Dogs and Cats

There are millions of stray and feral dogs and cats roaming our country. Feral or stray dogs and cats cause a multitude of problems for both landowners and wildlife, that are compounded by their ability to live long lives and produce large litters. Feral, stray or free-roaming dogs and cats quickly compound the problem because they live long lives and produce large litters. A few feral dogs and cats in an area can quickly turn into hundreds.

Free roaming dogs and cats can, and do transmit new diseases to wildlife. Some states and provinces allow citizens to kill stray cats and dogs if they cause damage or threaten human health and safety.

Control

One of the most important actions you can take to reduce cat and dog problems is to contact neighbors who allow their pets to roam freely. If this does not help, contact your local Animal Control officer, Humane Society, or Animal Shelter. They will be able to help you in controlling or removing nuisance dogs and cats. Report dogs killing wildlife to your local Game Warden, Fish, Wildlife and Parks office, or local law enforcement agency.

Some nuisance cats can be easily caught in live traps. One method is to cover the trap so that the cat will go in to investigate. Another technique is to anchor the trap and put the bait under the trap. The cat will not be able to reach under or into the trap for the bait, but will have to go into the trap to access the bait. Tuna, sardines, and cat food are all good baits but may attract other wildlife. You might want to try using catnip as bait. Once trapped, you can turn the cat over to your animal control officer, humane society, or animal shelter.

For Further Information

Audubon, Cats Indoors. Website: http://www.audubon.org/bird/cat/index.html.

A Catastrophe for Birds. Website: http://www.ncal.verio.com/~nsn/acatastrophe.html.

Cat Indoors! Website: http://www.batnet.com/wildlife/education.html.

Facts on Cats and Wildlife: A Conservation Dilemma. University of Maine, Bulletin 7148. Website: http://www.wildlifesolutionsonline.com/publications/feral_cats_3.pdf.

Keep Your Cat Indoors! Website: http://www.oaklandspca.org/cats/indoorcats.html.

Nuisance Animals. 1997. John Trout, Jr. Midwest Publishing. Tennyson, IN.

Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage. 1994. Cooperative Extension Division. Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE.

A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION 1901 2001

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

www.fwp.state.mt.us

Living With Dogs & Cats

WHEN GOOD PETS GO BAD!

Free-ranging dogs and cats cause a multitude of problems for landowners and wildlife. Too many people allow their dogs and cats to come and go as they please. They obviously have no idea how damaging these pets are to wildlife.

Living with Wildlife

www.fwp.state.mt.us

EXHIBIT 9
DATE 3.22.05
SB 40

DOGS

Dogs allowed to run free will often band together to form a pack. Dogs still have the ancient instincts of their wolf ancestors and these instincts are revived when dogs "pack" or are in the presence of "prey." The best family dog can revert to an aggressive predator of wildlife. Dogs in packs will attack livestock, other pets, wildlife, and people. When dogs kill, they seldom go for the throats or do an efficient job. Dogs often attack from the rear, badly mangling their victims as they tear at the hind legs to bring down their prey.

With the exception of using trained or controlled dogs to chase or herd away game animals to protect humans, lawns, gardens, livestock, or agricultural products: "...any peace officer, game warden, or other person authorized to enforce the Montana fish and game laws who witnesses a dog chasing, stalking, pursuing, attacking, or killing hooved game animals may destroy that dog, on public land or on private land at the request of the landowner, without criminal or civil liability." (SB 104, 2001 Legislature)

In some areas of Montana, dogs may be one of the chief predators of deer. Dogs kill deer, antelope and their fawns, moose and elk calves, small mammals, and other wildlife. The impacts of free roaming dogs on wildlife may include harassment, injury, or death. Although not wildlife, a report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service showed that dogs killed 40,325 sheep/lambs in the U.S. in 1994 and approximately 21,800 cattle in 1995, attesting to their latent killer instincts.

"...a person who purposely, knowingly, or negligently permits a dog to chase, stalk, pursue, attack, or kill hooved game animals is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to the penalty in 87-1-102(1). If the dog is not under the control of an adult at the time of the violation, the owner of the dog is personally responsible. A defense that the dog was allowed to run at large by another person is not allowable, unless it is shown that at the time of the violation the dog was running at large without the consent of the owner and that the owner took reasonable precautions to prevent the dog from running at large." (SB 104, 2001 Legislature)

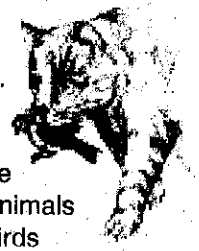
All dogs should be fenced, on a leash or under control at all times!

CATS

Numerous studies have shown that free-roaming domestic cats are significant predators of birds and other wildlife. A study at the University of Wisconsin found that a rural cat's diet may contain **35 percent songbirds**. In this four-year study, it was estimated that rural cats in Wisconsin killed an estimated **39 million birds each year**. Other figures vary, but it has also been estimated that cats in the U.S. kill between **4 and 5 million birds everyday** and a **billion small mammals each year**.

Other cat studies over the past 50 years have shown that a cats' prey is made up of:

- **60-70 percent small mammals,**
- **20-30 percent birds, and**
- **10 percent other animals such as reptiles, amphibians, and insects.**



Even when well-fed, cats will continue to hunt and kill birds and other wildlife. Observations of free roaming cats show that an individual cat is capable of killing over 1,000 wild animals per year. Cats will catch birds and other wildlife and play with them rather than killing them outright. Domestic cats don't kill to eat; they pursue their natural instincts as hunters and predators for entertainment. Declawing a cat does not stop it from killing wildlife.

Ground-nesting birds are very susceptible to free-roaming cats. So are young birds that leave above ground nests and spend a few days on the ground learning to perfect their flying skill.

Belling the Cat

Putting bells on cats doesn't work. Cats stalk slowly and often wait in ambush to catch their prey. There is no time for the bird to escape when it hears the bell – if it hears the bell. Birds and other wildlife do not associate bells with being stalked.

All cats should be kept indoors and not allowed to roam!

The Pet Food Institute estimates that there are at least 65.8 million pet cats in the U.S., and another survey indicates that only a little over half of these are kept indoors.