



2022 FERAL PIG FOCUS

Protecting the Scott Coastal Plain



Lower Blackwood Catchment
Land Conservation District Committee



natural resource
management program



Project Overview

Feral Pig Focus - Protecting the Scott Coastal Plain is a 3-year State NRM funded project that is supporting the Lower Blackwood Vertebrate Pest Management Group (LBVPMG) to work collaboratively with landholders, plantation companies, DBCA, DPIRD, Traditional Owners and local government to undertake priority feral pig control work to protect the Scott Coastal Plain.



Goals

The goals of this project are:

- To implement a multi-year, strategic and collaborative feral pig control program (including monitoring and evaluation) in the Scott Coastal Plain
- To prevent the spread of feral pigs into the Scott National Park (at the Western end of the Scott Coastal Plain)
- To build capacity in Lower Blackwood landholders to monitor and control feral pigs on their own property
- To raise awareness in the Lower Blackwood community of the issues and impacts of feral pigs

Outcomes

The outcomes of this project are:

- 2 x on-ground field officers and 1 x project officer implementing a three-year, strategic and collaborative feral pig control program (including monitoring and evaluation) in the Scott Coastal Plain. This includes a six-month trapping program each project year.
- Feral pigs controlled over the Scott Coastal Plain
- Demonstrating the effectiveness of the Hoggone Bait boxes in the Scott Coastal Plain
- Establishing feral pig monitoring sites in the Scott Coastal Plain and collecting population and distribution data
- Developing and extending Feral Pig Focus Resources
- Continued use and development of the FeralScan mapping tool to map all feral pig control, sightings and damage

Why the Scott Coastal Plain?

The Scott Coastal Plain is incredibly special and unique, environmentally, economically and culturally.



As well as being an important and productive Agricultural area, the Scott Coastal Plain is home to 10 species of threatened flora and 52 species of priority flora as well as the Scott River Ironstone Threatened Ecological Community. There are 26 fauna species listed as threatened, priority or under protection in the Scott Coastal Plain such as the Australasian Bitten (Endangered), the Forest Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo (Vulnerable) and the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo (Endangered).

This project will address the impact of feral pigs on the eastern and central Scott Coastal Plain and work to prevent their encroachment into the western Scott Coastal Plain, and in particular the Scott National Park.

The Blackwood River (Lower Reaches) and Tributaries System and the Gingilup-Jasper wetland system are both nationally important wetlands. Native vegetation in the Gingilup Nature Reserve is in excellent condition providing habitat for a diversity of fauna and supporting a number of species of Declared Rare Flora (DRF). On the Western side is the Scott National Park which includes a large number of Priority Species and DRF. A large proportion of the Scott National Park is considered to be in pristine condition with no or little evidence of pig population.

Culturally, the whole of the Blackwood River system (including the Scott River) is a registered Aboriginal

heritage site. Therefore, it's imperative that not only the current feral pig population in the Scott Coastal Plain be controlled but that they also be prevented from encroaching upon the Scott National Park.

The LBVPMG have been operational since 2009 and through the group's control and monitoring work, the LBVPMG have identified the key area of concern is the Scott Coastal Plain which has significant pig populations impacting on areas of high conservation and cultural values.

This project has seen the upscaling of the LBVPMG's current program to work collaboratively to implement a program to not only control the pig population currently harbouring in region but also prevent any more funnelling of the pig population into the Scott National Park which currently, is not greatly impacted by feral pigs

2022 Control Season Results

20th January 2022 - 17th July 2022

The 2022 control season activities included trapping and on ground control operations conducted by two field officers from the LBVPMG. This included tracking, training and ultimately control of feral pigs across the Scott Coastal Plain.

The Scott Coastal Plain can get extremely wet in the winter months in places, which has an impact on feral pig control activities as it limits access for the field officers to key trapping locations. Therefore, the project has been designed so that in the drier months of the year a 6-month trapping season will be implemented for each of the project years.



Control Results

A total of 439 Pigs have been removed through a combination of trapping, detection dogs and on ground shooting techniques in this trapping season by the LBVPMG field officers. (123 working days).

The trapping efforts were focused on the central and western end of the project area this season.



Monitoring Results

A monitoring program has also been established as part of this project to help evaluate the situation and success of the project. Two on-ground monitoring methods have been implemented, these are Pig Activity Transects and Camera Trapping.

It's important to note this first year of monitoring data collection is focused mainly on collecting baseline information. It is too early in the project to determine any reliable trends as of yet.

Pig Activity Transects

This involves three 10 km transects on roads throughout the survey area, that are surveyed by vehicle every three months, weather depending. At every 500m interval on the transect, any fresh pig digs on the roadside are recorded to determine the percentage of the transect feral pig impacts were observed.

It is now too wet to continue for this season so transect monitoring will recommence in Nov/Dec 2022.

Results from this season show a decrease in percentage of the transect with noticeable recent pig activity.

Camera Trapping

A total of 9 cameras have been installed, 3 across each of the sentinel sites, on pig pads, gaps in fences, or other key 'choke points'. The aim is to record the trend in capture rates over time as number of unique siting's per 100 trap nights.

- 6 Cameras out 16/3/22 – 19/4/22 – 34 nights times 6 = 204 trap nights with 36 unique captures
- 8 Cameras out 19/4/22 – 17/7/22 – 89 nights times 8 = 712 trap nights with 50 unique captures

Camera monitoring also indicated there are significant numbers of feral cats and foxes across the project area.



Next Steps

The next trapping season is expected to commence in Nov/Dec 2022 and we will also continue to focus on:

Call-Outs and Community Engagement

- Until the commencement of the next trapping season, the LBVPMG Field Officers will be focusing their control efforts on the accessible fringe areas of the Scott Coastal Plain where there is now more and more reports of pig activity.
- We are planning to run community workshops focusing on using the Hoggone units and the importance of reporting sightings and activity.
- We will be conducting landholder surveys to collect further information on pig sightings, pig impacts on land use, pig control activities and hunting.

Sourcing additional funding

- As more information is being gathered, a gap has been identified in control activities in the Scott Coastal Plain fringe areas during the current trapping off-season. We are seeking additional sources of funding to be able to increase our control activities during the winter months of 2023.
- Our monitoring information has also identified the issue and threat of other feral animal species in the Scott Coastal Plain, namely foxes and cats. We will be exploring the option of control programs for both these species and plan to seek additional funding to support that.



Special Thanks

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- Shire of Nannup
- and Collins Bros Orchards for their excellent supply of bait apples!



And a big thankyou to all participating landholders!
We look forward to your continued support and collaboration in tackling this important issue



And Remember to Report A Pig!

www.lowerblackwood.com.au/feral-pig-control



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**For more information and to report a pig sighting,
head to our website:**

www.lowerblackwood.com.au/feral-pig-control