



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)***

### **March 2018 Newsletter**

#### **Message from the CWM President**

If you've put the effort into finding and maintaining relationships with property owners, you'll appreciate the etiquette that is an unwritten rule amongst ethical hunters.

That being if you are lucky enough to be invited to go hunting on a property by a mate and would like to go back there again, you contact your mate. To contact the property owner directly is a very good way to never be invited back, ever.

Within CWM, we have **written** rules in our [Code of Conduct](#) in relation to contacting our project's property owners.

All CWM members are bound by this code and we take it very, very seriously, having

expelled members for breaching it.

There are many reasons for these rules and they are designed to protect every member, the organisation, property owners and stakeholders.

If you are on a project, please direct all requests regarding the property through your team leader. This includes if a property owner invites you to attend the property or repair/improve infrastructure on the property.

Relevant rules from our Code of Conduct:

21. Any person using their status as a member of CWM for personal gain, access to public or private lands, financial reward or any other purpose not directly relating to the objectives of CWM and specifically sanctioned by a Team Leader or State Operations Group will be subject to disciplinary action.

All CWM activities will be coordinated through the State Operations Group and written authorisation issued prior to the commencement of all CWM activities.

23. Members are not to make direct contact with landholders, government departments, members of the public, politicians or any other person who may deem that CWM member to be representative of the organisation as a whole. All contact with landholders and other parties is to be made, in the first instance, by a member of the State Operations Group or any other person appointed as their representative from time to time. Disciplinary action will result from any breach of this requirement.

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

### **Moonie Project - still producing results**

The conversation of hunting prospects was a little subdued as equipment and provisions were being unpacked from vehicles to the shearers' quarters. A rain delayed harvest had interrupted summer crop planting and the paddocks on the approaching drive in were bare of the usual green and grain filled bounty that feral animals find so attractive. Pasture growth however was high and the Moonie River full. A team of five set out on foot from the quarters for a late afternoon walk along the river banks and adjoining scrub. Thick undergrowth and sloping terrain made adhering to a straight advancing line a challenge, but blaze orange head wear, a consistent walking pace, regular check stops and earpiece radio communication ensured conformity and awareness of each members position.

waited for the line to pass before making an ill planned dash for better shelter. Soon after, radio snippets of a sighting of a startled fox was being passed down the line, followed by a resounding CRACK to my left and then, a two word report ... "Got him"! As we prepared to move off for a regroup, a second shot rang out from the same vicinity. A hesitant pause and then a murmured American Indian chant crackled in my ear piece....this is local code for another pig down.

The Moonie River system continues to provide protection and cover for transient feral animals in spite of five plus years of a coordinated CWM and community control effort. What now of those exposed paddocks of stubble and weeds? The evening plan was to have two mobile teams working at opposing ends of the property with thermals and spotlights. An afternoon storm had blustered then blew to the west leaving damp tracks wetter and water ponds in depressions.

as we skirted our zone, stopping to regularly scan with a thermal monocular. The absence of a cover crop allowed distant images to be detected, and then approached with stealth. Spotlights proved redundant for this action. The ATV was positioned at a respectable distance from the ghostly images, wind direction determined and then a moon lit creep forward to close ground. A silent signal from the thermal observer illuminated scope mounted torches and we were able to startle the unsuspecting chick pea browsers time and time again. One of our group, who usually packs a .444 Marlin, had selected a .308 Ruger Hawkeye Compact with 16.5 inch barrel for this after hours tactic. The meter long muzzle flash out shone any LED on the market and made for some spectacular fleeting images during the ear-splitting din.

John Swift

## **Townsville Report**

### **Burdekin River wet, wet, wet lands trip.**

With the recent bad weather, the trip to the Island was cancelled. Andrew Goldner and I had taken holidays, and not wanting them wasted, decided to make the trip to the Burdekin river wetlands project. The rain radar showed only small showers in the area, so we decided to go up for a look. I have always found hunting in the rain to be quite successful so we were excited to see what would be poking around under the drizzly overcast skies. We were not disappointed as we passed through a neighbouring property on the way in, we



A single one shot drop at close range from a Tikka .308 accounted for a good size jet black boar that had wisely

A three seat Yamaha ATV handled the conditions with ease and left little impression



passes a large mob of pigs slowly grazing only 200 metres off the main road at midday.

