

Nuisance Cats

Cat Act 2011

The main purpose of the *Cat Act* is to encourage responsible pet ownership by ensuring cats are registered, sterilised and microchipped. There are limited provisions within the Act to address cats that may be a considered nuisance because they roam, attack wildlife or create a disturbance in or around a property.

Under the provision of the *Cat Act 2011*, the City may seize cats if they are reported to be on private property without the consent of the owner/occupiers, however the trapping of cats will only be considered where other deterrent methods have failed. The City will assist you to reduce the impact of nuisance cat behaviour, however we ask that you attempt to initially resolve the situation by following some of the advice in this fact sheet.

Common nuisance behaviours

The following are a number of behaviours which are indicative of what could be termed, nuisance behaviour:

- A stray cat keeps coming into a garden and spraying on outdoor furniture.
- A stray cat defecating in flower beds.
- A stray cat in entering other properties frightening other cats.
- A cat killing wild life in neighbouring gardens, particularly birds.
- A stray cat looking for food.
- A stray cat entering cat flaps.

Common cat behaviour

Cats by nature are predators and are well equipped to catch their prey. Cats will roam their home ranges hunting during the day or night, unless they are restricted to indoors.

Yowling is part of a cat's vocal communication system and is more likely to be due to one of the following two circumstances.

- It is a queen (female cat) in season calling for a mate (tomcat) or the tomcat calling in response to the female cat.
- There are two cats that are in conflict with each other. Part of a cat's defence mechanism is to yell at each other rather than entering into a fight.

Suggested deterrent methods

The following information is provided to enable residents to deter unwanted attendance by cats on their property.

Please be mindful that any actions taken that deliberately injures or harms a cat is not acceptable and such action is deemed to be an offence under the provisions of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

Unwanted cats in your yard

If you know where the cat owner resides, the most effective deterrent method is to speak to the owner of the cat or alternatively place a letter in the mailbox to advise them of the issue and request that they deter their cat from attending your property.

If these measures are not successful, or you don't know where the cat comes from, the following methods may assist you:

- Try spraying the cat with water. If the cat associates its visits with an unpleasant experience it is unlikely to return.

It is important that you do not harm the cat in any way.

- Use a loud sudden noise to startle the cat.
- Use motion activated sprinklers or ultrasonic devices. Motion sensors use infra-red to detect when an animal enters a defined territory. As soon as the cat enters the infra-red field, the sprinkler shoots out a burst of water.

Ultrasonic devices emit a high frequency alarm that cats find annoying.

- Cats have a highly developed sense of smell; scent repellents can be a useful tool. Naturally based products can be helpful and include:

- *Coleus Canina* commonly known as the Scaredy-Cat plant because it emits an odour offensive to cats.
- Lavender
- Rue
- Lemon Thyme

Cats toileting

Cats, as with other animals, may defecate around homes.

The following suggestions may provide some relief:

- Clean the area thoroughly with a 10% solution consisting of biological washing powder mixed with warm water – (washing powder that contains enzymes such as Protease or Lipase is recommended). Wash the area thoroughly, allow it to dry, and spray the area lightly with a surgical spirit spray. It is advisable to conduct a test patch on the furniture prior to spraying to ensure that it does not discolour it.
- If you find that the cat returns to the same spot you can place a small piece of cardboard with some dried cat food glued to it at that location. Cats will not toilet where there is food.
- For protecting gardens or flower beds, common household items may be effective, including:
 - Rue, either planted or sprinkled in its dry form
 - Orange and lemon peel along with Cayenne Pepper
 - Coffee Grounds
 - Pipe Tobacco
 - Lavender Oil
 - Lemon Grass Oil
 - Citronella Oil
 - Peppermint Oil
 - Eucalyptus Oil
 - Mustard Oil
- Covering the soil with a heavy mulch often deters cats as they don't like the texture of mulch on the pads of their feet.
- Cat Scat is a product which consists of plastic mats that are pressed into the soil. Each mat has flexible plastic spikes and is cut into four pieces. The spikes are harmless to cats and other animals, but discourage digging.

Cats coming indoors

The following suggestions may assist to deter cats from entering a property:

- Purchase a cat flap that has an electronic release. It will come with a device that can be placed on your cat's collar therefore the cat flap will only open for your cat.
- Additionally, if your cat is micro-chipped you may purchase a microchip activated cat flap that operates from your cat's existing micro-chip number.

Cat welfare

If you believe a cat is injured, or in distress in any way, you may need to either attempt to capture the cat and take it to a veterinary surgery, or, if possible, locate the owner.

Further information

For further information please contact Community Safety on **9400 4000**.

Alternatively, you may wish to visit the City's Customer Service Centre, or view the City's website for further information at joondalup.wa.gov.au