

QUICK GUIDE FERAL CATS



ABOUT

Cats are one of the most significant predators in our ecosystem. They kill birds, bats, lizards, wētā and other insects.

Feral cats

Cats are solitary, skilled hunters. They are carnivores, often eating food in small portions over a 24-hour period, resulting in up to 10-20 kills per day.

- Feral cats devastate ground-nesting birds.
- They can carry and spread diseases like toxoplasmosis.
- They are apex predators in Aotearoa; no other animal preys on them.

Key features

- Feral cats are notoriously wary, cautious and hard to catch.
- They can have very large home ranges (travelling many km each day).
- Feral cats can have multiple litters of up to five kittens each year, depending on food availability.
- Feral cat numbers are concentrated near areas where there is a high density of rabbits or rodents.

Companion cats

In New Zealand cats are both popular pets and companions, so it is critical that we don't harm any owned cats in feral cat control.

- Companion cats are highly vulnerable to feral cat control operations.
- Live cage trapping is the only safe option in urban areas or where companion cats are present.
- Companion cats can be safely released if caught in live traps.
- Talk to your neighbours about any cat control and the risk to their pets. Encourage them to collar, desex and microchip their pet cats.
- Reflective collars help identify pet cats at night.
- Keeping pet cats happy and safe at home at all times is best for companion cats and wildlife.



For more information, go to
predatorfreenz.org

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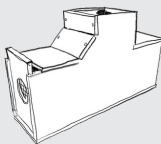
Trapping

- The best lures are large pieces of fresh rabbit, possum or mutton fat.
- Kill traps (SA2 Kat Traps, Timms) can be used in more remote areas but must be carefully located, set and pre-fed to ensure success.
- Chimney trap boxes (with SA2 or Belisle Super X 220 kill traps) are effective and reduce the risk of non-target species such as kiwi.
- Live capture cage traps are a good option, but before live trapping, make sure you have a plan for humanely dispatching any feral cats.
- As a legal requirement, live traps must be checked daily.
- Feral cats caught in live traps can be referred to a vet or the SPCA for euthanising or can be carefully and humanely dispatched using a small calibre firearm.
- Approved leg-hold traps, such as the Victor 1.5, can work for experienced users but require careful placement and camouflage and must be checked daily.

Tips and tricks

- Try pre-feeding an unset trap; it may take several days to entice trap interaction.
- Trail cameras are extremely useful to help understand cat behaviour in landscapes and around traps.
- Winter, when food is short, is the best time to target cats.
- In rural, open landscapes, shooting cats at night using a spotlight or 'thermal' is an effective option; ensure you check your firing zone to manage the trajectory of any bullet that may miss the target.
- Dogs can also be used to flush feral cats up trees during the day, where they can be easily shot.
- Most cats do not like water, so vehicle crossings over streams and rivers (bridges, culverts, etc.) make great trap sites.
- Haybarns are excellent cat trap sites (due to the presence of rodents and shelter).
- Kill traps that result in possum or rodent carcasses attract feral cats; co-locate cat traps at these sites.
- Toxin options registered for feral cat control are limited and require a Controlled Substance License (CSL).

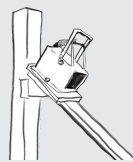
Trap examples



AllTrap Chimney
Trap Box



Tawhiti Smart
Cage



SA2 Kat Trap, set on
ramp



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