



Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Qld) Inc.
Conservation and Wildlife Management Division
"Preserving Australia's Heritage"

SSAA (Qld) Inc. Conservation and Wildlife Management Division
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CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (Qld) NEWS

December 2015

Message from the CWM President

Most of our members say the best thing about doing CWM projects and activities is being part of a great team and making new friends.

CWM is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for our members and our partners free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment. These values are enshrined in our code of conduct and our recently adopted Discrimination and Harassment Policy. We tend to take these things for granted but our policies make it clear that all CWM members are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

We urge all of our members to read our code of conduct and our Discrimination and Harassment Policy on the CWM web site. We strongly encourage any member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied or sexually harassed to take appropriate action by discussing the issue with the project/team leader or any committee

member.

SSAA Shot expo

The committee would like to express its thanks to Tim Shalders for doing a great job in organising numerous CWM to attend the SSAA CWM booth at the expo. We have had many people join and there were over a dozen at the SEQ training day in November that heard about CWM at the expo.



CWM Volunteers at Shot Expo

Training/Range Days

We are working to standardise these days across the state to ensure that all our members are able to tap into the extensive skills within the CWM membership. You may also notice that we will be calling them 'Skills Development Days' to better reflect their format. If you feel you can assist in regards to these days as you have specialist skills and/or contacts, please contact Mark Woods on 0438 098 469 or at markwoods2@bigpond.com

We cannot stress enough the importance of attending our training/range days to get to know your fellow CWM team mates and especially so that team leaders can get to know you. It helps them put a face to a name when they are putting project teams together.

Keep an eye on our **projects calendar** and be sure to get along to a training/range day in your area - [2016 CWM Calendar](#)

Damien Ferguson
President (tele - 0402 424 424)
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Gladstone Project Trifecta

I know you are thinking from the title, that on my recent participation in the Gladstone project that I shot 3 things during my hunt. Well you would be mistaken. And no it's not because I was lucky enough to put down 3 pigs on the same day, it's because this Gladstone project, that I felt very fortunate to be a part of, has the winning trifecta of the things I love best all rolled into one; four-wheel driving, camping on the beach and controlling feral pests. Dare I even say '**superfecta**', including meeting a new bunch of good mates.

Bull dust, panel scratches, late nights and getting bogged were all par for the course. The hunting was as hard or as easy as you wanted to make it. By that I mean, pushing through the forested sand dunes in the heat of the day or sitting quietly in the right location, potentially



Massive pig damage on the plains



Teatree swamps



The beach was very close to camp

both having good results. But no matter what tactic you and your hunting buddy chose, the refreshing ocean swell was waiting for you when you got back. With the passing of turtles as a reminder that we were not just there to bob in the waves but also to assist in maintaining this beautiful habitat.

Despite the high winds on our first few nights, the action didn't take long to get started. Five

minutes drive from our camp our lead vehicle came across a mob of large pigs and although they all got away in the nearby dense scrub, it kept our spirits high right from the get go.

We worked hard and covered quite a bit of ground in the early part of our week. We needed to get familiar with the terrain. What we found were huge areas of grassland and reed beds ripped up and stripped. This fresh pig sign was almost everywhere we looked. Also



The author with a pig that is a typical size for this property

seeing large numbers of fresh tracks in the boggy tea tree swamps, kept me enthusiastic and on high alert.

We only had one chance of catching them in their beds. After that they must have been onto us. It was the day the legend of the Adler was born. Three big boars were taken on our mid-morning walk.

The day light hours that followed were quiet, but the nights were in stark contrast, as we refined our skills and use of the game changer when hunting nocturnal feral pests - "Thermal Vision". It was new to many including myself, but this really tipped the scales in our direction. Fourteen out of seventeen pigs were spotted



Feral cats are damaging to the endangered Yellow Chat

and taken with the help of the thermal vision. And that is just the pigs. We would have driven straight past two cats that were also claimed, if not for the thermal heat signature among the trees.

Our week may have started slow, but it finished with a bang. Ten pigs and two cats were taken on the last two nights.

I was truly sad to leave our surroundings and the remaining pigs behind. The sighting of multiple mobs of twenty or more made me realise we have still got work to do.

