

Cats on Norfolk Island Survey Results and Basic Analysis

1.0 Summary

The cats on Norfolk Island survey was conducted between 24 March 2017 and 19 May 2017. The survey asked respondents which of three options they supported:

Option 1 – Do nothing

Option 2 – Ban cats from Norfolk Island

Option 3 – Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions

Whilst not compulsory, respondents were also asked for their name, email address and further comments. Although the data was deidentified for analysis, most respondents gave their name and email address. Most responses were from people on Norfolk Island. The survey found that 69% of the 182 responses supported Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions. 114 of the 182 responses received included comments, which varied in length from a couple of words through to several pages. There were many common themes in these comments, with the top five themes as follows:

1. Desex cats (many respondents suggested a subsidy).
2. If we reduce/ban cats, we will have more rats.
3. Register/ microchip cats. Use fees for responsible cat ownership/feral cat management. Limit cats per household.
4. Feral cats are the main problem/ I trap feral cats myself.
5. Cats are companions and good for mental health (especially for elderly).

2.0 Introduction and Survey Method

At its meeting on 7 March 2017, the Norfolk Island Public Reserves Advisory Committee proposed undertaking a survey about cats on Norfolk Island. A media release was used to publicise the survey and the online survey web address. The survey went live on 24 March 2017, but due to the upgrade of the NIRC website, the online survey web address changed not long after the survey started. Therefore, people were unable to access the survey for a time unless they knew the new web address for the survey. However, the survey web address was then clarified in a second media release, as approved by a resolution of the Norfolk Island Regional Council at its meeting on 19 April 2017. Whilst the survey was originally meant to close on 27 April 2017, this deadline was extended until 19 May 2017 to compensate for the time when people may not have been able to access the survey.

As can be seen in Figure 1, a link to the 'Cats on Norfolk Island Report' was provided from the online survey portal. Respondents were also able to provide comments (not compulsory), and there was no limit placed on the number of words that could be submitted in this field. The survey and the Cats on Norfolk Island Report were made available at NIRC Customer Care offices. The report was also published in the 'The Norfolk Islander' on 22 April 2017. This report is still available on the NIRC website.

'Cats on Norfolk Island'

This is your opportunity to provide feedback on the future of cats on Norfolk Island.
SUBMISSION CLOSE - 19 MAY 2017

* Required

'Cats on Norfolk Island' Report

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/sites/norfolkisland/files/Cats%20on%20Norfolk%20Island%20Report.pdf>

Name

Your answer

Email

Your answer

I support *

- Option 1 - Do nothing
- Option 2 - Ban cats from Norfolk Island
- Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions

Comments

Your answer

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Figure 1. Format of online survey form

3.0 Survey results

3.1 Survey response

A total of 182 responses were received. Whilst it wasn't compulsory to give comments, 114 of the responses also included comments.

The vast majority of responses were received via the online survey portal. The only compulsory field in the online survey was the vote (for one of the three potential options for cat ownership). All other information including name and email could be left blank. It was possible to vote multiple times, by logging on to the survey form again and filling it out. A quick check of the survey results suggests that the maximum number of times that any one respondent voted was three and that overt multiple voting was not common. A very small percentage of respondents used the paper form to submit their feedback. Using the paper form allowed respondents to leave any field blank, including the vote for which option they supported.

3.2 Results of vote on potential options for cat ownership

Respondents were asked to vote for one of three potential options for cat ownership, as shown in Figure 1. A total of 182 votes were received and 69% of respondents voted for Option 3 – Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions. The online survey made it compulsory to vote for one of the three options, and a number of responses included comments indicating they did not wish to vote for *any* of the options. Therefore, the results were corrected in line with these comments, and a fourth category of vote has been included in the results called 'None of these options'. This is shown in Table 1*. The corrected vote represents the views of the respondents as per their written comments, so this data has been used as the basis of the analysis and recommendations arising from the survey.

