

## FREE MICROCHIPPING FOR COMPANION CATS WITHIN THE HALO PROJECT AREA

We have 180 microchips and 180 registration forms for the NZ Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) to give away for companion cats within the halo project area. We are working with vet nurses and students from the Otago Polytechnic and Vetlife Waikouaiti to microchip 180 cats that live within the Halo Project area.

A microchip identification tag is a small computer chip containing information linking you to your cat. The chip is inserted under the skin with a needle, a procedure that takes only a few minutes. It is common practice to insert the chip, which is non-toxic and about the size of a grain of rice, between your cat's shoulder blades. It will not cause your cat discomfort or allergic reactions. It is NOT a GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking device.

The microchip will be registered on the NZCAR. It is important to note that if you move away from the area the microchip is still relevant ONLY IF you update your details. You can update your contact details by calling (freephone) **0800 LOSTPET** during office hours or online at [www.animalregister.co.nz](http://www.animalregister.co.nz).



**Book in with Wendy at Vetlife Waikouaiti**  
2 Pratt Street, Waikouaiti, 9510.  
**03 465 7613** or [waikouaiti@vetlife.co.nz](mailto:waikouaiti@vetlife.co.nz)

Vetlife have partnered with Masterpet & Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health New Zealand. The first 50 companion cats microchipped under the Halo Project will receive a Black Hawk goodie bag & your first Broadline spot-on treatment FREE.

## HOW SAFE IS MY CAT?

Children from five classes in three schools (St Leonards, Sawyers Bay and Port Chalmers) situated along the West Harbour of Dunedin, studied cat behaviour in their own gardens. The children wanted to make sure that pet cats will be safe if they encounter traps set to catch other predators. Children were tasked with identifying their cat's interactions around different types of inoperative traps (A24, Trapinator, DOC 150/200) using trail cameras.

### Results:

- Cats were unable to access the trapping mechanism.
- Cats were most attracted to the DOC 150/200 trap box, followed by the A24, then Trapinator. The number of active encounters by cats appeared to decline overall with each night following the installation of the traps.
- 40 cats were recorded visiting the 15 gardens.
- Hedgehogs, dogs and rats were also seen interacting with the trap boxes.
- All cats that were owned by participants in the study were desexed.
- All cats had previously brought home prey, with most having brought home a range of different species (rodents, rabbits, birds, lizards, freshwater crayfish).
- Only two of 16 cats regularly wore a collar.
- Half of the participating cats were already microchipped.

The Halo Project  
is brought to you  
by the



Our cat microchipping project has received support from



*We aim to inspire and work with our communities to enhance, protect and connect with this landscape.*



The Halo Project area spans 55,000 hectares (ha) from the Silverpeaks in the west to the coastline in the east. Our predator control work is focussed on the 12,500ha surrounding Orokonui Ecosanctuary.



**Is your cat a  
HALO CAT?**

## WHY WE NEED HALO CATS



Shadow



Piwakawaka (Fantail)



Smudge



Southern Grass Skink

New Zealanders love to see native birds and lizards in and around their gardens; a lot of us love our cats too.

As cat owners know, domestic or companion cats can be killers. A year-long study<sup>1</sup> of 150 cats in urban Dunedin showed that they kill more birds, skinks, geckos and wētā than rats and mice. The researchers then used 37 of these cats that were known to be prolific hunters and found that placing bells on these cats halved the number of birds caught. Without collars, the cats caught 378 animals, including 82 birds, the number halved when cats wore collars (41 birds).

Domestic cats are predators that we have direct control over – so by being responsible cat owners, we can make a real difference to our native birds and insects.

<sup>1</sup> "Do domestic cats impose an unsustainable harvest on urban bird populations?" led by Yolanda van Heezik in 2009, University of Otago.

## BECOMING A HALO CAT

Responsible cat ownership is the best way that your cat can be a HALO CAT.

According to the Vets Association of New Zealand (VANZ), responsible cat ownership means:

- **Permanent identification** = Register your contact details on the NZCAR by microchipping your cat.
- **Desex your cat** = Desexing is an effective tool to prevent overpopulation and unwanted kittens and cats.
- **Avoid negative impacts on other people, animals and the environment** = VANZ recommend an owner should:
  - not allow cats to stray from their property;
  - ensure cats do not predate on vulnerable, native wildlife. Measures to reduce predation include the use of deterrent collars, curfews, confinement and the use of cat aviaries;
  - ensure cats do not use neighbours' yards or gardens for toileting.

It wasn't too long ago that we didn't have much control over our dogs, now it is normal to fence your property to keep your dog from roaming.



Cat aviary/fenced backyard from "Good Cats Stay At Home" by the Government of South Australia

### Do we need to do the same with our cats?

Contrary to common belief, cats do not have to roam outdoors to be happy. If you keep your cat entertained by creating an interesting environment, which fulfills its physical, mental and social needs, it will be happy to stay entirely within the confines of your property.

## Q&A: MICROCHIPPING YOUR CAT

### How much does microchipping cost?

The Halo Project is partnering with **Vetlife Waikouaiti** and the **Otago Polytechnic** to provide a free microchip and registration for your cat. You will be charged \$20 for the insertion. Normal cost for microchipping your cat ranges from \$45 to \$80.

### Is microchipping my cat safe?

Cat microchipping is considered very safe. New microchips are designed to stop the chip from moving around under the skin.

### Why is the Halo Project offering FREE microchipping for companion cats?

In the future we would like to undertake multi-species predator control in areas of high conservation value within the Halo Project area. In the unlikely event your cat gets caught we want to be able to return it to you as quickly as possible.

### Why should I microchip my cat?

It used to be that unless you had an identification tag on your cat your chance of finding it if it went missing was slim. With modern technology, however, that's changing. Having your cat microchipped will help reunite you with your cat.

### Can I just keep my cat inside at night?

Keeping cats inside overnight and during the hours of dawn and dusk can reduce predation of some native creatures.

However, it is important to note that many species of conservation concern are diurnal (active during the day), i.e. birds and lizards.

### When can I get my cat microchipped?

Book in NOW with Wendy and the team at **Vetlife Waikouaiti**: phone 03 465 7613 or email: waikouaiti@vetlife.co.nz.

Check our website ([www.haloproject.org.nz](http://www.haloproject.org.nz)) for updates regarding microchipping with Otago Polytechnic vet nurses.