

Management of unowned cat colonies

Carole Webb

INTRODUCTION

Stray or, more accurately, unowned cat colonies may be an increasing problem in today's society and clearly there is increased community expectation that the problem be addressed. There are an estimated 150,000-200,000 stray/unowned cats in the Melbourne metropolitan area alone (Anon 1992). Irresponsible cat owners are often blamed for this situation. The populations may become self perpetuating due to the prolific breeding capacity of the domestic cat and readily available food sources. Their impact varies depending on locality, but their presence in an area usually raises animal welfare, conservation and community amenity concerns. This necessitates the humane and effective management of these colonies, the prevention of their reformation and the promotion of responsible cat ownership.

The Cat Protection Society of Victoria (CPS) is the largest cat welfare organisation in Australia, handling some 15,000 cats per annum. For the past 50 years it has had a daily interface with the management of unowned cat colonies, with some 9,000 wild cats being trapped and removed annually.

The nature of the stray cat problem is somewhat different to that of the stray dog. The majority of stray cats are unowned, not lost, and are totally unhandleable (65% of CPS intake falls into this category). This necessitates the implementation of trapping programs to remove them from an area (and thereby to solve the problems they cause), and effectively means that the majority of trapped cats will be euthanased.

In addressing the problem a holistic cat management plan is essential. Firstly, responsible cat ownership must be encouraged to prevent the replenishment of the unowned populations by irresponsibly owned cats. This fact must not be lost sight of. Once the owned population has been addressed, it must be recognised that there is already in existence an unowned population which must be effectively and humanely dealt with. As this population creates many of the community concerns, control of unowned cats is an important component of any effective cat management plan.

UNOWNED CAT COLONIES - A PROFILE

Essential to the success of dealing with unowned cat colonies is an understanding of their biology and behaviour as well as an appreciation of human attitudes towards these cats.

The typical unowned cat colony consists of approximately 20 cats, usually related, as evidenced by a common coat colour pattern and similarity of physical characteristics, ie facial structure, eye colour, body size. These cats have never been owned and are the progeny of unowned cats and abandoned owned cats. Typically, they are undernourished, diseased (cat flu is endemic), undesexed and totally unhandleable. Approach by humans, particularly the feeder, can be made to within 2 metres, but the cats cannot be picked up or otherwise handled. They will often watch unafraid from distances of 2-6 metres but disappear very quickly if approach by humans is made. If cornered these cats can pose a considerable threat, through biting and scratching to the catcher. Most attempts to handle them end in injury and failure. For this reason trapping is essential, both for success and for occupational safety. The critical socialisation period for kittens appears to be 408 weeks of age - domestication of feral/wild kittens is possible if they are removed from their environment and socialised with humans during this time. Similarly, if kittens of a domestic cat are not handled and socialised at a similar age they become wild and unhandleable.

Cats are prolific breeders. Only 2.5% of a colony needs to be entire to maintain that colony. Breeding tends to be seasonal and associated with warmer weather (typically September through to April), but can occur all year round - this is important as 'cat complaints' tend to be seasonal and related to increased numbers and activity levels during breeding season as well as breeding behaviour and habits eg. mating, fighting, spraying.

Ovulation occurs at the time of mating, so pregnancy is ensured. In the northern hemisphere, very cold winters provide a natural limitation to the population, Australia's milder climate allows year-round survival, thus greater potential for numbers to increase.

Studies have shown that these cats are crepuscular (peak activity periods at dawn and dusk), particularly in spring and summer but that activity patterns can be changed by food availability. Cats are also less active in rainy, windy or very hot conditions - important points for correct timing - of trapping programs.

Cats are opportunistic feeders, preferring the most easily available food source. In urban areas some hunt, but they are not reliant on hunting to survive as they will readily scavenge any available food source. In particular rubbish and food given by people are important food sources and are factors to consider in control of these populations.

Table 1: Percentage frequency of food items being eaten in 408 observations of feeding cats in urban areas

Item	Percentage frequency
Handouts	32.6%
Rubbish	51.5%
Mammals	0.5%
Birds	2.7%
Reptiles	0.2%
Insects	0.5%
Unidentified	12.0%

It is important to note that if such food sources are not readily available, cats will revert to hunting prey. This is of importance in rural setting where rubbish is less readily available and rural farm cat populations are commonplace. In this setting, hunting prey would constitute a larger part of the food source although the nature of these cats is essentially the same. The difference then between the urban unowned cat and the rural farm cat is their food source. Local government officers are more likely to deal with urban populations but rural populations should always be remembered.

