



"Preserving Australia's Heritage"

SSAA (Qld) Inc. Conservation and Wildlife Management Division
Postal Address: PO Box 2443, North Ipswich, Qld, 4305
Email: cwm@ssaaqld.org.au Internet: <http://cwm.ssaaqld.org.au>

CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (Qld)

June 2019 Newsletter

Message from the CWM President

Qld Rangers Muster

Each year park rangers from all over Qld and other countries attend a 'muster' to share ideas, meals, drinks and friendship.

This year 3 of our SEQ members attended as it was held at 'Gordon Country' at Cunningham's Gap at the top of the Great Dividing Range. Being early August they enjoyed near or below zero temperatures most nights.

CWM has been attending these musters for nearly 10 yrs now and it's a great way to learn about the enormous amount of work and effort put in by our park rangers. Many of our members are frustrated 'want to be' park rangers or farmers, so always fit in at these musters and come away having made some new friends.

Team Leader Training

A number of us held a trip leader training course in SEQ, for those who would like to assist leading teams on our projects.

We cover many topics at these 1.5 day events and spend a good chunk of it discussing tricky or difficult scenarios to equip our members with confidence that they will make good decisions if the need arises.

CWM has an outstandingly low record of safety incidents. Non CWM people always ask me when I explain to them that we cull feral animals.... they state "Gee that sounds risky!?" I've always told them that the drive to and from the project is the most dangerous part of what we do, and not the shooting part.

To be more specific it's the drive home that is the most dangerous, as we can spend long days and nights in the field on our projects and getting a really good nights sleep before driving home is absolutely vital.

The best kept secret in hunting

During our team leader training we always ask attendees about their hunting experience and how they came to hear about CWM. The level of experience

of our members always surprises me in that many have been shooting and hunting for many decades. It's also fantastic to see recent newcomers to our pastime who are enthusiastic and eager to learn.

Something that doesn't surprise me anymore is that CWM is the best kept secret in hunting! Although we've been advertising in the SSAA magazines for over 10 years, people are still surprised to learn about us at events like the Shot Show or at their local range.

We are in a unique position where we have landowners coming to us on a regular basis to assist them control pest animals. We have not actively looked for more properties for at least 5 yrs as we continually need to grow our number of active members to service the properties that are offered to us.

The interesting people from all walks of life whom you'll spend time with on our projects is endless. Conversations whilst sitting around the campfire at the end of a rewarding day in

the field are always very interesting and informative.

Please assist us in our drive for many more good reliable people to become members.

Damien Ferguson President
(Mob - 0402 424 424)
damien.ferguson@hotmail.com

South East Report

Moonie

Big Balls Competition!

The night was warm and the pigs were furtively moving around the property, unaware of the impending scene that was about to play out but wary enough to know that danger was around the next bush. Sounds like a good start to a story but it gets better.

Early in the evening leaving the comfort of the accommodation we eagerly leapt into the Sierra hunting rig, OK we climbed and assisted each other to get in. The Xeye thermal was quickly attached to the thermalink and our preparation for the night's activity was done. The dream team of Adam, Neil and I worked our way around the paddocks. Good number of foxes, cats and obviously pigs throughout the night. Seeing a good sized pig from a fair distance we idled closer whilst it moved about its business unaware of our presence. We pulled the rig up and settled down for a shot. The victim was in the paddock of harvested sorghum so was quite visible but being unable to drive on the paddock, in the wheel tracks only, meant that the shot had to be taken from the track. Neil made sure everything was right I flicked on the Thermalink light and Neil squeezed the trigger delivering the package with what was thought to be a well placed result. The sound of a solid hit

reverberated back to us and we watched both thermal and spotlights to see the result not what we expected.

The pig fell over, rolled around for a bit then got up and headed off at high speed. Using the dual screens of Thermalink, I watched from the driver's seat and Neil and Adam from the shooting platform, we easily tracked its path across the paddock until it vanished from sight as the undulating ground swallowed it up.

As responsible hunters we disembarked from the luxury of the Zook, removing seat belts, helmets and making sure our shoe laces were done up nice and tight and cross checked (see I told you we are responsible hunters) and headed off across the paddock in the direction of it's last seen whereabouts. The scene of the hit was noted as small bush was in the near vicinity so we had good reference points to track the exit route employed by our main character. Now this is where it gets interesting. We are now on foot entering the domain of the untamed beast with an injured and dangerous feral pig in the vicinity. Neil had my 19mm hand held thermal, I quickly detached the 35mm Xeye thermal from the Thermalink, marvelling at how good a design it was and how easy it is to detach and reattached again, exactly for this purpose.

