

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR EASTERN QUOLLS ON NORTH BRUNY ISLAND

PROJECT UPDATE NOVEMBER 2021



Schoolchildren from Bruny Island District Primary School taking part in responsible cat ownership activities.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS

July to September has been a busy period for cat management on north Bruny Island with some great progress made on feral cat control at sites on The Neck and Cape Queen Elizabeth. Research into the interactions between cats and quolls has begun, which is really exciting. We hope it will give us a better understanding of the threat feral cats pose to quolls on Bruny Island and elsewhere. A wonderful community day was also run at the Bruny Island District School, with stories and games centered around responsible ways to look after our domestic cats.

DOMESTIC CATS UPDATE



Since July, seven new households on Bruny were identified as owning cats. At least 71 domestic cats from 50 households are now known to live on or regularly visit Bruny. Of these 50 households 88% have registered their cats with Council and 76% are fully compliant with the By-law. In the last few months several residents received support from Kingborough Council and/or the Bruny Island Men's Shed to build cat enclosures, which will ensure their cats are happily contained.

A great educational day about domestic cats, was run by Ten Lives Cat Centre and Kingborough Council at Bruny Island District Primary School. A total of 52 students across all year groups learned about cats and responsible cat ownership. The sessions involved games, stories and discussion - teach students about cats, their impacts on wildlife, agriculture and people, and how to look after cats responsibly.

FERAL AND STRAY CAT TRAPPING UPDATE

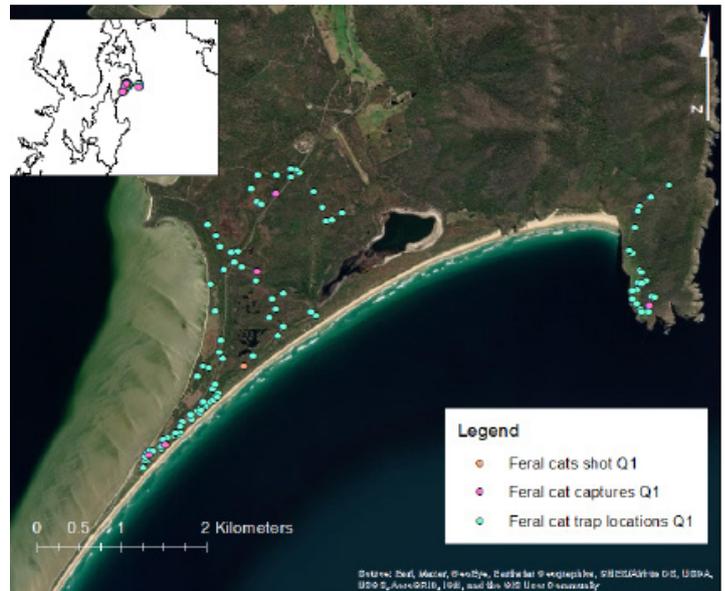
Between July and September, 20 cats were captured in the project area, bringing the project total to 65. Four were stray cats from nearby Simpsons Bay and Alonnah, seven were feral cats from north Bruny Island and an additional nine cats were captured by the community on their properties. Community management has had significant impacts, with 14 members of the community reporting sightings of feral cats - which have helped direct cat trapping efforts.

Additional cats have been captured since September and will be reported in the next update. Control activities were primarily undertaken by Bruny Farming at 101 locations on The Neck, Cape Queen Elizabeth, and several private properties in the surrounding area. One feral cat was shot in the field on Fairyland using a newly purchased thermal scope that detects cats using their heat signature. This is proving to be a method useful for controlling 'trap-shy' cats that will not enter cage traps.

These areas are home to the highest densities of cats on the island. GPS data has shown that cats on Bruny travel large distances, so removal of these cats has positive impacts for wildlife and livestock on the rest of the island.

GPS COLLARING OF CATS AND QUOLLS

Biosecurity Tasmania has started research on north Bruny Island to develop and improve our knowledge of feral cat impacts on eastern quolls, and how these impacts can be effectively managed and mitigated. This will be the first study of eastern quoll and feral cat interactions in Tasmania. So far, two GPS collars have been deployed on feral cats and one on an eastern quoll, with further deployments of GPS collars planned over the next few months. The units will record the interactions and movements of these animals and provide information on both mortality rates and habitat use. The deployment of collars on feral cats will also add to information gained in 2017-18 study on seasonal cat movement and home ranges across north Bruny Island. This research is undertaken with appropriate animal ethics and scientific research permits.