Our group leader did a great job of coordinating the whole exercise with a bunch of CWM members who were mostly unknown to each other. Many travelling from very long distances, 6 hours plus drive seemed to be the norm. But others had even journeyed from as far as Townsville and Cairns. All the members can also be commended for their team spirit and eagerness to participate as a group. With a big thanks to the land managers for their assistance and the opportunity for us to show our effectiveness.

Adam Gitsham



The legend of the Adler and his boar starts here

Gladstone Project - another perspective on 5-star conservation ecotourism CWM style.

Eight of us made the trip to this island based project. The property managers graciously covered the cost of the ferry ride including the four 4wds. Then an hour journey brought us to base camp - a heritage listed stone building known as "the hut".

The site had fantastic ocean views and a short walk down to the beach which was great for a swim after a hunt. Our area of operations was the "marine plain" and surrounding bush. This is a high conservation value area because of the yellow chat, an endangered bird that lives there.

The targets were pigs, cats and foxes. We saw lots of dog sign too, however didn't see any

The first few days were largely reconnaissance with a few pigs removed. Soon our success rate increased. Also critical were the two hand held thermal units and developing the best tactics for using them in that environment. Most of us were new to thermal hunting and by the end we were all total converts. The thermal units were nothing short of spectacular in their effectiveness. We ended up with 17 pigs and two cats for the trip which would most likely have been far less without the thermal units. One member also had a thermal rifle scope which was used to good effect



Thermal vision is transforming the way we work

on several pigs as well as identifying targets for other members.

Cats were high value targets given we were trying to save native animal and bird life. The property owners were especially happy as the cats had been seen on trail cameras but had proven elusive till now.

The big winners for the trip were CWM, thermal, the members who went and the yellow chat. The losers were the pigs and the cats.

Michael Edwards

Townsville report

We are fast coming to the end of the feral control season for 2015 here in the North. The day temperatures are well past the 25 degree C that our feral pigs prefer. The only option up these parts is to follow the feral pigs into the night. We will have a trip in November but at this time of the year all projects are subject to weather.

The Burdekin River Wetland Project has provided opportunities every month this year with more than 450 participating member days for

the year. This is not normally the case with the Northern wet usually taking several months off the project. Overall, the CWM members have maintained a very effective control of the pig population within the control area. We removed just over 100 feral pigs this year.

The last few years have given us a pretty good understanding of the feral animal behaviour within this very specific area. We can just about predict the movements of the remaining mobs. However, this doesn't make the task of removing them easier.

What we have learnt over the last few years is that the 125 gr – 130 gr hunting projectiles with at least 2000 ft/lb energy to be the most effective on feral pigs. We also found that waterproof UHF radios are very important with several fails due to water inundation.

The trips for next year are currently being worked on by all the stakeholder so keep an eye on the web calendar for times and dates in 2016.

Cheers Randle

Burdekin River Wetlands Project

These are extensive wetlands created by the annual wet season flooding and overflow in the headwater tract of the Burdekin.

The wetland is made up of the river, and a network of large and small lakes, billabongs and marshes which replenish their water loss during the dry season with oncoming floods of the wet season.

The wetland acts as a magnet for waterbirds such as pelicans, black swans, cormorants, hardheads, whistling ducks, Australian wood ducks, Teals, mallards and the list goes on. In this magical environment the birdlife flourishes with some species coming from as far as Mongolia, a birdwatcher's dream in which the bird life abounds.



Extensive wetlands are created by annual flooding



The property is closed when we are there



Stalking and removing feral pigs is our job

But threatening this avian wetland ecosystem are feral pigs and cats. Feral pigs digging and wallowing around the fringes of these lakes causes an inflow of excessive nutrients upon which blue green algae bloom in massive volumes lowering the dissolved oxygen content of the lake killing fish and all the other food sources upon which the birdlife depend. The property manager told me of an instance where feral pigs destroyed a wetland in only six days

In the field CWM member Trevor (self-confessed twitcher) scans one of the large lakes from the top of an escarpment. Here we patiently glassed along the length of the lake for some 40 minutes and were rewarded spotting 4 pigs in the far swamp just past the tree line some 1500 metres distant.