Life expectancy is an average of 3-4 years compared with an estimated 7-15 years in the owned population. Major causes of death are motor car accidents, disease and fighting.

ORIGIN OF UNOWNED CAT COLONIES

The origin of unowned cat colonies must always be considered in any cat management plan because part of the long term solution to the problem is the removal of their source through responsible cat ownership. Over the years, cats have sadly been allocated a very low status within the community, being regarded as disposable, easily replaced items able to fend for themselves. This has been a significant factor in creating the cat problem which we face today.

These colonies principally derive from irresponsibly owned cats:

- from cats that are abandoned when their owners move;
- from cats that are dumped by owners who no longer want them; and
- from owned cats which are not desexed.

Once established, the colony is self-perpetuating through breeding.

If responsible cat ownership is not encouraged, the removal of existing unowned populations will not be effective as they will be quickly replenished from the above sources.

LOCATION OF UNOWNED CAT COLONIES

Cats are adaptable animals, fitting into almost any surrounding and congregating around food sources. They are able to survive and maintain their colonies in most Australian conditions from desert to heavily forested areas. This is possible as they do not require fresh water to survive, as long as prey is fresh or the food source moist and they adapt their food source readily.

During periods of low activity, these cats rest in sheltered places, eg. under houses, under cars, in sheds, hay bales, overgrown areas (particularly such as agapanthus bushes), on top of roofs (particularly like sun-bathing).

Table 2: Common sites and food sources for unowned cat colonies

Site	Source of colony	Principal food supply
Rubbish tips	Dumping/self sustaining	Rubbish
Factories/industrial sites	Dumping/self sustaining	Rubbish
Restaurants/fast-food outlets	Dumping/self sustaining	Rubbish
Schools		
Hospitals	Dumping/self sustaining	Human feeders
Laneways	Dumping/self sustaining	Human feeders
Under houses	Abandonment	Human feeders
Farms	Abandonment	Human feeders
	Breeding of owned cats	Hunting

MAINTENANCE OF UNOWNED CAT COLONIES

Once established, unowned cat colonies are easily maintained by three factors:

i) Reproduction

The majority of unowned cats are not desexed (Cat Protection Society of Victoria (CPS) figures show - 98.6% of unowned, wild cats not desexed). Cats are prolific breeders with the capacity to produce 4 litters/year with an average of 4 kittens/litter. If only 2.5% of the colony remains entire, it is self-perpetuating (see flow charts) (Huxley/Greenwood 1990). There can be high mortality in kittens, particularly juvenile males. The mortality rate is determined by:

- food availability;
- endemic disease (cat flu); and
- competition with existing cats.

Reducing adult populations can therefore result in more kittens surviving to adulthood. A recent study (Paton, 1994) indicated that males had an average life expectancy of 9 months, but if they survived past this age, it was around 4 years. This coincides with the onset of sexual maturity which increases fighting incidence (for females and territory) and increases roaming (for food and territory).

As the colony increases, younger cats, particularly males, roam more widely and find unoccupied territories, thus moving outwards from human habitation. It has been estimated that this can occur at a rate of 4-8km/year (Fitzgerald, undated, Jones and Coman, 1982). This is of particular significance in rural areas with farm cat populations as these make possible the continual colonisation of adjoining conservation areas.

As a result of this reproductive capacity, recolonisation can occur very rapidly. It is therefore essential that in dealing with a colony, all cats are removed and constant monitoring of the area is continued, or the problem can be regenerated within 12 months.

ii) Replenishment

As discussed above, replenishment of the colony can occur if the source of these cats is not addressed.

iii) Food source

Unowned cat colonies are maintained by a constant food source. Food availability will influence colony numbers (reproductive capacity and survival rate) and also influence normal activity patterns. Although cats are opportunistic feeders, control of the food source can be used effectively for prevention of recolonisation by removing the food source (depending on prey availability) or for the co-ordination of trapping programs and is thus a powerful tool in unowned cat management.

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY UNOWNED CAT COLONIES

As a cat welfare organisation CPS obviously recognises the importance and role of cats as companion animals in society - responsibly owned cats are loving and rewarding companions. However, irresponsibly owned or unowned cats become a major community problem:

a. Cats cause community nuisance through:

- i) noise - fighting
- ii) odour - spraying
- iii) property damage - digging in gardens.

