[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Attached please find my Submission to the Deveopment of the SA Biodiversity Act.

Yours faithfully

Christine Pierson

[redacted]

Submission to the Development of the SA Biodiversity Act
From Christine Pierson

Cat Behaviourist and Cat Consultant
Former Councillor Norwood Payneham and St Peters Council
Former Member State Government Cat Consultative Committee to the Dog and Cat Management Board
Former TAFE instructor in Cat Management to Council staff and the public
Former teacher Dip KTC

13/2/2024

Identifying the main threats to native wildlife

Obviously before addressing ways to reduce the threats to native wildlife, we need to admit what the main threats are.

Biggest threats…

- Land and vegetation clearance
- Destruction of habitat
- Tree felling
- Wood-chipping
- Deliberate breeding of cats and carnivorous animals, such as dingoes, should be immediately banned
- Use of baiting – both direct killing and eating the baited victims
- Use of traps
- Use of insecticides and poisons

- Land use for breeding of animals for meat and animal products
- Discarded human rubbish (plastic, broken glass, sharp lids and tins, poisonous waste, cooked bones etc)
- Vehicles on roads resulting in road kill
- Old mines not filled in
- Fire - both bushfires and use of fire for vegetation clearance
- People displaying disregard for ALL species of animals

Addressing and rectifying the threats

Tighten up controls on land and vegetation which is being cleared and put pressure on Parliament to enforce laws to reduce clearance of habitat.

Obviously if animals have their natural habitat, they have their protection from predators and sustenance from the food supply.

I have studied animals of many kinds and as long as they have their natural habitat they can live perfectly well with predatory animals.

Examples

Birds, for example can build nests on wavy branches where cats cannot go, so they are safe.

The problem arises when the cats are killed and the rat population, without the main controlling predator, increases. Rats can go on the wavy branches and therefore eat the eggs and the fledglings.

Provided the ecosystem is not thrown out of balance by human interference the resident native animals and the resident predator animals build up a rapport and learn to live

with each other. This is a proven fact; I have seen it in operation. Actually native fauna living with cats in undisturbed habitat survive and flourish much better than where the cats are killed or removed, as the void created is quickly filled with new cats which are unfamiliar with the native animals, and this is where predation increases.

It is pointless to argue against this as I have seen it with my own eyes, and I have undertaken studies on it.

Example

I have seen multiple cats and multiple native animals living together for years, with virtually no dead native animals. With the introduction of a new cat, almost immediately, a dead bird or animal is found.

So removal and killing of cats does not save native wildlife. It doesn't matter how many cats are killed or removed as there is NEVER 100% success. The remaining cats, with no competition from the ones that are no longer there, will breed and their high reproduction rate will ensure that within a very short time, numbers will be restored and actually increase.

And these cats will be a far greater risk as the resident native wildlife will have no rapport with them, and not be so wary of them.

Furthermore the ecosystem will be completely thrown out of balance and, during the immediate drop in cat numbers, rat, mouse and rabbit populations, with their short gestation periods (much shorter than cats) explode and add to the danger to the native fauna. Eating them, their eggs and their food.

This excess of rodents and introduced mammals also provides a huge food supply for the cats which also increases the survival rate of the kittens. Killing the rats, mice and rabbits is also pointless, as the vacuum effect will also apply to all these species. More rats, mice and rabbits will quickly fill the spaces created If the resident ones are removed.

Clearly, human interference with cats is not saving native wild life – it is exacerbating the demise of the wildlife.

Please read and understand the implications of the Vacuum Effect.

For cats in populated areas there is only one method of control that has proved to show tangible evidence of success in reducing cat numbers, cat-related problems and impact on wildlife: And that is the Desex and Return to Home program, pioneered and operated by C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Incorporated in South Australia.

C.A.T.S. has organised the desexing and return of 135,000 cats and has had a significant impact on the population of felines, preventing the birth of literally millions of kittens.

Indeed, within its first 5 years of operation the number of felines destroyed at the main shelter in Adelaide dropped to virtually half: From around 8,000 p.a. to 4107.

C.A.T.S. studies have been on-going for over 35 years and the success is well known. The program is supported by the wider population as it works, when all the other approaches have failed to produce any desirable results.

