

# Indigenous Rangers integrate old and new technologies to manage cats on their lands

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# CATS

- First documented in the desert in the 1890s
- Replaced declining mammals in the diet of desert Aboriginal people
- Some communities still eat feral cats





# Indigenous Rangers are controlling cats to protect threatened species:

- Black-footed Rock-wallaby
- Bilby
- Great Desert Skink
- Declining Top End mammals





Rangers use a variety  
of techniques for Cat  
Control

But **Tracking** is  
integral to the success  
of all techniques



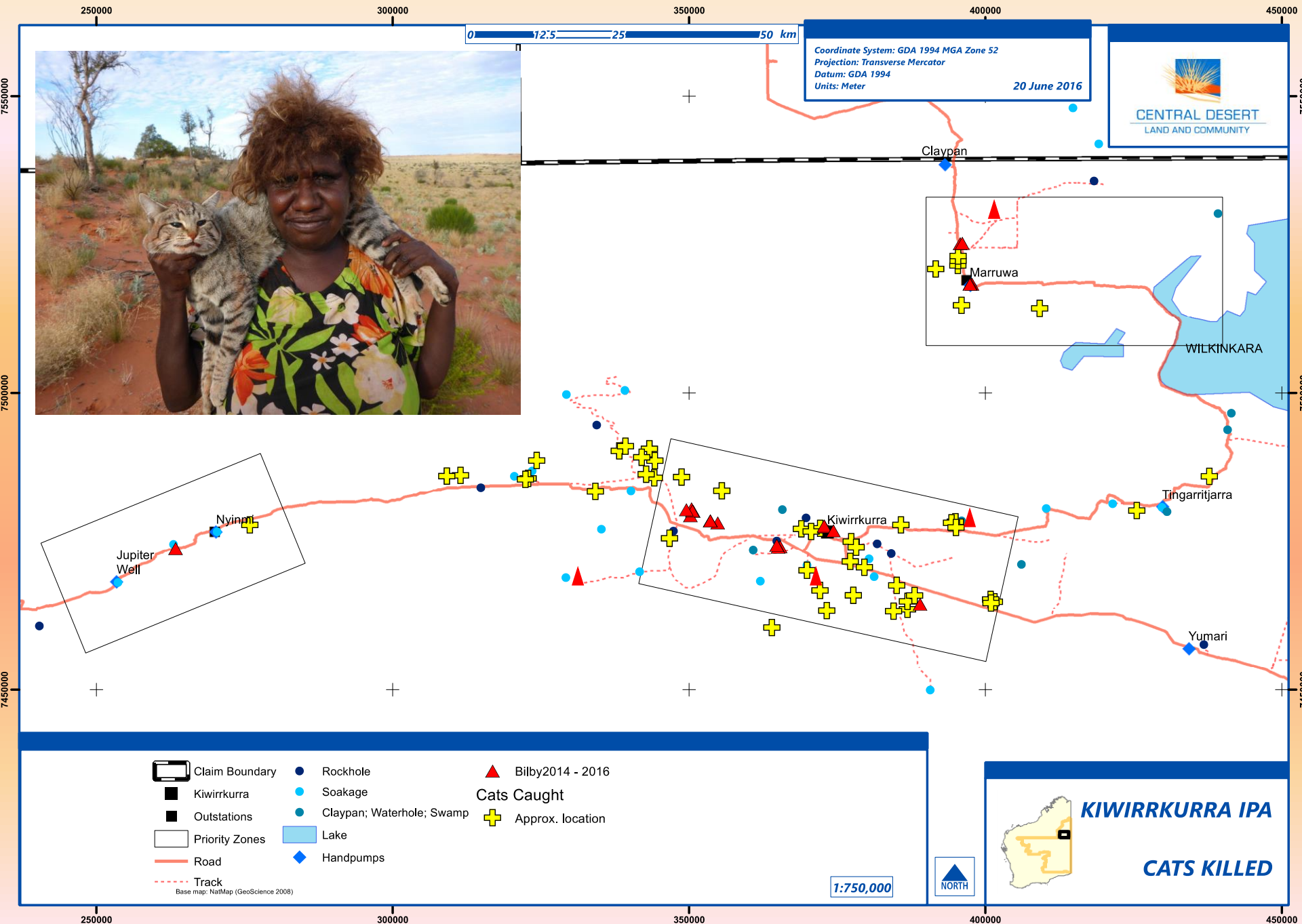


# Cat Hunting on the Kiwirrkurra IPA

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- Traditional tracking only method used
- Reimbursement for cats killed during independent hunting
- Supported cat hunting trips to threatened species sites during Ranger Work