Keeping downwind we stalked the target species to their location to the right (southern) side of the far swamp. And there they were!

A little more stalking and we would be in range. We proceeded very carefully. It was a long hike down the escarpment and didn't want to expend all that effort to rush in to lose all. A few trees ahead gave us good cover and allowed us to approach within 60 metres. The lead pig spotted us so it was time to go. Trevor with his Ruger .243 with 6x Swarovski and I with my Remington 7600 in .308 with a 1-6x VX-6 Leupold.

Removing several of these damaging feral animals made this a very successful morning's work. We headed back up the escarpment and then to camp on the edge of the river to relax,



Brolgas are one of many bird species drawn to the wetlands

recharge and then off for another round in the afternoon. We came across a feral pig which could be quite easily be mistaken for a baby hippo. But that's another story. I'm sure you will have others to tell when next you venture to the BWLP.

We shared this trip with some great people, Helen and Brian from Atherton with their amazing side by side setup, Bill from Townsville, and Kevin from the Gold Coast (now that's a hike). Kev was so impressed he'll be heading back in 2016.

Part of CWM role on this project is documenting and reporting the various species of ferals that inhabit the area, their numbers and locations as GPS coordinates are feedback to the

land managers. All of the images of feral animals taken in this article were automatically waypointed in my Garmin Monterra and the GPS data passed to the landholder.

Over the past 4 years CWM has worked this area removing feral pigs and cats. The bigger mobs of pigs having been reduced this year and served to slow down the rate of predation on the many species of birds eggs found in the ground nests that surround the wetlands. Nevertheless the wet season will see the return of the feral pigs and cats and it will be our role in 2016 to keep them in check.

Lionel Dowse



We reduce the damage to this fragile ecosystem by removing feral pigs

Mackay report

We conducted our first full scale trip to the Belyando Project in August. We had a short and successful, couple of days over a weekend. A couple more days would have been good though.

All members worked well as a team and were great company to spend time with. The team accounted for a total of 11 pigs and 1 cat. The majority of pigs were taken while stalking along and around water holes in the creek system (in the North West quadrant) with the remaining couple being sighted and dispatched from vehicles while travelling between areas.



Comfortable accommodation

Spotlighting was rather unfruitful with only one cat being sighted and shot, even though there was ample evidence of cat presence along the waterways. (Piles of bird feathers). Trapping would likely have been successful if we had the opportunity to stay a couple of days longer. The group camped in the quarters which are very comfortable.

Graham Blines



Making plans in the field



Steve and a pig with effective camouflage colourings for the surrounding environment

Moonie Project Update

Members participating in the Moonie project are billeted at either the property 'Cottage', a comfy farm house with all necessities or the shearing shed at a neighbouring property. This shed is a well maintained sixty-year-old cypress structure with expansive floor space for swags and a connection with Australia's wool era history. I was greeted warmly at the latter by fellow members Ron, Doug and Michael.

When the Darling Downs sky fades dark, this team with their renowned 'gunship' 4WD with externally mounted thermal vision and superfast micro calibre's, set out to add to their already unassailable tally of pest species on this property.

This is a grain and cattle property and also a Nature Refuge with extensive shelter belts of remnant brigalow-belah wildlife corridors, linking a nearby National Park and refuge to the native animals and birds that are somewhat isolated by the districts expanse of cultivation. The property owners Warren and Lynelle believe in the importance of rural producers promoting sustainable production whilst contributing to the conservation of the environment.

My team; Peter, Gary and Jarrod, operated at night from a slightly more conventional yet



Our home 'the shearing shed' was constructed from local cypress pine.

still impressive rear tray ute and shooting platform with hand held spotlights and thermal vision on Gary's Nissan. During the day we walked the shelter belts and large remnant vegetation property nearby and staked out dams during the last hours of light.

At down time and meals the conversation alternated from purely tactical topics to the absurd and ridiculously funny. Even the chestnut, 6.5 versus .270 versus 7mm 08 got a run. Jarrod presented a compelling argument with the monotonous consistency of long range accuracy with his Maddco heavy barrel 7mm 08, Tikka action on a McMillan stock and Nightforce 5.5 x 22 scope.

