



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

September 2013 Edition

Message from the Committee Chairman

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank our regional leaders (Randle Irvin, Graham Blines & Greg DeKoning) for the excellent work they have been doing in continuing to grow and develop CWM throughout Qld. We've also had a good number of people complete their accreditation course in Mt Isa and we look forward to them also coming online soon.

Our project negotiation of agreements means we now assist with feral animal management on over 50 properties covering more than 1.2M hectares across Qld. These are made up of properties owned or managed by state and local governments, private landholders and well known conservation groups.

One project that I wish to highlight was coordinated by

Randle Irvin (Townsville) where the goal is eradication of an overabundance of feral goats that have decimated the vegetation of an Island off the coast of Nth Qld. A CWM team spent 5 days camped on the uninhabited island in Aug and culled 732 goats. Follow up visits are planned over the next

caught mackerel from the beach! (See the pictorial evidence below)

A 2nd project to highlight is in southern Qld where 2 teams based at either ends of the property negotiated some very hilly and rough terrain on foot in order to cull many deer plus



The Townsville island goat project team relaxing on the beach

few months to mop up remaining animals. I'm told the project team had a great time that included some great curries, roasts and freshly

some feral pigs in a coordinated program that also included follow up aerial culling by helicopter by the property managers.

As part of our on ground work we are doing more monitoring of pest and native species in order that we can assist property owners with their planning, control & conservation work going forward.

This monitoring will be a regular feature on many of our projects going forward, hence the need for a GPS. Furthermore, some of these projects will be a great opportunity to involve your spouses and children who can be involved in pest & wildlife monitoring. They will need to be SSAA members (family membership) in order to attend, for insurance reasons.

Recently, we advertised for project leaders for a new project at Maryvale in Southern Qld. I'm heartened to have received over 20 responses, which the committee will be working through over the coming weeks.

Which brings me to my final point – please ensure that you attend our Training Days/Weekends or Range Days as advertised on our website's calendar of events, in order that we can get to know who's who and who will make good project and team leaders. This is imperative for all members. Like so many others have found out with CWM – you get out of it as much as you put in.

Damien Ferguson
Committee Chairman
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Central Queensland

Calliope Project

I arrived at the barracks late on Sunday afternoon for what would be my first CWM Project. On this trip there were only 2 CWM members so we mixed and matched teams during the week with the property management staff.

Day 1 saw Alex our team leader showing me around to get my bearings and hunting around the northern area of the property, not a lot of flat easy walking here I'm afraid. On the steeper sections it was apparent that not only was Alex much younger than I but he also seems to share certain genetic traits with mountain goats. I kept up none the less, for the most part, just needing a few extra breathers to take in the scenery of course. But seriously, the views from the higher vantage points are magnificent. We observed some fresh sign but nothing taken on day 1.

Day 2, Alex and I split up and teamed with management staff to cover different sections of the property. I went with Peter, one of the new custodians and Shane who specialises in pest control for the region the property will now be attached to. Shane himself is an experienced recreational bow hunter and was great to hunt with and learn from.

We were crossing a lantana lined creek in a vehicle down in the south western section of the

property when we spotted a couple of pigs take off into the scrub. I got out after them and despatched one with my .30-06. It was too thick to see the others but Peter and Shane saw a mob of 8 dart across the track and head up along the creek through the lantana.



8 pigs were dispatched at once

We stalked through the lantana along the creek bank and sure enough after covering about 500 metres we came across the mob of 8 in a relatively open area sloping down to the creek bank, they were too busy nosing through the sandy soil to notice us quietly getting into position. Then to what must have sounded like a fireworks display to Peter back at the creek crossing all 8 pigs fell to a hail of .30 calibre lead from Shane's Ruger M77 .308 and my Remington .30-06. Good news for that area due to the amount of diggings observed.

Day 3 saw us switch partners again and head off to cover as yet unchecked areas of the property. It was a disappointing day with only a couple of pigs seen despite covering a fair bit of country by both vehicle and foot.

Late in the day Alex and I went for a walk along a stretch of track near the feral bait feed store known as the Brewery for its barrels of fermenting grain. Alex spotted a pig in an area with a thick ferny understorey, light was fading making it difficult to see but a quartering shot from the .30-06 sent it crashing into the ferns, somewhere. We searched for 15 minutes or so without luck but gave up due to fading light. The next afternoon on our way back through the area we searched again retracing our steps and found the carcass within a few minutes, it was a large black boar with razor sharp tusks he had

meticulously ground to a knife edge, it collapsed under a bush surrounded by thick ferns and had not gone as far as I had originally thought, we probably walked right past it the first time.

