The predatory impact of feral cats Felis catus and their control on Dassen Island

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The predatory impact of feral cats Felis catus and their control on Dassen Island

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Abstract:

Feral cats Felis catus on Dassen Island, South Africa, ate mostly birds, primarily chicks of the jackass penguin Spheniscus demersus in March/April 1985. At least nine per cent of the penguin chicks produced annually were killed by cats. Subadult cats (<3 kg), ate a wide range of prey, but larger cats ate only penguins, rabbits Oryctolagus cuniculus and mice Mus musculus. As a result of intensified cat predation on penguins, and the cats’ probable prevention of breeding of small, colonial sea birds, it was decided to eliminate, or at least control, them. During a seven-day intensive hunting programme in March/April 1985, some 70 cats were killed. Fewer than 10 individuals were thought to survive. Control operations are being continued, the aim being total eradication.

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Jogahara T, Ogura G, Sasaki T et al (2003) Food habits of cats (Felis catus) in forests and villages and their impacts on native animals in the Yambaru area, northern part of Okinawa Island, Japan. Mamm Science 43:29–37Google Scholar. Jones E (1977) Ecology of the feral cat. Feral cats, Felis catus, inhabiting San Clemente Island, California, are both predators and competitors of multiple sympatric endemic species. To improve our understanding and management of these invasive predators, we used GPS-equipped radiocollars to track 11 (6F:5M) cats for a total of 3,108 days, resulting in 15,419 GPS locations. Since most birds were scavenged the impact of cat [Show full abstract] predation on the bird population was insignificant, while it had an effect on rabbit numbers which may have been ecologically important. The cats' ecological role was influenced strongly by their behaviour.-from Author. Numbers of Felis catus on Dassen Island increased from 20-25 in May 1979 to 37-50 in June 1980. The feral domestic cat (Felis catus) is a predatory invasive species with documented negative effects on native wildlife. The issue of appropriate and acceptable feral cat management is a matter of contentious debate in cities and states across the United States due to concerns for wildlife conservation, cat welfare, and public health. Despite the increasing availability of scientific literature on feral cats and their impact on wildlife, the issue of feral cat management is principally influenced by the opposing interests and beliefs of passionate stakeholder groups. (2004) predicted effective cat control through annual spaying/neutering of at least 75% of the population.