It must be remembered that people who do not like cats have a right to amenity and privacy.

b. Stray cats pose a threat to owned cats through:

- i) fighting - cat abscesses
- ii) disease spread - feline AIDS, cat flu.

c. Cats threaten wildlife in both the city and rural areas.

d. Cats can pose a public health risk via zoonoses: eg. toxoplasmosis, ringworm.

e. The suffering of neglected/unowned cats and kittens is of community concern and distresses many citizens.

f. There are considerable financial and emotional burdens placed on shelters dealing with these cats.

g. Cats pose a threat to agriculture through decreased productivity due to toxoplasmosis.

PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES FOR UNOWNED CAT COLONY MANAGEMENT

A) Prevention of replenishment

This may be achieved by responsible cat ownership and control of food source.

After a colony has been removed from an area, replenishment may be reduced by removal of the food source:

i) Rubbish

Rubbish sources should be cleaned up. At tips, rubbish should be buried daily. Use of cat-proof rubbish bins - plastic or metal - instead of plastic garbage bags will prevent scavenging of residents' rubbish.

ii) **Cat feeders**

Cat feeders (people who deliberately feed cats of which they otherwise do not claim ownership) contribute a significant proportion of the food source in urban areas (Huxley/Greenwood, 1990). Classically these 'free feeds' are distributed in the early morning or late evening. Cats quickly come to expect them and gather at the feeding site just before the feeder arrives. There is a very distinctive psychology involved in this process and it is important to appreciate this and incorporate it into your plan or the issue invariably and quickly becomes an emotionally charged and sensitive one.

Cat feeders are frequently middle-aged to elderly people, particularly women, who live on their own. They usually possess a deep love and caring for animals and a need to express this characteristic. Very often no focus is available in their existing daily routine. The process begins when a stray cat (sometimes 2 or 3) appears and, the feeder feeling sorry for them, food is put out. As these are unowned cats, they very quickly learn to arrive at meal-time and so the process continues, the feeder genuinely not wanting to see the cats starve, but also not wanting to take full responsibility due to the temperament of the cats (wild). With a reliable food source now available these cats breed and soon their numbers will have grown to 20-30. The cost of continuing the food supply for this increasing number of cats becomes enormous and the feeder becomes overwhelmed by the situation, emotionally, physically and financially. Despite the fact that the feeder does not regard these cats as his/her own, a great amount of responsibility is felt for them and the situation must be handled sensitively and compassionately. Most do realise that the situation is out of control.

Before beginning a trapping program, CPS seeks the co-operation of the feeder. The problem is discussed and there is a focus placed on the long-term welfare of these cats. If successful, the feeder may actually provide the feeding regime for the implementation of trapping programs; if not, they will at least not continue to feed and thereby interfere with trapping. The colony is now addressed and CPS has found most success by using the following approach:

- Initially kittens are removed and as many as possible rehoused - this provides positive reinforcement for the feeder.
- If the feeder does not own any cats; two cats are selected from the colony (usually the original cats depending on health) trapped, desexed and returned to the feeder for long term caring and ownership. This provides the focus they need for their nurturing instincts.
- The long term welfare of the remaining cats is discussed with emphasis on the fact that they are at constant risk of:
 - disease, particularly FIV (in fact many are already very ill)
 - fighting
 - car accidents
 - short life expectancy
 - persecution by people who dislike the problems they are causing.

It is important that these are put forward in 'cat lover' friendly terms as this is the feeder's prime concern.

- The rest of the colony is removed.

Interaction with the cat feeder is an important part of any unowned cat management plan and is crucial to its success.

B) Management of the existing unowned cat population

The techniques described below do not deal with the source of the problem, they simply address the end point. This must be kept in clear perspective for whichever technique is chosen, it is not in itself the solution to the problem. If it is regarded as such, the outcome in the long term will be unsuccessful.

In deciding which technique to implement the broad picture, not specific colonies must be evaluated, in overall management plans, ie. there is already in existence a surplus of unowned cats. Furthermore local decisions may have to be made regarding the tolerance of the community to desexed unowned colonies. It is important that practical considerations are balanced against emotional ones. It is always easier emotionally to decide to preserve life rather than decide on euthanasia, but this is a short term approach and does not examine long term welfare. Media attention and highly motivated and committed feeders may result in isolated colonies being managed by the desex/replace technique whereas in environmentally sensitive areas the trap/remove technique is more likely to be used. Overall, however it is not logistically possible to use the desex/replace technique for all colonies.

i) **Removal of unowned cat colonies - trapping programs**

This is the preferred option, both for the welfare of the cats, and in the successful resolution of the problems they cause.

