



## The Law and Trapping Cats in Tasmania

### **I have a stray or feral cat problem, can Council come and take care of it?**

No. The *Cat Management Act 2009* is administered by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), a state government agency. Local government does not have any direct obligations or funding and resources under the Act to control, trap or collect cats. Kingborough Council however is working to promote responsible cat ownership.

The reality is that local council, DPIPWE and the cat management facility (Ten Lives Cat Centre) do not have resources to go out and remove nuisance stays or other cats. A cat management facility may take trapped cats but in most cases will not trap them.

### **Can I catch a stray cat?**

At present, the *Cat Management Act 2009* permits the owner of rural land which is used for the purposes of livestock farming or whose land is more than one kilometer from any place genuinely used as a place of residence to trap, seize or humanely destroy a cat found on his or her private land.

While the *Cat Management Act 2009* is silent on the issue of catching cats in suburban areas, under other state legislation people are entitled to trap a cat that enters their property. However, people attempting to catch stray cats in suburban areas leave themselves open to civil legal action if a cat is injured in the process of trapping. Any cat caught in a suburban area must not be harmed and must be taken to a cat management facility to be scanned for a microchip. Cat management facilities have the right to refuse to take a cat which they reasonably believe may be a pet.

**You cannot under any circumstances enter another person's property or public or reserve land to trap a cat without permission.**

### **Can I kill stray or trespassing cats I catch?**

No, not if you live in an urban area. It is illegal for anyone except officers authorised under the *Cat Management Act 2009* to kill a cat, unless:

- a) the cat is found by a landowner on their land that is more than one kilometre from any place genuinely used as a place of residence; or
- b) the cat is found by a landowner (or person acting on their behalf) on rural land which is used for primary production relating to livestock.

**In all other cases you must take any trapped cat to a cat management facility** (Ten Lives Cat Centre) so it can be checked for a microchip.

Dumping or killing trapped cats are both offences under the [Animal Welfare Act 1993](#) and **severe penalties apply. It is illegal to ever use any kind of poison to kill a cat.**

### **Things to consider before attempting to trap a cat:**

- Have you exhausted all other avenues to address the problem (eg talked to, or left a note for the cat's owners about the cat coming onto your property)?
- Have you advised neighbours through a letterbox drop that you intend to trap any cats that wander onto your property?
- What are you going to do with the cat if you catch it?

- Are you able to humanely transport the cat by car (ie. securely in the back of a station wagon or ute) to a cat management facility within 12 hours of catching the cat?
- Not just anyone can destroy a cat; they must have the authority, experience and means to carry it out humanely.

A person meeting the requirements of a) or b) above, may humanely destroy a cat. However they must have the appropriate purpose on their firearms licence (primary production, animal control or animal welfare), have the appropriate caliber firearm, be in an appropriate place to discharge a firearm, and preferably have experience in killing cats in traps. And hence be able to kill the cat in a humane manner as per the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*.

- Dumping the cat is only transferring the problem elsewhere and is likely to make the problem worse. Dumping animals is an offence under the [Animal Welfare Act 1993](#).

### What types of trap can be used?

Any method of trapping cats must be humane. There are two main designs of cat traps that are considered acceptable. These traps are usually rectangular wire cages and both are operated by the cat touching a metal plate (treadle) on the floor of the trap with either a drop down or hinged swing-style door (as shown below). Trip wire triggered traps are now available (Mascot Wireworks) and are RSPCA approved (see Mascot website <http://www.mascotwireworks.com.au/trip-line-traps>).



*Recommended 'treadle style' cat cage trap. Photo courtesy of Sue Robinson DPIWWE*

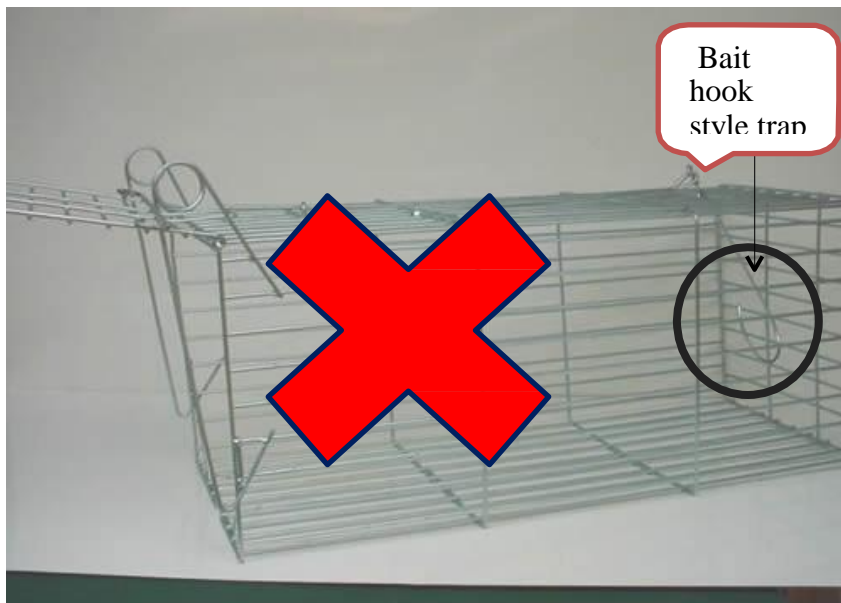
Heavier duty traps eg Mascot Wireworks or Hollander Imports, are preferred for Tasmanian conditions because devils or spotted tailed quolls may be caught and can injure themselves in lightweight traps. Light traps are easily squashed out of shape resulting in the door not closing properly or the locking mechanism not working.