Day 4 – The Buggy, Oh Yeah! Alex, the dedicated hunter that he is has invested heavily in all the latest hunting equipment making me green with envy. Not the least of which is his Polaris Ranger ATV for which he has gone to the trouble of getting provisional registration for use on some CWM projects. This awesome machine floats over terrain that rattles the bones of your standard 4WD Ute, carrying 3 men across the bench seat with a tip tray for all the gear you can carry. I was a little apprehensive at getting on board at first thinking I would be shaken apart but after spending the day running around in it, I WANT ONE!!!



The Buggy

It was much faster to jump out of the buggy to line up that shot quickly before a pig disappears into the scrub and we did bag a couple this way in the higher rainforest areas.

We were re-united today with Tim the property custodian who took us to areas that he has known to be fruitful on previous trips. We followed Tim on foot scouting around the hills SE of a dam. Alex and I heard a pig squeal from across a gully, after a short stalk we came upon 2 pigs, the closer pig unaware of our presence still had its nose buried in the soil when a well-placed shot from Alex's .270 Sako M85 dropped it on the spot, its mate got away. On the way back in the afternoon we got a couple more along the track side from the buggy in a rainforest area. Further on we only managed to get one out of a mob of 3–4 medium sized pigs with piglets before they disappeared into the scrub.



Next morning we found the pig



A happy project team member with another sow taken on the Calliope project

Project - Edgbaston

This trip emphasized again that Edgbaston really is an amazing part of the country, we seem to find something different each time we go there. This is a very diverse piece of country and has "the lot" including: escarpment, desert, clay pans, salt flats, downs, timber.

Edgbaston is home to what scientists have called the most significant natural springs for global biodiversity in the entire Great Artesian Basin. This is certainly quad and bike country, although there is some good walking to be had up the creeks and escarpment areas.

This trip we had 4 quads on site for the duration covering 100km + per quad. We covered quite a bit of ground we hadn't seen before due to the country being dryer. We got right down into Lake Muler although there was still lots of water in the Lake. Pig sign was present but none were seen. 4 Rabbits & 2 cats were taken all under spotlight. No pig activity was evident at the lake.

Once again the shearing shed was quite comfortable; 240v on hand, a good BBQ plate on site, with heaps of fire wood (gidgee) which makes great coals.

Would like to think we could squeeze in another trip before it gets too hot.

Cheers
Rod Costin.

Day 5 – Our last day began in a somewhat more relaxed fashion with a breakfast of pancakes and bacon and eggs on the BBQ. We decided on a quick trip in the buggy down to the dam area we visited the day before and headed off on foot only to come across a mob only about 120m away from where Alex despatched the sow in the photo the day before. We despatched a couple of the smaller pigs in this mob before the rest including a big black boar which were a little further off and we didn't see at first made a hasty retreat.

Between CWM and management staff we accounted for 16 pigs for the week, with a few getting away as well.

So, my impressions of my first CWM project: I had a great time; it's a top spot with

magnificent scenery. The information that Greg the Project Leader sent to me gave me a good indication of what to expect from this project so I could be fully prepared. A team area allocation log was used to ensure teams would not overlap territories as a safety precaution with a staff member at the base monitoring team movements. The area manager's VHF radio system was utilised as the useful range of 5W UHF handhelds was found to be less than 1km in some areas in this hilly country with UHF used only for close range communication between team members. Would I come back for more? I'm just counting the days (and getting in some training to keep up with Alex and Tim, bloody mountain goats).

Tim Giesberts.

Blackwater South Project

NOTICE: *the next trip to South Blackwater has been cancelled due to an aerial cull being conducted in November, no further trips are planned for this year.*



The South Blackwater property is 900 meters above sea level

The South Blackwater project is part of our major partnership with a state government agency. The property is approx. 30000 Hectares and reaches an elevation of approx. 900 meters above sea level. The area is home to in excess of 80 significant aboriginal sites, and is home to some species of plants which are found nowhere else in the world.

