

# Bushwalking, bokno, cats and cameras



Collaborative work of the Warddeken rangers  
and Northern Territory Government  
in the Manmoyi and Kamarrkawan Areas  
2012/2013

## Who was there

Rangers and traditional owners of the Warddeken IPA from the Manmoyi and Kamarrkawan ranger bases

Scientists Alys Stevens and Stuart Young (week 1) from the Northern Territory Government





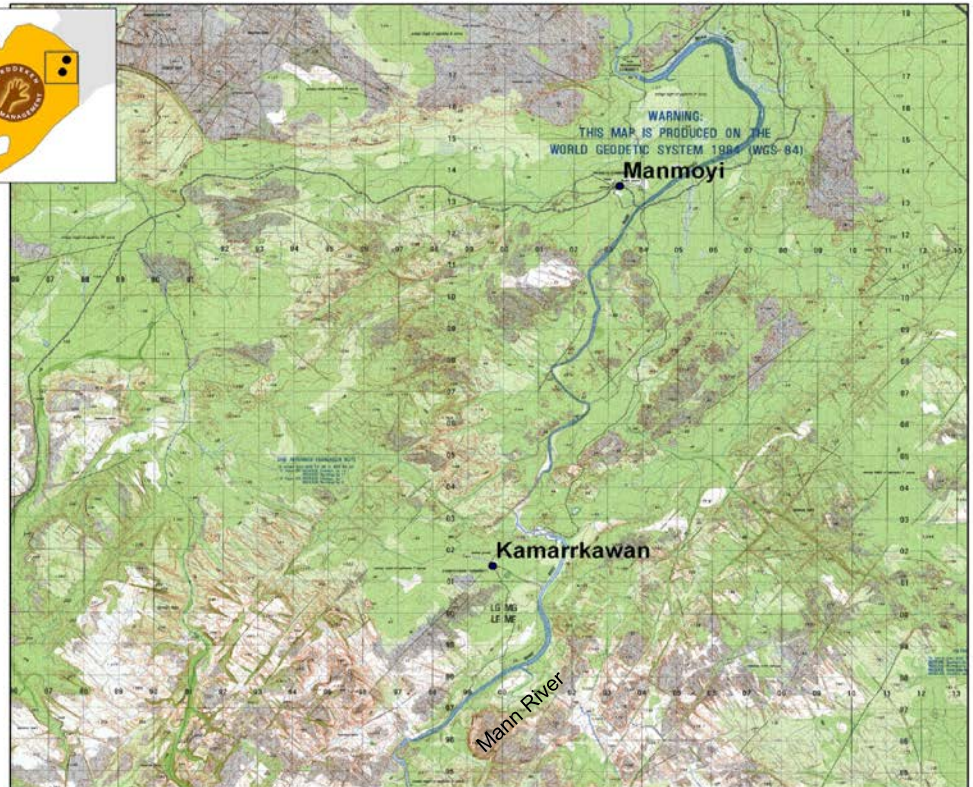
## Where and When



Our work was in the Ngulkwardde and Kordwalewale areas in the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area

This work forms part of going wildlife research and management that began in 2010.

In 2012 the rangers and scientist began surveying for feral cats to get a better understanding of what they are doing and their impact on native wildlife.



## Why?

This work is part of our project to understand what feral cats are doing in this country and if we can manage their impacts as part of taking care of stone-country animals

We had 3 main goals during this time

1. Start learning how to use motion sensor cameras in a better way
2. Find feral cat bokno (tracks) and manborlh (walking routes) by bushwalking through country
3. Night-time spotlight patrol for feral cats









## Both ways: two-toolbox

Our project tries to bring together Indigenous and western science

- Motion-sensor cameras are a new technology that help us have eyes in many places
- CyberTracker is a program that helps us collect information
- Bushwalking through country allows sharing of cultural knowledge and is good exercise, and at the same time we use rangers' acute tracking skills for feral cats to partner with our camera results

