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NRM Notes

Issue 3 ~ August 2010

- Enabling regional pest animal control – workshops and report
- Local NRM News stories:
 - Wild Dog Management Planning sessions in WA
 - RHD Boost in SA
 - Coordinated fox baiting program at Eyre Peninsula
 - Feral Cat genetic study on Kangaroo Island
 - Coordinated pest control in the Gingham/ Gwydir wetlands

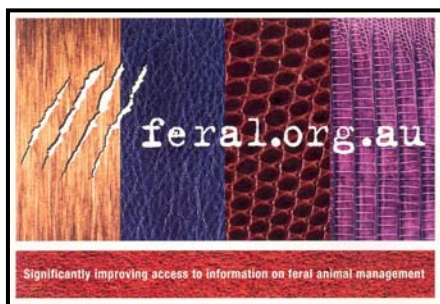
This is the 3rd edition of NRM Notes. It is published every 4 months and with each edition, we acquire new subscribers and interest is still increasing. Thank you to those of you who took the time to send me articles for this edition – if you have sent me an article and it does not appear in this edition, it will be included in the next NRM Notes before the end of 2010.

NRM Notes is a publication that encourages cross border and inter-agency communications regarding pest animal projects and planning – it is all much easier if we talk about it!

Keep sending through information about what you are up to and thanks for your support, Jessica

National NRM Knowledge Conference and Knowledge Fair – Darwin, April 2010

The National NRM Knowledge Conference was held this year in Darwin and the theme was ‘connecting across people and place’. Part of the conference was a knowledge fair that allowed NRM agencies to set up a trade display and showcase their services, skills and people. The Invasive Animals CRC set up a display and there was a high level of interest from a huge variety of backgrounds. There was wide interest in the Vertebrate Pest Diploma course that is currently being offered through University of Canberra and many resources were distributed to attendees.



If you have been experiencing technical problems when visiting or searching the pest animal database at www.feral.org.au we thank you for your patience. We are working to upgrade this resource and while the upgrade is not fully complete, we have moved to a new server and have decided to make the new site live. We have made the switch as the problems with the old server have meant the site is unavailable more often than it is live. Many of the links have changed, but the information you seek is still on the site. Search the reference database by clicking on the link from the homepage or go to: www.feral.org.au/search

Diary Marker for June 2011.....



For more information
visit the website
www.avpc.net.au





Enabling regional pest animal control

Dr Lisa Robins, Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, Canberra

'Enabling regional pest animal control' is an Invasive Animals CRC report prepared by Dr Lisa Robins through the Australian Pest Animal Management Program. The report examines the information needs of regional-level natural resource managers and pest animal controllers and explores the efficacy of capacity-building mechanisms. The report forms part of the IA CRC's PestSmart toolkit work which aims to provide a package of information that will distil the IA CRC's 7 year research program findings into an easy to use and accessible format.

Forbes in NSW (Lachlan CMA), Longreach in Qld (Desert Channels NRM) and Kingscote in SA (Kangaroo Island NRM) were locations chosen to hold regional workshops to help identify the capacity issues of regional NRM managers and pest animal controllers. Participants completed surveys on information products and capacity building options and engaged in structured discussions during the one day workshops.

Some key recommendations presented within the report include:

- Changing 'PestSmart toolkit' to 'Get PestSmart',
- The resource should be a dynamic 'one-stop-shop' for up to date and relevant pest animal information across all products and situations,
- The resource should be simply structured with increasing levels of detail available,
- The main structural platform for 'Get PestSmart' should be web-based.



Link: http://www.invasiveanimals.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Enabling-regional-pest-animal-control_020810.pdf
Contact: Jessica Marsh: (02) 6391 3907 or jessica.gibson@industry.nsw.gov.au

Pastoralist planning sessions in Western Australia set direction for wild dog control

Pastoralists in the Shark Bay and Murchison shires are strengthening wild dog control programs following recent planning workshops in the area. The sessions were run by Queensland-based national wild dog facilitator Greg Mifsud and organised by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA. The two workshops attracted 50 participants.

The workshops provided information on wild dog movements, ecology and areas of impact, along with optimal control methods. They were designed to help develop local area management plans to direct control activities.

As a result of the workshops, pastoralists in the Shire of Murchison will double their baiting programs from twice annually to four times per year. Those in the Shark Bay area will treble their coordinated baiting program from once to three times per year, at the same time as neighboring shires enhance the overall control program. The baiting will be coordinated through the local Zone Control Authorities, which are made-up of local landholders, shire and department representatives.

Sandy McTaggart, of Mt Narryer Station, said the workshop held at the Murchison Settlement provided good direction for pastoralists in terms of future strategic wild dog control.



Greg Mifsud, Mark Halleen, Tim Hyam & Brian Wake
Shark Bay Wild Dog Workshop

"There is a renewed level of hope if we can expedite the programs that have been discussed, that maybe we can get back on top of this problem as we did in the late seventies."



Animal Control Technologies Australia

Link: http://www.invasiveanimals.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Enabling-regional-pest-animal-control_020810.pdf
Contact: Barry Davies: (08) 9780 6271, Manager, Regional Biosecurity - Department of Agriculture and Food WA



RHD BOOST in South Australia - Sequencing Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV)

The South Australian government rabbit research group (now in Biosecurity SA) has collected samples of wild strains of RHDV since the originally imported Czech strain escaped quarantine in 1995. We have been monitoring evolution of the virus at both temporal and spatial scales. RHD-Boost is screening overseas strains of RHDV for potential release in Australia to overcome resistance to RHDV gradually developing in rabbits here.

