

Cat collars provide big benefits for low risk

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A new study has challenged the belief that cat collars are 'risky', showing that collars can actually enhance the welfare of our feline friends.

The study's lead author, Associate Professor Michael Calver of Murdoch University, said some owners are reluctant to put a collar on their cat, as required by new Western Australian laws that came into effect in November 2013.

"Some fear that their pets could be significantly injured if the collar became snagged on an object, or if a cat's teeth or paws were caught in it," he said.

Researchers analysed data from 63 [cat owners](#) in metropolitan Perth, 55

members of the Cat Welfare Society of Western Australia, 107 veterinarians from Australia and New Zealand (with a total of 1,588 years of clinical experience), along with records from four Perth general veterinary practices and one large practice that also treated 24-hour emergency cases.

The report stated that of the 4,460 individual [cats](#) treated by the large practice (covering general cases and 24h emergencies), only 15 were recorded as having collar injuries, with no deaths. Five of these were believed to be strays.

No collar injuries were reported at the other four Perth veterinary practices and only one veterinarian recalled a cat who had ever died from collar injuries.

"While many owners reported that their cat's collar had snagged on an object, or had caught a body part before, very few injuries resulted," Dr Calver said.

"The data showed that cats are far more likely to be injured in a road accident, or in a fight with another cat."

Dr Calver said that most collar injuries could be avoided by ensuring that a cat's collar fit properly, was in good condition and checked regularly.

He also said that the benefits far outweigh the risks.

"Identification tags attached to the collar are cheap and make it very easy to reunite lost pets with their owners," Dr Calver said.

"Someone finding a lost cat has only to phone the number on the collar, rather than go to the extra trouble of taking the cat to a facility where a microchip can be read.

"A number of safe and effective 'predation deterrents' can also be attached to a collar, which can stop cats from hunting native wildlife."

New cat laws came into effect in Western Australia on November 1, requiring that cats over six months old wear a collar and registration tag, are microchipped, sterilised and registered with local government.

Provided by Murdoch University

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