

23 May 2016
Pest Animal Review
Natural Resources Commission
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Pest Animal Review

Dear Sean,

The Shoalhaven Landcare Association welcomes the Pest Animal Management Review 2016 as the continued increase in the number of exotic feral vertebrates is impacting significantly on both agriculture and biodiversity. Our organisation supports virtually all of the recommendations. We wish to particularly highlight several of the issues as detailed below.

Shoalhaven Landcare Association is a grouping of 16 Landcare and natural resource management groups across the Shoalhaven LGA. We have been involved in many projects to restore ecosystems to provide habitat and facilitate the dispersal of flora and fauna, as well as to support agricultural enterprises develop more sustainable and profitable operations. In both sectors, the impacts of feral pests has been a common factor in all projects and endeavours, and one in which there are no easy solutions. Indeed, the impact of government regulations in various forms has generally made the remedial actions more difficult and more expensive.

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. We support the accelerated development of the virus to control freshwater carp, although we are concerned that progress at present is very slow. We believe that there is considerable community support for this measure look to the government for continued assistance for community control efforts in the meantime.

Feral Deer

The Shoalhaven area 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. We would welcome the reforms re excluding all species of deer from the NSW Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002. This would make deer control through shooting by landowners and recreational shooters a mor effective strategy. 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.

Feral Cats

We welcome the inclusion of the feral cat issue into the overall NSW Invasive species strategy. The complications with the companion animals system have made landowners ambivalent about participating in control programs. Recognition at the State level should ease many of these concerns.

Metadata and Data Protocols

There are some existing systems where records and metadata can be stored and readily accessed – the Atlas of Living Australia and BioNet. On the other hand, there are minimal widely used data protocols for the collection of feral pest control activity. We support the recommendation for standard data collection system for government-funded activity, and for this data to be publically available.

Funding

Shoalhaven Landcare urges governments to support the broad range of recommendations for funding. We note the regular reductions in funding for these types of activities by both Federal and State Governments during recent years. 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, if the adequate funding mechanisms are put in place.

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. We would welcome the proposed controls for issues such as this.

Penalties and enforcement

We note that there is no particular section of the report dealing with enforcement. Penalties and enforcement is probably the one single area with the most widespread community dissatisfaction with the Invasive Species strategy in NSW. We urge the NSW Government ensure that realistic enforcement processes that will be enforced by the Courts are a key part of the new system.