



Kiana - Dealing with feral cats humanely

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

My aim was to get people to understand the fact that there are feral cats in our area and there are a lot of people who would rather put them down but there are other ways. My area is Henley Beach and there are a few areas where there are feral cats, not many, it's mainly in other parts of South Australia and Australia. I wanted people to understand feral cats and their impact on the environment. We haven't done anything to stop it at the moment but we're going to try and do that.

We talked to the RSPCA and the council about how they deal with them and what they do with them after they catch them. Usually if they're young, they say they take them to the RSPCA, but if they're older they either put them down, or spay or neuter them and put them back out. So we're raising awareness about them not just in South Australia but the whole of Australia. A bit of the stuff I found was in America because everything is to do with the United States. When we were looking it up, everything was in the United States. There are over two billion animals killed a night,

that's not for Australia, but most of the other information was about Australia.

There's one thing that I found out about Victoria - they want feral cats to be declared pests. Kangaroo Island just wants to get rid of cats in general in the next 15 years or by 2030. Most of the other ones just want to trap them using TNR - which is Trap Neuter Return - which is trapping them, neutering and then returning them back to the area that they found them in.

Who did you work with?

My mum and my dad helped quite a bit - trying to manage doing school work and this project at the same time was a bit hard. There was a teacher at school, he didn't really help but he was aware that I was doing it. We did a bit of stuff as a class on feral cats and that helped me get a head start on what I was doing, and it did help that my parents helped. My mum helped me put the PowerPoint together, otherwise I would have just chosen pictures of cats looking all cute and she wanted them to understand that they really do eat other animals. They eat possums, birds, even domestic cats.

I haven't really promoted my project but the RSPCA know that we have been doing a project on it and I kind of hope they might do something. I know that they understand and they know about animal cruelty but they still put animals down. I did recommend lowering the age of volunteering as well so that there can be younger people who can do volunteering and helping out, so then they can have more people there to do stuff with and more people to manage stuff so they can focus more on the big problems.

What was your biggest success?

My biggest success has been figuring out how many cats there are in Australia. I might continue the project a bit more but probably not much. My advice would be - beware of the kind of photos that you'll find because some of them are quite sad, there's one of about 20 or 30 cats and they're all dead, so you need to be prepared for what you're actually going to see. It made me feel a bit bad because that's in Australia, that was near Uluru or Ayers Rock.

What did you enjoy most?

I enjoyed researching because then I finally figured out what my cats do at night, because some of this showed me the risks of serious public threats, and my cat could be picked up as a feral cat because they might have lost their collar or something, but not all feral cats are like common cats but there's some that you can get close to.

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Kiana's words and opinions.

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Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board
Department for Education