Although wet, the tracks were firm, so we made our way to the escarpment camp to unload the camper trailer, and ready a vehicle for the hunt. As a gold medal winner in work procrastination, before leaving, I decided to summon the great god Google and request of him some knowledge on pig hunting in the rain. The knowledge bestowed upon me suggested that in the rain, pigs may like to feed in areas normally too hard for them to dig in the dry.

Another little point of interest was a pig needs to eat 10 times its weight in calories per day, so an 80 kg pig needs to find 8000 calories per day. The bigger the pig, the longer it must stay out to feed. With this in mind we planned a hunt passing through the low swamp areas, up into the higher country to the east, and back through the lakes with a spotlight.

From the Escarpment camp, the wind is always in our favour, and Andrew shared his previous experiences with me,



showing me the best places to stop and approach the lakes and swamps on foot. We did this all morning with no results. However the evidence everywhere indicated that we had just missed them. We frequently found fresh digs here and there, where the rain had not had a chance to wash the freshly disturbed soil back down. Now we thought walking the worn tracks kept our footfalls as quiet as practical, but to the pigs we probably sounded like 2 pissed sasquatches staggering home

at 3 am from a bucks party. I was keen to get to my favourite lunch spot, but first, I wanted to have a look at a nearby dam I have named Lake Randle, after the CWM Northern coordinator Randle Irvin.

On a previous trip, Randle was inducting me to the property, and he had me drive to the dam wall where we stopped to check it out. I was having a play with Randle's spotting monocular when I saw two pigs in the distance unaware of our arrival. Randle was the only one with a rifle so he jumped out of the car to find a firing position. Fortunately CWM member Des Carroll was in the back with his laser range finding binoculars. Randle called for a distance, the reply, 350m. The pigs still unaware of our presence were standing like a couple of metallic silhouettes. Randle calculated his holdover on the 7mm short magnum and fired. The first one fell. The second one, a little confused, turned to look at its mate, then turned to look at us, and stayed still long enough for Randle to squeeze off the second shot. Two down. I was still in the driver's seat.





Des and Randle to my right chuffed about pulling off a couple of great long range shots were collecting brass and savoring the moment. I was putting away the spotting scope when out of the corner of my eye I saw a blonde flash streak through the grass. It took me a few seconds to think about what I had just seen, and I then sang out to Randle to come around the car and check that area. He only got to the bulbar when a large boar came out of the long grass heading straight towards him. The boar was only about 30 meters away and closing when Randle dropped his third pig in three minutes. Lake Randle, deservedly named.

After lunch at the outstation, a corrugated iron and timber shack beside some old cattle yards, Andrew and I headed further east into the mountainous area of the project. At this point we were feeling like we may not see any pigs that day, when a lone Ginger boar bolted across the road in front of us at a speed. We knew we would never be able to catch him up so we continued on. The sighting of this boar did get me to thinking whether the rain had actually brought the pigs higher into the mountains. A few kilometers on, we were rewarded with a nice boar, walking along a track 100 yards to our left. Doing what pigs do, it moved along the track until it found some long grass that it thought it could hide in, and stood still. I did not even have to get out of the car. From the passenger window I could see just enough through the grass to get a shot high into its chest. Andrew hunts with a 308 Ruger Scout, a compact rifle with a 20 inch barrel. It is an ideal vehicle gun



as it can be retrieved and readied for action very quickly. Mine on the other hand is long and heavy and requires a contortionist to get the barrel out of the window. My shot had knocked the boar back on its bum and a quick follow up shot from Andrew put it on the ground.

We ventured higher into the mountains and a few kilometers further on, at the edge of the road, stood a large sow. I began the game of tetris trying to get my monster of a rifle out of the car, meanwhile Andrew was already out of the car shouldering his rifle. "How the hell does he do that" I mused and looked for a James bond style ejection seat button somewhere on the dash. I finally approached Andrews firing position and saw him drop the sow at 96 meters unsupported. Andrew is a little shorter than I, and as I moved forward of his position I saw behind the sow, a large family group of pigs startled by the gunfire that Andrew could not see. The mob started to move, fortunately for us, across the road. I squatted and waited for a decent size pig to cross with the stream of suckers that were

on the run. One got across and I was too slow, but the second ran straight through the crosshairs and a Speer 130gn hollow point at 3100 fps stopped it in its tracks. Andrew moved forward to take up a new firing position but I had hit the last of the group. By the time we covered the 80 metres to their position, they had been swallowed by the bush.

