

Feral Cats on San Nicolas Island Face Death

U.S. Fish and Wildlife proposal seeks to euthanize cats to protect seabirds.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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Feral cats are the target of a plan crafted by federal wildlife biologists to protect wildlife. Feral cats are the target of a plan crafted by federal wildlife biologists to protect San Nicolas Island wildlife from extinction. The proposal calls for the use of padded leg traps and hunters to kill all wild cats on the Navy-owned land, about 60 miles off Southern California in the Channel Islands.

The island's 100 to 200 feral cats would be shot or given a lethal injection, according to the plan. The eradication of the felines would restore the seabird population and improve the quality of habitat for native wildlife.

Animal rights organizations oppose the plan and favor other methods for capturing the feral cats, including trap-neuter-return. TNR, however, is not an option on San Nicolas Island because in order to protect native wildlife, Navy policy prohibits the TNR practice on its property.

Specialized dogs also will be used to track the cats on the island. Professional hunters will use non-lead ammunition to kill the wild cats, the plan states. The removal of cats is expected to take one year.