

grade
4-6

The Ferals

This is a resource developed by Bellarine Catchment Network. Learn about some of the feral plants and animals that are taking over our natural areas.

For more information, email info@bcn.org.au



The Ferals

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When Europeans first arrived in Australia, they brought plants and animals with them that now thrive in the wild. These 'exotic' plants and animals have been introduced into Australia from overseas and take over native animals habitat, compete with what they eat and can prey on them also. These invasive species are a major threat to Australia's native wildlife and habitat diversity.

Most feral animals are either exotic animals that came here accidentally, domestic animals like pigs that have gone wild, or animals like rabbits that were brought here to control other animals or for recreational use. Feral animals like the red fox and feral cats have caused the extinction of at least 19 animals in Australia.

In Australia, the list of feral plants, or weeds, has grown to more than 2700. Weeds can damage local ecosystems, force out native plants and reduce biodiversity.

Some key actions to stop the spread of ferals:

1. Learn how to remove weeds
2. Plant native plants in your backyard
3. Use tree guards to protect your plants
4. Stop weeds and seeds leaving your garden
5. De-sex your cats & rabbits
6. Care for pets and keep them indoors
7. Clean your shoes and tyres between use
8. Keep compost away from mice/rats
9. Use a rabbit proof fence
10. Remove rubbish and debris to stop rabbits creating homes

the web-footed native water rat (rakali) is often confused with the black rat but is a completely different animal



What weed am I?

Watch our
video here

Watch our video by clicking the icon to the right or go into your backyard. Draw an example of the 3 weed species and then write out some basic info about them. This can be the start of your very own weed identification guide and as you learn more, you can add to your list.

name:

unique feature:

where does it come from:

what can you do:

name:

unique feature:

where does it come from:

what can you do:

name:

unique feature:

where does it come from:

what can you do:

Rabbit record

[click here for tips](#)

In 1859, 13 rabbits from Europe were released in Winchelsea which is a short drive from Geelong. We now have 200 million rabbits in Australia. Over the next week, record the rabbits that you see either in a nearby park or reserve or think about the times you have seen rabbits and list that record. They are active at dusk, just as it starts to get dark. At the bottom of the page, write out some ways that rabbits can cause harm.

date:

time:

location:

number of rabbits:

what impacts do rabbits have on the environment? Write your answer below

Match the animal

Cut out all of the shapes below, sort them and paste them onto a spare piece of paper. Match the native animal to a similar feral animal (look at their size, what they eat (prey), and where they live (habitat use)). Then, for each pair, write out what makes them similar. They might eat the same food, use the same habitat or be similar in size or animal type.

native

dingo

kangaroo

quoll

bandicoot

noisy miner

introduced

indian myna

feral cat

rabbit

deer

fox

Design the worst feral

On this page, start to describe the worst feral animal you can imagine. In the boxes provided, write or draw the different features and adaptations of your imagined animal. On the following page, you get to bring it to real life!

size

number of legs

number of arms

**how does it
move? Eg. flies**

habitat

what does it eat?