Table 1. Summary of survey vote including corrections to allow for people who did not wish to support any of the three options

Option	Count	Percentage of total	Corrections requested in comments	Option (corrected count)	Corrected Count	Corrected Count percentage
Option 1 - Do nothing	26	14%	-5	Option 1 - Do nothing	21	12%
Option 2 - Ban cats from Norfolk Island	27	15%	0	Option 2 - Ban cats from Norfolk Island	27	15%
Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions	128	70%	-2	Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions	126	69%
None of the options (applies to corrected count only)	N.A.	N.A.	8	None of the options*	8	4%
No vote submitted (paper survey allowed this)	1	1%	-1	No vote submitted (paper survey allowed this)	0	0%
Total responses to survey	182	100%	1	Total responses to survey	182	100%

**Note that although survey respondents could elect from one of the three options only, 4% of respondents added comments saying they did not want to vote for any of the options, so the data was corrected accordingly.*

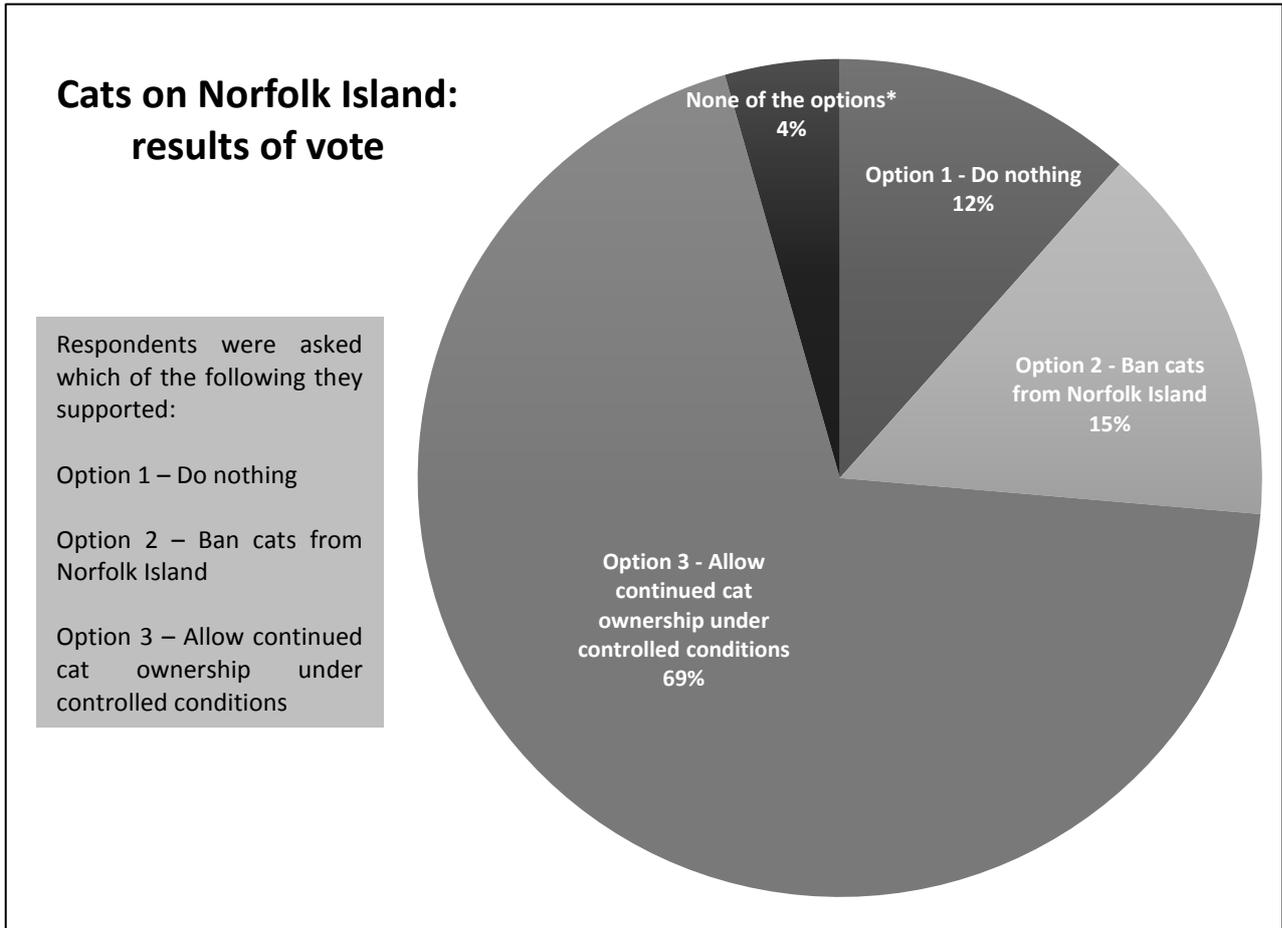


Figure 2. Pie chart showing results of vote for ‘Cats on Norfolk Island’

3.3 Results of comments

Whilst it wasn’t compulsory to provide comments, 114 of the 182 responses included comments, and these varied in length from just a couple of words through to several pages.

Where handwritten comments on hard copy survey responses were received, these were typed up, and collated together with the comments that had been received electronically. Every comment was read a minimum of two times, and during this process, a number of common themes emerged. To quantify this data, a tally was made of the number of times each theme was mentioned across all of the comments that were received. No matter how much a particular comment emphasised one theme, it could only receive a tally of 1 for that theme. This means that in Figure 3, if a theme had a tally of 11 (e.g. It is my right to have a cat if I want to), this meant that 11 separate responses had mentioned that theme.

