

## San Nicolas Island Cat-Eradication Plan Under Review

**Public input about feral cat population to be reviewed before final assessment.**

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Public outcry over a plan to eradicate feral cats urges a more humane way to protect wildlife.

The outcry over a plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to eradicate feral cats from San Nicolas Island urges a more humane way to reduce the feral cats' impact on native wildlife.

The proposal set forth in an environmental assessment, however, details humane practices for trapping and killing the island's cat population, said Jane Hendron, spokeswoman for the FWS office in Carlsbad, Calif.

"We did recognize that this would be controversial," Hendron said.

The 100 to 200 feral cats that are estimated to be living on the Navy-owned land would be shot or given a lethal injection on the spot, according to the plan. Primary methods of trapping the cats include hunting with specialized dogs and using padded leg traps.

"Shooting is in fact considered a humane option in these circumstances," Hendron said in a phone interview.

Hunting dogs would be used by barking at the cats and driving them into a hole or up a tree. A hunter would then shoot the cat when a clear, fatal shot can be delivered, the report states.

Animal welfare groups are against the plan. Other methods for capturing the feral cats, including trap-neuter-return (TNR), are considered more humane by groups such as Alley Cat Allies.

Wendy Anderson said in a statement submitted by Alley Cat Allies that the proposed cat eradication failed to adequately consider TNR, which she said is the most effective method to accomplish reductions in feline population.

TNR, however, is not an option on San Nicolas Island because Navy policy prohibits the practice on its property in order to protect native wildlife species. "That is a national policy," Hendron said.

The option of eliminating the felines is a step forward in restoring the natural balance of San Nicolas Island, she said. These cats are highly aggressive, she added, and virtually unadoptable because they are untamed.

The public comment period for this plan has ended and the next step is to review the recommendations that were submitted and prepare a final environmental assessment.

[Click here to read more CatChannel coverage of the situation on San Nicolas Island.](#)