Adam had a torch and an XSight thermal scope as we cautiously but briskly made out

way towards the stage exit. Getting to a point we spent quite a bit of time examining every row of sorghum, easy with the thermal to look down each row, scanning across in front occasionally. Adam was in the middle 10-15 meters to my right and Neil on the other side of Adam maybe 30m away. All was going great, our expectation was to find and identify the last known resting place of the allusive pig.

Suddenly Adam yells "LOOK OUT", a high pitched girly scream that must have stretched his vocal cords and moved his testicles into ovary territory..... Both myself and Neil bolted not even taking the time to look back ... I ran until the screaming of the little girl was a distant memory then curled up in the foetal position, rocking quietly until daylight! Not so, this is actually how it played out and the reason for Adam's nomination.

As we walked forward, we unknowingly had come across a boar feeding in the sorghum, in a depression and hidden by the stubble. The wind had obviously masked our approach and when startled he chose to employ the fight response. The rather pissed off boar charged straight at Adam from less than 10m. I spun around, dropping my thermal, to be caught by the lanyard, in time to witness Adam, firing from the hip at the boar. He did not panic, step back nor shy away from the situation, simply fired as quickly and as accurately as the time allowed, which was precious little. With less than 3m left the

boar spun around and before being able to retreat was drilled by Adam's second shot. The speed that Adam cycled the bolt and the accurate second shot put the charging boar down. I finished it quickly, as by that time I had been able to turn, raise my rifle and shoot by looking down the side of the barrel.

Neil came over and commented that it sounded more like a semi auto as the shots happened that quickly. This story is testimony to the training, experience and quick thinking we all need in the field. For as quickly as situations arise they can, and often do, go pear shaped much quicker.

Know who you are hunting with, put all reasonable or required safety measures in place and ensure that if you have not been in a situation before that you communicate well with your team. Put yourself in positions that enable you to help and assist if needed as safety is paramount in our chosen activity.

The pig that had vanished into the sorghum was later found deceased in a nearby hollow the sorghum, as it should have been

I am more than happy to hunt with Adam G at any time and formally nominate him for the inaugural 2019 Moonie Big Balls (MBB) awards..

Mark

Westmar

Richard Woods and I were recently at CWM Westmar project at the beginning of the month when this occurred.

We were gently bumping along in a small 4WD over a cattle-pocked track in melon-hole country in a large paddock of mainly dense lime bush and brigalow sucker regrowth, quietly idling along in the buggy in the cool darkness about 11.00 pm, only under red LED lights. The moon had not yet risen. I was in the passenger seat scanning with a CWM hand-held Pulsar thermal monocular. We had seen little thermal activity for a while, mostly bedded down cows and flighty roos, when I saw a weird glow in my thermal emanating from a patch of lime bush, upwind, about 100 meters off the track at 10 O'clock from our direction of travel, a bit away from the nearest cattle camp.

The signature was too big to be a pig; I commented at the time and was going to dismiss it as probably a cow camped with a baby calf just away from the mob.

Gut feeling took over, so we parked up and marked the vehicle on our GPS, also leaving a small, red LED marker light on as well. Loaded with only one lever action rifle, scope torch and a thermal each, we headed into the darkness toward the large glow, deep in the 3 meter tall, 30m across lime bush clump to investigate. The closer we advanced, the bigger it grew, looking more and more like a lone cow or bull. When we were as close as we dared, wary that it may be a protective cow with a baby calf, with the glow still deep in the thorny bushes, a sudden blast of grunts and squeals saw that weird glow split at least 10 different ways through the undergrowth.

Adrenalin overload! We were so surprised that it was not a cow, but a big mob of larger pigs, miles away from the nearest water, so, by the time we rounded the other side of the prickly clump we only glimpsed the rear of the tail-enders bolting into thick regrowth 50 meters away. My ambushing sidekick with the lever action was also taken unprepared and did not have a round up the spout and in the heat of the explosive action, dry fired at the only grunter to grace his sights and I stupidly only had my hunting knife, about as useful in that situation as a hand full of gravel. Not intending to ever repeat that mistake.

