

FERAL CAT REPORTS

Wildlife Officer R. Smith of the Karratha District has reported, since the last issue of S.W.A.N.S., the taking of a feral cat at Yanrey Station.

The animal's stomach contained the following:

- 3 Geckoes
- 2 Dragons
- 2 Large Centepedes
- 1 Stick Insect
- 2 Skinks
- 2 Blind Worms
- 3 Grasshoppers
- 1 Spinifex Hopping Mouse (*Notomys alexis*)

Positive identification of the Hopping Mouse was provided by the Western Australian Museum.

This report demonstrates the diverse diet of the feral cat, and the occurrence of the Hopping Mouse is further circumstantial evidence in support of the theory that cats are responsible for the disappearance of many of our native mammals in certain areas.

The Museum, prior to this report, has recorded thirty-two species of mammals, eaten by feral cats. These comprise:—

- 10 species of bat
- 9 species of rodent
- 10 species of dasyurid
- Honey Possum
- Pigmy Possum
- Bandicoot, and
- Rabbit.

In some cases, the examination of stomach contents has provided the only locality data for some species, and demonstrates the predatory efficiency of the lovable domestic pet when abandoned in the wild.

An Honorary Wildlife Officer has also reported the taking of a feral cat during a field trip to observe the rare and endangered Naretha Blue-bonnet parrot in its habitat on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain. The cat, which was the size of an average domestic dog, had found a means of capturing prey, by lying in wait under a sheep watering trough and then attacking the birds as they came to drink. His hunting skill could be determined by the large quantities of feathers of this rare bird around the trough.

Field officers put paid to the cat with appropriate action, but evidence of other cats in the bird's habitat is of concern to Departmental officers and ornithologists.