



Wildlife and Pets

Pets are great companions to have, they give us unconditional love when we get home from work, they play with us and lick us when they are happy to see us, lie in our laps and fall asleep enjoying the safety we provide and give a sense of enjoyment in our lives.



Unfortunately, they can create a problem for our native animals. Most dog and cat owners would consider their pet as harmless, but they are not. Thousands of wild animals are injured or killed by pet cats and dogs every single year.

Cats are an introduced domestic animal and pure carnivores. They prey on birds, lizards, frogs and small mammals, such as possums, bandicoots, micro-bats, native rodents, and anything else that it may be able to maim or kill. The threat of cats, domestic or feral is a terrifying reality to native animals and if you have a pet cat, please be a responsible owner.



Dogs on the other hand can be just as bad. They can chase and kill lizards, frogs, birds, wallabies and other mammals as well. They may not consider native animals as prey items but can kill and injure these animals for fun, boredom, protecting their home and other reasons.

Owners of pets have to take responsibility of their pet's actions. All dogs and cats should be de-sexed at an early age if they are not being bred, to prevent unwanted litters. Dogs should be kept under control at all times, either by a sturdy fence so they cannot get out and roam the streets by themselves or by leash when taken out for walks with their owners.

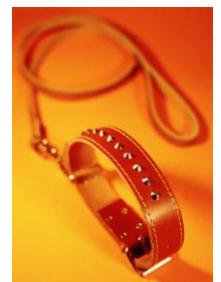
It is much harder to control the movements of cats and cat owners are encouraged to feed their pet at the same time every night (just on dusk), so they will be motivated to come home at this time. It is also encouraged that cat owners keep a bell on the collar of their cat and keep the collar on at all times. Wildlife can then be alerted to a cat's presence when the bell sounds.

Both cats and dogs should be kept inside at night time, as most native mammals are nocturnal and more active during the dark. By allowing pets to be outside only during the day, nocturnal animals will be safer when they come out at night and not fall prey to a cat or dog that has been left outside for the night.

There are such enclosures for cats that can be installed in the yard so that cats can still go outside and enjoy themselves without injuring wildlife. "Cat-runs" gives the cat access to their backyard but also prevents them from preying on native species.

Releasing unwanted dogs or cats into the bush is not only cruel, but also devastating to wildlife populations, if the domestic pet survives; it WILL kill a great number of native species and could breed in the wild, and produce more and more feral predators in the area.

Make sure your cat and dog has identification such name and number of who to call or microchipping and follow local council and ranger policies in relation to keeping pets.



Being a responsible pet owner will not only greatly benefit the native wildlife ,but you will also be more in control of your pet and develop an even more great companionship with them.