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National Geographic: The Secret Life of Cats

By Unknown

And they all lived
happily ever after.
G'night, sweetie.
In an ordinary house
on an ordinary street...
Kyle, are you in bed?
...there lived a cat.
There's my kitty.
You're so sweet.
He had everything
a kitty could want...
Feed the gerbils, honey?
Yeah, Mom.
...affection, food, shelter
and a family who thought
he was the sweetest kitty
in the whole wide world.
But this is
only half the story.
There is another side
to this contented kitty-
one his family
knows nothing about.
Like his ancestors,
he has the heart of a hunter.
Well fed and
showered with affection,
wildness still courses
through his veins.
He may look domesticated,
but look again.
This is a real life Jekyll
and Hyde.
It is the paradox of the cat.
There are more than
in the U.S. alone.
What goes on in
their secret world?
In the next hour you may
learn more about cats
than you ever wanted to know.
It's 8 p.m. Do you know
where your kitty is?
Magnificent,

elusive and deadly,
the cat family species boasts
including the diminutive,
wild cat.
Since prehistoric times,
these cats have wandered
Africa and Europe.
The presumed ancestor of
our domestic cat,
the wild cat might
look like a tabby,
but its canines and claws
are as lethal
as those of any tiger.
In its eyes,
there's a haunting familiarity
How did this ferocious
feline jump the wild track
and make its way
to our milk bowls
and our beds?
Felis catus
set out on the rocky road
to domestication more than
In ancient Egypt,
this hunter extraordinaire
kept rodents from the granaries
In return, he was worshipped
as a symbol of life.
But history would not always
treat our feline friend
so kindly.
Believed to be
the devil's companion,
more than a few were
burned at the stake-
for keeping wrong company.
Luckily, the cat would soon
fall into grace once again,
for his hunting skills proved
invaluable on the open seas.
Cats kept the rat in check.
Near the end of the road,
perhaps the most

steadfast alliance
was forged between the farmer
and his beloved barn cat.
Now, what you got there?
You are a good cat.
Ironically,
the cat's very wildness
was its ticket to
domestication.
There's extra milk for
you tonight.
Now to complete the journey.
...eleven, twelve, thirteen,
fourteen, fifteen...
ready or not here I come.
What lay ahead was one of
the most complex
relationships nature has
ever known-
the remarkable bond
between human and cat.
We were drawn to a creature
we could never fully tame.
Wow! Hey guys
look what I found.
We would overlook
their wildness
and welcome them
into our lives.
When the dust of the eons
finally settled,
we found ourselves inexorably
linked to the cat.
This extraordinary creature
had found a permanent place
in our hearts-and our homes.
Mama, Mama, Mama, Mom, Mama,
look what I found.
Can I keep him,
please, please?
At last, the cat managed to
dethrone the dog
as the most popular pet
in the Western world.

In the U.S. alone, house cats
have doubled in number
in just 20 years.
C'mon, chin up.
That a good boy.
Cat-mania is
sweeping the country.
These are piddle pants
for cats.
The Chaise lounges are a new
add- on to our products
that we're carrying.
The Litter Maid Electric Self-
Cleaning Litter Box.
We probably spend about
eight grand a year.
\$10, \$20, or \$30,000 a year,
just on one cat. Yeah.
Throughout the world,
cat shows pay homage
to our feline companions
in a fury of grooming,
primping and keen competition.
Through the careful
coupling of cats,
humans have created nearly 50
breeds of domesticated felines
Though some might look
to the untrained eye like
mistakes of nature...
each coupling is carefully
planned to make a winner.
But a cat needn't be a winner
to be the object of affection.
Well, it's Rush's
third birthday.
We have birthday cakes for us,
so why shouldn't we have
a birthday cake for
our four-footed child?
The Ross family has taken
feline adoration to new heights
They're very much our family.
Well, hi, Neut.

