

FELIXOR

BY **Thylation**

2021 Felixer year in review

A feral cat a day and a fox per week

There are 363 images of feral cats targeted by Felixers in 2021 lodged on the Felixer Management System, and we expect a few more amongst the unclassified or not yet uploaded datasets. At least 68 foxes were also targeted by Felixers in 2021, including a fox that had invaded a Fairy Tern colony at Port Adelaide and was found dead.

In total the 170 active Felixers in the field identified 786 targets, 439 were classified as cats and foxes resulting in a 55.85% accuracy in targeting. Improvements to this efficiency have been enabled by updates to the algorithm during 2021 to avoid non-target animals. A new AI camera and processor that are in final stages of R&D will be available in the V3.2 Felixer due out late 2022 and should be available for retrofitting to existing V3.1 Felixers.



Dead fox, poisoned by Felixer, from Bird Island – Port Adelaide

Tasmania joins the fold

Two University of Tasmania honours students supervised by Rowena Hamer (Tasmanian Land Conservancy), Menna Jones, Chris Johnson (UTAS) and John Read (Thylation) assessed whether Felixers could safely and effectively be used for feral cat control in Tasmania.

Holly Rickards found that Felixers could be safely deployed with both spotted tail quolls and eastern quolls, contributing to, and confirming studies conducted on the mainland.

Despite probably not representing a risk to Tasmanian Devils due to their higher tolerance to 1080, devil targeting rates of 23% suggest that improvements will need to be made before Felixers can be used to control feral cats in devil habitat.

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Morgan Humphrey found that peak efficacy of feral cat control was achieved through deployment of 5-6 Felixers over 100km² of the Tasmanian midlands.

You can read the Thesis Summary here - <https://thylation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Thesis-Summary.pdf>

And in breaking news, following extensive risk assessment Cradle Coast NRM and Biosecurity Tasmania have now deployed Felixers in toxic mode in the feral cat eradication program on Three Hummock Island in Bass Strait to protect the Hooded Plover.



Felixer deployed on Three Hummock Island – photo Matt Pauza

APY Rock Wallabies

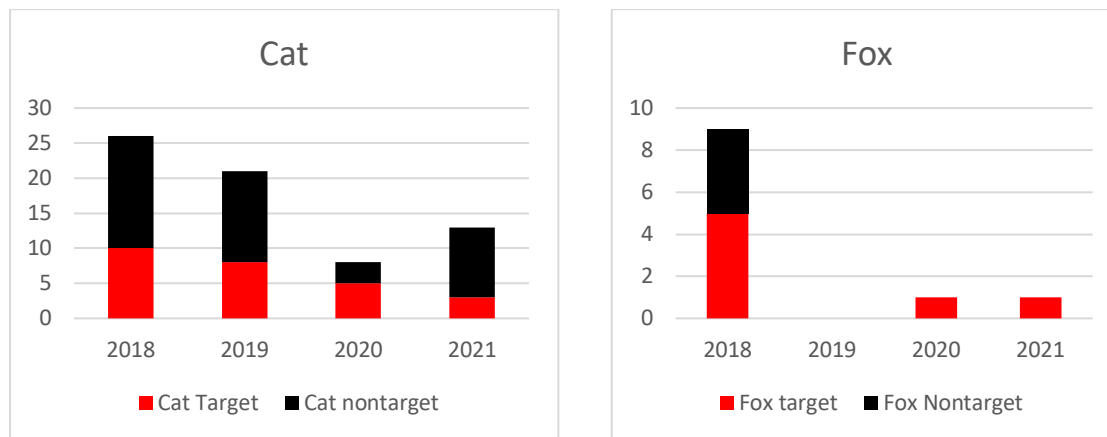
Felixers are deployed around the Wamitjara warru (black-footed rock wallaby) colony near the SA/NT border to control feral cats and foxes that prey on this reintroduced population of South Australia's most endangered mammal.

Since 2019 when algorithms were improved, Felixers have targeted 16 feral cats and the only 2 foxes detected, without spraying any of the 95 warru or over 200 dingoes detected.

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Maintenance of stable dingo populations is important culturally, and also to limit euro and fox populations that affect warru.



Kangaroo Island Dunnarts

Felixers effectively targeted 66 cats deployed at key unburnt remnant sites for Kangaroo Island Dunnarts from January to July 2021, including 26 targeted by Felixers funded by the Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner.

KI Land for Wildlife ecologist Pat Hodgens has found that whilst trapping was initially effective for trapping feral cats after the 2020 fires, Felixers are increasingly effective at removing cats that have avoided capture or the ace hunters that are not interested in baited traps, like the cat below which killed a bandicoot 12 days before it was targeted by a Felixer.



Photographed with bandicoot 28/06/2021



Targeted by Felixer 11/07/2021

A report on the Kangaroo Island deployments from January to July 2021 can be found here - <https://thylation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/KI-OTSC-Felixer-trial-report-07OCT2021.pdf>

And you may have also read the ABC Rural article “Hundreds of feral cats removed from Kangaroo Island in bid to protect endangered native species” during the holiday



season. Read it here - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2021-12-30/hundreds-of-feral-cats-removed-from-kangaroo-island/100730212>

Wild Deserts

The first toxic Felixer trial in NSW is helping protect reintroduced bilbies, mulgaras and Shark Bay barred bandicoots for Wild Deserts in Sturt National Park. Since commencing in March 2021 the Felixers have targeted 71 cats, 1 fox and 4 kangaroos (at 0.9%), with Felixers set on fences targeting 11 times as many cats as Felixers set on roads.

Currently Felixers can only be deployed in National Parks in NSW, and we are working with the NSW EPA to extend this to other areas. Watch this space!

Atlas of Living Australia uploads

During 2021 Thylation reconfigured our animal classification system in the Felixer Management System to ensure consistency across the increasing number of projects by linking labelling to a standardised taxonomic list of Australian vertebrates.

Importantly this now enables those valuable records of black grasswrens, bilbies and perenties etc photographed by Felixers to be uploaded onto the Atlas of Living Australia database to assist in monitoring and conservation efforts.

Felixer 1080 Registration

Throughout 2021, the commercial registration of 1080 Felixer Cartridges by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority edged tantalisingly close, with the efficacy and environmental modules approved.

We are standing by for labelling requirements and (hopefully) final approvals early in 2022. The APVMA research permit 80926v6 remains valid until 30 June 2022.