# Cat Hunting on the Kiwirrkurra IPA

100 cats killed  
since 2014



Bilby Sign

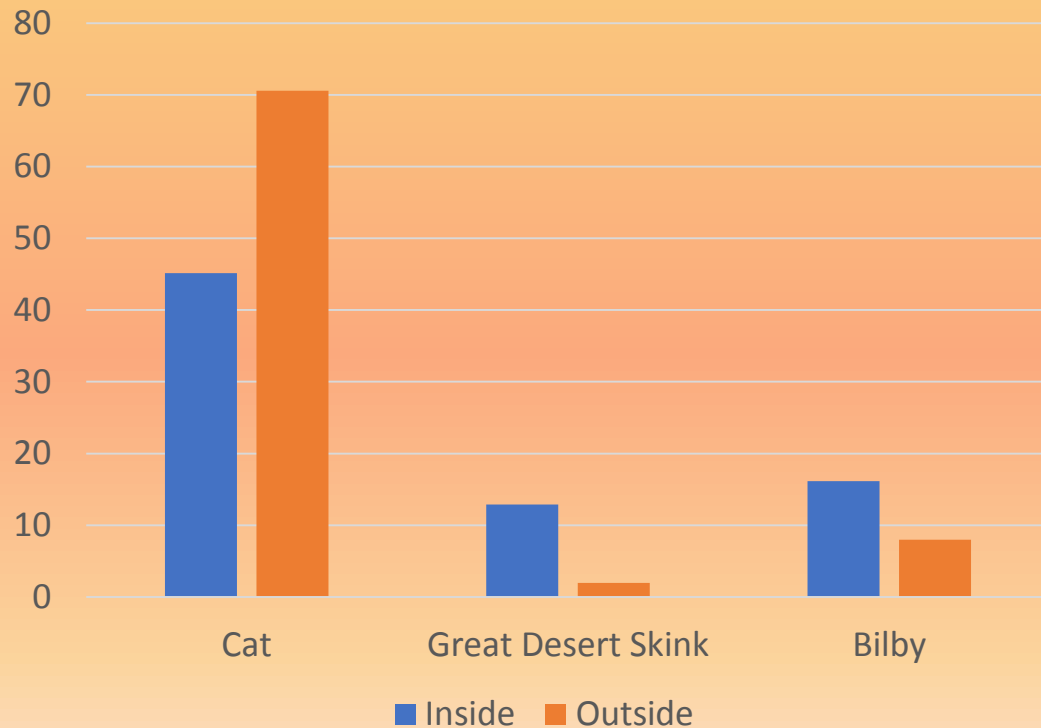


Cat killed

50km

# Kiwirrkurra Bilby Blitz Survey - 80 sites in April 2018

% sites with cats and threatened species inside and outside cat hunting zone



Cameras monitor Cat Predation Pressure at Bilby Burrows



**Low frequency of cat visitation to bilby burrows**

= 0.5 cats per 100 trap nights

Tanami Desert = 6.9 cats per 100 trap nights

# Details of cats captured during Ranger Work March-June 2016

Date	Tracking time (mins)	Number of trackers	Person-minutes	Distance from start (metres)	Cat Gender	Cat Body Mass (kg)
10/03/16	53	3	159	1960	M	4.2
14/03/16	30	3	90		F	3.2
9/04/16	30	4	120	883	F	3.5
21/04/16	53	3	159	1126	F	3.5
22/04/16	36	2	72	276	M	4.4
22/04/16	30	2	60	3212	M	4.5
23/04/16	65	4	260		M	5.1
24/04/16	39	2	78	377	M	4.5
15/05/16	60	2	120	620	M	2.2
4/06/16	75	3	225	2163	M	4.5
<b>Mean</b>	<b>47 min</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>134 pers-min</b>	<b>1327m</b>		<b>4.0kg</b>