Hey, Rush,
here's some food coming.
My husband spoils the cats.
Of course, I don't.
And so he always has the cats
eating with us at the table.
One more bite,
but don't let it spoil you.
You won't get the same thing
tomorrow night.
They like to have the food
that we're eating.
And they oftentimes will eat
very peculiar things,
things they would never eat
if you would
put it in their bowl.
As you can see,
our cats are very well fed.
But well-fed cats
still do hunt.
So we keep them inside.
And our cats are never bored.
Shirley May loves her cats.
But even she knows,
there can be
too much of a good thing.
When I was a child,
there was a family down
the street who had some cats.
And they didn't have
them altered.
And there were kittens
born all the time.
Well, of course,
I thought that was great,
because I loved kittens.
Super kitty
flying through the air!
There are more than
born in this country each day-
and more than twice
that many kittens.
Sheltered and well-fed,

cat numbers can soar
if reproduction goes unchecked
Cats are prolific.
One female can have as many
as 30 kittens a year.
In just seven years,
she and her offspring
could produce over
Suddenly, sometimes,
those kittens would disappear-
and nobody seemed to
be able to tell me
where the kittens went.
With such feline fertility,
unwanted cats are a sad
byproduct of our domestic bond
This scene may be
an echo from the past,
but the tragedy is still
being played out today.
Even now, hundreds of cats
are abandoned each day
in the U.S. alone.
What's to become of
a castaway?
He is suddenly faced
with the struggle
to survive in an alien world.
But the cat holds a wild card-
a gift from his ancestors.
He is one of the earth's
most adept hunters.
Good news for the cat...
but bad for the locals.
There's one more predator
on the prowl.
And when push comes to shove,
he's not a picky eater-
another key
to the cat's success.
In the face of adversity,
the cat often has the advantage
Armed with sharp claws,
he's not restricted to

terra firma.
The cat nearly always lands
on his feet.
This diminutive creature seems
to defy the odds.
With a flexible backbone
like a cheetah,
the cat can run up
to 30 miles per hour.
His agile body
is engineered for the chase.
But at times,
the best strategy
is to seek shelter...
and wait.
For the tables will soon turn
for felis catus.
Night belongs to the cat.
He is a creature designed
for the nocturnal hunt:
with night vision,
whiskers to help navigate,
a keen sense of smell,
and ears
tuned to signals that mere
humans could never perceive.
The faintest squeak-
even from a distance-
allows him to pinpoint
his prey...
and launch his assault.
Only the fortunate manage to
escape this master predator.
The cat is a marvel of
engineering.
His supple spine allows
acrobatics of which
we could only dream.
His uncanny sense of balance
almost always insures
a safe landing.
With persistence
and precision,
the cat gets his mouse.

This is a creature
designed to survive.
He has landed in the most
outlandish of places
and somehow managed to endure.
Near the Antarctic,
temperatures can
plunge to 50 below.
On a diet of seabirds
and the occasional
penguin carcass,
the cats of Macquarie Island
have persevered since
they were dropped here
by sealers over a century ago.
Half a world away,
the volcanic Galapagos Islands
offer little water
or prey to its immigrant cats.
Though lean,
the population persists.
Abandoned cats are struggling
to survive throughout
the world-even in the U.S.,
where there are an
estimated 50 million.
Here in Miami, Florida,
thousands of forsaken felines
have landed in the middle of
a raging controversy.
Though the dumping of
pets is prohibited
in Dade County parks,
it's not uncommon to
find colonies of up to 75
abandoned cats.
What are the consequences
of so many predators?
Don Chingquina of the
Tropical Audubon Society
is concerned about
the wildlife.
You know parks like these
are so important to