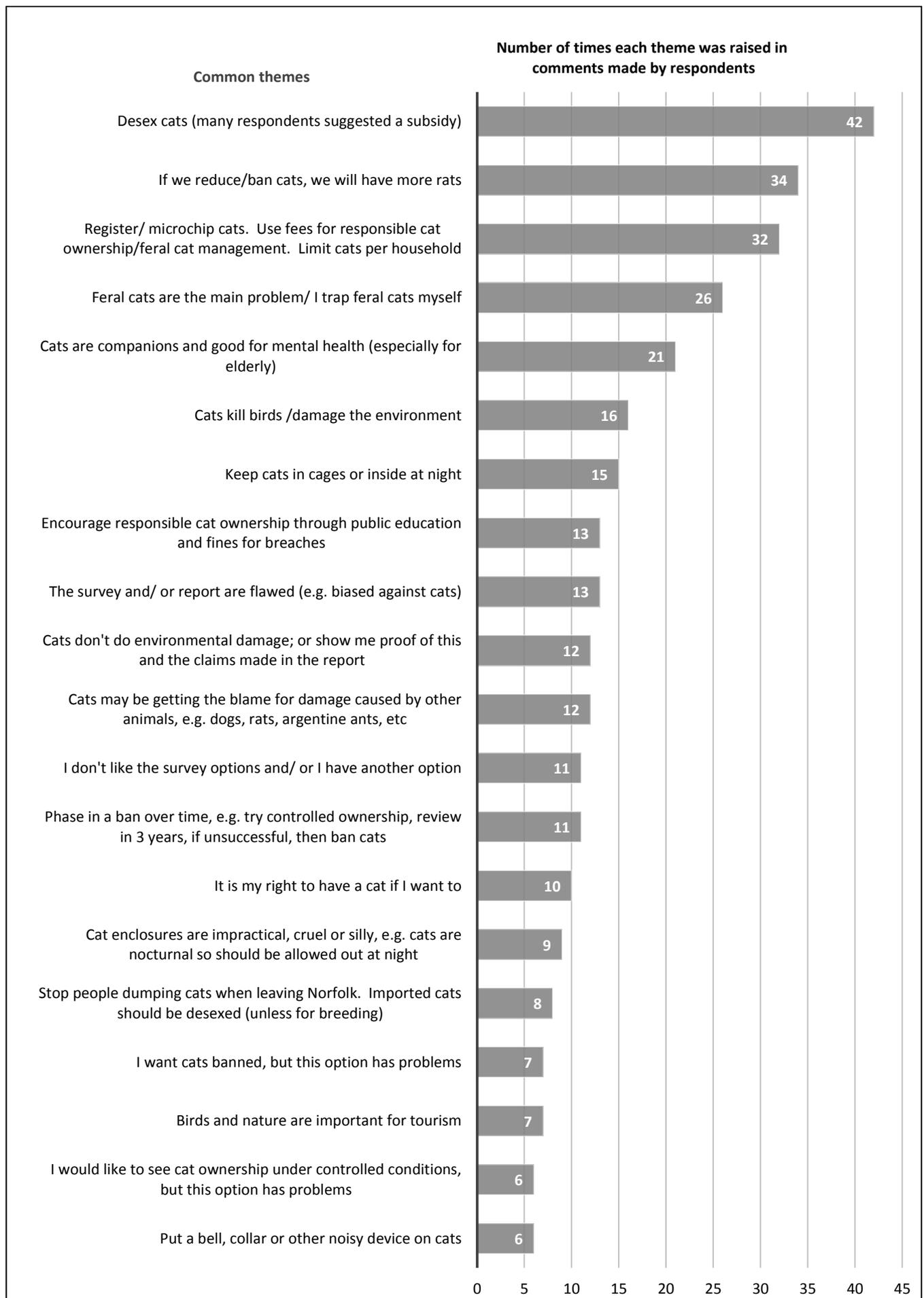


Figure 3. Common themes in survey comments, and tally of number of times each theme was mentioned

4.0 Discussion

The volume of survey responses received was higher than might be expected, and very good for an opt-in type community survey. The larger the number of respondents, the more certainty that the responses are a true representation of the views of the greater Norfolk Island population, provided it is a random sample of the population (and that respondents are resident on Norfolk Island). Whilst the data was deidentified for analysis, 145 of the 182 responses included a name and email address. Almost all of these responses were received from residents of Norfolk Island. The 2016 census determined the resident population of Norfolk Island to be 1748. Assuming that most of the 182 responses came from the Norfolk Island community, the survey response is considered large enough to be representative of the views of the community (within certain limits).

As the survey was opt-in only, the results may be somewhat biased to only those people who felt passionately about the issue, and/ or to those who had the time available to complete it. It is also possible that some groups of the population such as those unable to drive to a Customer Care centre and those unable to access the online survey might have experienced difficulty in participating. And, as previously mentioned, it was possible to take the survey multiple times, although the results suggest that this was not common. Taking all of these factors into account however, there was a clear majority of votes for Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions. In terms of the type of controls on cat ownership, the comments included a number of potential controls, e.g. desex cats, introduce registration and microchipping, keep cats contained/ inside at night, and encourage responsible cat ownership through public education.

5.0 Conclusion

The results show that 69% of responses were in favour of Option 3 - Allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions. Option 1 (Do Nothing) and Option 2 (Ban Cats from Norfolk Island) received 12% and 15% of the vote respectively, whilst 4% voted for none of the options. The recommendation arising from the survey vote is to allow continued cat ownership under controlled conditions. In terms of the type of controls on cat ownership, the comments received included a number of suggested potential controls, e.g. desex cats, introduce registration and microchipping, keep cats contained/ inside at night, and encourage responsible cat ownership through public education.

There were a number of broad common themes in the comments submitted by respondents. The most commonly mentioned issues were (in order):

1. Desex cats (many respondents suggested a subsidy).
2. If we reduce/ban cats, we will have more rats.
3. Register/ microchip cats. Use fees for responsible cat ownership/feral cat management. Limit cats per household.
4. Feral cats are the main problem/ I trap feral cats myself.
5. Cats are companions and good for mental health (especially for elderly).

It is recommended that any management actions that are undertaken should be designed knowing that these issues above are of importance to the community.