

## **Feral Cats**

By Errol Corry

Feral cats threaten the survival of over 100 native species in Australia. They have caused the extinction of some ground-dwelling birds and small to medium-sized mammals. They are a major cause of decline for many land-based endangered animals such as the bilby, bandicoot, bettong and numbat. Many native animals are struggling to survive so reducing the number killed by this introduced predator will allow their populations to grow.

Feral cats can carry infectious diseases which can be transmitted to native animals, domestic livestock and humans.

Feral cats are the same species as domestic cats; however, they live and reproduce in the wild and survive by hunting or scavenging. They are found all over Australia in all habitats, including forests, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and arid areas.



Feral cats are predominantly solitary and nocturnal, spending most of the day in the safety of a shelter such as a rabbit burrow, log or rock pile. They are carnivores, generally eating small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects depending on their availability.

The control of feral cats' ranges from poisoning, trapping and shooting to fencing off entire native habitats to protect endangered wildlife. Australian hunter's will generally

come across a feral cat whilst pursuing other game or pest animals, it is important that all opportunities to kill a feral cat is taken advantage of.

These animals are found often on cropland after harvest searching for rodents. Feral cats have been known to respond to fox whistles or at least sit long enough for a humane shot to be administered. They can be found though, as listed above, in most country you come across.

Adequate calibre for Feral cat range from .22 to the shotgun & .243 and above for longer range shots.

Feral cats are found on all our club properties, our landholders have an expectation we will eradicate them whenever we come across them. I always enquire if the landowner has a cat(s) and if so, I make sure I don't shoot any of them around the house area.



#### References for this article

Australian Government – Department of Agriculture, Water & the Environment