Trapping programs are an effective and humane method to catch and remove unowned cats as most of these are wild and unhandleable. It is important however, that certain procedures be followed to ensure that owned cats are not trapped, and that cats trapped are caught and handled humanely.

Preparation

Prior to conducting a trapping program it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to avoid catching any owned cats by mistake. This may be done by:

1. Establishing that the cat(s) cannot be handled and are therefore wild. Such cats do not usually approach humans closely and are only seen at feeding time or after dark. They are usually in poor body condition and frequently show signs of 'cat flu'. If the cat can be picked up easily and shows friendly behaviour then it is likely to be owned or lost.
2. Time should be taken to recognise the cats in the colony and the fact that they are not owned.
3. A letter-drop to all residents within the immediate area to advise that a trapping program will be conducted and that their assistance would be appreciated by ensuring their own cat(s) is inside and is wearing obvious identification. A note in the local milkbar is also worthwhile and if there is time, door knocking is very useful.
4. Any cats wearing collars/ID/with tattoos that are trapped should be released immediately.
5. Traps should not be used for the capture of any other animal.

Trapping

This involves:

- The establishment of a regular feeding regime - the cats are fed in the same place at the same time each day for at least seven days. It is important that there is only one cat feeder.
- The cats are then not fed for 24 hours before the traps are set to ensure that they are sufficiently hungry to enter the traps for food.
- Pressure plate traps are used as these are more humane and effective than the possum traps (they do not have the hook operation which can injure the contained cat and cats normally eat from the ground rather than from a hook) and allow easier handling of the cat. Through the back-plate cats can be transferred between cages without physical handling. This is both safer for the operator as well as less stressful for the cat.
- Traps are set in a sheltered area near to where the cats are usually fed.
- We have found that fishy food is the most successful lure for cats and that trapping is most effective if done just before dusk.
- Traps must be checked frequently and preferably not left unattended. This prevents them being stolen/vandalised. Cats are vulnerable once trapped and their welfare must be considered.

- Once trapped, the cat must be taken within 12 hours of capture to a shelter experienced in handling cats to avoid unnecessary suffering, eg. exposure to inclement weather. Covering the trap with a cloth or blanket calms the cat during transport. Cats must NOT be transported in car boots and if the weather is hot, water MUST be provided. (The back-plate of the trap may be lifted slightly and a water bowl put in.

Colonies of cats require several visits to capture all of the cats. The first visit to a colony of 20 cats usually results in the capture of 7-10 cats, the second visit usually 3-5 cats and subsequent visits 1-2 cats. Visits are spaced at intervals of about 2 weeks to allow the remaining cats to settle and the feeding regime to be re-established. It is important that follow up visits are conducted as just one entire female cat is enough to reproduce the colony within 12 months. In particular, a visit in early spring, before the breeding season, can save a lot of work during summer. Female cats are usually pregnant at this time and therefore slower moving and hungrier.

The control of the food source is the key to success for any trapping program. As previously discussed, cats are opportunistic feeders and prefer the most readily available food source. If 'free feeds' are routine they will change their daily activity pattern to accommodate this (Huxley/Greenwood 1990). If the 'free feed' is particularly tasty they will also wait for this in preference to seeking alternative food sources.

The following factors are of importance in planning a trapping program:

- In urban areas, primarily dusk and dawn activity can be adjusted by day feeding patterns which may be practically easier for council officers to incorporate into work schedules.
- At sites where food cannot be withdrawn for 24 hours (eg. tips) the provision of particularly tasty food will entice cats into the trap.
- Cat feeders must be involved (or actively precluded) from the program or they hinder the process by feeding the cats before the trapper arrives. If cats are not hungry, trapping success is significantly reduced.
- Cats in rural areas are less reliant on a human feeder or rubbish as a food source, but the provision of free feeds can be used to establish a feeding regime and thereby a successful trapping program.

If day trapping is not successful (human activity levels in an area may preclude this) then night or early morning programs may be necessary. Rainy, windy or very hot conditions are not ideal for trapping as cats are less active in these conditions.

Trap-shy cats

Cats very quickly become trap-shy if an unsuccessful attempt has been made to capture them. To catch these cats requires a lot of work and patience. A technique used by CPS officers is to introduce a 'crate' similar in size to the trap near to where the cat is being fed and then slowly move the food towards this, eventually placing the food inside the crate (a milk crate is ideal). Once feeding confidently, the crate is removed and a trap set.

