



New member of the team

Introducing Shannon Evenden, who is the new National Feral Deer Support Officer. Shannon brings a range of experience in research, community engagement and working with industry and regions.

She is supporting the National Feral Deer Coordinator project, with a focus on environmental impacts and bushfire recovery efforts across Australia.

During the next 12 months, Shannon will raise awareness of environmental impacts of feral deer, and help local groups with control plans and find ways to measure the effectiveness of feral deer control.



Would your group benefit from support in protecting bushfire affected vegetation from the impacts of feral deer?

Shannon is keen to hear from community groups who could benefit from her time and expertise to establish or expand their local feral deer control plans in and around native habitats, particularly in areas affected by recent bushfires.

Support may include raising awareness to increase community participation, reviewing local deer control plans and monitoring programs, and helping with workshops, meetings and reporting (e.g. DeerScan). Support will be tailored to each group's needs.

The National Feral Deer Action Plan Project will promote participating groups as 'Champion Communities' to encourage others to work across land tenures and property boundaries, and use best practice to improve feral deer control in bush environments.

Contact us if your community group is interested in Shannon's help, or wants to learn more. We hope to choose three groups. Make sure to jump on this opportunity by **17 September** by emailing Shannon.evenden2@sa.gov.au.



In the media

[Feral deer in Canberra on rise due to Black Summer bushfires | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT](#), June 30 2021

[NBN News | THE NORTHERN RIVERS IS ON FERAL DEER ALERT](#), July 7 2021

[Large-scale traps provide new feral deer option | Stock Journal | South Australia](#), July 26 2021

[Deer control underway on NSW Mid North coast, carcasses used as feed for local zoo - ABC News](#), August 10 2021

[National deer plan hopes to stave off tipping point](#), August 19 2021

[Invasive species cost nation \\$390 billion, top 10 named and shamed | Farm Online | Australia](#) 2 August 2021

Momentum in Victoria

In Victoria, the State Government is developing three regional deer control plans, one each for Melbourne, Eastern and Western Victoria. Some plans are due to be released later this year.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Did you know?

Around 60 native plants are thought to be threatened by feral deer, and more than a dozen state or federally listed vegetation communities are close to the brink.

In South Australia, deer are also compromising the regeneration of *Allocasuarina verticillata*, the main food of an endangered subspecies of Glossy Black-cockatoos.

Spotlight on girdling or ring-barking

Feral deer not only affect vegetation by grazing, but can inadvertently use the same mechanism that foresters use to thin out young trees without felling them. This is known as girdling, or ringbarking.

Girdling takes off a strip of bark around the circumference of a tree. By removing the bark, the transport of sugars from leaves to roots is affected, because sugars cannot pass the point of damage. The tree dies because the roots can no longer receive energy to transport nutrients from the soil.

Foresters use an axe, chainsaw, or sharp chisel to girdle a tree. Feral deer can achieve the same result by rubbing their antlers on saplings and mature trees, although it can take a while for the tree to die.



The best way to control feral deer populations is to jump on the issue early.

This concept is well understood in the Northern Rivers. Within this region, a group of Councils has come together with the Tweed Landcare and Border Ranges-Richmond Valley Landcare networks to launch “The Feral Deer Alert” campaign. The campaign aims to prevent feral deer numbers growing out-of-control by managing feral deer populations while they are still small.

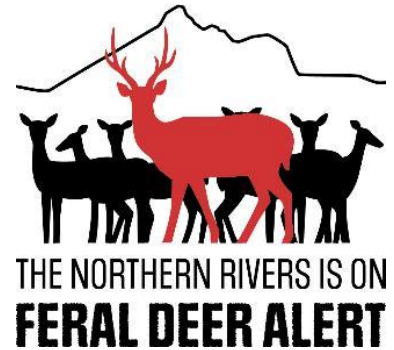
The Northern Rivers is one of the only areas left on NSW’s eastern seaboard where feral deer have not yet become established. However, the region’s habitat is suitable for most of the six species in the state, and feral deer sightings are increasing. These factors are driving the area’s prevention-containment-eradication campaign.