migrating birds,
because
when you think about it,
these birds fly from as
far away as the Yucatan.
They come across
the Gulf of Mexico,
and they're tired,
they're hungry.
They land in a small,
confined place like
this to replenish
and they're greeted
by 50 to 100 cats.
It's a recipe for disaster.
Through no fault of their own
these felines have stirred
a fiery debate.
Kate Rhubee is one of many
volunteer feeders
who have taken pity on
these outcasts.
She, too, knows there's
no easy solution.
A lot of people
are really concerned
about the impact that
the homeless
cats have on the small birds
in the area.
In an ideal world,
we wouldn't have
people dumping their pets,
and the cats wouldn't
be outside,
and they wouldn't be
impacting the wildlife.
But in this cycle of
human neglect,
it's not just the wildlife
that's in jeopardy.
These cats are at the mercy
of world-class hurricanes,
aggression within

the colony and disease.
It's really upsetting to me
when someone dumps
their pets here,
'cause this is absolutely
no life for a cat.
In the last
three-and-a-half months,
we've had 39
new cats dumped here.
With so many new arrivals,
the population is exploding.
Spaying and neutering
is critical.
But most of the strays
have become so wild,
it's impossible to
even approach them.
Members of the Cat Network
provide the traps,
the ingenuity-
and the sardines.
Still, there's no guarantee
which cats will venture
into the traps-
if any at all.
Only tomorrow will tell.
Hey, you guys,
we got one already.
The night's bounty
has been good.
Kate? Is this the orange
you were looking for?
Yes, he is.
I'm concerned that
he's really sick,
looks like he's gonna have
AIDS with all of those marks.
Off to the vet you go.
Dr. Ted Sanchez
works with the Cat Network
at a reduced rate caring for
homeless cats.
The rest of the funds come

from volunteers like
Cindy Hewitt
who contribute thousands of
dollars each year.
We're going to be taking a
little blood test
and we're just gonna try to
rule out a couple of
viral diseases
that they commonly get.
It's a male.
And these guys tend to be a
little bit more prevalent
in the males than the females
because they tend to have
more sexual contact.
We're just going to
take a little blood.
Cats are vulnerable to
two lethal viruses.
Feline leukemia
and feline AIDS
are both highly contagious-
and deadly.
It's not a pretty death.
Cindy, I think we may have
a positive here.
You can tell here.
We'll see what the test
comes out.
But you see the gums?
They're real, real red.
He's got a pretty good
gingivitis here,
which is one of the common
things we see with feline...
plus the fact that
he's a male.
So we'll wait.
He's got a couple of variety
of skin lesions as well,
so he's not in
the greatest shape.
He's been eating well,

he's not too thin,
but this is a bad sign.
It really makes me sad
that the animals suffer.
And anytime I have to
put a cat down,
it really bothers me.
But, if you leave him,
then he's gonna infect
the others.
It's the right thing to do,
unfortunately.
And he'll also have
a really miserable death.
If they go through the
course of this illness,
it's not fair to them.
They suffer too much.
Cats that test negative
for disease
might be candidates
for adoption.
But first they must be spayed
or neutered.
I don't think it's the
solution to the problem.
But at least
we are controlling
the population somewhat.
Thousands of cats are being
put to sleep every year,
needlessly,
because owners are
just not complying
with spaying and neutering.
We have to tell these people
that are abandoning cats,
this isn't the way to do it.
Spayed and neutered cats
have the tips of
the ears clipped,
to serve
as a permanent record.
This kitten has become

too wild for adoption.
Once she's recovered
from surgery,
she'll return to the colony-
to face an uncertain future.
You doing alright?
Alright.
It's a dismal solution
for the cats
and a precarious
one for the wildlife.
Well-fed and spayed,
a cat can still hunt.
But where are the thousands
of homeless felines to go?
Until an answer can be found,
migrating birds
may come face to face
with yet another predator.
But it's not just
the homeless that hunt.
There are more than 60
million house cats in the U.S. -
and many are on the prowl
night and day.
What is the impact of
these unleashed predators?
The answer is clear at the
Wildlife Center of Virginia.
Dr. Gentz, cat attack coming
in from Harrisonburg.
Many of the patients
are casualties
of ordinary house cats.
We have two injured bunnies.
Most are mangled
beyond repair.
Cat attack coming in from...
Each day brings new drama for
Dr. Ned Gentz and his team,
as they try to piece together
the victims of cat attacks.
Well, I think this one's
going to make it...

