

FERAL CAT ECOLOGY & CONTROL



Feral Cats in Australia

Where Did They Come From?

The common 'house' cat (*Felis catus*) is a descendant of the African Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris lybica*) that has now been domesticated for about 4,000 years.

Although the domestic cat has a long history of association with man, it retains a strong hunting instinct and can easily revert to a wild (feral) state when abandoned or having strayed from a domestic situation.

What Do They Look Like?

Feral cats are usually shorthaired and have lost the variance of colour in their coats. They are often more muscular than a domestic cat. It must be noted that it is not always possible to be certain that a cat is feral by its appearance and body size.

Where Do They Live - What Do They Eat?

A true feral cat does not rely on human interaction but obtains its food and shelter from the natural environment, whereas stray or 'semi-feral' cats live around dump sites, alleys or abandoned buildings, relying on humans by scavenging rubbish scraps and sheltering in abandoned structures.

Feral cats are solitary and mostly nocturnal spending most of the day in the safety of their shelter with peak hunting activity occurring soon after sunset and the early hours before sunrise. They are territorial but their territory can be large in more remote areas (averaging 280 hectares).

Feral cats are carnivores and can survive on limited access to water - gaining moisture from their prey. They generally eat small mammals but also catch birds, reptiles, fish and insects. They can take prey up to the size of a brush-tail possum.



How Often Do They Breed?

From the age of about one year, feral cats can breed. They can have up to two litters per year, up to four kittens per litter - however few of the young survive. Feral cats fall prey to dingos, foxes and even wedge-tail eagles.



Environmental Impact

Feral cats are not native to Australia but have spread rapidly across most of the continent. There is clear evidence that feral cats can have a heavy impact on island fauna, but on the mainland this is a little less conclusive. Feral cats prey on our native wildlife - reducing their numbers and have been thought to contribute to the extinction of some sub-species of birds and small mammals.

Feral cats represent a threat to primary industries and natural resources and have an impact on other human activities. Feral cats carry infectious diseases such as toxoplasmosis and sarcosporidiosis, which can be transmitted to native animals, domestic livestock and humans.

How Can Amalgamated Pest Control Help You?

Amalgamated Pest Control has a long track record of assisting with the management of feral cats.

Cats are easily trapped in a wire "treadle-type" box trap. This method is most practical for semi-feral urban cats.

Cats that are captured are taken to a veterinarian for assessment and will be placed with a new family if at all possible.



Why Choose Amalgamated Pest Control?

- With over 80 years of industry experience we can provide the solutions to your pest management challenges.
- Our customers come first - We provide prompt service. While the others are arranging, we're doing.
- After-sales service is a priority. Once a treatment is completed, we stand by our work with a free service warranty backup. Should the need arise, a prompt on-call service applies for the entire warranty period.
- Our field technicians carry the latest specialised equipment designed to achieve the safest and most effective application possible. Our treatment methods have proved to be the most successful control measures available.
- We are a quality assured company to ISO9001:2000.
- We are comprehensively insured for your peace of mind.
- An Amalgamated Pest Control Management Program means more than just applying pesticides. We have field supervisors and national technical support available for expert advice on pests and pest management.
- The pesticides used are environmentally friendly and the safest available. Continual testing and research ensures that the latest developments are implemented with your interests in mind.
- We have extensive industry involvement at all levels, and active working relationships with our industry association (AEPMA), State and Federal Government bodies covering Health, WorkCover, Forestry, Primary Industries and Employment and Training.
- We can provide your complete pest management solution.

Our services include:

- o All general household and commercial pests including rodents
- o Mosquito and biting Midge Management
- o Termites and other timber pests
- o Bird and fly management
- o Specialist compliance in HACCP and AQIS systems

References:

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Images:

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