Keep it or Kill it? Considering the welfare of feral, stray, and companion domestic cats (Felis catus).

Mark J Farnworth

- Arrived circa 1770
- 48% of households now own a cat
- 1.4 million owned cats
- *~14-75% unowned cats

What are we talking about?
- This presentation will:
  - Consider how attitudes differ around cats, and why.
  - Address attitudes towards the management of the cat population
  - Consider where cats are to be found and how this may relate to behaviour

Applying behaviour
- Feral cats: increasing baiting and trapping
- Stray cats: temperament testing, rehoming, disease spread
- Companion cats: bedding preferences, enrichment, veterinary care
- Predation: Feral>stray>companion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Incapacitate</th>
<th>Pest</th>
<th>Kill</th>
<th>Unwanted</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rat</td>
<td>0.8 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>0.8 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>1 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>0.8 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The results in which these groups of animals consider right non-exhaustive mammal sense, to which include the animals found in captions. Both were represented within number. Rat and snake were determined by the difference between lower and upper quartile value below the words 'various' among animal groups for the rats.

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Defining Cats

Feral cats: Unowned, not provided for by humans

Stray cats: Unowned or lost, provided for by humans

Companion (pet) cats: owned, provided for by humans

Where are the cats?

- Stray cat presence is positively correlated with measures of social deprivation
- Education is important for improving human and animal experiences

Stray cats

- Stray cats are particularly problematic given the range of interested parties.

Within Auckland there appears to be no decline in population growth
Life as a stray is less than ideal.
Where are the feral cats?

What can we explore?

• What aspects of owner attachment increase transition from owned to stray to feral?

• Are there behavioural and genetic predispositions in cats (e.g. DRD4) that make them more or less desirable?

• Are these ‘three populations’ simply one population?

• How do we exploit cat behaviour for different outcomes?