Average time to catch a cat = 47 minutes



# Cat Control to protect Great Desert Skinks at Newhaven



Territory NRM funding supported engagement of Indigenous Rangers from Nyirripi Community to conduct cat control



## Project involved:

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- Hunting and trapping cats
- Monitoring great desert skinks, mulgara and predators with cameras at burrows
- Annual burrow surveys along transects
- Predator scat analysis

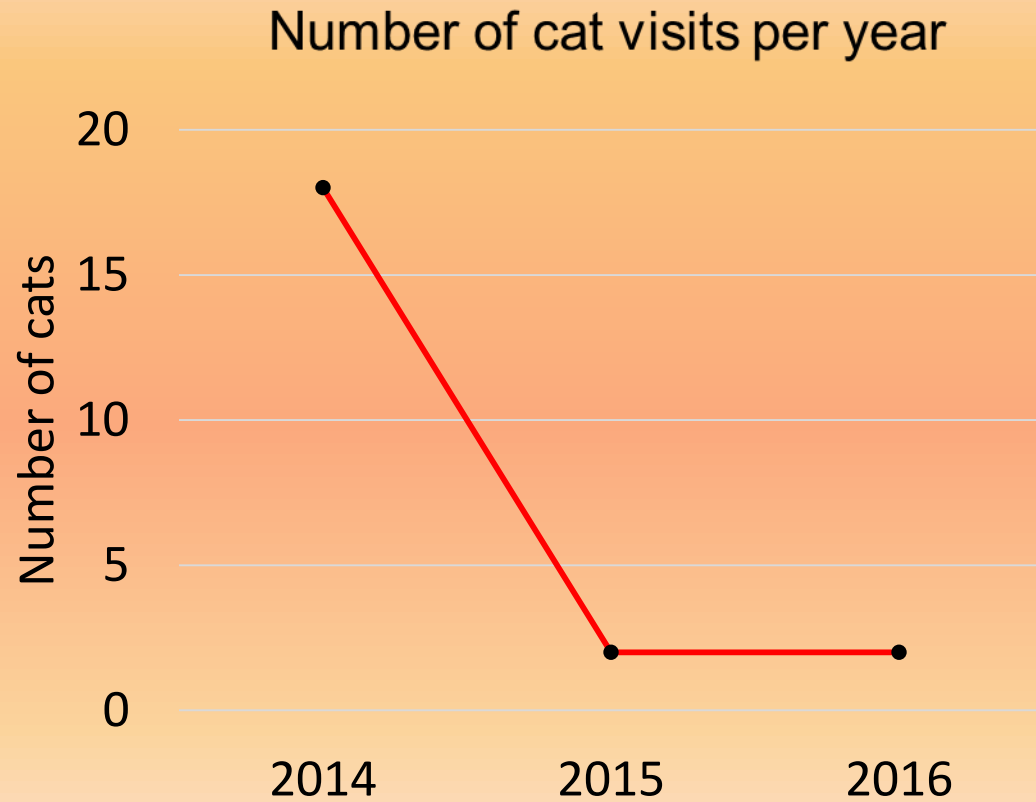


# 5 different cats hunting at burrows in 1 km<sup>2</sup> control area in first month of the project





- 5 cats removed from 1 km<sup>2</sup> over 12 months
- Gradually expanded control area to 10 km<sup>2</sup>
- 27 cats removed from buffer zone over 2 year period prevented recolonisation





# Cat Camps and Awards

- Ranger to Ranger peer mentoring
- Introduce new techniques
- Reinforce importance of humaneness and good Animal Ethics
- Sparks healthy competition between Ranger Groups



# West Island Cat Eradication Project, Gulf of Carpentaria 2011-2018

4 kittens introduced to 13,000 ha island in 1994





# Sea Rangers using Felixer Grooming Traps



- New technology from Ecological Horizons
- **Highly target specific**
- Relies on Grooming behaviour rather than hunger
- Can be left in the field for months at a time
- Still need good Trackers for optimum placement

- Good Tracking skills are integral to the success of most cat control techniques
- Indigenous Rangers are making significant contributions to cat control projects
- Supporting Indigenous Rangers do cat control work gives Tracking a new relevance and helps keep these skills alive

