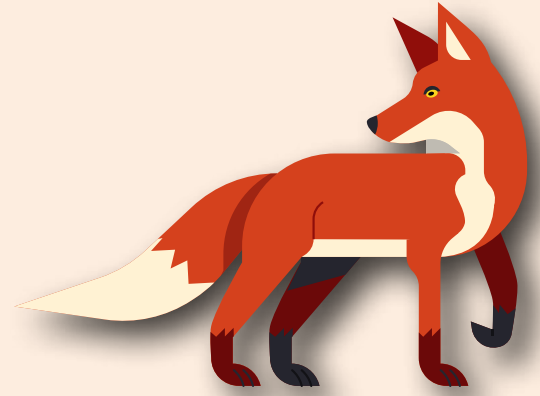


# The Fast and the Furriest



Role play game for schools

## Overview

This outdoor game can be used to help teach the impact that feral animals can have on threatened species.

Feral animals are animals that have been introduced from other areas, usually other countries, that have established populations in the wild. They have a devastating effect on our farmland, farm animals, native species and natural environments.

## Before the game

Identify a threatened species specific to your area, or area of interest. For example: Hunter River turtle, Manning River turtle, koala, spotted-tailed quoll or little tern. Turtles are a good subject for this game because they have heaps of eggs/young with the assurance that some will survive to adulthood.

Discuss the **threats** to this animal, such as habitat destruction (losing its home and/or food source), foxes, feral cats, dogs, vehicles, development and climate change.

Discuss the potential '**safe havens**' for these animals, such as trees, hollow logs, rocky islands in the creek, undisturbed beaches, patches of bushland.

## What you need to play

Max 30 students

50 X 30 metre open area

Hoops, or similar

Umpire's whistle

12 (approximate) cones to mark out game area

Different coloured vests or similar



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# Game area setup

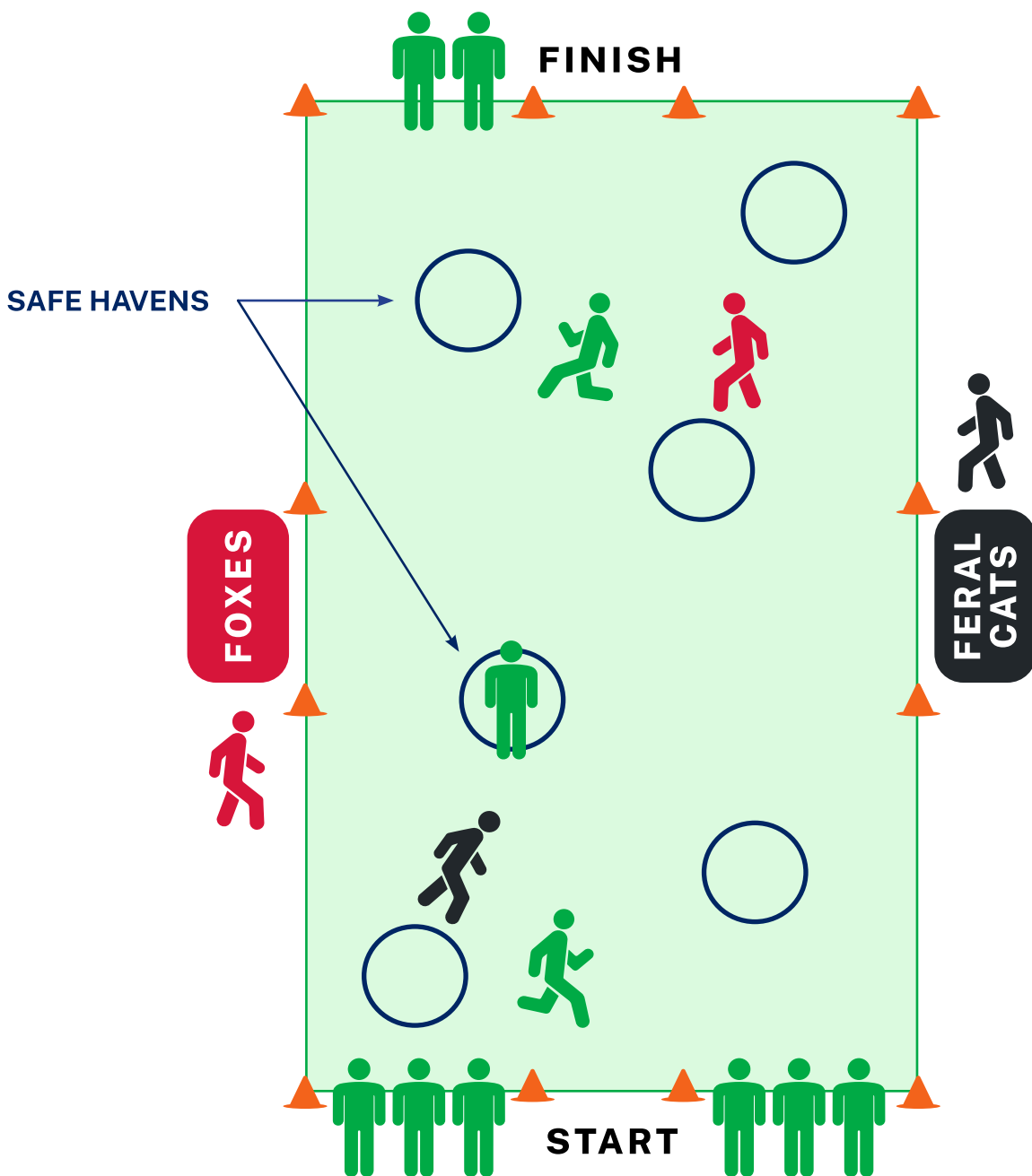
Mark out the game area in your school ground approximately 50 X 30 metres. Cones will help define the area.