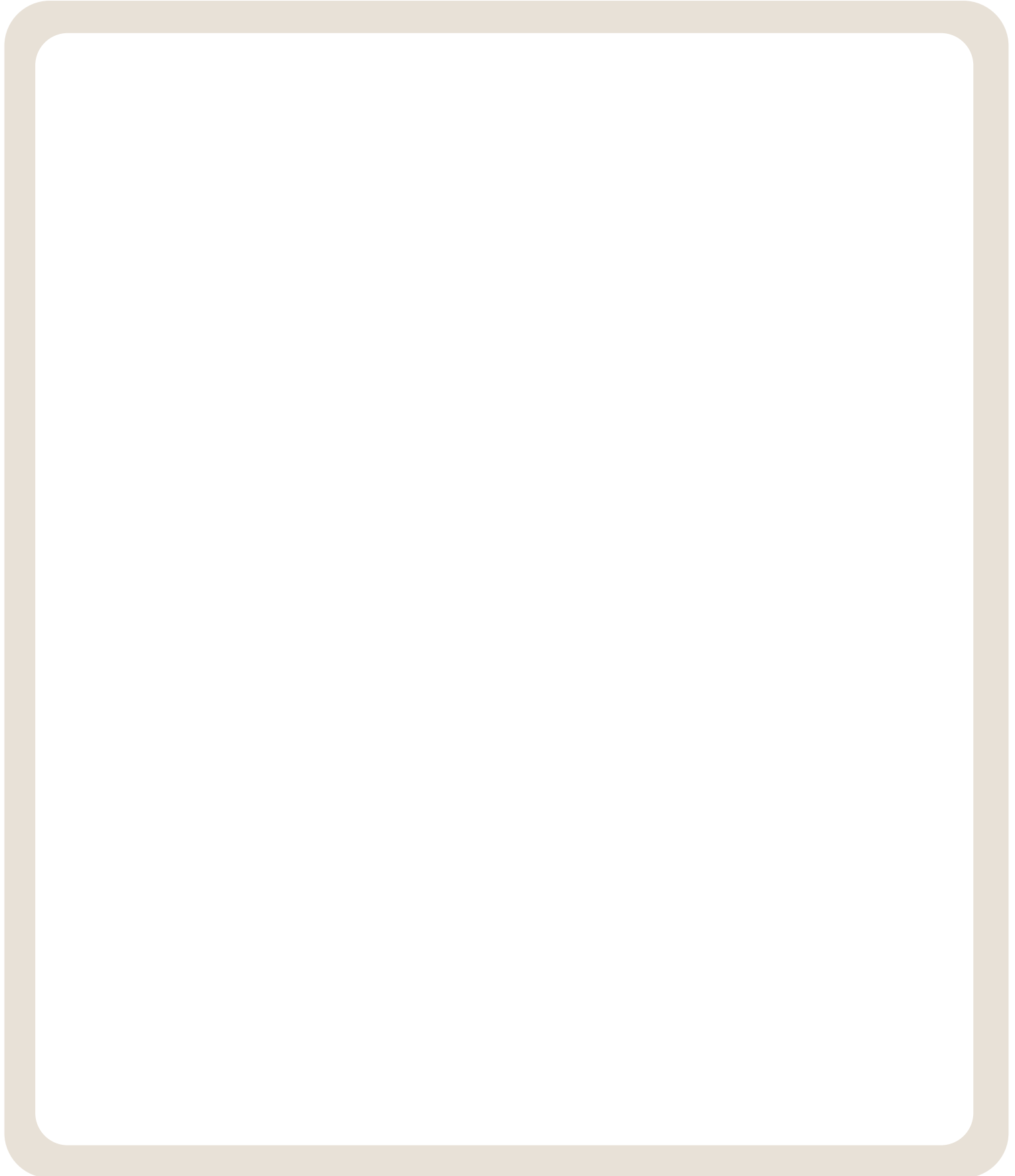
**how many babies can
it have at once?**

life span

**how does it get
its food?**

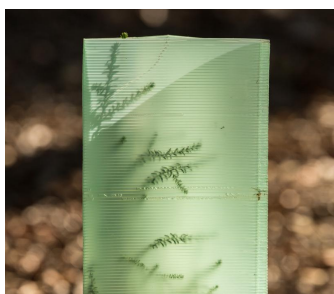
Design the worst feral

Using scrap paper, felt or fabric scraps, leaves, sticks or using pens and pencils, bring your feral to life. Try and create the features you described on the previous page (example: it has four legs, eating bugs).



Feral bingo

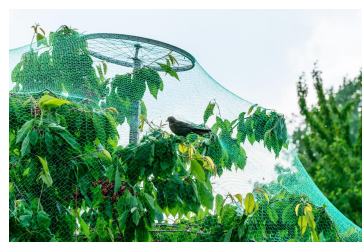
Go for a walk in your backyard, your neighbourhood, park or nature reserve and try and spot these methods of feral animal control. Tick them off in the squares provided when you spot them.



tree guard ☐



rabbit fence ☐



fruit netting ☐



closed compost ☐



chicken coop ☐



traps ☐

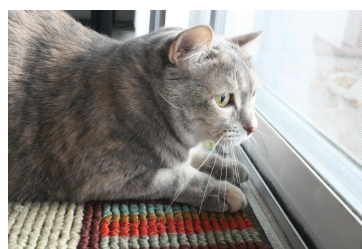
CAUTION
Feral Cat
Control Program

Pest animal capture cages
are set remotely in the sand
dunes for the control of feral
cats.

signs ☐



weeding ☐



indoor cats ☐



planting natives ☐



picking up rubbish ☐



learning about ferals ☐

Feral felines

To see the impact that one feral cat can have in a natural area, count the cats in the pyramid and figure out how many animals they eat every day and then, every year.

