

Felt Cat Activity Instructions

Lesson Outline:

Students visually see the predatory impacts of both feral and domestic cats on Australian wildlife.

Desired Understandings:

Students will be able to identify different species of bush animals under threat due to the predatory impacts of roaming cats. They can verbally propose/design methods for reducing the predatory impact of cats on Australian wildlife/bush animals.

Activity 1

Introduction

- Place Felt Cat on the floor, as per Figure 1
- Bring students onto the floor, sitting in a large circle around the Felt Cat.
- Ask the students if they have/had a cat? (How many do they have? What are their names? Do they hunt for food? Where do they sleep at night? Etc.)
- Allow time to respond to student's comments and questions.

Figure 1. Felt Cat Front



Activity

- Explain to the students that while cats make nice pets, they can have a terrible impact on our bush animals
- Ask students what they feed their cats? What other foods do cats eat? Where do they find their food? (Encourage students to broaden their thinking as to what types of food and where cats find it)

- Explain to the students that if we do not make sure our cat is well cared for and fed they go looking for their own food. (Emphasize this is done mostly at night)
- Ask students if they keep their cat inside at night? Explain, if we do not keep our cats inside at night, this is when they're most likely to go hunting for their food, killing our bush animals.

Start to tell the students the story of Felt Cat *“Last night I forgot to keep Felt Cat inside. I also forgot to feed him. He was so hungry that he went out all night hunting in the bush looking for food. When I woke up this morning he looked very fat and tired. “Look how big his belly is!” “What do you think he ate last night?”* (Allow students to touch and feel Felt Cats stomach) Refer to Figure 2.

Figure 2. Felt Cat with stomach full of bush animals



- Ask the students if they would like to turn Felt Cat over and find out what he ate last night.
- Select students individually, asking them to remove an animal from Felt Cat’s stomach. Discuss with the students what animal they found inside Felt Cat’s stomach. What does it look like? Where does it live? Can you buy it at the shop to eat?
- When all animals have been removed arrange as per Figure 3

Figure 3. Felt Cat belly contents



- Highlight to the students the number of bush animals which Felt Cat has killed and eaten in one night. (Count all the bush animals eaten). Discuss the impacts of Felt Cat eating our bush animals. There is also the opportunity here to discuss the implication of hunting cats of local threatened end species if know.
- Ask the students what would happen if all our cats were out at night killing our bush animals?
- Ask the students what we all could do to stop our cats killing our bush animals. (Eg, keeping our cats inside at night, feeding and desexing owned cats). By desexing we are reducing the number of unwanted and stray cats, and therefore reducing the hunting burden of these cats.
- Recapping on the lesson use Figure 4, “The Australian Cat Map”, to demonstrate how many cats there are in Australia. Explain that Felt Cat is only one of these cats, imagine if all these cats were out at night hunting our bush animals?

Figure 4. The Australian Cat Map



Final Understanding

- Cats will hunt if left alone outside
- Cats have a profound impact on our native wildlife and bush animals
- Desexing cats reduces the cat population, and thus the impacts on wildlife/bush animals
- Feeding cats and keeping them inside at night helps to stop them hunting

Appendix A

The Cat Map

Statistic Source: Legge, S et al. (2017). Enumerating a continental-scale threat: How many feral cats are in Australia? *Biological Conservation* 206.10.1016/j.bicon.2016.11.032.



There are up to
6 MILLION FERAL CATS
in Australia



Appendix B

Felt Cat

Materials List

Felt Cat Templates 1 & 2

Material scissors

Sewing machine

Plastic animals and insects

65cm x 65cm Faux Fur (topside of cat coat)

65cm x 65cm (Underside of cat)

