



CATS

The main concern and reason why people want to carry out cat control is because they predate on our native bird species and other natives like lizards and frogs etc. Cats consume a reasonable amount of food in a day, can climb and range over large areas so have the ability to quickly decimate bird populations etc.

Pressure is being brought to bear on domesticated cats with many new housing subdivisions being made cat exclusion zones. In other areas cat owners are being encouraged to keep their cats indoors after dark to reduce their impact on waning native bird populations.

In New Zealand there are estimated to be about 185,000 domestic cats with at least half of all households having a cat. Our high domestic cat population is a problem in that many do become unwanted strays. These stray cats will continue to rely on man for their existence and will take up residence in a variety of buildings and out-buildings in residential, industrial, and agricultural situations. Living close to human habitation often means they will scratch a living by finding scraps of food, catching and eating birds and their eggs and anything else they can scavenge, and are sometimes even fed by sympathetic humans.

Some stray cats will take to the wild, do not exist with the help of man for food and shelter and are referred to as feral or wild cats. Their populations can build up quickly as they are good breeders, have high litter numbers and have good survival rates. They are adept at catching their prey, hunting day and night. Adult birds on the nest, along with eggs and fledglings are easy pickings.

There are no registered poisons currently available in New Zealand to control feral cats. The two main control methods are live trapping or the use of kill traps.