Jarrod's display of accuracy caused Gary and I to set up a 100m range in the quarry in an effort to identify a probable cause of our lack of accuracy by comparison. Neither firearm nor scope manufacturer proved to be a contributing factor.

October is wheat harvest and combined with mid-season rain produced favourable growing conditions for an exceptional crop. Our anxious host Warren took grain moisture readings to establish the optimal harvest start date. This was pay day for the district growers, the first substantial wheat cheque in some years. Our efforts at conservation and pest control had contributed and were recognised.



Our host Warren took Gary and I for a flight over the district



Warren took Gary and I to witness the harvest from the air in his Piper Warrior. A memorable experience to see the scale of grain growing primary production from above. To observe the remnant vegetation and adjoining properties from above was spectacular.

Our final tally was not huge, pigs and goats were elusive. The local European Hare population suffered heavily as a

result, but the numbers were not the motivator to return. The gold is the involvement in an organisation such as CWM which provides the opportunity to meet and establish friendships whilst pursuing a special and worthwhile interest in a special place.

The week's anthem "It's a gas"...

John Swift

Whitsunday/Bowen Report

At the Bowen SSAA range on the 14th November 2015 the next CWM course was conducted. We had 10 aspiring members doing the course that will boost our numbers again.

Recently rain fell for the first time in the Longreach area for 5 years. The old saying "he who gets the rain first will get the roos first". They don't need anymore, I just came back and there are roos standing in groups under every tree.

Bowen/Whitsunday CWM has had several teams attending a couple of stations removing wild dogs, feral cats and feral pigs. All wearing hi vis as you can see. Our Farmer Assist projects in the west are turning up some good results with a couple of "snodger" pigs being taken.

I took a 100kg + boar which had 1.5 inches of mud armour on him. He had no ears to talk about so he had many a battle with dogs and his favourite trick was to eat lambs at night. The owner was pleased we found and removed him.

Dean took a 70 Kg sow in a creek bed we had been tracking and eventually found, well done 'Deano'.

Keep your powder dry Peter
Peter Hannah



Peter Hannah's armour plated boar

Murphy's Law – Twice

On a recent Moonie Pigs project I ran into Murphy and his old adage - twice.

Earlier in the afternoon we had seen a small mob of pigs coming off the Barley paddock and running through one of many holes in the fence line and into a very thick adjoining scrub paddock. There was a road down both sides of a 2 meter high mesh fence. Not long before dark Paul and myself were waiting with the thermal looking for the pigs to come back through the fence using his car as a rest.

While leaning on Paul's car about 3 meters from the fence looking up and down the fence I heard a small noise and looking through the fence, Murphy's law #1 came true. We were parked on the exact hole the mob were aiming for. They propped about 5 meters the other side of the fence slightly hidden by some trees and I



The fencing wire was neatly parted

slowly closed the bolt on my 308 and raised it for a shot, no good – still on 12 power, lowed and adjusted back to 3 power and raised again. I had to raise and lower myself to get a clean shot through the wire. As the lead sow stepped clear I thought 'gotcher' and fired.

After climbing through a hole in the fence safely we covered the area with the thermal looking for a downed pig. No such thing. On getting back to the fence Murphy's law #2 kicked in. I had lined up between the

mesh OK but in the twilight did not see the rusty plain fencing wire used to support the mesh fence. The wire had been parted as neat as you like. Paul's comment was, "I'd like to see you do that again". My reply was, several years ago I had shot the top strand of a barb wire fence taking a shot at a wild dog one late afternoon – hardest bit then is finding some wire to repair the fence...it's funny how you can find wire everywhere when you don't want it! **Ken Payne**



The fence between the bush and the Barley

Upcoming Activity Dates

Our calendar of activity dates is now published on our web site. Please go to:

<http://cwm.ssaaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/calendar/2016-calendar>

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The businesses listed below support us in different ways, whether it is through direct discounts to members, donations to the Christmas Shoot, or items loaned for field use.

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