

Submission
No 50

INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Cumberland Bird Observers Club

Date Received: 19 November 2024

My name is Martin Mansfield. I am the Conservation Officer of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club (CBOC). Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission which has been approved by the club's executive committee.

CBOC has over 400 members from throughout the Sydney region. Its objectives include:

- To encourage knowledge and enjoyment of native birds
- To actively promote the protection and conservation of native birds and their habitat.

CBOC strongly supports the introduction of effective pet cat containment laws in NSW. In particular we support local councils having the power to mandate that owners of pet cats keep them contained to their own property 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Many native bird species are in serious decline and one of the main causes of this decline is predation by invasive species in particular cats, not just feral cats but also pet cats. 71% of pet cats roam and of these, 78% hunt. On average, a roaming pet cat kills 186 animals per year. Research released by the Australian National University in 2023 found that roaming pet cats kill around 66 million native animals each year in Sydney alone.

All animals including birds have the right to be protected from this depredation, and we have the responsibility to provide this protection. The best way to do this is to ensure that pet owners keep their cats contained 24/7. Local councils must be given the power to mandate this.

At least two thirds of Australians support policies that require cat owners to keep their cat contained to their own property. This requirement will in fact benefit both the cats and their owners. Research shows that pet cats kept responsibly at home can live up to 10 years longer than roaming cats, as they pick up fewer diseases, and avoid being hit by cars, attacked by dogs and involved in fights with other cats.

CBOC also supports other actions to protect native animals including cat curfews, funding for responsible pet ownership initiatives such as subsidised desexing, and streamlined pet identification and cat registration processes.