Assessment

At the shelter, all incoming cats should be assessed for health and temperament. As the majority of these cats are wild, their fate is usually immediate euthanasia. To hold these cats in captivity for any period of time induces severe stress, thereby predisposing to and exacerbating existing disease. As their temperament precludes them from rehoming programs, immediate euthanasia is the humane course of action.

Cost

In 1994, the CPS trapping program resulted in the capture of 8,983 cats at a cost of approximately \$60,000. It is a labour intensive process but definitely a feasible one.

Other methods of removal

In difficult cases where trapping has not been successful, or where a particularly trap-shy cat remains, other methods of capture are attempted. This usually involves the containment of the cat in an escape-proof area (food is the lure) and then netting of the cat +/- tranquilliser via the food first. This is obviously not ideal as there is the possibility of stress to the cat and injury to the captor. Tranquilliser guns and drop-nets are currently under investigation.

ii) The desex/replacement technique for controlling unowned cat populations

This technique has been suggested and used, particularly in Great Britain (Anon 1982), to address the problem of unowned cat colonies particularly in suburban areas. The technique involves a program of trapping these cats (as they cannot otherwise be handled), desexing them, and then returning them to the colony (they are not rehoused due to temperament). The aim is the control of reproduction within the colony, the presence of the desexed returned cats preventing the entry of new undesexed cats to the colony. Males have sometimes been vasectomised so that mating effectively takes entire females off season. Desexing also reduces some of the problems caused by unowned cats, eg. fighting, spraying.

Although this seems a very sensible and humane approach to the problem there are unfortunately many drawbacks - the most important of these, from our point of view, being the welfare of these cats. Many years ago, the CPS conducted such programs throughout the Melbourne area. We no longer do this because of the following welfare problems encountered:

- These colonies are wholly reliant on the 'cat-feeder' for food. Whilst these people are totally committed to the welfare of their colony, practically we found difficulty with the continuation of food supply particularly as this needs to be 7 days a week. In particular, illness or in some cases, the death of the feeder led to the colony starving for long periods of time. This raises serious welfare considerations for the cats involved.
- After the cats had been trapped once (for desexing) they became 'tray-shy' and would not re-enter a trap. Thus, if the cats became ill, required routine health care procedures (eg. vaccination, worming) or were injured, they could not be caught to be treated and medicated. Because routine vaccination was realistically impossible, disease was a significant problem in these colonies. We encountered several cases where the cat had been involved in a car accident and as a result had a broken leg. These cats could not be caught until they had become so weak they could be netted. This also raises serious welfare considerations.
- In the cases where the cat-feeder had for one reason or another been unable to continue maintenance of the colony, it was very difficult to re-trap these cats for either relocation or euthanasia. Thus, effectively, a colony was without a food source, and there was no means to address the situation.

It is important to comment that the welfare and quality of life that the cat leads is of paramount importance.

For these colonies of cats, although they were fed and had stopped breeding, they were under constant threat from disease, car accidents and human persecution and for many their life span was very short. They became totally reliant on their feeder and if for any reason feeding ceased the threat of starvation quickly became a reality.

In judging the effectiveness of these programs as a technique for controlling unowned cat populations, we found that overall there was little effect. There were several reasons for this:

- the cats were still present in the area and therefore still caused problems:
 - community nuisance;
 - threat to owned cats - fighting, disease spread (FIV); and
 - threat to wildlife (perhaps more important in Australia than Europe).

an ongoing one. In particular new entire males, because of their aggressiveness posed considerable threat to the desexed members of the colony.

- It was necessary to desex the whole colony - if one entire female remained she was sufficient to regenerate the problem.
- The technique is a costly and labour-intensive process - as a welfare society our financial resources are limited and as there were serious welfare concerns, it was decided to apply these resources to more beneficial programs for the overall welfare of cats.

Cost

This technique is both labour intensive, costly and ongoing. Due to this it may be appropriate for isolated colonies but not for all.

