



NAMN Forum: Feral Animal Management

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2017
Time: 9.15am - 1.00pm (Registration from 8.45am)
Venue: Henderson Environment Centre, 16 Groat Street, North Beach
Cost: \$66 (inc. GST)

ABOUT THE FORUM

Please join us for this fantastic opportunity to hear from organisations involved in the research and management of current and emerging feral animal control issues. The pressure from invasive animals is one of the most frequently cited threats to our environment, resulting in the loss of native fauna and degradation of habitat, as well having significant impacts on agriculture. Speakers for the day include experts from the City of Stirling, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Agriculture and Food WA, Murdoch University, the WA Apiarists' Society, Murdoch University, WALGA and feral animal contractors. The event will include a morning tea and lunch break where attendees can meet and network with others in their field, and question sessions with all presenters.

PROGRAM

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| 8.45am | Registration |
| 9.15am | Welcome and Introduction
<i>Melanie Davies, Biodiversity and Sustainability Project Officer, WALGA</i> |
| 9.20am | Introduced Corella control in the south-west region: outcomes from the first year of local government collaboration
<i>Michelle Hofmeester, Environmental Policy Officer, WALGA, and Clint Charles, Principal, C&S Feral Pest Services</i> |
| 9.45am | Feral animal control in the City of Stirling: working smarter not harder
<i>Jo Taylor, Conservation Officer Natural Areas, City of Stirling</i> |
| 10.10am | Bee-keepers versus bee-losers: how to manage feral bee infestations and swarming
<i>Dan Dowsett, Member of the WA Apiarists' Society (Inc.)</i> |
| 10.35am | Rabbits: destructive pests of agriculture and the environment
<i>Dr Susan Campbell, Research Officer Invasive Species, DAFWA</i> |
| 11.00am | Morning tea |
| 11.30am | Western Shield fauna recovery program
<i>Ashley Millar, Western Shield Coordinator, DPAW</i> |
| 11.55am | Detecting feral pigs in forest habitats using aerially deployed thermal sensors
<i>Dr Peter Adams, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Murdoch University and Development Officer Invasive Species, DAFWA</i> |
| 12.20pm | Wild dogs in Western Australia: research informing management
<i>Malcolm Kennedy, Research Officer Invasive Species, DAFWA</i> |
| 12.45pm | Lunch and close of event |

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Michelle Hofmeester, Environment Policy Officer WALGA, and Clint Charles, Principal C & S Feral Pest Services, will discuss introduced Corella control in the South West, focusing on the outcomes of the first year of implementation of the Local Government Coordinated Corella Control Program. Michelle will discuss the background to the program, the importance of a collaborative approach, the challenges encountered and plans for future continuity. Clint will provide information on the technical aspects of control, such as development of a successful control technique and suitable sites for control operations.

Jo Taylor, Conservation Officer Natural Areas, City of Stirling, will discuss how the control of feral animals presents local governments with one of our most challenging modern day issues. Jo will discuss strategies to increase success in feral animal control, in particular for foxes, rabbits and feral cats, through upskilling staff and community members, building partnerships with adjacent landowners, utilising new technology and providing education programs.

Dan Dowsett, Nationally Accredited Beekeeper, Beekeeping Lecturer and Life Member of the WA Apiarists' Society (Inc.), will discuss how modern bee keeping techniques aim to avoid undesirable behaviour of the European Honey Bee, such as swarming and occupancy of native animal nesting hollows in natural areas. Dan will also provide information on the management of nesting hollow occupation, and the merits and drawbacks of relocation, chemical, barrier and baiting treatment options. Information on the impact of feral bees on native bee species, and an approach to feral bee management in the context of the worldwide bee decline will also be provided. Dan has worked with Local Government Authorities on feral bee management policies, and will discuss what programs are underway, available training, and the importance of registration for both backyard and commercial beekeepers.

Dr Susan Campbell, Research Officer Invasive Species, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, will discuss how rabbits are a significant threat to agricultural production, causing an estimated \$200 million in damages each year. In addition, competition with and land degradation from rabbits directly threatens the survival of over 300 threatened native plant and animal species in Australia. For the first time in 20 years, a new strain of biological control virus for rabbits was released in March 2017. Through a nationally co-ordinated program, community groups, landcare and NRM organisations, industry stakeholders and all tiers of government have worked together to release the new rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus strain (RHDV1 K5) across the country. Susan will provide an overview of the national RHDV1 K5 release program and emphasises the importance of following up biological control with conventional control tools to provide best practice rabbit control.

Ashley Millar, Western Shield Coordinator, Department of Parks and Wildlife, will discuss the department's lead fauna conservation program, Western Shield. The program is one of the biggest wildlife conservation initiatives ever undertaken in Australia, focusing on threatened species susceptible to predation by foxes and feral cats. Ashley will provide an outline of the land areas covered, methods employed to control foxes and feral cats and results in relation to the recovery of native fauna.



Dr Peter Adams, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Murdoch University School of Veterinary and Life Sciences, and Development Officer Invasive Species, DAFWA, will discuss current research into developing an innovative method of detecting feral pigs using thermal imagery. This newly evolving technique combines aerial surveillance with thermal sensors to improve the detection rate of feral pigs in densely vegetated habitats of southwest WA, an area with established populations of feral pigs where the habitat makes it difficult to monitor feral pigs using conventional methods. The technique can potentially enable both immediate feedback on the location of feral pigs to target control programs, as well as provide long-term monitoring of population trends. Peter will discuss the capabilities and benefits of the technology, cost-effectiveness, and results from ongoing operational trials that aim to quantify the broad-scale effectiveness of feral pig control programs.

Malcolm Kennedy, Research Officer Invasive Species, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, will discuss how wild dogs are a significant pest of livestock enterprises and can have negative impacts on biodiversity and human health. Recent wild dog population modelling, corroborated with landholder reports of wild dog impacts, indicate a potential expansion of wild dog distribution in the agricultural region of Western Australia, including shires directly north of Perth. Malcolm will discuss the research which has been instrumental in identifying, and developing a response, to this risk. Malcolm will also discuss the role of recognised biosecurity groups in undertaking on-ground control programs and working across areas managed by multiple stakeholders.