GAIA RESEARCH   ABN 21 073 711 421
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

21 May 2016

Pest Animal Review
Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001
nrc@nrc.nsw.gov.au

Pest Animal Review

Dear Sean,

I welcome the Pest Animal Management Review 2016 as the continued increase in the number of exotic feral vertebrates is impacting on ecosystems and threatened species (as Listed under the TSC Act (1995). I support virtually all of the recommendations. However there are a few exceptions that will be outlined below

My comments are based on the facts that I: am a field zoologist (over 40 articles published in reviewed journals) that deals with the TSC Act professionally, sit on various recovery teams set up by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and hold the position of secretary for the Shoalhaven Landcare Association. I have been involved in many projects to restore ecosystems to provide habitat and facilitate the dispersal of flora and fauna.

Feral Horses
A small vocal minority have captured the media in regard to feral houses, particularly in the high country of Victoria and NSW. I have seen first hand the damage this species has done to the fragile ecosystems in the high country. Feral horses should be allowed one exception – that registered horse fanciers can capture and rehabilitate animals. Apart from that all wild horse are feral and should be eradicated. The heritage value of this species ancestors is debatable and should not be given undue priority in regard to conservation of threatened ecosystems and human health (many vehicular accidents with collisions with feral horses).

Freshwater pest species
The NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994 should list the yabbie *Cherax destructor* east of the divide as a feral species and prohibit its sale and culture. It is probably too late but this native species now has widespread populations outside its natural range because it is legal to purchase seedling fish and stock dams. Animals are also sold in pet shops. I did nominate this species as a key threatening process under the TSC Act but the scientific committee indicated that there was insufficient quantitative evidence to support the claim.

Feral Deer

I reside in Nowra on the south coast of NSW and the Shoalhaven now supports 5 feral species of deer (Chital, Rusa, Fallow, Red and Samba). Virtually all have established from animals being liberated from farms in the last decade. I welcome the reforms re excluding all species of deer from the NSW Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002. Deer farms should be registered and the owners be licenced. As part of that licence they should provide a strategy for humane disposal of animals, especially if the farm is discontinued or sold.

Indian Ringnecks

Indian Ringnecks are a highly adaptable species capable of surviving in a wide range of climates and environments. It should be illegal to breed or sell this species so that by natural attrition those animals currently in captivity can be kept but no future generations are permitted.

Metadata

There are existing systems where records and metadata can be stored and readily accessed – the Atlas of Living Australia and BioNet. Using the standard proforma used by these systems will not duplicate an existing robust system.

Funding

My question is will both governments support that the broad range of recommendations are funded. The expanded role of Local Land Services for feral animals (and the NSW Biodiversity Act) means that there should be adequate staff to undertake the many actions necessary as a result of this review.

Climate Change

Anthropogenic climate change is an established fact with quantitative data indicating increases in ambient and water temperatures. Feral populations of ornamental live bearing exotic fish occur in far northern NSW. These populations will be enhanced by a slight raise in water temperature. Live bearing exotic fish are likely to form feral populations in central and southern NSW over the near future – given the current trends. I welcome the proposed controls.

Yours truly,

Garry Daly

B.Sc, Dip. Ed, Secretary Shoalhaven Landcare Association