although probably half don't.
Casualties pour into the
Wildlife Center night and day.
Pet owners are often shocked
to find that their well-fed
cats are killers.
Though some have been
de-clawed,
the attack is often
just as gruesome.
This one was injured on
it's eye right here.
And it was bleeding
this morning.
And this one was injured...
...on his leg...
...right there.
Oh, you better
put it back in.
The hospital recovery room
is filled with creatures
that fell prey to the claw.
Most require intensive care.
But for every
recovering patient...
there are four others
that didn't make it.
This represents two weeks of
cat attack victims
brought here to the
Wildlife Center of Virginia-
the non-survivors.
We probably have an
equal number of
animals in the
intensive care unit
still being treated now
that we hope will do better
than these,
but statistically about
of the cat attack victims that
we see here don't survive.
Cats are incredibly efficient
hunters and predators.

This poor bunny was
effectively disemboweled
by the cat that caught it.
Creatures lucky enough to
survive an attack
face yet another peril.
Cat saliva is
almost toxic by itself.
Getting bit by a cat
is like injecting
poison into a wild animal.
A wild animal with a cat
bite that doesn't die
from the trauma will die of
an infection within
As a wildlife veterinarian,
it's my job
to take care of sick
and injured wildlife
and I like to do that,
but this is a waste.
These animals
didn't have to die.
If people would keep their
pet cats indoors,
these animals wouldn't end up
in my wildlife hospital.
What's a cat owner to do?
Just three hours from the
Wildlife Center of Virginia,
on 25 acres of
rolling woodland,
lives a cat
named Ting Tang II.
Ironically,
he lives with a biologist
who's specialty is birds.
As a devoted cat owner,
Ruth Beck has been grappling
with a personal dilemma.
I specialize in ornithology
and I'm very interested in
birds.
But I also love cats.

Ting Tang II is a hunter.
It is not the cat's fault,
it's what he does and what
he does successfully.
He has some basic equipment,
just as every
hunter would have:
first of all,
you can look at these
nice teeth.
And then we have
an excellent set
of switchblades
and they indeed
can inflict quite a wound.
C'mon, breakfast.
Ting Tang II is a well-fed cat.
But breakfast
never puts a damper
on his favorite pastime.
He's an avid bird watcher-
and hunter.
Each morning,
after a full can of food,
Ting Tang is ready
for his favorite sport.
But he has to comply with
the rules of the house.
Most bird species feed
early in the morning.
So just by not letting him out
until 10 or 11 o'clock
and for just a few hours
mid-afternoon,
when the birds are less
active... will certainly help
to prevent the cat
from capturing the birds.
Ruth has found a compromise
that gives the cat some freedom,
but gives the birds
some protection, as well.
Ting Tang II must make
the most of his hours

in feline paradise.
He is a cat with a curfew.
When day is done,
he'll be called indoors.
I think that true cat lovers
don't see their pet as killers
I'd like to see us
make everyone aware of the fact
that our pets are
also predators.
If we come to terms
with the fact
that our cats do hunt,
the question then becomes:
How much are they hunting?
That's just what
the British Mammal Society
set out to discover
when they launched
their survey called,
"Look What the Cat Brought In"
...a bit ghoulish, really.
This is brilliant.
Yes, it's good, isn't it?
Excellent...
The Society has found itself
buried beneath a mountain
of responses.
For Michael Woods,
processing the results
has been daunting.
C'mon, I can't have you
sitting on
top of all my work.
Well, I have a very ambivalent
relationship with cats.
I love the way
that they move and I think
they're beautiful animals,
but I just hate what they
do to the wildlife.
The Society invited the public
to register their cats
for a five-month period,