Our role is to help with the removal of feral cattle which cause damage to the environment in several ways. The top of the escarpment is weed free and the feral cattle move freely thought the area which increases the risk of introducing weeds like parthenium, prickly pear and lantana.

In the past the area was an important stop over area for aboriginal people due to

constant water and food supplies. The cattle have a negative impact on the ancient aboriginal rock art. As most of the art is relatively low down the cattle are rubbing against the paintings and causing irreversible damage.

The area is undulating with areas of sparsely timbered to heavily timbered areas. There are many fresh water springs across the area which is some of the best drinking water you will find. We filled some water bottles from one of the springs and the water was clearer and nicer than the bottled water we took in. Over the summer temperatures reach in excess of 40 degrees c during the day and high 20's at night. Winter brings the temp to mid 20's during the day and just above 0 at night. Access in and out is fairly straight forward with well-maintained tracks, however if it rains the roads can become impassable and the area is closed. The area has some magnificent scenery, waterfalls and swimming holes, a great place to take the family.

Wayne Bowker, Project leader

Blackwater South May 2013

The last trip was attended by 4 personal, a full crew. Two travelled from Brisbane, 1 from Proserpine and myself from Yeppoon. On arrival at the manager's base the first thing we noticed was how cold it had become from 6 weeks earlier. As normal Carlin was there to greet us, and ensured our first night was comfortable stay in the barracks. Saturday started with our local area induction, and then we headed down to the property, a 3 hour drive, clearing trees as we went.



Target feral cattle are Poll Hereford

Sunday we got into the hunting. The boys from Brisbane accounting for 2 cows and a couple of pigs (very large sows). The cattle are very different this time. Every time we see them now they are on the run, very flighty. On the first trip they just looked at us, now they head for the hills. We had to do a lot more work this time to find them as they were further into the property on this trip.

Monday saw another 2 cows dispatched, but we were surprised by the number of cattle there. At times herds of 8 to 10 would be seen running at full tilt to get as far away from us as they could. Tuesday the Brisbane boys got another, which was also to be their last for the trip. Johan and I had to leave Tuesday afternoon due to work commitments so headed back to the manager's base.

Upon arrival at the base Carlin asked us to check out an area where he had seen cattle the previous day. So with an early start Wednesday we headed down a track to explore the area resulting in another 2 cows dispatched. With that we left Blackwater South to go home.

The Brisbane boys stayed until Thursday with no further success, just rain. Another enjoyable trip had by all, looking forward to the next trip. All spots on this project are filled for the year, with many people already on the waiting list. If you are coming to South Blackwater you need to bring a large caliber rifle 338win and above, these cattle are getting grumpy and we are shooting them from approx. 100m.

Wayne Bowker

Blackwater South July 2013

The 4 of us from the Brisbane region arrived Friday arvo for the induction and stay over in the manager's residence. During the night rain showers came in and when we woke up we were in the clouds and things were damp.

As this was the third trip we did not have the trouble of trees



across the road that the earlier trips had. By the time we had travelled the hour into the back of the property the showers had lifted and made setting up camp easier.

After a quick bite to eat we set off with Ian and I walking from camp and Earl and Ian on the quad putting up the remaining signs and checking out the furthest spots for cattle. Ian and I hunted up the main creek and came onto a single bull and between us put him down. Earl also got a nice bull the first day making it a good start to the trip.

The property was quite pretty

having recovered from the fires with lots of new vegetation growth from small sun jewels (carnivorous plants the size of a 20 cent piece) to large palm trees. Sitting around the fire of a night swapping yarns the only sounds were the dingos calling to each other and what we made ourselves.

Some of the hunting area was gentle rolling slopes with open glades and other areas were steep sided valleys with rocky waterways and less visibility. On our way out we stopped at one of the lookouts for a last look around and as the air was so crisp and clean you could see for a very long way.





Rocky waterways at Blackwater South Project



There are many fresh water springs



Carnivorous plants

On CWM projects one issue is that many of us have never hunted together before. By following the procedures there are no misunderstandings and a safe and enjoyable trip can be had by all. One of the things that was a must is making sure of shot placement and enough knock down power to put down as they are a big animal.

Total for this trip was 6 Bulls, 5 cows and 1 boar.

Ken Payne

Blackwater Cat & Dog Project

While not on the calendar of events, this trip was advertised in mid July. At first all positions filled within the first day but as usual work or other commitments dropped numbers back to a comfortable four.

