



"Preserving Australia's Heritage"

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CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (Qld)

December 2018 Newsletter

Message from the CWM President

Thermal Vision

Well the wet season is almost upon the Far North Queensland members so most projects up that way are on hold, if not from the rain, the heat. The Cairns team have discovered how effective thermal vision is at night in controlling pest species, especially feral pigs. Their results have improved greatly and night time control work in the hotter months is much less taxing than walking around in the scrub during the day, trying to kick feral pigs out of bed. Many long time day time only hunters in the SEQ part of the state have also discovered how easy it is to stay up all night culling feral pigs with the aid of thermal equipment. Thermal equipment will detect feral pigs in open country long before the best spotlight ever will. In fact, it's not uncommon to see feral pigs running off when looking through thermal vision when they are hundreds of metres

out of even top line HID spotlight range.

Qld Rangers Muster 2018

I attended and made a presentation at the Qld Rangers Muster at Ellis Beach north of Cairns. Gordon and Greg from Cairns and Townsville also attended as representatives of CWM in FNQ. We made new friends and rekindled old friendships with the Rangers, who are a great bunch of people and go above and beyond in looking after our environment. Gordon had a lot of interest and very worthwhile discussions with representatives from the Qld Govt and also traditional owners, which has resulted in one new project south of Cairns starting and others in the progress of being added in FNQ.

We plan to send a few members to the 2109 Qld Rangers Muster in SEQ to continue improving our relationships on ground results.

2019 Projects

Check out our [2019 calendar here](#) for dates.

Not all dates for 2019 are listed yet as we are working with our landholder partners to coordinate with their other on ground activities. We often get requests from our members to schedule projects during school holidays, however we focus more on when we are likely to be able to be most effective in controlling pest species. Therefore other considerations come into the equation like when it suits the landowners' needs around cropping/accommodation availability, other control being undertaken (eg aerial culling and baiting) etc etc. We are more effective during a new moon phase compared to full moon phase (we have thermal).

NEW Members needed

We now have over 70 properties on the books across Qld and this is constantly growing mainly through word of mouth and neighbours to existing projects asking us to include them and undertake coordinated control on their properties. The Moonie project is an example of this, it started out as 2 private properties plus

one other some 6 years ago. It now covers 12 properties and over 100,000 acres. We undertake control at least every 2 months covering all properties at once. This means that any pests scared onto a neighboring property in the group can be targeted as well. Effective pest

management suggests that reducing numbers over a large area is more effective than a small area.

With the increase to our list of projects we encourage you to invite as many good ethical and reliable people to join CWM.

Merry Christmas and have a fun New Years break. See you in 2019.

Damien Ferguson
President (Mob - 0402 424 424)
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South East Report

Amiens Weekend 10-12 Aug 2018

With a high pressure system current and an elevation of 800m, the expedition for feral animal culling was always going to be a chilly affair. A stiff frosty tonneau cover on the SUV in the morning needed gloved hands to move things about.



The terrain at Amiens covered about five properties. Good mixed country; granite boulders, native pine and

stringy bark. Irrigated pastures of Lucerne were the primary difference, the bush land lacking moisture or green wicks. Meet and greets with the landholders took up most of Friday afternoon after our rendezvous and camp setup.

Vehicle sessions with thermal and spotlight were scheduled for Friday and Saturday night. Lack of rainfall had scattered feral populations, and farm

management of irrigated Lucerne paddocks kept sightings low. The large and well conditioned eastern grey kangaroos, in numbers, ensured that the attrition rate on the Lucerne would be substantial.

Friday night revealed three fleet footed deer in high grass which escaped unscathed. Walkabouts turned up no feral animals; frustrating as goats and deer had been taken

before. Saturday night saw a couple of rabbits at the front steps of a farm house we had visited, so that was out.

Late into the evening, Daniel who was alternating spot and thermals with me up on the back of the ute, identified a deer with the thermal imager across the other side of a Lucerne paddock. It was my turn with the rifle - a new Luigi Franchi synthetic in 243 caliber, and a 4-12 scope set at 8X. The rifle had just been shot in at Belmont using corelokt ammunition, and zeroed to be point blank just over 200 metres, negating need for much hold over/under between 100 & 250mtrs. Daniel identified the target region to be approximately 1 o'clock of our position, and I was pointed in that direction, when he switched on the spotlight. The light picked up the target and the tuned trigger sent the 80gr projectile on its way within 1-2 seconds.

That was it for the trip, one deer (of debatable species), with dreams of other adventures to follow.

Paul Millist

Townsville Report

Cravens Peak

I first visited Cravens Peak in June of this year on my way home from the Longreach Cats Project in western Queensland. Dave and I accompanied Mike

from Brisbane for our initial look at the property. Dave and I only had 4 days as we had to be back in Mount Isa for work. Jane, the reserve manager, made us very welcome, putting the 3 of us through an induction of the property's policies and rules. Although she already had a group of BHA volunteers working on the park, she took the time to take us around the property to give us the lay of the land.