detailing every creature
their kitty dragged home.
The amazing thing is we've had
the results from 750 cats,
which is a huge amount-
and much better
than we'd expected.
We've got a lot of
them analyzed
and it's giving us some
really good answers.
And some of them
are real big killers,
they're some big killer
cats out there.
And they're causing quite
a lot of mayhem.
Remarkably,
almost as you'd expect,
the traditional
prey of the cat,
the mouse,
has come out much the highest.
If you extrapolate up
to the number
of cats we have in Britain,
which is around about
seven million-
and that's just the tame ones
the wild ones are
on top of that-
then we are looking at
something around 200,000 mice
are killed every year by cats.
And then we have voles,
and then after that, shrews.
The mice are interesting,
because a lot of people think
we don't need mice,
you know, because they can be
a pest and a problem,
particularly if they
get into the house,
but mice are very important,

along with the other
small mammals,
as prey species for
natural predators.
Then,
if we turn to the information
we've got about cats,
we find that a third of them,
approximately, wear bells.
Wearing bells seems to
make almost no difference
at all to the amount of
prey that they catch.
They still go out and catch
just as much.
And color of cats seems
to make a difference.
White cats appear to catch
a lot less than some of the
other more camouflaged cats,
and I guess it's color
that does that,
particularly at night,
if they're hunting at night.
The survey's certainly shown
that however
much you feed a cat,
it makes no difference at all
and the cat feeds
and is just as likely to
start hunting immediately.
Out of 750 cats, one of the
biggest killers is Missy,
a female cat
who lives down in Dorset,
and who has killed
over seven pages
worth of
small mammals and birds
for us to
include in the survey.
So she's a real, you know,
wicked thing to
have out there.

Knowing her record,
I thought it would be
interesting to enter her-
and I was really surprised
myself
when I started to fill in
the form and found out
how many
things she did bring in.
Hilary and Jim Pike
have become accustomed
to Missy's daily offerings.
For Jim, the rabbits
are the worst.
They all start from the skull
and eat the head first
and all we get left
are two ears
and four little paws...
...which is not a
very nice thing
when you come home
and it's on the middle of the
mat or stuck on the tiles.
There must be some sort
of driving force that
makes her do it all the time...
...nothing to do with hunger.
They obviously just do it
because they love it.
The spot you see along here,
she lays in there
in the summer time,
and the swallows zip along,
come down to along
the top of the pond to drink,
and she just leaps up and
grabs them clean out of the air
And, you know,
just a big snatch,
and they're just stunned
the moment she's got them.
The two sucker fish
that we bought

specifically to take out
all the algae,
within two weeks
of us buying them-
and they were
quite expensive...
We paid 40 pound for the pair.
And in two weeks they're
on the kitchen mat.
We found them on the grass.
So that was a waste of
time and money.
Well, I've been collecting
what Missy's brought in
for the last two weeks,
approximately.
So, would you like me
To show you just
a few of the items-
or bodies, I should say?
It was a little bird,
I'm afraid.
Just looks to be asleep, but
unfortunately,
there's one gone.
And then this is one of the
many mice we have around here.
This is what Missy's brought
in in less than two weeks.
She's quite a hunter.
She's really surprised us on
the amount of carnage.
I've got to say that
it's really shocked me
when we started
counting them up.
In the last two weeks she's
brought in maybe 30, 36... plus
maybe a dozen or so that
we've let go.
And I think that's a little
bit too much, really.
Well,
I'm quite proud to think

that she was one of
the top cats.
But knowing how much stuff
I didn't write down
Because
I wasn't here to see it,
um, I think she's actually
the top cat.
For many a cat, such
extraordinary hunting prowess
at one time translated into a
ticket to travel the world.
They kept stowaway
rats at bay...
But not all the cats
that left port
made the long journey home.
Some jumped ship and soon had
a foothold in a new frontier
New Zealand is a unique place.
Like many islands,
its wildlife evolved with
few natural predators.
Today, rare shore birds still
lay their eggs
on the sandy beaches-
completely exposed.
Attentive parents
tend to their chicks,
but their nests
are vulnerable.
Until recently,
the system worked fine.
But today, New Zealand's shore
birds are in trouble.
Here at
Mangawhai Wildlife Refuge,
the fairy tern is down to
less than six breeding pairs.
Each chick represents the
future of the species.
With the
Department of Conservation,
Richard Parrish

