

Bruny Cat Management Update - Dec 2020



A Community Forum on Dec 5th at Dennes Point provided information on the research and cat management activities planned for the next two years and discussed how the community can get involved. The work will focus on North Bruny as it is an important area in Tasmania for the threatened Eastern Quoll (EQ) and because of the relatively small number of feral cats present (compared to South Bruny).

Research

Innovative research will be undertaken to understand the impact of feral cats on EQs, and to test new ways of controlling cats. Throughout the project both EQs and cats will be tracked to see how feral cats influence the survivorship of EQs, their habitat use and how far they range.

Trials of new feral cat control methods will aim to determine whether they could be used effectively on Bruny, including within the seabird colonies. Currently, cage trapping of feral cats is the key control technique being used in this project. However, it is not effective in the seabird colonies during the bird breeding season because feral cats are so well fed. This is a problem as the density of feral cats is extremely high around seabird colonies, causing large numbers of bird mortalities each year. The project will trial three new methods used successfully in other parts of Australia. These include:

- Thermal shooting: This involves targeting of feral cats using heat sensitive rifle scopes. This will be trailed in the seabird colony at night and precautions will be taken to ensure there is no risk to the community and other species from this activity.

- Felixer 'grooming traps': This is an automated trap that uses inbuilt sensors to detect and target feral cats. When detected, a feral cat is sprayed with a toxic gel, it then licks the gel from its fur and dies. These traps have been effective on the mainland without impacting on other animals. There will be extensive trials on Bruny without the toxin to ensure that other species don't trigger the trap. Preliminary work by Holly Rickards from The University of Tasmania recently found that Eastern Quolls were not identified as a target by the trap.



A Eastern Quoll checking out a Felixer grooming trap

- Baiting: The feral cat bait 'Curiosity' has been used successfully in other feral cat control projects on small islands. A non-toxic trial of this bait on Bruny will verify that native species are not impacted by the bait.

The results of all these trials will be made public and if successful we will then consult with the Bruny community about their use.

Getting involved

As a community member you see what's happening on the ground and we need your help to find feral cats!!

The best way to do this is to **record sightings feral cats** on the Feral Cat Scan App on your smart phone when and where you see them. The App automatically records the location without mobile reception, adds them to a central database and maps the sightings so that everyone can view them.

Importantly it will also send us an alert so we can follow up each sighting.



Please download the App by simply scanning this QR code with your phone or searching for the App on Google Play or the App Store. Instructions are provided on www.feralcatscan.org.au



Android QR code for Google Play



Apple QR code for App Store

Alternatively, you can phone Council on 6211 8200 to record the sighting and we will add it to the database.

Thank you to everyone who has recorded feral cat sightings to date :0)

For more information on the program please either contact Rosie Hohnen (NRM South) 0437 659 078 or Kaylene Allan (Kingborough Council) 0439 885 803.

The project is supported by NRM South, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

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