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











State Policy Framework

- O Hawaii has no statutory definition of "pets"
- O 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

- O 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







Cat backpack. Source: American Bird Conservancy

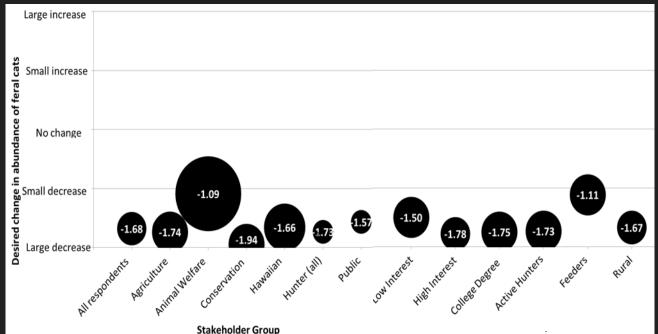


A hunter in Australia. Australia is deadly serious about killing millions of cats, NY Times, 4/25/19

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

	Authors Conservation impact	Cat owners		Veterinarians		
		Likelihood of adoption	Current penetration rate	Cat welfare	Effectiveness score	Rank
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

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

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 × probability of adoption × (1-current penetration rate) × cat welfare.

HISC Resolution 19-2





HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL HIST RINKINGUS ST. 635 HIGHOLUL, JUWAI SHIJ

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RESOLUTION 19-2

SUPPORTING THE KEEPING OF PET CATS INDOORS AND THE USE OF PEER-REVIEWED SCIENCE IN PURSUING HUMANE MITIGATION OF THE IMPACTS OF FERAL CATS ON WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

WHEREAS feral and free-roaming cats have been documented as predators of wildlife native to Hawaii, including endangered bird species; and

WHEREAS the toxoplasmosis parasite (Toxoplasma gondii) reproduces only in the feline digestive system; and

WHEREAS toxoplasmosis has been documented as the cause of death in both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife in Hawaii, including but not limited to the spinner dolphin, the endangered Hawaiian monk seal, the endangered alala, the endangered nene, and the red-footed booby; and

WHEREAS in humans toxoplasmosis can present health risks to pregnant women and/or immunocompromised persons if they handle cat feces or eat raw or undercooked meat; and

RECOGNIZING that previous public policy discussions in Hawaii have included consideration of funding or exempting from other laws practitioners of a system referred to as "Trap-Neuter-Return" that includes the re-release of neutered feral cats into the wild; and

RECOGNIZING that indoor cats have greater life expectancy than free roaming or feral cats; and

RECOGNIZING that numerous scientific studies, summarized in a meta-analysis titled "Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return" by Longcore et al (2009) in the journal *Conservation Biology*, have shown that "Trap-Neuter-Return" is not an effective strategy to reduce the number of feral cats in a given area or the predation and discase impacts of feral cats; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 194, Hawaii Revised Statutes, authorizes the Hawaii Invasive Species Council to advise and coordinate invasive species-related efforts with and between state, federal, international, and private programs, and to coordinate the State's position with regard to invasive species; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Hawaii Invasive Species Council recognizes that feral and free roaming cats can have a variety of impacts in Hawaii, including predation of native species and the proliferation and transmission of disease to wildlift and humans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Invasive Species Council supports the keeping

 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

O NO TNR



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