On arrival the property manager offered to run us all through an induction and familiarise us with current road conditions and pest activity. Cat traps were set throughout the park and pig traps were baited during the previous weeks.

Trapping at various locations around the park provided the only success over the weekend despite an accumulated 60 hours of spotlighting and around 50 hours day work. Three cats were despatched this way over the weekend. Most successful trap bait was recovered faeces.

Dam 1 and 12 showed signs of recent pig activity mainly around the northern tip with large wallows evident. Scat, ground moisture and tracks indicated that the activity was less than 24 hours. Paul and Luke laid some fermented grain in strategic locations at dam 12 and staked the position out Saturday night with no luck. The groups night vision gear was used how-ever consensus was that infra-red would be a better investment due to it not needing back up lighting.

We all had a good time and were able to develop skills in hunting and trialling night vision gear as well as ensuring an ongoing good relationship with the property managers. We would like to thank Jim for his

assistance and tips during the weekend and he asked to pass on his appreciation for the effort put in by the CWM members over the weekend.

Paul Thompson

North Queensland

Mackay report

We had 7 new members complete our last accreditation course on 3rd August.

Back in June we conducted an interesting night practice shoot where we had steel silhouettes warmed up to around 40 odd degrees and scattered around the rimfire range for spotlighting. The difference this time they were partly hidden and we were using thermal vision units. This made them very visible and then we were able to focus the spotlight on the area. Each round the targets were reset in different locations.

Afterwards we had the centrefire event on paper lever action targets. To simulate field conditions both events were timed. This usually required a reload. If you have a high capacity box magazine you gain by not reloading. As most of us are competitive when it comes to shooting, we score these events. Thanks to Ian from Mackay Shooters Supplies for organising the thermal vision demonstration and showing us how to shoot.

Paul Thompson

The new lessee (Gerard) of the Collinsville Project property is receptive to us undertaking another visit this year. To fit in with his mustering plans it will need to be organised during the last two weeks of October as it

starts to get quite hot after that and the chances of rain increases. Gerard had been told about our visits previously over a number of years and is a keen shooter himself. The project could run for up to a week or 10 days during this period.

Help needed! - To make this trip happen I'm going to need someone to step forward as a Trip Leader, preferably someone who has been there before. Volunteers please call me.

Graham Blines

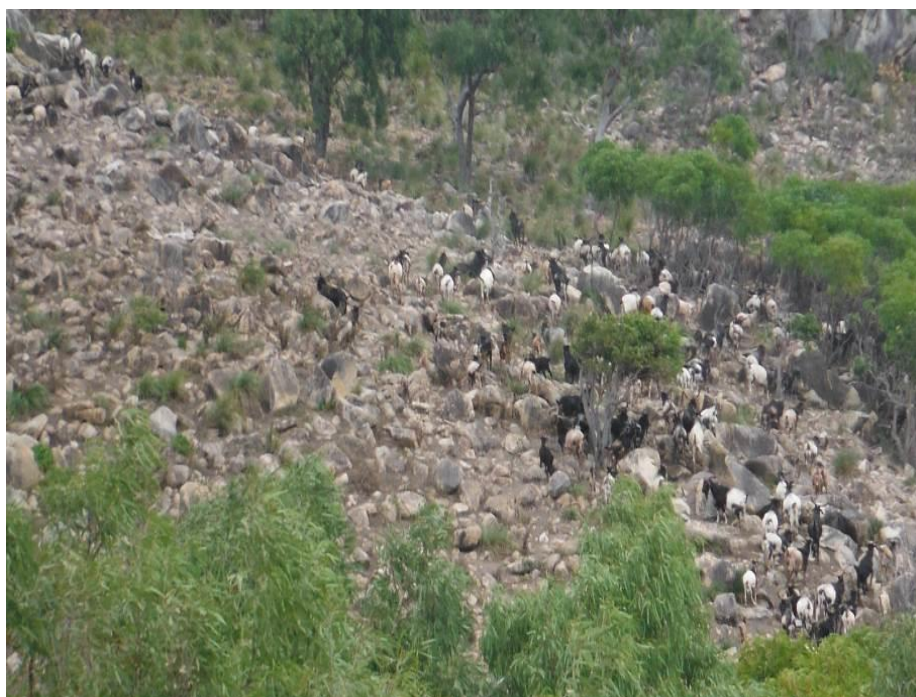
Townsville Island Goat Project

The first phase of this project has passed with a successful outcome. The group of 13 members accounted for **732 feral pest goats**, and collected hundreds of images and observations for future reference.