It is illegal to use or set leg hold or steel jawed traps or snares anywhere in Tasmania. Penalties apply under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* for setting and using these types of traps. Hook operated cat traps should not be used for trapping cats, as the 'hook', used to hold the food attractant, can often injure any animal that has been caught. You might accidentally catch and injure quolls, devils or possums.



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Civic Centre, 15 Channel Hwy, Kingston, Tasmania 7050 Locked Bag 1, Kingston Tasmania 7050  
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### Can I hire a cat trap from Council?

No. Council does not hire out traps but the Ten Lives Cat Centre provide trap hire to members of the public to allow stray and feral cats to be humanely captured.

#### Ten Lives Cat Centre

12 Selfs Point Road New

Town 7008

Phone: (03) 6278 2111

Web: [www.tenlives.com.au](http://www.tenlives.com.au)

#### Conditions of trap hire:

- Traps are only to be hired for trapping cats; not possums or other wildlife.
- A \$25 bond applies per trap, of which \$20 will be refunded on the return of the trap/s.
- All traps are to be returned to the centre by Thursday each week. Therefore, it's recommended that traps be hired on a Sunday or Monday to allow time for trapping.
- The registered hirer is responsible for the cost of the trap if it is damaged or stolen.
- Any cat caught in a trap must be brought to the centre as soon as possible.

### Where can I buy a cat trap?

A number of rural supplies stores including Derwent Traders in Moonah and Hollander Imports in Hobart City have sturdy 'treadle style' cat traps for sale starting at \$70 to \$130.

Derwent Traders – Phone: (03) 6272 3270 Web: [www.derwenttraders.com.au](http://www.derwenttraders.com.au)

Hollander Imports – Address: 87 Brooker Ave Glebe (03) 6234 5111

Traps may also be purchased from animal trapping supply stores online.

Beware of some cheaply constructed cat traps on the market. These often don't meet the required humane criteria.



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## PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN TRAPPING A CAT:

When trapping a cat the following procedures must be carefully followed to ensure the cat is treated humanely:

- Only trap a cat if you are able to transport it safely to the Ten Lives Centre. Check their opening hours before attempting to trap a cat.
- Any ill-treatment of cats (including during trapping and transport) may be an offence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and may result in prosecution.
- Use only approved (treadle/foot pad style) cage traps. Do not use cage traps which have a hook for holding food/meat. Do not use leg-hold or body-grip traps or snares – these are illegal in Tasmania and can result in prosecution.



*Recommended 'treadle style' cat cage trap. Photo courtesy of Sue Robinson DPIPWE*

- Ensure the cage is suitably covered (with canvas, hessian bag or blanket) to provide any captured cats with protection from the weather and to help keep them calm.
- The cage cover should be tied on securely to prevent it from startling the cat away from the trap if the cover flaps in the wind.