## Planning

We started planning meetings discussing our 3 goals and activities

By the beginning of every new week, we would have another planning meeting, putting together the work teams and dealing with any issues

We know it is important to always talk to each other and try to understand each other





## Bushwalking for bokno

We chose 20 walk routes of different lengths (3-15 km) to suit different teams of walkers

Rangers chose the walks so they could check up on country at the same time as looking for feral cat bokno (track) and manborlh (road)

We walked 89 km within a 200 km<sup>2</sup> area. We recorded > 50 incidents of feral cat bokno over 8 distinct areas





## Spotlighting for cats

During 14 patrol events, we drove our 60 km transects 5 times each over 50 hours and we recorded 14 individual cats.

One cat was recorded in the same place 3 times.

We also recorded other native species, such as *djebuyh*, the brush-tailed possum.

We weren't fast enough to get any photos of the cats we saw!



## Cameras

In northern Australia, no-one has been having much luck 'catching' cats on motion sensor cameras using the same baits as down south.

We are partners in an experiment being co-ordinated by Northern Territory Government Scientists across different places including Warddeken IPA, Kakadu NP, Wongalara (an AWC property) and Fish River (an ILC property).

We are testing out different baits including chicken meat, 'meow meow' (Feline Attractant Phonics), 'squashed cat glands' (Catastrophic™ for smell) all paired with a feathery visual lure. We also tested different numbers of traps at each site varying from 2 to 5.

We ran 24 camera sites, 3 weeks per site on 2 occasions, with 2 cameras per site, taking care to put them in different types of country including rocky, lowland woodland and wet areas with different types of bait and Lures. We also tested using five cameras per site.

