

Section 6.1 Declaration of pests in NSW, paragraph 4 page 71

6.2 Management of deer in NSW must change (various sections)

Comment:

I oppose the listing of deer (any species) as declared pest animals.

The social and economic benefits to the community of healthy deer populations far outweigh any (generally insignificant) environmental impacts. Other than in situations in which wild deer become locally overabundant (eg Royal NP), their presence rarely results in observable or measurable negative impacts upon ecology or the economics of rural farming enterprises. Management of localised overabundance can be effectively addressed using the management tool that is recreational hunting. Wild deer overabundance is in almost all cases a result of access restrictions upon recreational hunters, which restricts the effectiveness of this population control tool.

Wild deer management programs administered by the NSW DPI have been shown to be highly effective at addressing local overabundance. In fact the Draft Hastings Wild Deer Management Strategy 2016-2018 (NSW LLS, 2016) states that “The success of using local recreational hunters/ shooters is observed in a significantly reduced population of wild deer”. The abovementioned report further confirms that temporary suspensions of game hunting regulations can be obtained as required. To state that deer control via targeted recreational hunting cannot be achieved under the current regulatory framework is therefore misleading and inaccurate.

Page 76: “placing a responsibility for all landholders to control pests on their property.”

Comment: Listing of deer as a pest species would place an unwelcome regulatory burden upon landowners to control populations of deer, given the transient and cryptic behaviour of this species.

Page 76: Re constraints upon deer hunting as a result of fair chase provisions.

Comment: I generally concur with the spirit of this finding however I caution that any changes to the rules that allow deer to be hunted from vehicles (particularly at night) would result in an unacceptable risk of harm to non-target species / humans. A review of hunting related firearm related incidents suggests that most involve vehicles.

Section 6.3 Reducing the risks from cats

Page 82.

Comment: I support the use of “24-hour containment requirements for domestic cats, particularly close to identified conservation area of significance” (Hasham 2015).

I believe this measure would be effective in reducing cat abundance, particularly in the urban-rural fringe. This measure should be applied throughout NSW, with any cat identified outside a residence at any time being a candidate for capture and / or lethal control.

6.4 Wild dogs – Schedule 2 lands

Comment: Research shows wild dogs provide similar ecological functions within ecosystems to pure bred dingoes. Any new regulatory framework should view wild dogs and dingoes as one and the same from an ecological perspective, and should place emphasis on dingo / wild dog conservation, particularly in sensitive ecological environments.

7.2 Valuing science and heritage – feral horses

Comment: I support the effective eradication of wild horse populations through NSW. Allowable methodologies should include trapping and lethal control, ground and aerial shooting combined with harm minimisation via exclusion fencing.

The NSW strategy should contain provision for the integration of the NSW wild horse control framework with that of the Commonwealth. Parts of the Commonwealth Estate (particularly military land) contain populations of wild horses. It is recommended the Department of Defence adopt a revised NSW regulatory framework for the management of wild horses in preference to Commonwealth procedures.

7.3 Greater consistency in managing introduced birds in NSW

Comment: Greater emphasis should be placed on the role of individuals and community groups in the trapping and destruction of introduced birds (eg mynas). Designs of traps should be made freely available and technical assistance could be provided by the relevant LLS.

7.4 Recreational hunting as a management tool

General Comments:

I take exception to the style and content of the section. In particular the highlighting of disagreements between some landowners and hunters. Such disagreements are rare in the context of the number of licenced hunters in NSW, further this should be viewed as an opportunity to improve relations rather than a reason to discredit the efficacy of hunting as a pest control tool.

The attempt by the report to associate recreational hunting with animal welfare concerns is in the most part baseless, and reflects a poor understanding of the skills and experience of NSW hunters on the part of the author. The views of the RSPCA in this sense should not be included in the report. This organisation is confused and conflicted with an emotional and philosophical bias against recreational hunting. I note that the highest profile animal cruelty issues in recent times have been associated with professional shooting, for example the Guy Fawkes National Park wild horse cull.

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