The lessons learned here were: always expect the unexpected; always check out weird thermal signatures no matter how unlikely they seem; always take your loaded firearms with you, no matter how unlikely the signature appears and trust your gut instinct.

Cheers,

Steve Mallett

Townsville Report

Burdekin River Wetlands Lodge

For a trip to a one of a kind property, heritage listed station homestead, then visit our glorious Burdekin River Wetlands Lodge!

This property was originally at the forefront of Brahman cattle industry and has a rich history in Far North Queensland's cattle industry. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to participate in the project



caravans for long or short term stays.

On a recent trip to the Lodge it got rather cold and for the first time in my life I experienced a full frost and the most glorious sunrise I have ever seen. You could take a photo or paint it every day and would never see the same scenes twice, the changing of the colours, the sunrises and sunsets, they are spectacular!

Enjoy the Lodge and its surrounds and remember, the BRWL project is only minutes away from the homestead. Just stay for the peace and tranquillity or go into the field and fully enjoy the CWM experience.

For more information regarding the BRWL project and Lodge contact Randle Irvin, 0411 040 010, Project 21C, Anthony Darlington on 0422 165 774 or

involving the lodge and share in its wonders.

The Burdekin River Wetlands project is right on its doorstep. The veranda is a treat to sit outside and watch the water-birds over the lagoon. Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner outside and enjoy the views! There is always wildlife activity around the lodge, whether it be Emus, kangaroos, and the amazing diversity of birdlife. Whether it is a winter's day or a summers morning the scenery and wildlife will not cease to amaze! CWM members are lucky enough to be able to experience the Lodge and its surrounds on a regular basis. We are regular visitors to the Lodge and have seen its many and varied weather patterns, scenery and especially the wildlife.

The Lodge has been lovingly restored and it is a very comfortable place to stay. There is a full working kitchen with stove, fridge, microwave and more. There are a few rooms available to stay in and there is a separate bathroom with hot shower and separate flushing toilet. The Lodge is

fully powered and drinking water is available. There is also a separate accommodation available in the form of a stockman's house which has two bedrooms, small kitchenette (no oven or fridge) but has separate shower and toilet facilities. Phone reception



and internet are extremely limited, but Qld Govt have supplied a radio set up that is housed in the kitchen. There are sheds available to park vehicles and areas to park

just for a chat about the Lodge and surrounds, Helen Poulos, 0499 151 873

Patience pays off

Having been a member of CWM for a few years I was left wondering if I would ever get the chance to spot and takedown a decent size feral pig.



My husband Brian kept telling me “Patience love, patience. It will happen when you least expect it”.

We decided to do a quick trip to BRWL as new caretakers were arriving at the Lodge who had not been there before. So after doing the necessary handover, we decided to take a leisurely drive around the park.

It was deemed necessary that being on the project property we should take the necessities so all precautions were taken and we stored the Rossi lever action stainless with 16” barrel and a

couple of rounds of ammo for the ‘Just in Case ‘ scenario!

We were travelling along one of the many tracks in the project area and taking note of the many numerous waterholes and courses that meander alongside. We had

not travelled more than about 3kms when I heard the call “Pig, right side”.

The vehicle was brought to a standstill and we all expected the Pig to turn tail and run, but whatever he was feeding on had his whole attention. We exited the vehicle and I retrieved the rifle. We moved into the scrub and stopped in a clearing where

hubby said “Your turn love!”

Didn’t have to tell me twice!

Once I had a clear line of sight I was able to take the shot.

Having done some practice with open sights I felt quite comfortable looking down the barrel and at the target. One shot and the pig went down. After having surgery recently I was struggling to negotiate my way along the open ground so I asked my husband to ensure that the animal had been taken cleanly.

Once the all clear was given I made my way over and we were all quite stunned at the size of the pig. For me it was not only patience paid off but also my personal best.

To say that I was a happy camper was too mild, but now it is a case of can I do better! I did not realise how challenging or exciting it was to stalk and take down a feral animal.

So for everyone out there I say “You can get a big pig too oi!

Helen Poulos

The Western Queensland bilby project.

CWM were invited to participate in this important project in 2013. A succession of wet seasons had resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of feral cats in a reserve that was set aside to protect Queensland's last remaining population of greater bilbies. I have been fortunate enough to be included in CWM teams attending the project over several years. Usually we attend the project for about ten days once per year between April and July although if the cat numbers are up we may be invited to do a second trip later in the year. This year eight



CWM members attended from late May to early June.



