



Central  
Coast  
Council

## Pets and protecting wildlife

Owning a pet is highly rewarding, but as a responsible pet owner you have an obligation to ensure your pet does not affect the natural environment and its inhabitants.

### The impact of pets on native wildlife

- The sight, smell and sound of a dog or cat can cause birds and animals distress.
- Dogs and cats can kill or harm wildlife.
- Breeding of native animals can be disrupted, effecting the already reducing populations.
- Dogs and cats can disturb bush regeneration projects and areas of ecological significance.
- Dog and cat poo that washes into waterways can harm fish, frogs and other aquatic animals.

## What you can do

To help preserve our wildlife and the environment, there are some things that responsible pet owners can do:

- When exercising your dog in public spaces, it's important they are kept on a leash and restrained at all times except when you're in an allocated off-leash area. Central Coast Council provides a number of off-leash exercise areas but owners must ensure that dogs are under effective control.
- Cats are allowed to roam away from home, except in prohibited places. Keeping your cat indoors overnight is recommended as they are natural hunters and may prey on birds and lizards, especially at dusk and dawn when these animals are most active.
- Dogs and cats are prohibited to enter school / preschool / kindergarten grounds, shopping centres, public-bathing areas including beaches, food preparation areas, sporting fields, playgrounds and wildlife protection areas, as outlined by the Companion Animals Act (1998).
- If your dog defecates in a public place or on someone else's property, you must remove the faeces immediately and dispose of it properly. This will stop it from getting into the waterways. If you fail to pick up after your dog, you or the person in charge at the time may be liable for a penalty.
- If your dog attacks or harms an animal, or causes a nuisance, as an owner you remain liable. On-the-spot fines can be issued for unregistered dogs or for owners who do not clean up after their pets.
- If you find a sick or injured wild native animal, contact WIRES, Wildlife Animal Rescue & Care Society Inc. or your local National Parks and Wildlife Service for more information.

For more information on responsible pet ownership visit [centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/pets](https://centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/pets)