

**Submission regarding the Natural Resources Commission's Pest Animal Management Review
draft report**

This draft report was brought to my attention by The Cat Protection Society (CPS), whose submission I support.

As a cat owner, I too am concerned with the lack of distinction between 'stray' and 'feral' cat populations. While I wholeheartedly agree that our natural fauna is endangered by feral cats (and yes, uncontained pets/strays), and support the concept of protecting our wildlife, I also agree with the point that CPS makes in regards to the potential for stray cats to be a missing family pet. I personally have two desexed indoor cats, however there is always a chance that somehow they may find their way outside. I would be appalled and heartbroken were they to be mistakenly killed. Collars can become detached, and nowhere on the feral cat management page provided can I see any promises about checking for microchips on stray cats captured as part of this program. I would be reassured if the draft was amended to include measures to be taken to ensure that the cats captured and killed are definitely feral/homeless strays.

I note also the call to have cats desexed by the age of four months. As I stated earlier, my cats have indeed been desexed, as I have no desire to contribute to the number of strays in shelters. I realise that not all owners take the responsibility to do this. However, all veterinary advice given to me thus far has indicated that with the animal's best interest, a minimum age of 6 months is recommended for desexing kittens. There are also, as CPS pointed out, already legislations in place for the registration of cats with appropriate councils, including their intact/desexed status.

CPS has also questioned the ethical methods with which it is intended to cull these feral cat populations. I would be disappointed if there was no intention to kill these cats in a humane manner. Certainly I object to their being labelled as pests. To some people, possums and bilbies (for example) are 'pests'. I feel that this does create a 'reason' to be violent towards them, and I have seen firsthand what people are capable of doing to an animal when they see them as worthless. I have seen cats that have been so mistreated that I have questioned the humanity of the person who has committed the act.

By all means, protect our wildlife. But please do not persecute an entire species in order to do so. It is not the cat's fault that it exists or lives the way that it does.

Kind regards

Kit Strong