A few kilometers further on the same track, while scanning the bushland recently burnt out by fire, I spotted a boar not more than 50 meters away on the driver's side. I shouted, 'Boar, Boar, Boar' and I began to stop the vehicle, surprisingly, Andrew was already in front of it. This time I had seen it happen. The only thing I can liken it to is watching a semi auto eject a spent case. It is hard to see with the naked eye, but the door opens, Andrew and rifle fly out of the car and the door closes again. Maybe I was hunting with The Flash, and he had to swap the winged hood, for the flouro blaze camo CWM required hat. Andrew spotted the Boar and again fired off the shoulder. That boar went down like he had been smitten by the fist of god.





The Ruger Scout also using Speer 130 gn hollow point (now known as 'Fists of God') had done the job yet again.

A scout around the area showed that the boar had been pushing logs over, possibly looking for grubs and lizards. We soon took the track home and back down amongst the lagoons. At 'Whitefaced Heron', we saw a family group of pigs at around 350 metres away, but they had spotted us first, and were already on the run. While spotlighting back to camp, we spotted a cat, but were unable to get a clear shot at it, so it is waiting for another crew to come across it on another trip.

When downloading information from the GPS back at home onto the Garmin Basecamp software, I noticed that all of the pigs shot were at the highest elevation of the project, all over 600m above sea level. Maybe the rain did move them to areas away from the lakes. Maybe they are always up that high, and travel down when it gets too dry. Who knows, but it pays to hunt the areas you

would not necessarily expect to find them.

Greg Donaldson

## **FERAL CAT /DOG TRAINING CAMP**

We are currently looking for expressions of interest for people who may be looking to join the Feral Cat /Dog training program. With any luck, we will be holding this during **8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018**. RSVP 30<sup>th</sup> April.

This program is to introduce dogs and handlers to search and find feral cats in protected habitats and reserves. This weekend is to determine how the dogs and handlers work together and with other dogs and trainers.

There will be basic training and obedience and also lead and field work. There will be a talk from the Veterinary side of things regarding dog health and the impact of feral cats on the native wildlife population.

This will be part one of two levels to be held and each

handler and dog will be assessed according to the scoring criteria for Conservation Detection Dogs.

For more information please contact: Brian & Helen Poulos  
Mob: 0499151873  
Email: [brilen@live.com.au](mailto:brilen@live.com.au)

## **General articles, stories, tips**

With the crops harvested, the fields are bare with only low stubble. At Moonie these fields are often the best place to find cats and foxes. On a recent Moonie trip we collected one cat and 10 foxes all in the open fields. What attracts these animals to the stubble fields?



While out on an ATV side by side, John and Ken observed, with the aid of a thermal night vision scope, a fox running around and repeatedly returning to the same spot. After watching the fox for a while, they shot the fox and then had a look at the spot the fox had returned to. There they found a cache of dead mice.



## Vehicle recalls for fire risks

More than 70,000 current-model Ford Ranger PXIIs and 20,000 Mazda BT-50s are affected in the official safety recall, some of which are still being sold to customers. The recall began in late December 2017 due to a fire risk caused by a diesel particulate filter operating at very high temperatures in the undercarriage.

The vehicle emissions system can generate very high temperatures during Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) regeneration and if sufficient grass or vegetation accumulates near the DPF, it could create a risk of fire.

**Customers should avoid driving over long grass and have their vehicle inspected or inspect their vehicle themselves for grass accumulation until parts are available to reduce the possibility of this occurring.**

Ford said that it was contacting customers to alert them of the risk, and they would be contacted again as parts were available to address this concern.

NOTE: Fires can be started by any 4WD exhaust system if grass accumulates under the vehicle.

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**Opportunities may arise for CWM members to target Feral Animals after fires.**

Media Release: From: The University of Melbourne - Threatened Species Hub

'Five-fold increase in fox and cat occurrence after Otways fire'

New research undertaken in south-east Australia has shown that fire can lead to a dramatic increase in the occurrence of feral predators, and make some native animals more vulnerable to predation.

The study monitored the effects of a 1200 ha prescribed burn in the Otway Ranges using 54 motion-sensing cameras set out before and after the fire,



and a similar layout in a non-burnt forest 10 km away.