Locations of feral cat cage traps deployed, and cats trapped and shot from July - September 2021.



A GPS unit deployed on an eastern quoll. The collar will record location information for approximately 67 days. The collars have a built-in release mechanism that will activate after that period.

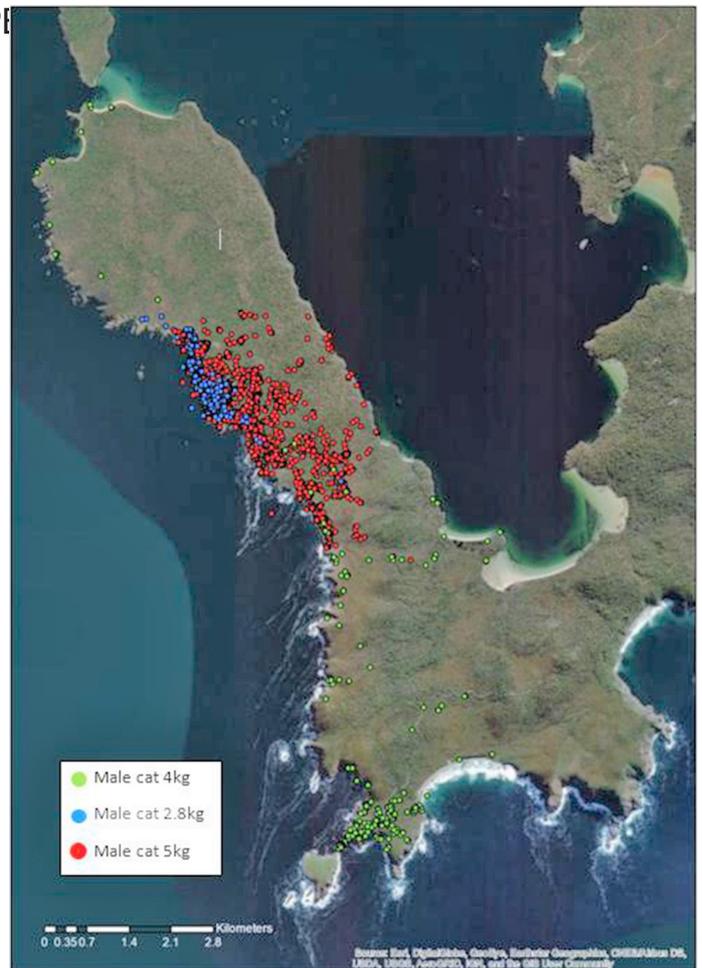


RESEARCH ON FERAL CATS OF THE LABILLARDIÈRE PENINSULA

Between 2018 and 2020 Cyril Scomparin (PhD student with the University of Tasmania) monitored feral cats in the Labillardière Peninsula. This area was his focus because it is a geographically isolated and supports a range of conservation significant native species. He identified four or five individual feral cats in the area and tracked three of these cats, all males, using GPS collars.

Two of the three cats spent most of their time in the seabird colony on the Peninsula, including after the seabirds had left the colony on their migration. During this time rabbit numbers were also extremely low in the area.

The three cats were repeatedly re-trapped, indicating they were hungry. Two of the three cats died during the study duration, potentially from starvation, and the remaining cat was euthanised after 49 weeks of monitoring. Cyril's work indicates that it may be difficult for feral cats to survive on the Peninsula due to fluctuations in prey availability. Potentially feral cat survival is higher in other shearwater colonies on north Bruny Island, such as those on The Neck Game Reserve, or Cape Queen Elizabeth. These areas may support higher densities of invasive rodents, providing a food source for feral cats throughout the year. Further analysis of the movements of these cats and others from north Bruny, will provide much needed information on feral cat habitat preferences that will help direct control programs on the island.



A map showing the movements of three cats on the Labillardiere Peninsula, on Southern Bruny Island.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Supporting organisations



Project partners



This project is supported by NRM South through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (Environmental Restoration Fund).

- Record sightings of feral cats on Bruny Island via FeralCatScan. [Visit the website](#), download the free smart phone app or contact Kingborough Council 6211 8200 / kc@kingborough.tas.gov.au to report a cat sighting.
- Trap for feral cats on your property. Contact Kingborough Council's Cat Management Officer on 03 6211 8284 or kallan@kingborough.tas.gov.au for more information.
- Protect domestic cats, livestock and wildlife by complying with the Bruny Island Cat By-Law.
- Find out more about [the project here](#).
- Have a question about cat management on Bruny? Email Rosie Hohnen rhohnen@nrmsouth.org.au