



O tātou tamariki, ngā Kaitiaki Taiao. Our children, our environmental guardians

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTACHING HARNESSSES AND COLLECTING MOVEMENT DATA

IMPORTANT NOTES BEFORE YOU START:

- School children may need help from an adult to attach a harness to a pet cat.
- Read these instructions through completely before you begin fitting the harness to a cat.
- Only attach a harness to a pet cat if you have a signed consent form from the pet owner and returned the signed form to your classroom teacher. You can download a copy of the consent form from www.nzfauna.ac.nz/cats
- Some cats might become aggressive while being fitted with a harness. Please do not try and fit a harness to a cat if you think there is a risk that you will be bitten or scratched.
- If the cat usually wears a flea collar, you may wish to remove this collar from the cat before you attach the harness.

A video explanation for attaching a harness can be found at www.nzfauna.ac.nz/cats

STEP 1. Find a cat. You may have a pet cat at home that you would like to fit a walking harness to, or you might have a friend or relative that will let you study their cat. Remember that you need to have a signed consent form from the owner of the pet cat if you want to include that cat in this project.

STEP 2. Make sure the cat is big enough for the harness. The cat needs to weigh over 1 kg to make sure that the weight of the harness is not too much for the cat to handle. Healthy cats that are 6 months old or older should weigh more than 1 kg.

STEP 3. Wait until the cat is calm before trying to attach the harness. Think about the times of day when your cat is likely to be sitting calmly. Attach the harness during that time for your first attempt.

STEP 4. Understand the different parts of the harness. Lay out the harness and identify the three different sections (Figure 1). The body loop, the collar loop, and the back strap.



Figure 1. Walking harness with a GPS device attached.



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STEP 5. Adjust the size of the harness. The collar strap and the body strap of the harness each have a buckle that allows you to resize the straps. The straps need to be long enough so that they reach around neck of the cat (for the collar section) and the body of the cat behind the front legs (for the body section). The amount of space between the cat and the harness should be about the width of your finger (Figure 2).

STEP 6. Fit the harness to the cat. This is where school children might need help from an adult. Hold the cat securely. Loop the body section of the harness around the belly of the cat and use the clip to securely fasten the body section into a loop. The body section of the harness should sit behind the front legs of the cat. Loop the collar section of the harness around the neck of the cat. Use the clip to secure it into place. You can fit the collar section either before or after you have fitted the body section. As in **STEP 5**, you may need to remove the harness to adjust the size of the collar or body section using the buckle.

When the body section of the harness and the collar section of the harness are correctly secured in place the back strap with the GPS device attached should be running along the back of the cat. If the back strap is running along the belly of the cat then remove the harness and try again.



Figure 2. Walking harness attached to a pet cat.



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STEP 7. Allow the cat some time to get used to the harness. Put the harness on the cat and leave the cat for one hour. The cat will probably bite at the harness for several minutes while it is getting used to wearing the harness. If the cat is still biting at the harness after one hour then remove the harness from the cat. It may take several times of putting the harness on the cat and leaving it for a while before the cat gets used to wearing the harness.

STEP 8. Turn the GPS device on. Once you are confident that the cat is comfortable wearing the harness then fit the harness to the cat by following **STEP 6**. Push the button on the GPS device until the blue light flashes once, then release the button. The blue light flash means that the GPS device is now working and will record a GPS position every few minutes. A red and a blue light will both flash at the same time when a GPS position is recorded.

IMPORTANT: If the red light blinked once when the button on the GPS device was held then the GPS device is now turned off. In this case, just hold the button on the GPS device again until the blue light flashes once, then release the button.



Figure 3. Turn the GPS device on by holding the large button. A blue light on the device will flash when the device is turned on.

STEP 9. Monitor the health of the cat. Check the cat once per day for signs of abrasion caused by the harness. You are looking for redness on the skin underneath the fur. If the harness is causing abrasion then remove the harness and do not put it back onto the cat.

STEP 10. Record movement data. The walking harness can stay on the cat for up to three days to record where it goes.

STEP 11. Remove the harness and bring it back to school. After three days turn the device off by holding the button on the GPS device. The red light should blink once. If no lights blink after holding the button for 5 seconds then the GPS device has already run out of battery and is turned off. Remove the harness and place it back into the envelope that was provided. Return the harness in the envelope to the classroom teacher.