Material pins

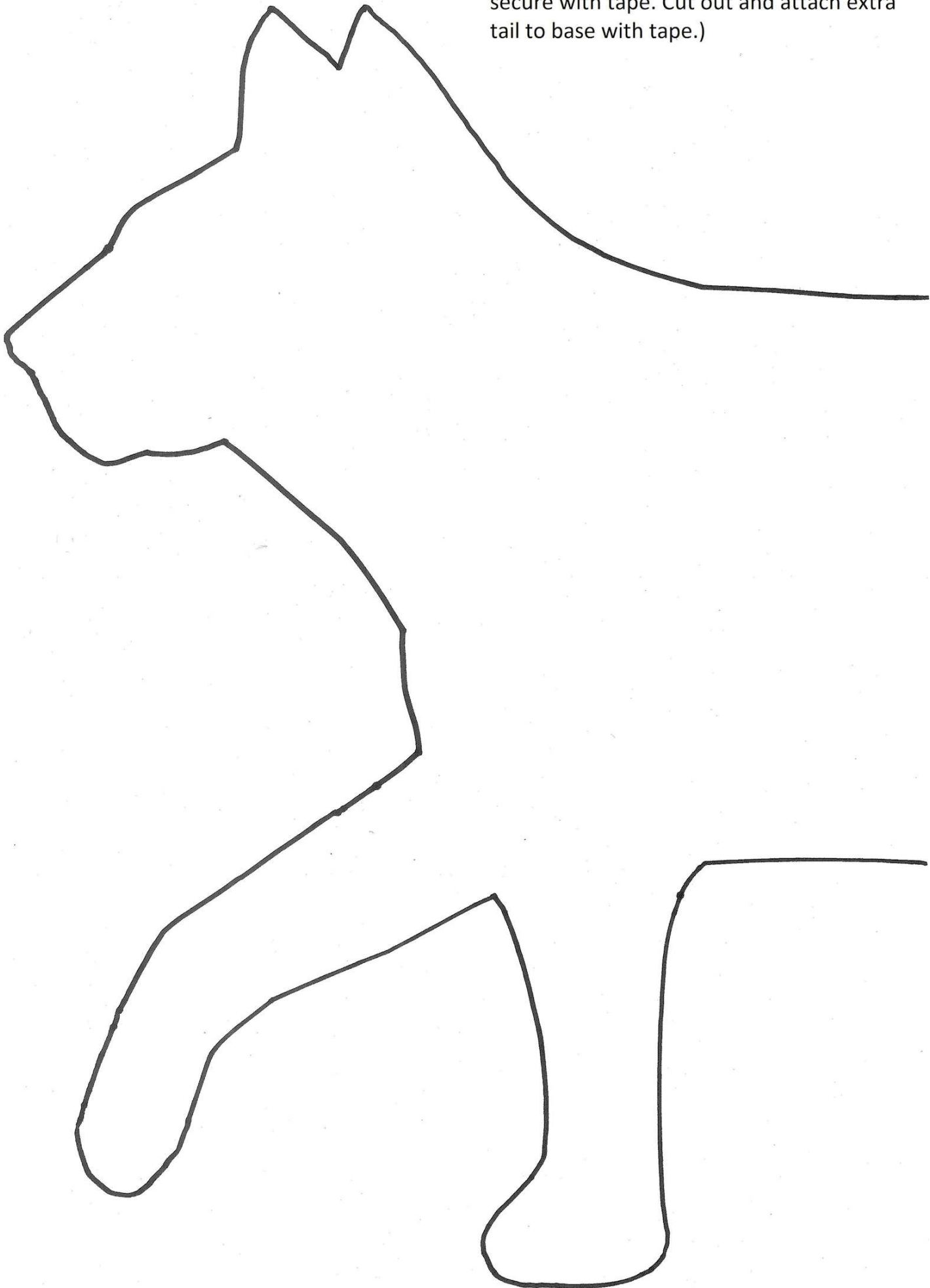
- Print Felt Cat Templates 1 & 2 onto single A3 pages
- Cut both templates out and secure together in the middle with sticky tape. Ensure that the extra tails is also cut out and attach to the tail base with sticky tape.
- Using the Felt Cat Template, trave onto faux fur and felt. This will give you the top and bottom layer of your cat.
- Secure the two layers together with pins for ease of sewing.



- Sew the two layers together approximately 1cm from the edge.
- Once the two templates have been sewn together, turn Felt Cat over and but the back of the felt approximately 12cm long in a vertical direction.
- Sew around the cut to ensure it is durable. This will allow the animals/insects to be inserted into the cat's stomach.
- Fill the Felt Cat with animals and insects.
- Let the fun and learning begin.

Felt Cat 1

(Cut out Felt Cat template 1 and 2 and secure with tape. Cut out and attach extra tail to base with tape.)



Felt Cat 2