Place a hoop, or mark an area, to one side of the game area for cats, and the other side for foxes. Feral animals can be interchanged depending on your threatened species.

Make a start line at one end of the play area and a finish line at the other end. If your threatened species is a turtle, the start line can be a nest area and the finish can be the river (use your imagination).

Mark out 'safe havens' in the game area using hoops, or similar items. Threatened species are safe and cannot be eaten when standing in the safe havens. For example, if you are using turtles it may be a big log or a rock.

You need to have rules stopping the feral animals from loitering near the 'safe havens' for too long. One option is to have a farmer, or someone similar, scaring off the feral animals and they have to go back to their home hoop for a period of time.



# Game play instructions

- Select players:
  - 5 students to be foxes and they wear red vests, or similar.
  - 5 students to be cats and they wear black vests, or similar.
  - The rest of the students line up along the start line.
- When the umpire blows the whistle (or says “GO”), the threatened species run to try and get to the finish line. Feral animals chase the threatened species and gently tap them to catch them (this needs to be firmly monitored as tapping can get a bit hard).

DIFFICULTY OPTION: Students move like their animal (crawl, fly, hop).

- If a threatened species gets caught by a feral animal, they change into a feral animal. The feral animal that caught them has to go home (to eat their prey).
- After touching home, the feral animal can return to the playing field. This is done so one feral animal can't tap lots of threatened species in a row. If needed, the umpire can make the feral animal stay at their home until released by the umpire to give the threatened species a better chance of survival.
- After all the threatened species are either caught or make it safe to the finish line, the umpire blows the whistle. The game resets and all the caught threatened species become feral animals. The remaining threatened species line up again and the umpire restarts the game.

## More information

Hunter region fact sheets

[Koala](#)

[Pied oystercatcher](#)

[Beach-stone curlew](#)

[Little tern](#)

[Spotted-tailed quoll](#)

[Swift parrot](#)

[Regent honeyeater](#)

[Brush-tailed rock wallaby](#)

[Australasian bittern](#)

[Eastern curlew](#)



## Post game reflection

Discuss with students how more threatened species reach the finish when there are more to start with.

The main take home messages:

**If there are lots of threatened species and fewer feral animals, then more species survive.**

**The more feral animals there are, the fewer threatened species survive.**

**Safe havens are important habitat for threatened species.**

