

Is my pet cat at risk?

No.

In the six wildcat priority areas in which Scottish Wildcat Action is working, project staff will be putting out our own cage traps for the purposes of the *Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Release (TNVR)* programme. The purpose of TNVR is to neuter and vaccinate unowned domestic cats living in the wild that can breed with and pass disease to the few Scottish wildcats that remain.

By neutering and vaccinating these unowned cats, your pet will also be less exposed to the risk of disease.

If you live in a wildcat priority area (Morvern, Strathpeffer, Strathbogie, Strathavon, Northern Strathspey or the Angus Glens), it is possible that your pet cat could get caught in one of our cages (which contain food and water) but the cages are checked every 12 hours, at which point your cat would be released. This is a well-established practice that is currently taking place across a number of parts of Scotland to manage populations of feral cats.

Is Scottish Wildcat Action shooting cats?

No.

Scottish Wildcat Action is not shooting cats in order to protect Scottish wildcats.

However, we do work with land managers and gamekeepers across Scotland to protect the few wildcats that remain on their land. Land managers and gamekeepers routinely undertake legal predator control, including shooting feral cats, as part of their activities.

Scottish Wildcat Action is encouraging land managers and gamekeepers to take a precautionary approach in order to reduce the risk of wildcats being harmed. Using cage traps makes this possible. When an animal is caught in the cage trap, the gamekeeper can identify whether it has wildcat markings or indeed is someone's pet cat (e.g. collar or microchip). If one of these is the case, they alert us and/or release the cat unharmed. Cage trapping therefore prevents cats from being shot accidentally. We would also encourage all pet owners to microchip their cats.

Are cats being put down as part of Scottish Wildcat Action?

There are some circumstances when cats may be put down because of welfare issues:

- 1) The *Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release (TNVR)* protocol specifies that within wildcat priority areas (Morvern, Strathpeffer, Strathbogie, Strathavon, Northern Strathspey and the Angus Glens) only animals assessed as unhealthy by a vet may be put down.
- 2) The conservation breeding protocol specifies that only cats that do not meet the wildcat criteria necessary for conservation breeding AND would be at risk of being shot if returned to their place of capture, will be humanely euthanised. Welfare considerations mean it is not appropriate to move cats to another location as cats are territorial.