This was my first experience of crossing sand dunes, and some of them looked pretty daunting, but following Jane and Mike's Landcruisers, I found that my Navara was up to the job. I got the hang of it and only had to deploy the sand tracks once to help me over the crest when I didn't quite make it. There are several bush camps at bores scattered about the place that would make more than adequate camps, and the homestead is quite comfortable. We didn't see any feral critters on this trip, but did encounter cat, fox and camel tracks in several places on the sand dunes.

Cravens Peak is an interesting place with sand dunes and swales, claypans and gidyea, mallee, ironstone flats and rocky hills. Spinifex and



Mitchell grass compete with introduced Buffel grass. The nearest town is 2.5 hours drive away, with 65kms of graded station roads (1 hour), and the rest on the Donohue Highway, which is partly bitumen. Work continues on sealing the highway.

Due to the isolation, strict safety rules apply. Every trip starts with a phone call to Log In with a destination and expected time frame for completion. Every trip ends with a Log Out call. If you are late with your Log Out, it doesn't take long for the phone calls to start tracking you down. Every party must carry a Spot Tracker to give an "Okay" signal at predetermined times,

and a satellite phone, and must stay within the agreed area. Dave and I returned again in August with Steve, also from Mount Isa. Once again we only had 3 days. Steve received his induction and we all renewed our Firearms Authorisation with BHA.

This was to be a further reconnaissance trip in our getting-to-know-you plan, refreshing memories and reinforcing our knowledge of the land, but naturally, this time we expected to get some results with a feral or two in the bag. It was not to be. We checked some likely spots, during daylight and night times, but although the evidence was there, the targets stayed hidden. Still, we considered it a successful venture for laying the foundations of future trips. In late October, we planned a longer trip from Mount Isa to scout out the hiding places of the foxes. We reckoned that there had to be water available somewhere, and we wanted to find it.

Unfortunately, Dave and Steve had to drop out due to other commitments, and I was joined by Norm from Brisbane, who



was travelling on to another project in the area straight after. Norm was my lucky charm. As

No more critters were spotted this trip, but as the temperatures were exceeding



my designated shooter he managed to take down the first cat and the first camel for our involvement on the project. His eagle eyes also got the first glimpse of a fox as it ran on the road at the limits of my headlights, it then disappeared into the long grass. We got one eye shine from it, then it was gone, and no amount of whistling brought it back to us. Returning to the locality over subsequent nights, at different times, did not produce the fox again.

Our second cat also got away. Norm spotted it heading into a Gidyea stand, but as we idled along trying to pick it up again, a wind blew up, peppering the car with sand and twigs, forcing us to stop spotlighting and wind up the windows. The wind intensified, and reduced visibility in gusts to 50 metres. We reasoned that the cats had tucked themselves in and were not going to raise their heads tonight, so we headed for the homestead and did the same. The wind raged all night, buffeting the quarters, and we even got a few mils of rain, but none in the rain gauge.

45C it was not surprising. Even at 4am, the thermometer was up to 30C and the thermal imager showed everything as a hotspot. Only mad dogs and Englishmen etc.

We never found the water, it had long since dried up, but did map a number of sites for feral activity.

The next trip will likely be after the wet season (if it arrives this year) and when the weather starts to cool.

Ian Handley
Mount Isa

Yourka

On Tuesday the 25th September 2018, Brian and I had been invited up to Yourka to have a bush yarn with some University students who were currently studying at the Townsville University Campus. These students were from all over the world including Russia, the Netherlands, Italy, and Norway.

Paul Hales, Manager of Yourka, introduced the topic of CWM and Detection dogs and the role that they both play in maintaining our conservation wildlife and habitats. After all the introductions, we then proceeded to explain what CWM stands for and that we have many roles; not just the feral control programs but also data management, and the importance that data management plays within all of our conservation programs.

We then discussed the role that the Detection dogs have within these conservation programs and the many steps that allow these dogs to be welcomed into the parks and other protected habitats. We touched on dog health, worming, immunization, training and the many other steps required to allow these dogs into these areas. There are many dog programs already going on around the world and within Australia. They are using these animals to find protected species, their habitats, feral animals and even weeds, ie fireweed!

The students then participated in awakening their senses! Volunteers were blindfolded and given items to smell, one of which was kangaroo dung, the other coffee beans. It was really quite amazing what some of the students thought that they were sniffing. Some said we had raisins or figs or dates, one said poop and only one person guessed the coffee. We discussed how putting your trust in your dog/s helps maintain the balance between dog and handler, thus working as one unit.



