember to leave out a litter tray!) or you may choose to confine it to one room at night (just make sure you leave enough food, water and a warm, dry bed). Some cat owners even build modular cat enclosures which can be attached to a cat flap, allowing the cat to leave the house whenever it pleases while remaining safe. Without the many hazards of the outside world, indoor cats live longer than outdoors cats, at least 2 or 3 years longer. So it's kind, not cruel, to keep your cat inside.

**Well cared for domestic cats can be wonderful pets, but if you really care for your cat, not to mention our vast array of wildlife, you'll keep your cat confined at night for the following reasons:**

- Most cat fights occur at night. Anyone whose cat has been involved in a cat fight will know how serious they can be.
- Not only will any serious injuries result in expensive vet bills, but also increases the chance of your cat being exposed to feline AIDS and feline Leukaemia, both fatal diseases.

<sup>1</sup> [www.epa.qld.gov.au/cgi-bin/w3-msql/environment/plant/animals/wildbottom.html](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/cgi-bin/w3-msql/environment/plant/animals/wildbottom.html)

- Most vehicle accidents involving cats occur at night and because they often aren't found until morning, the cat may suffer for many hours before anyone discovers it.

**The following tips will help to ensure you are a responsible cat owner and will assist in protecting our unique wildlife;**

- Keep your cat inside the house or in an enclosed cat park during the day and particularly at night to prevent it from preying on native animals.
- Provide sufficient food and shelter for your cat.
- Identify your cat with a collar, tag, microchip or tattoo.
- Put three large bells on your cat's collar as a warning to wildlife or a "leap-activated" collar.
- De-sex your cat to prevent unwanted litters.
- Never feed a stray cat unless you intend to care for it as a pet. If you notice feral cats or strays in the area, call the Council or Cat Protection Society.
- Build a cat proof boundary fence to keep your cat in the yard.
- Provide cat-free environments in your garden by providing a cat proof area for wildlife.
- Explain to friends and family how to look after their cats to protect native wildlife.
- Provide your cat with enclosed areas for exercise.

**Please make sure you do you know where your cat is at night!!**



1. Support moves to introduce cat controls, such as identification, registration, and curfews for the protection of your pets and our precious native wildlife.
2. DON'T feed stray or feral cats! Remember, stray cats can become feral.

**Questions and answers**

- Q** My neighbour lets his cat run wild and it often kills possums in my back yard. Is there anything I can do?
- A** Try discussing it with him first, maybe he doesn't realise the damage his cat is doing. Perhaps leave him a copy of this information sheet. If your neighbour chooses to ignore your suggestions, call your local Council. While it isn't law that cats must be kept inside, you can request that they don't roam on your property, so if your neighbours cat is wandering, he can be fined under the *Companion Animals Act, 1998*.

**Important contact numbers**

Catnip Modular Cat Parks - 1800 639 998  
 Cats Inside Out Cat Enclosures - 0408 060 164

**WE THANK YOU**

**[www.wilvos.org.au](http://www.wilvos.org.au)**