The work of C.A.T.S. involves a two-part method: Desexing the cats to prevent breeding and cat-related problems and returning the cats to their homes to hold their territory and prevent new cats from infiltrating.

There is no such thing as a cat free zone in an open system which sustains cats. Removal, killing and confinement of one lot of cats simply results in a new lot of cats moving into the vacated spaces to breed and restore, usually increase, the original numbers. (C.A.T.S. can be contacted on email - animalsassistant@outlook.com)

- Deliberate breeding of cats and other carnivorous animals should be immediately banned

- Stop the indiscriminate distribution of poisons, especially 1080 and PAPP. These deadly poisons need to be banned immediately. These poisons are killing and causing immeasurable harm to the wildlife, through both ingesting the poison or the poisoned victims. Just investigate the studies which have been done, for example on owls, and see the fatal and devastating effects on these creatures. The poisons are also seeping into the water supply and poisoning the animals as well.
- Native animals are being caught in leg-hold traps, cages where they have been frantic and severely injured from bashing around the cages, some dying, and callously shot by those out for blood sports.

All these diabolical actions are causing loss of life to the endangered wildlife. It needs to be stopped.

- Education is required to reduce the obsession with spreading insecticides and poisons for farming and better practices encouraged for less dangerous practices.
- Incentives need to be made available for farmers to get out of the rut they are in with meat production and to assist them in changing over to plant based foods, and other forms of income, such as carbon credits, and solar power. Breeding animals for meat production is also polluting the environment and causing climate change endangering all life, including native.
- The appalling rubbish dumping of dangerous waste in open tips needs to be addressed. Animals are eating food scraps mixed with plastic, broken glass, sharp tins, cooked bones, and all manner of poisonous substances. All tips should be covered securely with earth immediately after each load has been dumped. In addition residents should be made aware that when they throw out their rubbish to think carefully about what

impact this is going to have on the wildlife when it is dumped in the open. Also, roadside tips where animals have access to the contents are an on-going danger.

- Roads have always been a major threat to native wildlife and I was sickened by the dead animals along the roads when I was living in the NE pastoral station country, when school teaching. The death toll from this is increasing by the day with the roadsides littered with the bodies of the dead animals. Other animals, like wedge tail eagles, feeding on the carcasses, are also being struck by vehicles adding to the carnage. Worse than the ones killed are the ones that are injured and slowly die in agony as they struggle to get away from the roadside, and nobody sees them to at least put them out of their misery.

Far more needs to be done to make the roads less likely to be death traps for animals.

- It is horrifying that thousands of open mines are allowed to be left in this dangerous state where native animals are continually falling into them to slowly die of thirst and starvation. Nothing seems to even be mentioned about this danger to the wildlife and this is unacceptable. There should be laws passed that all unused mines are to be filled and inspected.
- The sickening use of fire to clear unwanted scrub is abhorrent. How many millions of animals, native and otherwise have been killed and worse still, burned and left to suffer from the burns? Also, bushfires are nearly all started by the human species. Severe punishment and imprisonment need to be enforced for anyone causing fires. In fact once a firebug has been convicted they should NEVER be released. Fires kill more native animals than almost anything else. And the dreadful suffering from burns is almost beyond words to describe.

- And to conclude the threats to wildlife: The biggest danger to wildlife of all the things I have already covered, put together, does not match the danger to wildlife that has been caused and is still being caused, by our human race.
- Obviously, we need strict population control and we need to stop immigration. Australia already has far, far too many people.
- My last comments relate to the cruel and completely unacceptable so-called wilding, where poor little native animals are being deliberately bred and “released” meaning “dumped” in areas completely foreign to them, to face the dangers. There is no denying that all suffer and many die. This should be covered under the Animal Welfare Act as unnecessary cruelty to an animal. Equally abhorrent, maybe even worse, is the trapping of native animals and transporting them from their homes, their families and their loved ones, and releasing, again “dumping “them in a strange environment to battle against the odds. Also, all suffer and many die. We know these animals are dying in large percentages in the ones that are dumped, but this is kept quiet.

This cruelty is unacceptable and must be stopped.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to send this Submission.

Yours faithfully

Christine Pierson