How many cats are in the pyramid?

.....

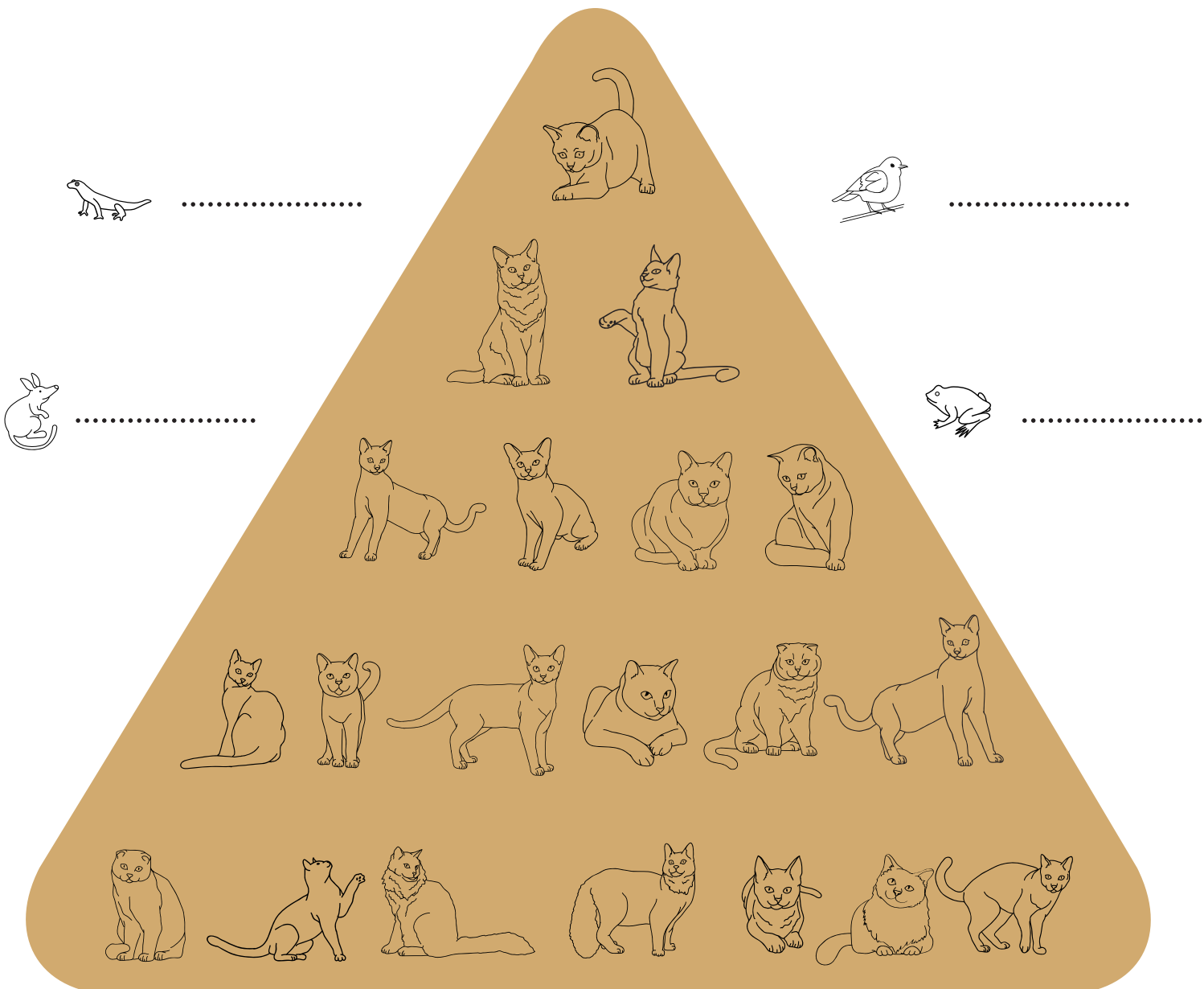
A cat can eat 4 animals a day. Multiply the number of cats in the pyramid with 4 (cats x 4)

.....

How many animals are eaten per year?
Multiply your answer above with 365 days

.....

Next to each native animal, list how we can save these animals from feral cats



Evaluation

What activity was your favourite?

What are some common introduced pests?

Why can they be so bad for our environment?

How can we protect our environment from these ferals?

Name

Teacher

Grade

Date