See a recent Media Release: [New sightings in the Tweed](#)



What is the Northern Rivers program doing?

The program is raising awareness of the impacts of deer and the need to report sightings.



The campaign asks the whole Northern Rivers community to stay on Feral Deer Alert, while they are driving, bush walking or managing their property, and to report feral deer sightings to [FeralScan](#).

FeralScan is a free app and webpage for landholders, Landcare groups, community groups, local Councils, professional pest controllers and biosecurity groups. On the app three things are recorded: sightings and evidence (e.g. photos & prints), damage (e.g. browsing of trees) and control activities (e.g. ground shooting). Data entered into [DeerScan](#) can be used to identify strategies for cost-effective deer control.



Tweed Shire Council’s Feral Deer Project Officer, Rachel Hughes, said “The best way to manage feral deer in the Northern Rivers is to work together as a community to eradicate deer populations from the region.”

For more information read the [Draft Plan](#) and [campaign](#)

Future Plans

The plan is to collaborate with interstate neighbours and regional NRM and Local Government agencies to form a cross border initiative, for landscape scale feral deer management. The initiative is to encourage consistent strategic management across regions in addition to increasing community awareness and reporting of all feral deer sightings. Rachel Hughes said “we want to get everyone involved in stopping the spread”.



**Newsletter article from ACT Government
Sambar Deer Project, 20 August 2020**

The ACT Government Parks and Conservation Service, together with Conservation Research, are in the final year of a Commonwealth National Landcare funded three-year project to manage the threat of Sambar Deer to the upland region of Namadgi National Park. This project aims to manage the threat of Sambar Deer to threatened and sensitive sub alpine communities, including the Ginini Wetland Ramsar site, and determine the best methods of managing Sambar deer at low abundance in this environment.

Our project has a three-pronged approach:

1. Sambar deer abundance monitoring
2. Sambar deer impact monitoring and
3. Sambar deer control.

Sambar deer abundance

We are using four camera arrays, which consist of 38 cameras each, to monitor the density of Sambar deer and to detect changes in numbers over the life of the project. The project area consists of a management zone where control actions occur and a reference zone where no control actions will occur for the life of the project. This will allow us to robustly monitor and understand the impact of our deer control actions on deer abundance. The camera arrays also provide us with useful information about other species including vertebrate pests such as pigs, foxes and cats.

Sambar deer impact monitoring

Monitoring the change of deer impact within the project area is a highly important part of the control program. We are trialling the use of high-resolution aerial drone imagery to monitor Sambar deer impact to vegetation and soil. The drone flew transects across the camera arrays and was able to produce sub cm resolution imagery which can be used to map and quantify features such as wallow size and density, bare ground, tracks, and other vertebrate pest damage such as pig ripping. The method is repeatable to allow us to track change in impact over time.

Sambar deer control

We are using both ground shooting and thermally assisted aerial shooting to control the Sambar deer numbers. Ground shooting proved to be highly challenging in this project area due to low deer density, mountainous terrain and a post bushfire landscape which combined with high rainfall and extensive water and feed options caused the deer to disperse widely.

Our thermally assisted aerial control program in May 2021 was the first time that this method had been used in Australia for Sambar deer and in mountainous country. It was the second time this method had been used in Australia. The program was very successful. All of the detections of animals were through the thermal camera, with none detected using standard visual observation. The staff at Heli Surveys and Strathbogie Wildlife provided excellent professionalism and expertise. We will continue to use thermally assisted aerial control for the remainder of the project.

The future of the project

We have a year left of the project in which we will continue our thermal aerial control and determine the effectiveness of these methods through any changes in deer abundance and impact. Early indications suggest that this method of Sambar deer control has been highly successful and will be integrated into Namadgi National Parks ongoing vertebrate pest control program. This method will continue to manage the threat of Sambar deer and other large vertebrate pests in this fragile ecosystem.

Please contact Louisa.Roberts@act.gov.au for more information