Perfect weather and extra



special environs added to the harmony that became the signature for the new project. This project was a learning curve as we don't have a project similar that we can refer to. The last trip for the year is in the first week of October.



732 Goats were removed in the first visit

Member comments - Townsville Goat island Project:

Dave.

We were the first of our group to arrive via water taxi from Townsville on the Thursday morning, followed by a second group in a private boat soon after. We set up camp under some Leichhardt trees at the NW end of the island in what can only be described as one of the better camping spots ever; white sand, blue water, no flies, sandflies or mozzies and whales 20m from off the end sand spit. All of this just over 1.5hrs from Townsville.



Eric

I used a Tikka T3 6.5x55 with a mix of 87gn, 100gn HP projectiles and some 120gn SP for longer shots (approx 200m). All were effective on the game the lighter 87gn projectiles easily dropping the goats with one shot one kill. I do believe my rounds were far more efficient than the 308w in the team I shot with. Too much gun for the goats. As these are light framed animals, 223 would

also be effective and more economical. The .243 would be also very effective. I believe we should also consider projectile type as well as calibre.

Scott.

This was my first CWM project, and I doubt very much that any other trip will be ever top this one. However I'm keen to try to as the group of CWM members in Townsville and on this trip was fantastic. The project itself

was scenic being on a tropical island 13nm from the mainland. It mainly consisted of large hills and rocky foreshore surround by coral reef with a little sand spit where we camped. Most days were spent with half day walks/stalks to the southern end of the island covering 7-8km and a peak elevation of 170m. The rest of the time was spent fishing and whale watching and usually topped off with grilled goat and fish for dinner cooked up by the island chief Dave. Dave you're welcome any time to cook us grub again it was fantastic!

The highlight of the trip was sitting on one of the peaks, overlooking the adjacent island group and watching and hearing the whales go past as we do our little bit for conservation.

Mac

My thoughts - "need more ammo", "Great trip"

Wayne.

I have had some thoughts about some of the things that we saw on the island during the



project and I think that most (if not all) of them can be explained by natural selection.

Some of the points raised by people during the shoot include the following: No large billies, 75% billies, small size of the goats - even the mature goats, very small amount of meat on the carcasses we boned out, nanny's abandoning kids without any shooting pressure, nannys aborting near-term kids, the lack of almost any vegetation lower than shoulder height, water deposits from dew etc. all over the island.

On this island there are no real predators so the only real parameters are the birth rate, death by natural causes, the food supply and the island's capacity. Given that they are on an isolated island, there will be a maximum capacity. The only real control on the goats is the food supply. I think that natural selection has moulded the goat population to the one that we saw.

For a range of reasons I think it is reasonable to assume the goat herd is working towards a smaller, lighter herd and slowly increasing in numbers but individually decreasing in weight and size as time goes on. Given enough time, I think the herd would evolve into goats the size of large cats and there would be a couple of thousand on the Island. They are not doing this consciously, of course, but the principle of natural selection says that this is what is happening. The only missing thing here is the length of time that they have been on the Island.

Townsville report

Developments are coming thick and fast up here in North Queensland.

We have a new project that we are looking to get started on ASAP. The project is with a state government department and is located about half way between Cairns and Townsville. That means that Cairns members are also within easy driving distance and we welcome them and all CWM members to attend.

The property includes a large wetland area on the Burdekin River. The main focus of the project at this stage is the control of feral pigs and cats. Like many of our newer projects, it also includes more collection of data and recording of observations. With this in mind there is the chance to include observers on the project. This would include our partners and children who can help with wildlife observations.

Participation on this project would require full CWM accreditation for the use of firearms, SSAA family membership for your partner and young ones (must be under direct supervision by their accredited parent). Partners can do just the CWM theory accreditation to participate in monitoring only.

We will look at the feasibility of three trips this year, with the proposed dates (at this stage) being:

September 28 - October 6.
November 2 - 10 November.
December 7 - 15 December.

