

State involvement in the feral cat issue: Overview of Policies and Strategies Regarding Cats

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Cats & Hawaiian Ecosystems

- Evolution in isolation: no mammalian predators, very few pathways for parasite introduction
- Predation impacts
- Toxoplasmosis
 - Native birds: nene, alala, red-footed booby
 - Game birds: Erckels francolin
 - Hawaiian monk seal



Photo: Francis C Franklin



Photo: USFWS

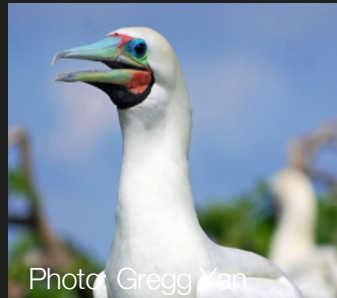


Photo: Gregg Yan



Photo: Dick Daniels



State Policy Framework

- Hawaii has no statutory definition of “pets”
- Cats are variously designated as:
 - Animals (Dept of Agriculture, regarding import, HAR 4-29)
 - Predators (Dept of Land & Nat Resources, regarding wildlife impacts, HRS 183-D)
 - A domesticated animal (Inferred by Dept of Agriculture, as an exclusion to the definition of “non-domesticated animals”, HAR 4-71)
 - Invasive species (Hawaii Invasive Species Council, non-regulatory)

County Policies

- City and County of Honolulu requires owners to sterilize cats older than 6 months (ROH 7-6.6) and provide them with an ID collar, tag, or microchip (ROH 7-6.2)
- Maui County requires all cats released for adoption to be neutered (CC 6.04.070)
- Hawaii County prohibits owners (undefined) from taking cats to county beach parks or businesses where food is sold (CC 4-18), and prohibits feces or other nuisances on any public areas (CC 4-19)

Federal Policies

- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §703-712)
 - Unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take capture, kill, attempt to take capture, kill, possess, offer for sale... any migratory bird
- Endangered Species Act (6 U.S.C. §§1531-1544)
 - Prohibits any person from harassing or harming any endangered or threatened species within the United States

Current Practices

- State
 - Predator control in remote areas / near native wildlife
 - Prohibition on feeding cats at small boat harbors
- County / Hawaiian Humane Society contract
 - High volume spay/neuter
- Private practices (individual actions, not endorsed by government)
 - Sanctuary on Lanai
 - Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
 - Return to Field?

Recent Policy Efforts

Efforts originating with the State:

- Abandonment penalty increases
- Feeding prohibitions on state lands

Efforts originating with animal welfare groups:

- Exempting cat colony managers from other laws
- Funding for TNR

Actions Elsewhere

- Australia: widespread control
- Cats Indoors
- NY Lawsuit



A catio



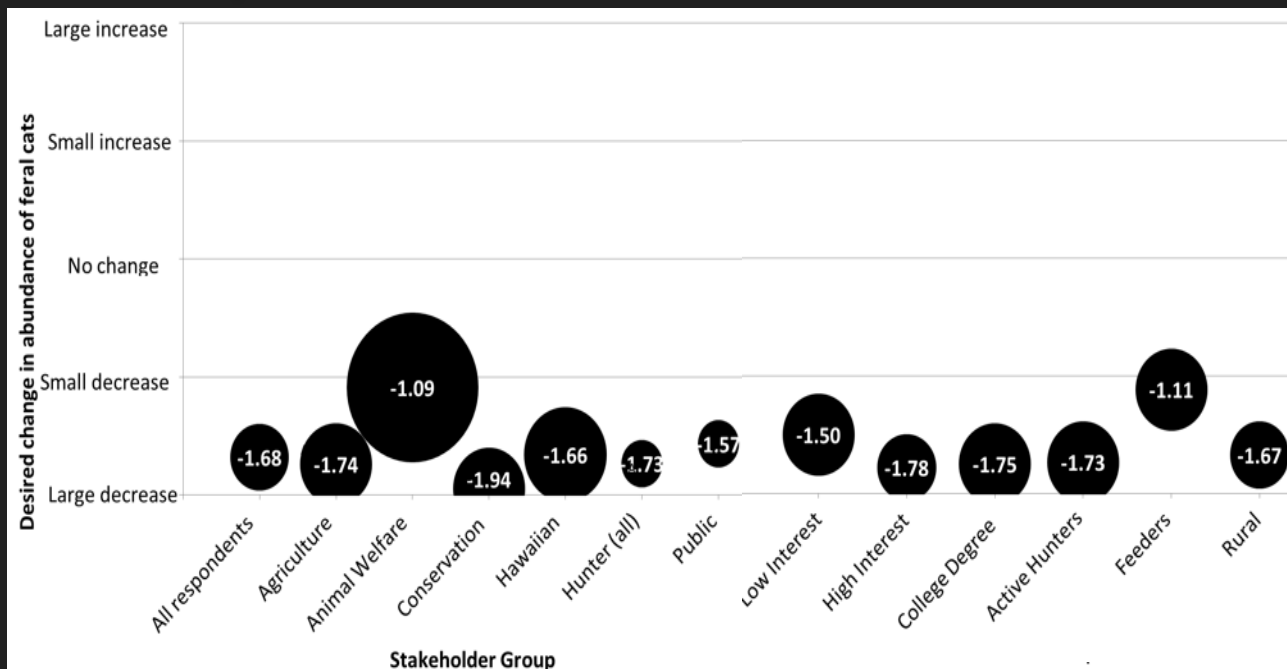
Cat backpack. Source:
American Bird Conservancy



A hunter in Australia. Australia is
deadly serious about killing millions
of cats, NY Times, 4/25/19

Socially Acceptable Solutions

- Effective solutions should be socially acceptable
- Lohr & Lepczyk (2013):
 - 87% of HI residents want to see reduced cats on landscape
 - 78% of HI residents want cats permanently removed from areas with T&E species



Socially Acceptable Solutions

Linklater et al (2018): Prioritizing cat-owner behaviors for a campaign to reduce wildlife depredation

TABLE 2 The score for each item used in the behavioural prioritization of nine cat-owner behaviors

	Authors	Cat owners		Veterinarians		Rank
	Conservation impact	Likelihood of adoption	Current penetration rate	Cat welfare	Effectiveness score	
Cat(s) in at night	6.0	4.82 ± 0.26	0.29	5.46 ± 0.12	110.53	1
Contain to property via fence	7.6	2.12 ± 0.21	<0.01	4.10 ± 0.12	65.40	2
Collar	5.4	3.57 ± 0.27	0.26	3.28 ± 0.013	46.79	3
Cat in 24 hr	10.0	1.76 ± 0.16	<0.01	2.28 ± 0.11	39.73	4
Restrict cat to run	8.4	1.38 ± 0.11	<0.01	2.81 ± 0.13	32.25	5
Register cat like dog	1.6	3.94 ± 0.29	<0.01	4.83 ± 0.14	30.14	6
Microchip	1.6	4.97 ± 0.28	0.64	5.91 ± 0.09	16.92	7
Limit number of cats	3.6	5.54 ± 0.23	0.96 (< 4 cats)	5.69 ± 0.09	4.54	8
De-sex	2.2	6.77 ± 0.10	0.96	6.20 ± 0.09	3.69	9

Conservation impact is represented by an average score (range 1 to 10). Likelihood of adoption and veterinarian opinions about the impact of the action on cat welfare are represented by average (± 1 SE) Likert scores on a scale of 1 to 7. Current penetration rate is represented as a proportion of survey respondents (ranging from 0 to 1). Behaviors were ranked based on their calculated effectiveness score with higher scores being judged better subjects of an advocacy campaign. Calculation of effectiveness was based on the modified McKenzie-Mohr (2000) formula: effectiveness score = conservation impact \times probability of adoption \times (1-current penetration rate) \times cat welfare.

HISC Resolution 19-2



- Non-regulatory policy statement recommending:
 - Keeping cats indoors
 - Exclusion tools to separate cats from wildlife: catios, sanctuaries, leashes
 - The use of peer-reviewed science in finding humane solutions to population reduction
 - No TNR



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