The nights were very cool, sometimes down to 3 or 4 degrees as we were finishing our shifts around midnight or later. What do you wear standing up on the back of a ute spotlighting in cold weather? Everything you've got!! A wind-proof jacket over it all, a balaclava, towel around the neck and thick gloves. Some nights there was a good bit of breeze and if we were driving into it we could get quite cold.

Days were spent doing some citizen science on the previous night's culls, and reconnoitering the routes for the night-time spotlighting and shooting trips. Some parts of the park had received rain during March and the daytime drives out and back allowed us to check for any remaining boggy patches. We were also able to record the route on the GPS as a track to be followed during the night trip. That didn't take all day so there was some cooking (my contribution was fresh baked whole-meal bread, very popular) and a lot of yarning of course.

The overall score was 15 cats

First night there were seven people, which constituted two teams of three and one surplus. I decided to stay in camp and leave the other guys to it. On the following few nights we had our full complement of ten people (squeezed into accommodation designed for four, with two CWM guys sleeping in tents outside). Barry the ranger wanted me to drive for him and Zoe (a visiting ranger from Christmas Island where she will be leading a new cat-hunting team) as my driving is smooth - well usually. They were using a thermal imaging camera to detect animals and it blurs badly with any rough movement of the vehicle it's mounted on. So gentle driving is necessary and I drove for him two nights while he demonstrated the thermal gear to Zoe, and shot a couple of cats during the process. I drove for other teams for a couple more nights then I was on the back doing spotlighting or shooting on several nights but few cats were seen in our spotlight. Other teams were more successful. Of course all team members contribute to the success of the project, whether they are driving, spotlighting or

shooting and the final tally is very much the result of a combined effort.

We were trialing a new technique using two vehicles in a double team. One vehicle each side of a creek, creeks consisting just of shallow depressional dry channels with sparse stunted Coolibahs, many of which are dying with the eastward progression of the deserts. The idea is that if a cat rushes across the creek to escape a vehicle the team on the other vehicle will be there to intercept the cat and shoot it. The technique worked well.



for the nine nights. All cats got the full autopsy on the following morning, description of stomach contents, samples of urine and faeces, a piece of ear for DNA to determine which tribe the cat belonged to, and recovery of the all-important female scent gland contents, used for trapping. Barry has a team for doing the analysis somewhere in a big city. I asked Barry if 15 was a high enough number to ring alarm bells, which I thought should be a yes. But he said it depends what happens in the future, for example if it rains again soon the long-haired rat numbers will increase, which will be followed by an increase in the cat numbers, then when the weather dries out the rat numbers will suddenly collapse and the cats will hunt more bilbies. So if there is further rain we may be required out there again in October or November. I'm very much looking forward to that.

Norm Bain.

General articles, stories, tips

I was recently invited onto a new property through the Farmer Assist program. The property is in the Glenmorgan area and is 15,000 acres including riverfront, grazing, crops and even a small feedlot. For a bloke like me, the ability to gain access to properties through both CWM and Farmer Assist over the last few years has been fantastic. What a great service QLD SSAA is providing.

opportunity to take a few steps towards a tree, take a supported position and wait for



the dogs to re-appear. Sure enough one dog crested the creek edge at about 90m and presented an easy target. Whilst we were no doubt lucky on this day, I also believe we were successful because we listened to the intelligence gained from the property owner. We planned our stalk into the wind and we were moving very slowly.

A great couple of days were spent getting to know the property with our final tally being 1x Dog, 1x Pig, seven foxes and 42 Roos (taken under permit). I would like to say that I am a fan of the CWM system. I have had the chance to attend a few projects and was lucky enough to have a couple of experienced hunters take me under their wing and show me the ropes (thanks Ted & Steve). I also find the extra

After getting a brief from the property owners and gathering intelligence on recent critter sightings, we decided to stalk along a creek system being careful to work our way into the wind. We were probably 200m into a slow stalk when we sighted two dogs at about 150m, trotting along the creek towards us. The dogs soon disappeared into dead ground. I took this



flexibility of the Farmer Assist program just fantastic, dates are flexible and you can operate in very small groups or alone if that's your thing. We are certainly spoilt for choice.

Happy Hunting

Brett Poole

Ken Payne story

A mentor's view

Recently at a skills weekend, Adrian talked a new shooter Mick to put his name forward for Moonie. Mick took up shooting a while ago, but had no shooters in his friends or family circle. He had assumed that he needed more training, but Adrian said 'on the job training is the only way to go for



hunting', so Mick applied. Mick attended a few trips learning about hunting with Adrian, myself and quite a few others, but had not succeeded in culling much.