and Leigh Honnor
are part of a team trying to
save the last of
the fairy terns-
and Mangawhai's other
threatened species.
Five years ago,
they found themselves
confronted with a mystery:
Something was
killing the chicks-
and no one knew what.
The team had to do a little
undercover work.
One year we lost a lot of
nests of the fairy terns
and we didn't know
who was doing it,
so we decided to set up
an infrared camera
and try and work out who was
taking the eggs and the chicks
The new lens is good,
isn't it?
The wide-eyed angle lens...
Oh, it is.
...taking in a much bigger
field of view.
Well,
those chicks will probably
stay here another day.
You think so?
Initially, we set it up on a
Caspian tern colony,
just to get used to
the equipment and iron
out the problems.
What they discovered
was both alarming...
. and macabre.
We ended up catching a cat
on film,
and over four nights,
that cat took out 40 chicks.

The interesting thing for me
was that the cat
only ate the heads.
They left the bodies behind.
Over the next four years,
they trained the camera
on various nests and found
more gruesome evidence
against the alien predator.
As a result, feral cats
are now being eradicated
in Mangawhai Park.
New Zealand
is just one example
of what can happen
when a cat comes to stay.
Here, in a land where
temperatures can soar to 120
and there's often
no water in sight,
it's hard to imagine
any creature
surviving for long... but the
cat has adapted once again.
In the middle of
Australia's Outback,
it must eat
whatever it can find-
be it road kill
or Australia's
endangered wildlife.
Bilbies, bandicoots,
and other rare marsupials
have been pushed
to the edge of extinction
by a barrage of pressures,
including introduced species.
One of the culprits
is the cat.
For at least a century,
feral cats have roamed
this harsh expanse.
And yet they remain elusive...
...even to those

whose ancestors were
here long before them.
In an effort to unlock
their secrets,
Parks and Wildlife
biologist Rachel Paltridge
has enlisted the help
of experts.
Searching for a cat
in the Outback
is like looking for
a needle in a haystack.
Yet these Aboriginal trackers
are able to read even
the most elusive signs
in the shadows of the sand.
So the pussy cat,
him sitting down,
jumping here, jumped there,
jumped there, and over there...
With their extraordinary
expertise,
Rachel has begun to unravel
the secrets of the cat
Where's that pussy cat now-
long ways?
Must be a long ways off.
With their greater insight,
she hopes that, someday,
cat numbers
will be controlled.
They're a pretty amazing animal
you have to respect them.
But they just don't
belong out here.
They didn't evolve out here.
The native animals
didn't evolve with
them and just can't really
tolerate their predation.
Hopefully, this work will lead
to a better understanding
of feral cats and eventually
lead to better management.

To reveal the patterns of these elusive predators, Rachel uses radio telemetry, tracking individual cats over time.

Finding them is only half the challenge. Feral cats are as ferocious as any wild animal.

Before handling one, Rachel must first anesthetize it.

Cat bites are not only dangerous to prey, they can infect humans as well.

We caught this cat about four months ago, using the Aboriginal trackers to catch it, and radio collared it, and we've been following its movement patterns in those last four months.

This cat normally only roams over about two or three kilometers a day and he has a fairly tight home range that he lives in.

He's lost about 300 grams in the last four months.

I don't know if its maybe times are getting a bit tough there may be a bit less food around.

I just wanted to check that his collar was still okay and not rubbing on his neck and just check his general condition.

But he's fine, so we'll just let him go here and continue tracking him.