Originally, we sequenced a relatively small portion of the viral genome but in recent times, John Kovaliski, our technical officer has succeeded in sequencing the whole genome of 7437 nucleotides and has found differences in wild strains compared to the original Czech strain.

Unfortunately, over the last 10 years, very few samples have been collected from anywhere in Australia other than those we have collected ourselves in SA.

We are asking anyone who finds dead rabbits that they suspect may have died from RHD to collect a thumb-nail size piece of liver or spleen, freeze it as soon as possible and let us know so we can arrange collection.

If these tissues are no longer present, we can extract virus from marrow the larger legs bones if the carcass is relatively fresh. Samples from 1-3 dead rabbits from any one site would be most welcome.

Contact: Ron Sinclair, Greg Mutze or John Kovaliski: (08) 8303 9620, or email ron.sinclair@sa.gov.au

Eyre Peninsula coordinated fox baiting shows substantial production gains

Eyre Peninsula has the largest and longest running landscape scale fox baiting and monitoring program in Australia. Around 800 land managers are involved in the program covering 40,000 square kilometers of private and public land. Coordinated community groups distribute bait at two main periods of the year. Autumn baiting coincides with peak fox numbers, low food levels and high mobility. It's also close to key lambing times. Spring baiting coincides with adult foxes actively searching for extra resources to feed cubs.

While increased lambing is the goal for many farmers, analysis of annual spotlight surveys and anecdotal reports by land managers show significant improvement in the numbers of many native species such as goannas, echidnas, quails and mallee fowl. Analysis of the spotlight surveys also suggests fox populations have declined by as much as 55% in some areas since the monitoring program in 2002.

“This analysis conclusively showed that fox populations on the Eyre Peninsula have undergone substantial declines over the last 8 years”

“Preliminary analysis of other species suggest that both rabbits and kangaroos have not declined over the same period, making it unlikely that the fox decline was due principally to an environmental effect like drought”(O’Connor NRM analysis)

It is estimated that gains for livestock production alone are in the order of 5-10%, which equates roughly to a net gain of \$10 million for the EP economy. To date there have not been definitive methods to put an economic value on the loss of biodiversity caused by foxes on Eyre Peninsula.



Local 1080 preparation



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Web: <http://www.epnrm.sa.gov.au/>



Government of South Australia
Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources
Management Board



Genetic Structure of Feral Cat Populations on Kangaroo Island

The effective control of feral cats requires that animals are removed from the population faster than they are replaced by births and immigration from surrounding areas. Consequently, cat control programs are likely to be most effective when immigration into the control area is minimal. The Dudley Peninsula is connected to the main body of Kangaroo Island by a narrow isthmus which might act as a barrier to restrict migration. If the potential for migration of feral cats across the isthmus is relatively low, the Dudley Peninsula could be a useful management unit for feral cat control because the rate at which cats are replaced by immigration would be low.

105 genetic samples from feral cats across the island have been collected to help determine whether the cat populations on the Dudley Peninsula are sufficiently distinct from populations on other parts of the island to indicate low rates of migration onto the peninsula.



Most of these samples have been provided by community members in the form of small pieces of ear tissue cut from the carcasses of cats that have been shot, trapped or found as road kill. This project is being undertaken by the Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board with support from the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre.

Image: Locations of collected cat samples on Kangaroo Island

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Web: <http://www.kinrm.sa.gov.au/>



Government of South Australia
Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board

Coordinated Pest animal Control in the Lower Gwydir and Gingham Wetlands

The North West Livestock Health and Pest Authority have recently completed a major feral pig control program in the internationally recognised RAMSAR wetlands in the Lower Gwydir and Gingham area North West of Moree. The program is a joint initiative between the North West LHPA, Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Landholders in the project area which covered around 170,000 hectares over 73 properties.

Two aerial shooting programs were carried out with the most recent program in early May this year culling 1,558 feral pigs over 4 days. This is in addition to 1,012 feral pigs that were shot in February. A large scale follow up 1080 baiting and trapping program has also recently been carried out following the aerial component of the project and the North West LHPA has made a number of feral pig traps available to landholders to assist with this follow up control.

Many landholders in the project area have also taken advantage of the subsidised fox baits made available by the project. Fox control is planned on many properties in coming months and landholders are expected to see results from fox control including increased livestock productivity as well as a reduction in the threats foxes cause to native wildlife including nationally threatened migratory bird species found in the area. The Border Rivers Gwydir CMA has recently negotiated with the North West LHPA for further funding for feral pig and fox control in the Lower Gwydir and Gingham wetlands area during 2010-2011. This funding, being an initiative of *Caring for Our Country* will provide a further two aerial shooting programs (around 40 hours per program) as well as continued landholder support for follow up 1080 baiting for feral pigs and foxes.



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Contact: Jamie Maddocks: 0429 924 365



Thanks again to all NRM Notes subscribers, if you have any comments about this issue or would like to contribute to the next issue, please contact me on (02) 6391 3907 or email jessica.gibson@invasiveanimals.com