We were asked many questions about Nero and Pistol and they were surprised to learn that both of our dogs were rescue dogs and had been given a second chance. The students were then invited to write a few comments regarding their morning activities and the comments are as follows:

'I had a great time this morning learning about Detection dogs and conservation techniques involving dogs and feral species. - Dave Charlton.

Thank you for sharing the conservation techniques concerning dogs. It was great to learn about and meet the dogs. – Sophie, Fred & Julia.

Thank you, it was really informative and great to know that there are dedicated people out there training dogs to help conserve our wildlife – Kimberly.

Very informative and very interesting work for the future of the Environment. Many thanks Helen and Brian, love your work. –Janice.

Thanks for chatting with the students and showing us the dogs in action. It was great to hear about the diversity of

conservation/science they are used for.

Cheers -Jane (Lecturer).'

Helen Poulos

General articles, stories, tips

QUAD Bikes

What was/is the impact, if any, upon Queensland CWM members in using 2, 3, or 4 wheeled recreation vehicles during CWM activities?

In brief, the changes from 1 February 2017 were/are:

- Children under the age of 8 are prohibited from being carried as passengers on quad bikes and utility off-road vehicles being used on a road or road related area, as well as any child of any age if they are unable to sit with their feet flat on the floor and hands on handholds;
- The operator of a quad bike or utility off-road vehicle and their passengers will be required to wear a motorcycle helmet, failing to comply with this requirement results in a fine of \$365 and 3 demerit points – 2 or more offences committed within a 12 month period will incur double demerit points;

- The only exemptions from wearing approved motorcycle helmets for quad bike and utility off-road vehicles riders and passengers is for vehicles being operated under conditional registration code LO3, provided the vehicle has factory fitted seatbelts and a roll over protections system;
- These new requirements apply on roads and road related areas only and will be enforced by the Queensland Police Service.

The relevant considerations for Queensland CWM members are:

- If the recreational vehicle is restricted to purely private property use, the above age, size and helmet requirements have no application – but it would be highly advisable to comply with the above requirements for the purpose of alignment with the provisions of the **Work Health and Safety Act 2011 QLD**;
- If a non-standard vehicle is not being driven on a road or road related area and is only used on private property, then it may not need conditional registration;
- However, the definition of a road under Queensland law includes areas such as;
 - shopping centre car parks
 - railway crossings
 - areas open to the public for use as a road
 - road-related areas—areas that are part of a road and include areas such as footpaths and nature strips.
- The relevant issue for CWM members becomes that gazetted and non-gazetted roads running through private property could fall within the definition of 'road' or 'road related area', due to them being open to the public, so if the

recreation vehicle travels on or crosses a 'road' or 'road related area' on private property, the age, size and helmet requirements would apply, equally there would be a need for conditional registration of the vehicle to satisfy legal and insurance requirements;

- Australian Road Rules, which apply in Queensland, have very broad definitions of the term 'road' and 'road related area';

- **12 What is a road**

- (1) A **road** is an area that is open to or used by the public and is developed for, or has as one of its main uses, the driving or riding of motor vehicles.

- Note: **Motor vehicle** is defined in the dictionary.

- (2) However, unless the contrary intention appears, a reference in the Australian Road Rules (except in this Division) to a **road** does not include a reference to:

- (a) an area so far as the area is declared, under another law of this jurisdiction, not to be a road for the Australian Road Rules; or

- (b) any shoulder of the road.

- (3) The **shoulder** of the road includes any part of the road that is not designed to be used by motor vehicles in travelling along the road, and includes:

- (a) for a kerbed road—any part of the kerb; and

- (b) for a sealed road—any unsealed part of the road, and any sealed part of the road outside an edge line on the road;

- but does not include a bicycle path, footpath or shared path.

- Note: **Bicycle path** is defined in rule 239, **edge line** and **footpath** are defined in the dictionary, and **shared path** is defined in rule 242.

- **13 What is a road-related area**

- (1) A **road-related area** is any of the following:

- (a) an area that divides a road;

- (b) a footpath or nature strip adjacent to a road; Australian Road

- (c) an area that is not a road and that is open to the public

and designated for use by cyclists or animals;

- (d) an area that is not a road and that is open to or used by the public for driving, riding or parking vehicles.

- Note: **Vehicle** is defined in rule 15.

- (2) However, unless the contrary intention appears, a reference in the Australian Road Rules (except in this Division) to a **road-related area** includes a reference to:

- (a) an area so far as the area is declared, under another law of this jurisdiction, to be a road-related area for the Australian Road Rules; or

- (b) any shoulder of a road; or

- (c) any other area that is a footpath or nature strip as defined in the dictionary;

- but does not include a reference to an area so far as the area is declared, under another law of this jurisdiction, not to be a road-related area for the Australian Road Rules.

