



Animal Ethics

Baiting and Shooting Feral Cats

The information in this factsheet has been collated directly from the National Standard Operating Procedures (NATSOPs) and Codes of Practice (CoPs) for feral cats written by Sharp T (2012, 2016, 2018) and available on the [PestSmart](#) website listed below under the Additional Online Resources section.

General Guidelines

Note: Information below is current as of February 2025

A variety of methods can be used to manage feral cat populations, there are 10 techniques currently used in Australia: aerial baiting, ground baiting (including Felixer™ grooming trap), leghold trapping, cage trapping, shooting, tracking with detector dogs, tracking by Indigenous Rangers, habitat modification, resource modification and exclusion fencing. If using baits, there are two main toxins approved for feral cat control in Australia: sodium fluoroacetate (1080) and para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP). To access 1080 or PAPP, you need to be trained and authorised, and licences and permits are required. Check the current rules with your state or territory agency.

Feral cat control techniques have the potential to cause animals to suffer. To minimise this suffering the most humane techniques that will achieve the control program's aims must be used. This will be the technique that causes **the least amount of pain and suffering** to the target animal with the **least harm or risk to non-target animals**, people and the environment. The technique must also be effective in the situation where it will be used (e.g. cage traps will have little effect in large areas where cats are at low densities). It is also important to remember that the humaneness of a technique is highly dependent on whether or not it is correctly employed. In selecting techniques to use, it is important to consider whether sufficient resources are available to fully implement the techniques correctly.

Why is baiting and shooting used?

Poison baiting is the only method for directly controlling feral cats at a landscape scale in many areas. Poison baiting is one of the most effective methods of broad-scale feral cat control and can provide large population reductions.

Baiting and shooting is preferred as some traps have the potential to cause injury and some degree of suffering and distress. Traps should only be used when no practical alternative exists.

Shooting is a humane method of removing feral cats when it is carried out by experienced, skilled and responsible shooters. The animal must be clearly seen, within range, and shot with the correct firearm, ammunition and placement.

Shooting advantages:

- A humane method of control when carried out effectively.
- Appropriate for smaller areas and or targeting problem animals.
- Highly target-specific, reducing the chance of harm to off-target animals.

When to perform baiting and shooting

Baiting

- After a risk assessment for off-target impact/benefit analysis has been undertaken.
- Baits must be delivered at an appropriate time of year, when alternate prey species are less available.
- Baits should be delivered at the recommended label rate and outside of the restricted distances from boundaries, waterways, roads and residences.

Shooting

- After a risk assessment for off-target impact/benefit analysis has been undertaken.
- Shooting is typically undertaken at night when feral cats are most active.
- Must be carried out by an experienced, skilled and responsible shooter.



Who can undertake baiting and shooting?

Baiting

- A person who is authorised under the Health Act 1937 to administer substances to an animal, provided it is killed humanely
 - o Specifically, the Act allows for certain individuals to be authorized by law to carry out actions such as administering substances to euthanize an animal in a manner that meets humane standards. The substances administered are typically those that cause death in a way that minimizes pain and distress to the animal.
 - o In practice, this could refer to veterinarians, but in some contexts, it might also refer to other professionals who have been granted specific permissions by regulatory authorities to carry out these actions.
- A person killing feral or pest animals. This exemption applies only if done in a way that causes the animal as little pain as is reasonable and complies with any regulations.
- Laws for baiting feral cats- Using 1080 and PAPP products for controlling feral animals is strictly regulated in Australia. Use of [Eradicat®](#) and [Curiosity®](#) must be done in accordance with the label directions on the packaging and any state or territory requirements, if different to the label.

Shooting

- Shooters must comply with the relevant state or territory Firearms Act. A firearms licence and permits are required for the land you are shooting on. Shooting must be undertaken in accordance with relevant Animal Welfare or Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act and Regulations, including not causing unnecessary harm.

Shooting for feral cat control is permitted in all states and territories; however, there are some restrictions on certain land tenures, certain distances from buildings and in urban areas. You must have landholder or land manager permission if shooting on someone else's property or public land. Contact your [state or territory](#) for more information on regulatory requirements for your program.

How can Indigenous Ranger Groups undertake these activities?

To effectively carry out this work, Indigenous rangers must be competent, demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge, and undergo training, such as Feral Animal Control methodology, which includes the following skills needed for the task:

- **Species Identification:** Understanding which species are considered feral in specific areas and how they impact local ecosystems, agriculture, and public health.
- **Legal and Ethical Guidelines:** Familiarising Indigenous Rangers with the laws and regulations related to controlling feral animals (Cats), animal welfare legislation, and permits required for certain control measures (see the Legislation section in [PestSmart- Feral Cats](#))
- **Control Methods:** Humane methods of control, ensuring animals are killed humanely or managed in a way that does not cause unnecessary suffering.
- **Trapping techniques:** Training on using humane traps to capture feral animals for relocation or euthanasia.
- **Poisoning:** Training on the use of approved, controlled substances for euthanizing feral animals.
- **Shooting:** Training on how to euthanize animals using firearms humanely and safely.
- **Exclusion Techniques:** Training on how to set up barrier fences and other strategies to prevent feral animals from entering certain areas.
- **Biological Control:** Exploring options like introducing natural predators or diseases (where appropriate and regulated).
- **Public Health and Safety:** Understanding the risks feral animals pose to human health, including the transmission of diseases such as rabies or leptospirosis, and ensuring safety protocols during the control operations.
- **Humane Euthanasia:** Methods and best practices for ensuring the humane killing of animals, ensuring that suffering is minimized during the process.