*Cover your trap with canvass, hessian bag or blanket*

- Do not set traps during bad weather (ie very hot, very cold or very wet) or in direct sunlight (remember that shaded spots change throughout the day).
- Cats often follow fence or creek lines, old tracks, the edges of a paddock or plain or just behind a coastal dune. These places and where routes intersect or near a bridge (cats will cross) can be good places to trap.
- For the safety of any trapped animals and yourself - make sure the site where the trap is placed is free of ant nests or likely sheltering spots for snakes.
- Ensure other animals (particularly dogs) and people cannot get access to the trap and either harm, harass or release the cat.
- Placing the trap against an object such as a wall or under a bush works well as cats will be reluctant to enter a trap which is sitting out, exposed in the open.
- Ensure the trap is set on a flat surface and is *very* secure (e.g. with a rock on top or pegged into the ground) so the trigger mechanism won't go off accidentally, functions smoothly and the cage cannot move once the cat is inside. How you set the trap will help determine how much stress the animal is exposed to and your likelihood of success.
- Setting the trap at dusk is recommended. Check it first thing next morning & in the evening.
- Test the treadle plate/foot pad mechanism to ensure the trap closes completely and quickly.
- Placing a piece of cardboard over the floor inside the trap can prevent animal injury (e.g. broken claws or feet).
- Place some cat food just inside the trap to tempt the cat inside. You may also want to offer food for two or three nights in the area where you intend to trap to encourage any cat into the area before trapping.
- Tie the bait (chicken, rabbit or some cat food/sardines wrapped in a piece of chux) onto the floor or back of trap (behind treadle plate). The more expensive the cat food the more attractive it is. Fish sauce is also good for attracting cats. The use of poisoned bait is an offence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*.
- Once set, ensure the cage is regularly checked (at least twice per day) so that caught cats or native animals are not caged for extended periods. Animals can thrash around in a trap and end up with a bloody nose or broken limb.
- Release any native animal as soon as possible, either where trapped or nearby into a vegetated area. If an animal is injured consider taking it to a vet or wildlife rescue service.
- Use thick leather gloves when handling the trap to avoid being scratched. Leave the cat in the cage for transport. Use a cable tie to secure the cage door shut.
- Check any caught cats for identification (e.g. collar) and contact the owner.
  - Note: Some cats may be identified only by an implanted microchip which can only be read with a scanner – available at most vets and cat management facilities.
- If the cat is not identified and appears friendly try to locate the owner by doorknocking / letterbox drops in your local area.
- If the owner can't be located, take the cat immediately to the Ten Lives Cat Centre.
- Transport cats promptly, humanely & securely (ideally secured in tray of a ute). Inside your car may not be safe and cat urine odour is also difficult to remove from upholstery.
- Before transport, **lock the trap door shut with a cable tie** to prevent cat escaping on route.
- Keep any trapped cats covered at all times with canvas, hessian bag or blanket to minimise stress during transport.



## Cats and disease

Cats often carry parasites and diseases that can be transmitted to people, livestock, native animals and other cats. One such parasite - toxoplasmosis can cause abortion and foetal abnormalities in pregnant women and sheep. It is also fatal to many marsupials. Pregnant women should not trap or handle a trapped cat. Any euthanased cats should be disposed of by deep burial to prevent the possible spread of disease.

Traps must be cleaned after catching a cat to minimize the risk of disease transfer. You can use a disinfectant that does not contain phenol as cats are highly sensitive to this chemical. In addition, cats are very sensitive to smell and removing the odour of previous cats and handlers of the trap may assist your trapping efforts.

## What do I do with a trapped cat?

### What must I do if I catch or trap a cat that has a collar or ear tattoo?

Ear tattoos indicate that a cat has been desexed and is or was someone's pet. Try to locate the owner if the cat has a tag or you can take the cat to a vet or the Ten Lives Cat Centre.

***Note: it is an offence to remove or interfere with the identification on a cat. Penalties apply.***

### Where do I take the cat I have trapped?

- If the cat has identification or you know who the owner is you can return the cat to them and encourage them to keep their cat confined to their yard.
- Whether or not the owner of the cat is known to the person who trapped the cat, the cat can be taken to a cat management facility (Ten Lives Cat Centre).
- Any cat caught in a hired trap must be brought to the facility from where the trap was hired.
- If you are using your own trap, the cat may be taken to either Ten Lives Cat Centre (New Town). Call ahead to make sure they are able to receive the cat before you put it in the car and travel to the facility.

### Can I bring a trapped cat to the Council or ask Council Officers to trap a cat?

- No. Council does not have facilities to trap, hold or to destroy cats.
- Commercial pest control services can trap and remove problem or feral cats at your expense.

### Can I destroy or keep any unidentified cats I legally trap or catch?

No. You must take the cat to the Ten Lives Cat Centre within 12 hours. The responsible organisation will scan the cat for a microchip and then either return, re-home or destroy the cat.

If a cat is caught on either private land that is more than 1 km from a place of residence or rural land where livestock are grazed can be returned to the owner, taken to a cat management facility or humanely destroyed.

NEVER destroy the cat yourself - as techniques such as striking or drowning are unacceptable, inhumane and constitute an offence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*.

### Will I be charged for dropping off a stray cat to the Ten Lives Cat Centre?

No. The Ten Lives Cat Centre do not currently charge for accepting stray cats. A fee may be charged for surrendering your own unwanted pet cat. If in doubt about any aspect of trapping a cat, contact Kingborough Council, the Ten Lives Cat Centre for further advice.



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