- Note: **Shoulder** is defined in rule 12.

- CWM volunteers are also required to consider risk management issues and comply with the vicarious liability and safe systems of work provisions of the **Work Health and Safety Act of 2011 QLD**, particularly Section 17 – Management of Risks, Section 18 - What is reasonably practicable and the penalty provisions under Section 31 – Reckless Conduct.

Recommendations for CWM members would be:

- If there is any doubt that off-road recreational vehicles being used by CWM members will be on a 'road' or 'road related area' at any stage, then age, size, helmet and conditional registration requirements would apply;

- Whilst the issues of age, size and helmet requirement do not have strict application when using recreational off-road vehicles on private property,

duty of care obligations and potential liability issues would be well served by applying same in all circumstances and the requirement should be embedded in project/CWM rules.

Further information can be obtained at:

<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/for-ms-and-resources/newsletter/esafe-newsletters/esafe-editions/esafe-rural/january-2017/road-rule-changes-for-quad-bikes-and-utility-off-road-vehicles> accessed 28/8/18.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/registration/register/conditional/about-conditional> accessed 28/8/18.

How many birds are killed by cats in Australia?

Abstract (Simplified)

From analysis of results from 93 studies on the frequency of occurrence of birds in cat dietary samples, and a recently published assessment of the population size of feral cats in largely natural landscapes, we estimate and map the number of birds killed annually in Australia by feral cats. We show that average rates of predation on birds by cats on islands are about 10 times higher than for comparable mainland areas.

Predation rates on birds are also relatively high in hot, arid regions. Across Australia's natural landscapes, feral cats typically consume 272 million birds per year. However, there is substantial inter-annual variation, depending on changes in the cat population that are driven by rainfall conditions: ranging between 161 million birds per year

following dry periods and 757 million birds per year following wet periods. On average, feral cats kill 35.6 birds per km², per year. About 99% of these mortalities are native bird species.

With a much sparser evidence base, we also estimate that a further 44 million birds are killed annually by feral cats in highly modified landscapes, and 61 million birds are killed annually by pet cats, summing to 377 million birds killed per year (i.e., just over 1 million birds per day) by all cats.

Feral cats include a significantly higher proportion of birds in their diet than do other main mammalian predators. The national tally of birds killed by cats in Australia is broadly comparable to recent assessments for Canada, but less than that reported for the United States (because the cat population is much higher there). However, it remains challenging to interpret this mortality assessment in terms of population viability or conservation concern for Australian birds.

J.C.Z.Woinarski, B.P.Murphy, S.M.Legge, S.T.Garnett, M.J.Lawes, S.Comer, C.R.Dickman, T.S.Doherty, G.Edwards, A.Nankivell, D.Paton, R.Palmer, L.A.Woolley in *Biological Conservation*, Volume 214, October **2017**, Pages 76-87

Mammalian meat allergy

It's called mammalian meat allergy, or MMA. Unheard of until a few years ago, it's on the rise up and down the eastern seaboard, with two cases now

being diagnosed a week just in this area. But what is more astonishing is what causes it. We've now discovered it's triggered months, even years, earlier by a seemingly unrelated event - a bite from a scrub tick.

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4177191.htm>

What happens when ammunition is involved in a fire?

There are over 400,000 rounds of ammunition put through different tests by the American fire service to show what happens from fire to manual destruction.

<https://www.firerescue1.com/fire-attack/videos/61202267-What-happens-when-ammo-burns/>

The cat issue in

Australia. An Article on SBS's show 'Insight'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re4XDHYtgBM>

Ken Payne story

Cat's Meow

In a recent SSAA hunter magazine, I read an article

about how cats will only give you maybe one glint of eyes and then walk away, but by imitating a cat's meow they will stop and look back a few times.

On a recent trip to the Westmar project we were sitting on a dam in the dark when a fox and a cat were seen walking in from different directions towards the dam. A shot at the fox was taken first, aided by use of a thermal scope, and I noticed the cat on the other side of the dam beginning to walk away until I remembered the article and started my meow imitation. The cat stopped, turned around and started walking back (no lights, only the thermal) coming right out from among the trees and down towards the dam. John's shot rang out and took the cat, a nice healthy female. A few days later on the opposite side of the crop from the dam, in the middle of the Day, John spotted a cat slinking

through the tree line. While he got out of the ute to get his rifle from the bag and quickly load a round, I again started to meow and stopped the curious cat long enough for John to take it, another healthy female with similar colouring as the first one. The lesson is to practice your meowing on the family cat and try it next time out hunting.



Upcoming Activity Dates

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

<http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/calendar/2018-calendar>

<http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/calendar/2019-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.

When purchasing items from these businesses please be sure to mention you are a Conservation and Wildlife Member (CWM) for discounts where applicable.



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