

# Cats: are they pests?

Cats are large predators compared to most of our New Zealand native birds. They are great hunters, and they will eat even large birds like kiwi, kakapo and takahe.

## Why cats can be pests

Cats eat native birds, invertebrates and lizards. In the 1940's, cats wiped out most forest birds and at least two types of seabird from Mangere Island where they were taken to try to control rabbits.



Hunting cat. Photo: DOC

## But my cat is a pet, not a pest!...

Wild cats are more of a problem than pet cats, but pet cats can still kill native birds, lizards and insects. Put a bell on your cat and try to keep them inside as much as possible to decrease the chances of them killing native animals. Cats should be well looked after and not left to hunt for themselves.

## Why are cats in New Zealand?

Cats were brought to New Zealand with people as pets. They were also put into the wild back in the 1800's to try to deal with rabbit and pest problems.



Feral cat paw print. Photo: Jon Anda



Cat dropping. Photo: DOC