If you're interested, please contact

Randle Irvin

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South East Queensland Report

With spring all but on us and with the dry weather that we are going through at the moment it is good time to think about the way we target the ferals on our projects. At Stewartdale, there is still some water laying in small holes around the property. When the weather warms up this will disappear quickly and we will be back to checking the more permanent water and moving out into the paddocks looking for ferals.

September 21st - 22nd is our Southern Training Weekend.

This is a good time to get out and connect with your fellow members and get involved with your club's field training activities at Stewartdale Training area. I would like to thank all the members who helped with the June training weekend field navigation exercise and those who came along to clean up CWM hill. Find directions to Stewartdale for the training weekend at <http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/component/content/article/41-top-headlines/137-seq-stewartdale-via-ripley-training-weekends-details.html>

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Glen Neville

Gympie Dogs
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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 Hunting & Conservation member for discounts where applicable.

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Upcoming Activity Dates –2013

Be sure to mark the dates below in your diary and plan to come along. You never know – you might just be free on that date.

Hunting Activities - Attendance at activities **must** be arranged with the Team Leader (Contact) as most activities will have a safe operating limit.

September			
9th -13 th	Calliope Pigs	Central	Greg de Koning
14 th	Townsville Training/Range Day - Thuringowa	Northern	Randle Irvin
21st - 22 nd	Training Week end	Southern	Brett Marais
21 st – 22 nd	Blackwater Project	Central	Rod Costin
October			
5th - 12 th	Moonie Pigs	Southern	Damien Ferguson
12 th	Townsville Training/Range Day - Thuringowa	Northern	Randle Irvin
12th	CWM Training and Practice shoot 6.00pm – 9.00pm	Mackay	Graham Blines
12th - 18 th	Blackwater South Project	Central	Wayne Bowker
19 th – 20 th	Avocet	Central	Brad Hughes
19th - 20 th	Stewartdale Feral Control	Southern	Owen McIntyre
26th - 2 nd	Gladstone Pigs	Central	Greg de Koning
November			
2nd	Mackay - Accreditation Course & Practice (all day)	Mackay	Graham Blines
9 th	Townsville Training/Range Day - Thuringowa	Northern	Randle Irvin
16th - 17 th	Training Week end	Southern	Brett Marais
16 th - 17 th	Blackwater Project	Central	Rod Costin
25th - 29 th	Calliope Pigs	Central	Greg de Koning
December			
30 Nov – 7 Dec	Moonie Pigs	Southern	Damien Ferguson
14 th	Townsville Training/Range Day - Thuringowa	Northern	Randle Irvin
21st - 22 nd	Stewartdale Feral Control	Southern	Owen McIntyre
30th - 7 th	Gladstone Pigs	Central	Greg de Koning
Projects - Dates to be confirmed			
TBA	Stanthorpe 'Amiens' Project	Southern	Peter Keith
TBA	Gympie Dogs	Southern	Glen Neville
TBA	Mundubbera Dogs and Pigs	Southern	Peter Ferguson

TBA - For many of the projects marked as 'TBA', please contact the relevant project leader or keep a close eye on email traffic and the website <http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/calendar-of-events.html> for trip dates.

TBA ¹ - Dry season only

Project Target Species

Avocet – Primary - Foxes, Cats, Dogs. Secondary – Rabbits, Pigs

Blackwater – Feral Pigs, Dogs & cats.

Blackwater South – Feral Pigs and scrub cattle. Secondary – Cats.

Calliope – Feral pigs, foxes, cats & wild dogs.

Collinsville - Primary – Pigs.

Edgebaston – Primary – Feral Pigs, wild dogs, foxes & cats.

Gladstone – Primary – Feral Pigs, wild dogs, foxes & cats.

Gympie – Primary – Wild Dogs. Secondary – Feral Pigs, Foxes, Feral Cats and European Hares.

Longreach 'L', 'W', 'B' & 'D' projects – Primary – Feral Cats & Foxes. Secondary – Feral Pigs.

Moonie – Primary – Pigs, Goats, Foxes, Cats, Dogs, European Carp & Indian Mynah birds.

Mundubbera - Primary Dogs. Secondary pigs, cats & foxes

Stewartdale - Primary - Hares, Foxes, Cats, Dogs, Pigs

Stanthorpe 'Amiens' - Pigs, Foxes, Cats, Wild Dogs, Rabbits, Goats & Deer.

Townsville – Primary – Pigs

Serpentine Creek – Pigs

Pinnacles - Pigs