



## MONITORING DOMESTIC CATS IN AND AROUND ALICE SPRINGS

### Introduction

Cats have a significant impact on native mammals, birds and reptiles in the region. Feral cats are a key threatening process to ecosystem health in the McDonnell Ranges bioregion. There is much still to learn about the influence of domestic cats on feral populations. The project collected spatial data from domestic cats in an effort to showcase their movements and roaming activity to owners to encourage behaviour change.

### Background & Motivation

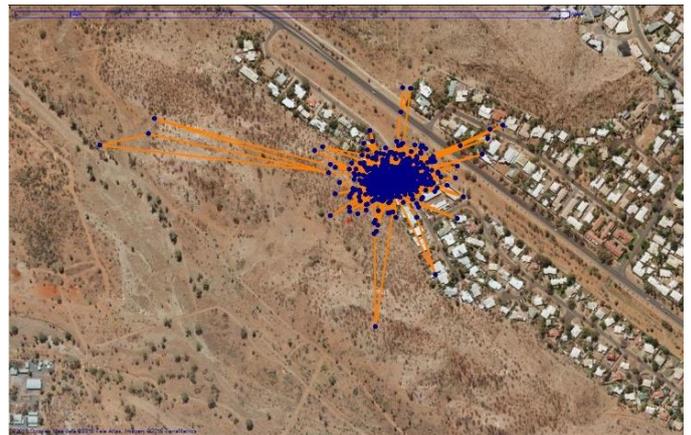
Land for Wildlife is a not-for-profit, nature conservation program that supports voluntary management of private land by its members. Land for Wildlife's motivation to conduct the project stemmed from the following:

- Domestic cats are likely to contribute to the pressure feral cats place on birds, reptiles and mammals (biodiversity).
- No prior studies about roaming of domestic cats in Alice Springs.
- Lack of awareness from pet owners about the roaming habits of their cats.
- Lack of community awareness about responsible cat ownership, their potential impact on biodiversity and existing council by-laws.
- Unwanted cats visit and impact biodiversity on *Garden for Wildlife* and *Land for Wildlife* properties.

### Activities

The project used a variety of means to engage the community including workshops, flyers, involvement at community events, which generated significant media interest. Community engagement activities facilitated conversations leading to education and raising awareness about responsible cat ownership in Alice Springs.

The project involved attaching GPS fitted harnesses onto domestic cats to track their movements. Pet cat Ruby was monitored for 21 hours to produce the location map below, roaming to adjacent bushland on various occasions, traveling a maximum distance of 558m from its residence.



# MONITORING DOMESTIC CATS IN AND AROUND ALICE SPRINGS

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- 17** domestic cats were monitored
- 30** maps showcasing the roaming locations of pet cats
- 32** cat owners directly engaged
- 17** pre and post-monitoring surveys undertaken by cat owners
- 2** workshops engaging with pet owners and the wider community about responsible ownership of pet cats in Alice Springs
- 1** community engagement brochure produced and printed

## Outcomes

Monitoring pet cats in Alice Springs provided visual maps for cat owners to view and consider the roaming locations and distances travelled by their pet.

From pre-monitoring surveys, pet owners agreed about the possibility of pet cats impacting wildlife. Post-monitoring surveys indicated pet owners were amazed and shocked by the distances and locations travelled by their pets.

Pet owners surveyed expressed their interest in more information and education about domestic cats.

Monitoring showed that pet cats roam widely during daylight and evening hours, including multiple visits to adjacent bushland. One cat travelled a maximum distance of 857m from its residence.

*"I am amazed at how far he travels and concerned at what he is killing in these areas."*

*"I was amazed at how far she went, that's a fair few places she goes of a night and day."*

*"Wow! My cheeky cat gets around."*

Comments from Cat Owners

## Future Activities

The project encouraged a significant amount of conversation and interest, extending beyond the Alice Springs region and traditional conservation network. This has secured future project support for monitoring and raising awareness about domestic cats in the rural area of Alice Springs.

If you live in Alice Springs and want to get involved, contact the Land for Wildlife Coordinator at: [lfw@lowecol.com.au](mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au).



Front cover of community engagement brochure

## Acknowledgements

Territory Natural Resource Management thanks Land for Wildlife for their hard work and commitment to this project and acknowledges the contributions of volunteer pet owners and the support, advice and feedback of community organisations involved in the project.

This project was supported by Territory Natural Resource Management with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Territory Natural Resource Management  
08 8942 8300 / [info@territorynrm.org.au](mailto:info@territorynrm.org.au)  
[www.territorynrm.org.au](http://www.territorynrm.org.au)