Refer to the NAILSMA Work, Health and Safety Training and Risk Mitigation Table for specific training units and legal guidelines for WA, NT and QLD.

How do we measure their effectiveness?

- Monitoring and Evaluation: methods for assessing the effectiveness of control programs, including tracking animal populations, identifying signs of animal damage, and adjusting strategies as needed.
- Surveys should be conducted both prior to and post control operations to monitor effectiveness and to justify the culling program. This could include monitoring changes in the environment, such as wetlands and culturally significant sites, or direct measurement of feral cat populations.
- Feral cat activity can be tracked using apps such as FeralCatScan
- Reporting and Documentation: Instruction on how to properly document control actions, report results to relevant authorities and maintain accurate records of activities for compliance and future planning.

Community Education

It is important to work with Traditional Owners and community members and discuss any culturally significant species that may be impacted by feral cat populations to prioritise locations for control activities. Working together with community to discuss preferred control options is a great way of developing community education of feral animals and the impact they could have on important sites.



Additional Online Resources

[PestSmart National Code of Practice for the humane control of feral cats](#) – PestSmart website provides many resources for managing feral cats including information on legislation, control methods and many more:

- [Feral cat control methods humaneness matrix](#)
- [Glovebox Guide for Managing Feral Cats](#)
- [Planning Guide for Feral Cat Management in Australia](#)
- [NATSOP-CAT001 National Standard Operating Procedure: Ground shooting of feral cats](#)
- [NATSOP-CAT002 National Standard Operating Procedure: Trapping of feral cats using cage traps](#)
- [NATSOP-CAT003 National Standard Operating Procedure: Trapping of feral cats using padded-jaw traps](#)
- [NATSOP-CAT004 National Standard Operating Procedure: Baiting of feral cats with para-aminopropiophenone \(PAPP\)](#)
- [Baiting of feral cats with sodium fluoroacetate \(1080\)](#)

Other

- [Feral Cat Management Decision Support Tool](#)
- [National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination](#)
- [DCCEEW Feral Cat Taskforce](#)
- [Dorph et al. 2024 Current and emerging feral cat management practices in Australia](#)
- [Best-practice management of feral cats and red foxes: workshop 2 report](#)
- [Record feral cat activity in FeralCatScan](#)
- [Felixer – Thylation](#)

Firearms Licensing

National Guidelines Firearms- [2017 National Firearms Agreement](#) | [Attorney-General's Department](#)

- Western Australia Government- [Licensing Services \(Firearms\)](#)
- Queensland Government – [Weapons Licensing](#) | [QPS](#)
- NT Government- [Licence and Permit Applications and Information](#) | [NT Police, Fire & Emergency Services](#)

Firearms Training Providers

Queensland

Cairns Firearms Safety Course
0417395561 | pgkl44@gmail.com
Cairns City, Queensland

Ballistic training Solutions Pty Ltd
1300 738 098 | ballistictraining.com.au
Caloundra West, 4551 Queensland Australia

IMPACT- Townsville
0417 069 961
impactfirearmstraining.com.au

Asset College
1300 731 602 | Study@asset.edu.au
asset.edu.au

Northern Territory

[Firearms Training and Safety Course providers- NT](#)

Sureline Security & Firearms Training NT
Humpty Doo, NT, 0836
(08) 8988 2369 | 0427 612 789
surelinesecurity@bigpond.com

Australian Security Training (Gareth Graham)
0412 387 178
gareth.graham@itscomm.com.au

Survival and Field Safety Australia
0400 296 179
mark.butler@westnet.com.au

Paladin Firearm Solutions
0428 588 515 | pat.paladin@gmail.com

Northern Territory *continued*

Eagle Training Services (Gary Carter)

0414 656 821

gary@eagletraining.com.au

Morningstar Training (Mr David Farlam)

0459 527 057

info@morningstartraining.com.au

NT Firearms Training (Garry Miezis)

0418 349 477 | garrym26941@bigpond.com

BLP Training & INLOC Training (Darren North)

1300 257 477

training@blpts.com.au

operations@inlocgroup.com

Western Australia

Paragon Corporate Training

C4, 58 Newcastle Street, Perth WA 6000

08 9227 5125 | 041 718 6380

craig@paragontraining.com.au

Core Training Group

113 Belmont Ave, Belmont 6104

Postal: PO Box 441,

Forrestfield, WA, 6058

(08) 6336 8080

admin@coretraining.wa.edu.au

National / Other

All States Training

(07) 4123 0415

info@centralsafetytraining.com

Queensland 4650

Pest Animal Control and Training

(Stuart Boyd-Law)

0408 463 425

sboyd-law@bigpond.com

Firearm Safety and Training Council Ltd

P.O. Box 393, Terrey Hills NSW 2084

Phone: (02) 9486 3077 Fax: (02) 9486 3497

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