



Controlling feral cats

Feral and roaming domestic cats pose a serious threat to wildlife and biodiversity in Victoria. They are responsible for the predation of millions of birds, reptiles, and mammals annually. Roaming domestic cats can also cause nuisance and ecological harm, especially in bushland and conservation areas. Cats are not declared pests on private land, limiting control options for landholders.

Location and habitat

These cat control methods are relevant statewide across a range of habitats.

General information

- Humane trapping is the most viable method for private landholders
- Roaming domestic cats may be trapped by property owners if trespassing repeatedly or if there is a cat curfew or no-cat zone in your council area
- Predator proof fencing can be used but will restrict the movement of wildlife



Methods

For most landholders, trapping cats alive is the most effective method for controlling feral cats and roaming domestic cats. Cage traps must be used (leghold traps are illegal in Victoria).

- Obtain a trap from council, animal welfare organisation, or commercial supplier that complies with animal welfare regulations (e.g. no hooks, sharp edges, or mechanisms that cause injury)
- Prepare and set the trap:
 - Select a quiet, sheltered site
 - De-scent the trap to remove human/animal smells
 - Use effective bait (e.g. sardines, liver, canned cat food, fried chicken)
- Monitor the trap: check every 24 hours
- Once trapped:
 - Deliver cat to an authorised officer or council facility as soon as reasonably possible
 - Do not release or relocate the cat

Maintenance and monitoring

- Regularly assess cat activity on your property
- Keep records of trapping attempts and outcomes
- Work with neighbours and local groups to coordinate efforts
- Monitor for signs of new feral or roaming cats





Safety

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking land management. Follow all label instructions on equipment and local regulations. Be mindful of weather conditions. Do not conduct land management on days of extreme or catastrophic fire danger or total fire ban.

Further information

For further advice and support, please contact Trust for Nature.

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