Any cats that are not part
of Rachel's study
might find another
fate awaits them.
It is a twist of irony:
the cat has helped push
much of the Aborigine's
traditional food prey
to near extinction.
In doing so, it now fills an
important niche itself.
Like a game of cat and mouse-
in this scenario,
it is the cat that
has become the mouse.
Going to cook this one up
for supper tonight?
Yeah. Good meat.
These people
have been eating cats
all their lives and it's quite
an important part of their diet
So they'll probably cook
it up on the fire tonight.
Good bush meat? Yeah.
Now that the bilbies,
bandicoots
and other medium-sized mammals
have all but disappeared,
the cat has taken a place
in the food chain.
Back at camp,
Rachel collects
as much information
as possible before the cat
becomes dinner for the trackers
I'm trying to look at
the predation pressure
on all the wildlife out there
in the Spinnefex Grasslands
and I'm looking at
gut contents as probably
the best way
of understanding

what they eat.
This cat was obviously
a very good hunter.
You can see quite plainly
each object's
quite intact still.
What's this one, snake?
He's got a little snake
in here.
Well,
there's heaps in his stomach.
There's three different
sorts of lizards,
three of these
military dragons,
one quite large...
and there's also
some remains of
some bird feathers.
So you can
just see how much of
an impact they're
probably having
on the native wildlife out
there if just each cat eats
that much in just one day.
Ideally, we'd like to
get rid of them altogether
and see the native animals
that have declined severely
returned to their
original status out here.
Until the cat
is better understood,
it will remain a fixture
in the Outback.
It has worked its way
into the food chain,
for better or worse.
There is a new order here
in the heart of Australia
and it's not a kind one for
the wildlife or the cat.
The cat wars are raging

throughout Australia.
Halfway across the continent,
there's a new chapter unfolding
On 160,000 acres of land,
a wire fence
stretches as far as
the eye can see.
Why would anyone
put up a 150-mile fence
in the middle of
the Australian Outback?
The world has lost
over the last 200 years;
At present, about one a year
we're losing and that's
just not acceptable.
John Wamsley is a self-
made millionaire-
and rabid conservationist.
Considered controversial
by many,
his passion for
native wildlife
has fueled his ire
against the cat.
Let's talk about cats.
This is a feral cat...
they came to Australia
about 500 years ago,
probably with the early
shipwrecks off
the West Australian coast,
but they couldn't cross
Australia until
the rabbit came.
The rabbit came late 1800s,
and that allowed the cat
to cross Australia,
and that's when the
devastation started.
I love Australia and I love
the Australian wildlife.
I've taken on the job of
saving them

and I am going to save them.
It's as simple as that.
For over a decade,
Wamsley has bred
endangered species
in captivity to insure that
Australia's unique creatures
don't slip away.
We're an island.
We had no serious predators
and all these incredible
creatures evolved...
little marsupials,
most of them and they evolved
to do wonderful things.
We've got banded anteaters
with fluffy tails.
We've got kangaroos
that burrow in the ground
like rabbits.
And we're losing them.
We've got the bilbie
that looks
just like a cartoon character
The world would love to see
our animals,
but they can't,
because they're all going.
Wamsley's dream to create a
safe haven for native creatures
is getting closer
all the time.
But fencing in habitat
is only half the battle.
Before endangered wildlife
can be released,
the enclosure
will have to be free
of introduced species.
This fence is all about cats
and rabbits.
It puts a pretty
big boot in it.
It's a massive charge

and it's like getting hit
in the middle of the back
with a sledge hammer.
When a cat touches
that fence once,
it doesn't come back.
On the other hand,
we don't want to stop
the big kangaroos,
the wildlife that
already live here,
we don't want to stop
them with this fence.
And this fence is designed
to let them through.
The kangaroos
just hop through.
What we're going to do here,
is we're now watering
the cats.
The cats have plenty
of water here.
And on the hottest day
in summer,
when we get there in February
when all the rabbits are gone
we're gonna cut off
their water.
There'll be water
outside the fence.
They'll come over the fence
to get the water.
They won't be able to
get back in again.
For the cats and rabbits
that don't take the bait,
Wamsley called in an expert.
I guess Adam O'Neil is the
real live Crocodile Dundee.
He understands animals
and the bush better than
anybody else
I've ever met.
He's probably the best shot