Table 3: Cost/labour involved in the desex/replace technique

Based on 150,000 cats (conservative estimate of unowned cats in Melbourne)

<p>INITIAL EXPENDITURE To trap and desex - approx. ½ hr/cat x 2 people If no reproduction in the meantime -</p>	<p>= 75,000 hrs of time x 2 people = 3125 days x 2 people = 10 years (24 hrs/day) x 2 people = 2 x 30 people x 1 yr (8 hrs/day) =\$3,000,000.00</p>
<p>MAINTENANCE - ONGOING COST Cost to feed @ \$5/cat per week - If 20 cats per colony - 1 feeder per colony per week -</p>	<p>= \$750,000.00 per week = \$39 million per year = 7500 colonies = 7500 people x 7 days per week</p>

As cat-lovers we totally understand the need to try to save these cats rather than euthanase them. However, the welfare concerns we encountered led us to the belief that these programs were not the best alternative for their long term welfare.

iii) Hormonal control of unowned cat populations

This is similar in theory to ii) but involves the administration of hormonal medication to prevent breeding rather than surgical sterilisation techniques. Megestrol acetate (Ovarid) is placed in the food source at a dose of 5mg/cat twice weekly. This prevents the female coming into season and thereby becoming pregnant.

Advantages

- Cats do not become trap-shy;
- the drug also increases appetite so if cats need to be trapped, they are hungrier and more likely to go into traps; and
- the drug also lowers levels of aggression and improves the handling ability of these cats.

Disadvantages

- There is restricted access to the drug (S4 rating);
- the control of the population is entirely dependent on the continued administration of the drug thus totally reliant on:
 - feeder
 - cats eating the food with the correct dosage; and
- there is the risk of uterine infection with long term administration.

MEASUREMENT

There is still much to be learned about the ecology of unowned cat colonies particularly in relation to reinvasion and regeneration. Therefore to determine the effectiveness of a trapping program measurements of unowned cat populations (numbers, coat length, age, sex, size) should be taken when the program begins and progress monitored at regular intervals. This will enable the success of individual programs to be assessed as well as providing useful information on unowned cat ecology.

CONCLUSION

With the recent introduction of legislation regarding cat management in Victoria and South Australia as well as increasing community expectation that unowned cat colonies be addressed, it is inevitable that local governments will become progressively more involved in the practical management of this problem. It is hopefully comforting to know that the CPS has been dealing with this on a daily basis for many years and has developed considerable expertise in these techniques. CPS is currently running 'hands on' training services to local government officers (many of the subtleties of cat trapping are not appreciated until field experience is obtained) and welcomes any enquiries about dealing with unowned cat colonies.

REFERENCES

- Anon. 1982. *Feral Cats: Suggestions for Control*, Booklet produced by Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW), South Mimms, Potters Bar, Herts, England.
- Anon. 1992. Ray Morgan Research Centre Survey on Pet Ownership
- Fitzgerald, B.M. 'Family Felidae', in *New Zealand Mammals*, B. Moore (ed) Zoology Depts, Kyushu & Qld. Univ. & CSIRO Div. of Wildlife and Ecology, a series of collaborative papers on socio-ecology of feral cats in Yathong Nature Reserve, 1987-1990.
- Huxley/Greenwood L. 1990. *Population Densities and Control Implications of a Study of Urban Cats in Melbourne*, Ch. 3, PhD Thesis, Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands, Victoria.
- Jones, E. and Coman, B., 1982. 'Ecology of the Feral Cat, *Felis cati* (L), in South-Eastern Australia, 111 Home-ranges and population ecology in semi arid N.W. Victoria', *Australian Wildlife Research* 9, 409-20.
- Matheson 1944. 'Domestic Cats as a Factor in Urban Ecology', *Journal of Animal Ecology*, 13: 130
- Paton, D. 1994. *Ecology of Cats in South Australia and testing possible methods of control*, Annual Progress Report, Australian Native Conservation Agency.
- Rees, P. 1982. *The Ecological Distribution of Feral Cats*, PhD Thesis, University of Bradford. UK.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carole Webb BVSc (Hons),
Cat Protection Society of Victoria,
PO Box 257,
GREENSBOROUGH Vic 3088
Telephone: (03) 9434 7155
Facsimile: (03) 9432 0472

Carole Webb has been a practising veterinarian for the past 17 years, dealing with cats only. She has her own feline practice in Melbourne and joined the CPS as veterinarian, 10 years' ago. Since this time, she has established a feline practice for CPS at the Society, reorganised and renovated the shelter section and actively lobbied for effective and humane legislative measures to address the cat problem. In 1987, she became the Society's senior veterinarian and in 1990, the Executive Director and is now responsible for the Society's overall operation. She has a deep love and respect for the feline species, extensive experience in cat welfare issues and management and has been involved in media and educational programs on responsible cat ownership.

[UAM 95 Index page](#)