

Media release

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CAT TRACKER PROJECT REVEALS MOVEMENTS OF DOMESTIC CATS IN THE CRADLE COAST REGION

Earlier this year Cradle Coast Authority's (CCA) Natural Resource Management team, in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Biosecurity Tasmania), tracked the movements of 11 domestic cats in the Cradle Coast region to discover the size of a domestic cat's home range, or the area a cat uses on a regular basis.

The project aimed to understand the movements of domestic cats in semi-urban areas and assist owners in making informed decisions about their cat's safety and welfare.

It involved placing a light-weight GPS tracker, attached to a harness, on the cat for nine days. According to CCA's Regional Cat Management Coordinator, Dr Margot Oorebeek, the data has now been analysed and the results have been quite a surprise for some cat owners.

"Many cat owners believe that their cat never leaves their property, but the data is showing otherwise."

The cats tracked by the project were selected from urban, urban-edge and rural areas across the Cradle Coast region. The results show that the median size of a cat's home range is 1.4 hectares, which covers around 12 neighbouring properties in an urban area such as Ulverstone or Devonport. Rural cats travelled further afield than urban cats, with one such cat, Ollie, having a home range of seven hectares, the largest home range in the project.

The project also showed that cats do not mind crossing roads. "Cats regularly risk one of their nine lives crossing the road". said Dr Oorebeek. "How often a cat crosses a road is dependent on how many roads there are in the cat's home range, but on average urban cats crossed three roads a day."

One rural cat shocked his owners by regularly wandering 300 meters up or down a busy country road to visit the neighbours.

The full cat tracker report is available on the Cradle Coast website. (www.cradlecoast.com/cat-tracker/)

This research was approved by the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (project number 20261) and the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Animal Ethics Committee (project number 15/2019-20).



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CCA is jointly owned by the eight Councils of western and north-western Tasmania, to help them achieve regional outcomes and maintain strong local government, by working together.