that I've ever seen.
He can knock over
a rabbit at 500 meters
without any trouble.
Yeah, he's got the job
of getting rid of
the cats and the rabbits.
Well, I love the cat
along with every other animal
on this planet.
They're not exactly calculating
and malicious with intent.
They're just out there acting
on their instincts to survive.
It's just unfortunate
the way things have panned out
I suppose.
But they've obviously got to
go from this environment.
Once again, the cat has been
caught in the crossfire.
If you walk down the street
with this cat hat on,
then you are noticed.
I can guarantee you that.
Some people might try
and ignore you,
and they'll have different
things to say to you,
but you'll be noticed
by everyone.
Here at CATS, Incorporated,
we say, "No dead cats for hats."
Right, Nippy?
Not everyone approves
of Wamsley's approach.
At the other end of the
spectrum is Christine Pierson,
the president of CATS,
Incorporated.
She is dedicated to
the care of strays
and the control of cat numbers
through sterilization.

Killing cats-
or trying to get rid of
the cats-
is achieving nothing.
Christine Pierson
has her own theories
about the cat crisis.
If you leave the birds
and the animals alone,
they have a natural balance
between them.
But the trouble is that
people come along and
they upset the natural balance
and they stuff everything up.
And so the cat wars
continue to rage.
Where does the solution lie?
Perhaps it
begins in our own backyards.
In the Adelaide Hills,
there is a cat whose
lifestyle changed
a few years back.
Owner Christine Colyer
is a bird lover who's found
an unusual solution
for her beloved cat.
Diddles is a happy cat.
The more comfortable she is,
the happier she is...
...the further out that
tongue will hang.
She is the most beautiful cat
in the world.
We just don't think that
there's another one like her.
Nestled in
this garden of Eden,
Diddles has the run of
the house-
and access to an open cat
flap... 24 hours a day.
The world outside for Diddles

is a labyrinth of bridges
and tunnels-
a playground for cats.
We have what
we call a London Bridge,
which Diddles just loves to
run from one side to the other
up and over and down.
It's not a cage.
And that's the beauty of it.
The garden is full of birds-
be it the [...pigeons,
the red finches, rosillas,
the cockatoos] that fly in.
They will graze directly
around the cat units.
It's lovely to see the birds
coming around so close.
It certainly is peace
of mind for me to know
where Diddles is,
that she is safe and that
she can go outside and
enjoy life just as normal,
but she is protected.
And so are the birds.
Back in Virginia,
another cat is yielding
to domestication.
Ting Tang! Time to come in.
Ting Tang II's moment in the
sun has come to an end.
You know the rules.
C'mon in now.
It's curfew time.
Good boy.
Yes, it's time to come on in.
Until tomorrow, there will be
one less cat on the prowl.
Through the millennia,
cats have found their way
into our hearts and our homes.
Mama, Mama, Mama, Mom, Mama,
look what I found.

Can I keep him,
please, please?
But has our passion
for these creatures
also blinded us to
their natural instincts?
Has domestication gone awry?
With cat numbers on the rise,
Felis catus is getting away
with murder.
Well-fed and sheltered,
these predators are gaining
a competitive edge-
against which
few creatures can contend.
Most simply can't compete
with the extraordinary cat.
In the time it's
taken to watch this film,
cats in the U.S. have caught
as many as 100,000 mammals
and over 30,000 birds.
As for Missy, last month
she caught five rabbits,
Nine more cats were dumped
in the Miami Park.
Neut celebrated
another birthday.
Diddles communed
with the cockatoos.
And Ting Tang II
broke his curfew twice.
It's 9 p.m.
Do you know where
your kitty is?