

SENSIBLE PETS FOR AUSTRALIA

Some people may not like this story; here it is anyway.

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Some cat keepers believe that it is only natural for cats and foxes to take our fauna as they fill an ecological niche. Is it an ecological niche for cats to push our lyrebirds towards extinction? They are already doing this to our dunnarts, hopping mice, bandicoots and other small marsupials and various other native creatures. How much fauna do cats kill? We don't know exactly however, there are some sound figures on what cats can and do kill. So for anybody to say that we need more research into cats so that we can find out is just nonsense.

Sunday Mail Adelaide 13/08/2000 Kellie-Jo Lamb an environmental scientist with Western Mining Company, showed a cat which contained:- 24 painted dragons, 3 bearded dragons, 2 earless dragons, 3 striped skinks, 1 zebra finch and 1 mouse. All but one was a native animal. That's over 10 000 native animals per year. If cats take only one quarter of this estimate it is a national disaster; but **you** can be fined for having **one** native animal.

Those who knew [Melbourne in the 60s and 70s](#) would remember the skinks on the paling fences in the summer. There were finches, Grey fantails, Restless flycatchers, Pardalotes, Silvereyes, Willy wagtails and Pee wees (mud/magpie larks). The Willy wagtails and Pee wees always nested within view of each other, a kind of symbiotic relationship; now we hardly ever see either and seldom do the red robins visit us anymore.

Poison garden sprays are taking their toll on much wildlife but cats are also a disaster. Keeping a cat in at night does not help much at all. In the daytime cats kill the remaining lizards and native birds. Cats and foxes have already done the damage at night and, the only bell that will stop a cat from killing wildlife is a cowbell.

Keep a native animal without a licence and you can be fined. Export one out of the country and you can go to prison; even if it is not rare or has been bred in captivity. Cats are bred indiscriminately and you don't even have to account for the kittens; but we must account for all native animals that we breed. Why? What is wrong with native animals? Instead of cats, should we not be breeding native animals by the millions? Instead of a licence for native animals, why not a licence for the exotics? Don't you think we have it all back to front?

We now know how to breed most native animals. You can feed your Bilby on cat food and birdseed and we could have them as pets across Australia. We should breed the mini kangaroos like Pademelons, Potoroos and Tamar wallabies.

[The Northern Quoll](#) *Dasyurus hallucatus* **will** become extinct on the mainland from eating poisonous cane toads that have invaded the Northern Territory. The public must catch quolls and breed as many as possible. We must learn fast, these quolls are different to the other quolls; the males only live for about a year; this makes it even more urgent. **If the public don't help the Northern Quoll we may never see them on the mainland again.** Remember they are our quolls they belong to the citizens of Australia; not the government.

Why not breed up the [Cassowary](#) numbers before the gene pool gets too narrow. We should have thousands in stock for when we rid the rainforest of the feral pigs. At no cost to the government we could breed up the numbers of many types of native animals. Government departments could then focus on the feral animals like; [cats, foxes, pigs, rabbits, fire ants, gambusia, cane toads](#) and [Clear Fell Woodchip Companies](#) etc.

We Australians are far too out of touch with our wildlife. When given a pet, a child will love any animal. What better pets, than a beautiful pair of Potoroos or Pademelons to mow your back lawn?

Not all Australian animals will make good pets, but there are many that would. We must however, make sure that by law, we don't get drongos out there breeding them into pink poodles. We must preserve their genetic integrity. If we do that we will always have a viable gene pool for times of disaster in the bush. A minimum cage or pen size would be a 'legal must'.

Some Australians don't want us to breed these animals back into their millions because some are rare and they'd prefer us to keep cats; like for example, Hugh Wirth of the RSPCA. It takes all types i guess.