The research was led by Dr Bronwyn Hradsky and Craig Mildwaters, from the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences at the University of Melbourne. The research team worked closely with Parks Victoria and the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), who conducted the burn.

"The most startling finding was that after the fire, we detected feral cats and foxes five times more often in burnt forest," said Dr Hradsky, who is now part of

the Threatened Species Recovery Hub of the National Environmental Science Programme.

"Research in tropical savannas in Northern Australia has previously shown that feral cats will travel long distances to reach a burnt area. Once the under-storey has been removed by fire, remaining animals are easy to hunt.

"Our research shows the predator activity in burnt areas increases, so it's possible that

foxes and feral cats in south-east Australia take advantage of fires in a similar way."

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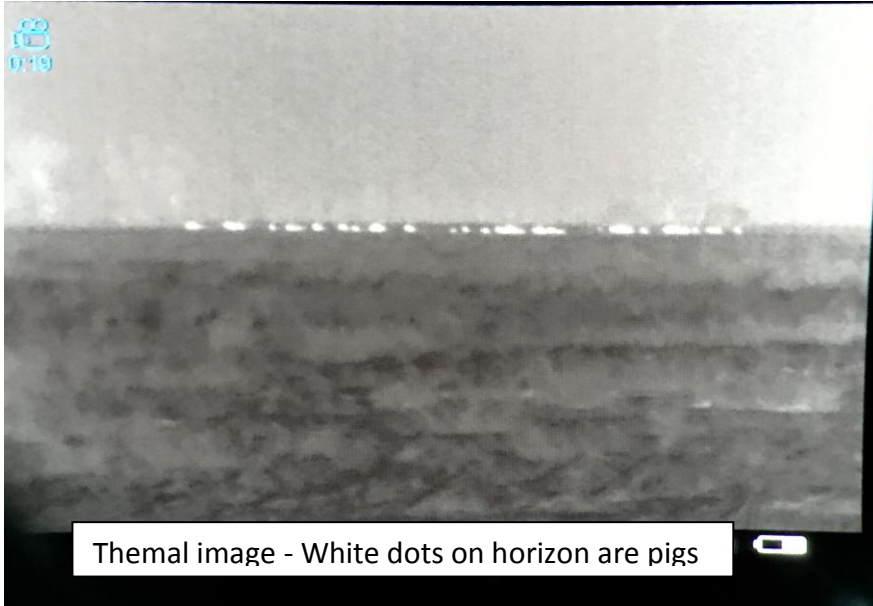
## Ken Payne story

On a recent trip to Moonie I used one of our Pulsar thermal units in a fashion that I have heard other members talk about in the last three or so years. I normally only walk of a day and spotlight at night supplemented with the thermal from the back of the vehicle. This time we quietly cruised around two harvested chick pea paddocks stopping every so

often to check out the fields with the thermal unit only.

turning them on to shoot the pigs.

walking without disturbing your quarry.



On our third night, we picked up a long heat signature on the horizon and when we got closer, we estimated there were 40 to 50 pigs strung out in a line. John and I walked up all excited, and once close enough, lit them up only to discover 98% of them were on the other side of a property fence. All we could see through our scope was a line of grass growing up through the wire fence, total pigs shot - two. Murphy's Law had kicked in - the things you learn.

Viewed through the thermal unit, the glowing shapes in the field were easily recognizable down to even seeing mice running around. Over three consecutive nights, we saw pigs feeding in the paddocks and using the full moon to our advantage, quietly walked out to them with one person, using the thermal, giving clear hand signals to the other hunters. Each of us had good torches fitted to the top of the scopes, and at most times, got close enough to pick out their shapes in the moonlight before all

We shot four between three of us the first night, eight between two of us the second night and five between two of us the third night. The crop field we had been walking in was 1.8 km long by 1.4 km wide. We walked in zig-zag patterns as the pigs were always on the move feeding. On one occasion we shot pigs and then walked another 500 or so meters without lights and shot some more. I have been informed since that on a moonless night a red head light will show you where you are

One other issue is trying to judge distances when looking through the thermal. We said a few choice words when we lit up and found we couldn't see much, we missed several of the first pigs as we were further from them than we thought and were unable to get a second shot when the smokeless gunpowder from the first shot made things too hazy through the scope.

Ken



## **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>

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## **CWM Contacts**     <http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/contacts>

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## Our Supporters

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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