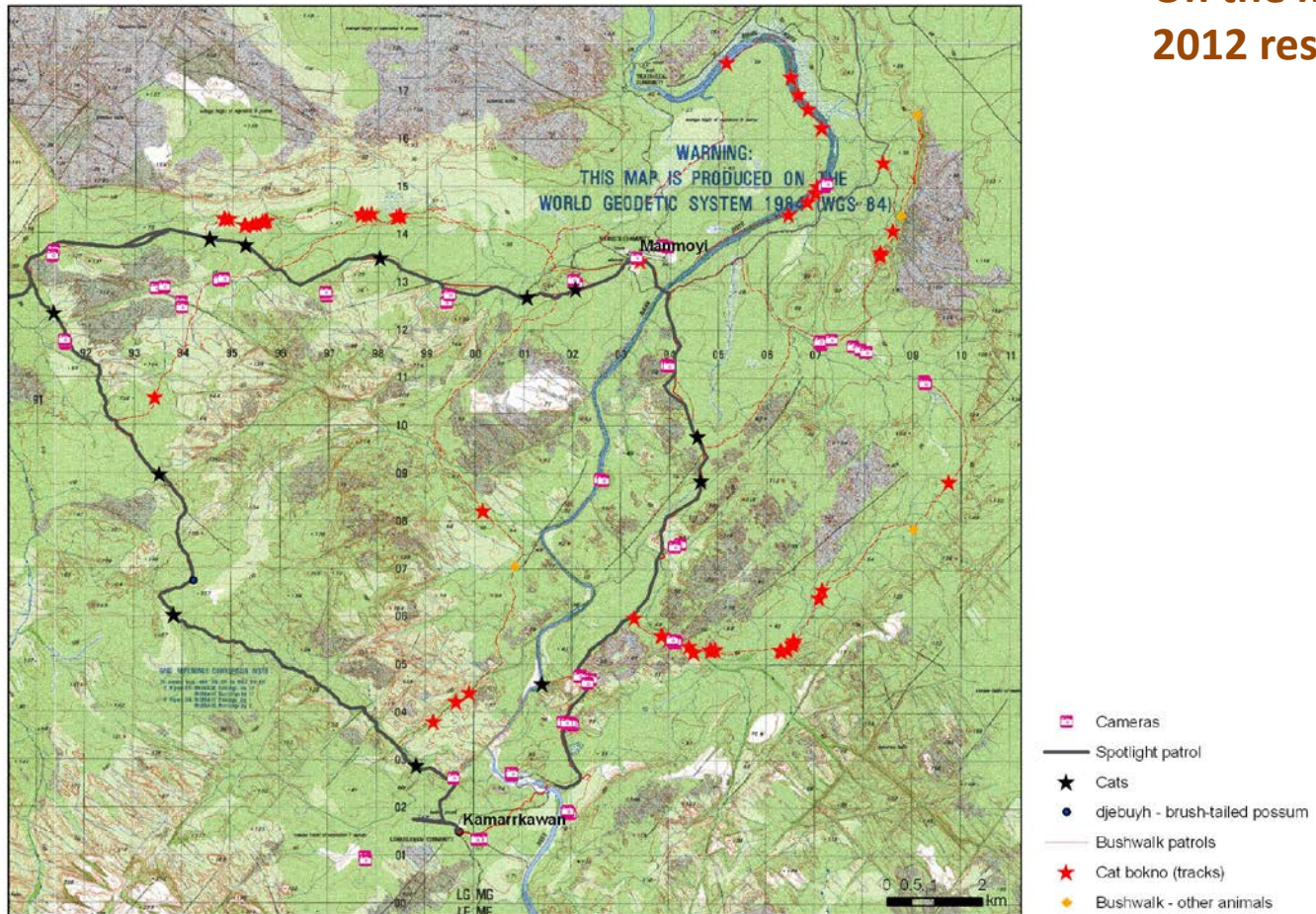






We have recorded cats on 10 different locations using camera traps. So far we have found that different lures and baits made little difference in attracting cats and we got the best results by using 5 camera set ups. However we will continue to test the best set up for cameras to capture both feral cats and small mammals.

## On the map – 2012 results









From the cameras



*Burrar*, Merten's water monitor

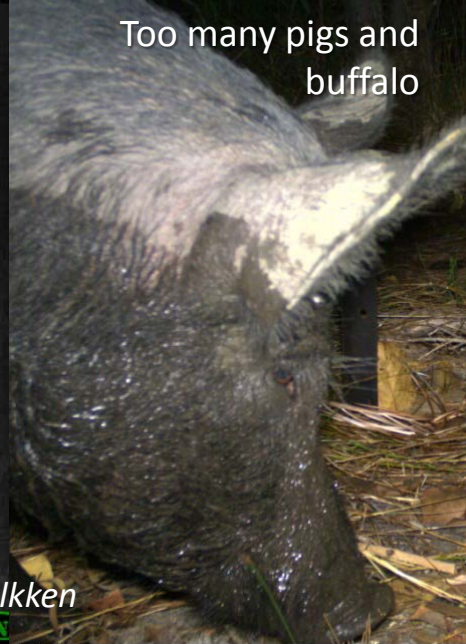
*Yirrkbadj*,  
the water rat

RW32





Too many pigs and buffalo



'Meow meow' is interesting for *dalkken* (dingo) and *kornobolo* (wallaby)

ECON

RW45

HC600 COVERT



Wak wak never stops going after our meat baits



15

HC600 COVERT



## Well done everyone



We were doing this work during kurrung, the build up season. This is the hottest time in the Northern Territory.

Outstation life is tough, especially at this time of the year. There is no escape from the heat as there are no air-conditioners, and services such as power, water and telephone lines are not always reliable. Everyone did very well to finish the work program.





For more information on any of the activities presented here, please contact Alys Stevens [alys.stevens@nt.gov.au](mailto:alys.stevens@nt.gov.au)





## **A special word**

During this time a very important traditional owner from the Manmoyi-Kamarrkawan areas and bininj professor passed away

She will be very deeply missed



Northern  
Territory  
Government

This project was supported by funding from the Australian Government's National Environmental Research Program.

For more information on the Northern Australia hub go to

[www.nerpnorthern.edu.au](http://www.nerpnorthern.edu.au)



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