On the recent June trip all the stars aligned, and while hunting through the scrub, Mick shot a nice boar, which we photographed just before the heavens opened

up. While hunting in the rain, on the way back to the vehicle, he managed to shoot another 2 pigs. I think Adrian and I were as buzzed about Mick getting the pigs as much as he was. Seeing the smile on his face went along with achieving his goal. After we had left the project, Mick went hunting with Ian trying out a thermal scope and managed to cull several more pigs and a fox. He is well on his way to more relaxed hunting now that he has achieved initial success within our group. From day one Mick has stated that he was a clean slate, willing and wanting to learn.



CWM Members Gear Corner

Stuck Case Removal

A recent trip to the range resulted in a very frustrating head case separation. The rifle was my Zastava M85 in 22 Hornet. The fault was mine for using dodgy old brass cases.

At home I placed the rifle in a vice and tried unsuccessfully to remove the stuck case. No amount of effort with screw drivers, WD 40 and cleaning rods would dislodge it. Before I made matters worse and damaged the rifle, I took to Google. The results were not to my liking and included pouring molten metal into the chamber and beating the resulting 'plug' out of the chamber with a rod, and/or visiting the local gunsmith.

I envisaged serious burn issues with the molten metal option and, as a matter of male pride a trip to Allan Swan to see what 'I had done now', was out of the question. The search continued on YouTube. Naturally thousands of people had shared 'quick fixes' - all seemed very complicated, involved molten metal or involved expensive tools. Eventually I found a clever bloke by the name of Yonks 85 and this is what he had to say.

You will need a long screwdriver, screw and a wall plug. The wall plug should be sized to allow it to fit into the case that is stuck in the chamber. Once you have the



tools, place the wall plug into the case stuck in the chamber. Push the screw into the back of the case and tighten. The tightened screw will expand the wall plug inside the case. Once the screw fits snugly in the wall plug, insert a cleaning rod into the barrel of the rifle (from the muzzle end) until it is up against the plug. Tap gently with a hammer and the stuck case will dislodge. It's as simple as that.

Adrian

Continued...The search for a 300 Blackout Subsonic Hunting Round

Last newsletter, I chronicled the start of my journey to develop a subsonic hunting round for my Ruger American Ranch Rifle in 300 Blackout. The idea was to make a heavy (200+

grain) projectile that would greatly reduce rifle report (no sonic boom) to minimize the disturbance to feral animals in the vicinity of my static hunting situations e.g. dam sitting. **NOTE:** While this type of round at subsonic velocity is not acceptable for other situations, at very close range with time for careful shot placement, it is a very effective and humane culling method.

The powder

The ADI technical centre suggested I use AR2205 as a faster burning powder for this application. This has worked well.

The Magnetospeed chronograph

One of my best discoveries is the Magnetospeed. Obviously, to make a subsonic round you





need to know the speed your bullet is travelling. This amazing device opens up a whole new world of load development based on velocity only. <http://www.65guys.com/10-round-load-development-ladder-test/>

The first projectile:

I started with the Lehigh Maximum Expansion Subsonic round in 194 gn. The reviews of this high-tech CNC turned all copper round are amazing. My reloads were grouping nicely from the get-go at 1050fps. I probably could have stopped there. But unfortunately, I used my box of 50 in load development and logging bullet drop etc. At \$2 to \$3 per round and very little availability in Australia I dropped them as an option.

The elusive expanding hunting bullet

I made a number of subsonic

rounds using a variety of jacketed projectiles and store-bought hard cast lead bullets. With the Ruger's 1:7 twist they all worked OK at subsonic speed at the range. When zeroed at 50 yards they usually drop about 6 or 7 inches at 100 yards. The problem is, all these rounds are all too hard to expand as a hunting bullet. In field testing, the Black Widow hard cast 230 gn did dispatch pigs easily, even with good shot placement, would go straight through the animal. I could find no other subsonic hunting projectiles on the market that would expand.

Make your own bullets - Back to the future

The search for an effective 300 BLK subsonic hunting round led me to old technology – casting my own soft lead bullets

- and new technology - polymer powder coating.

Bullet casting is pretty easy, the same as casting fishing sinkers. All you need is a bullet mould, a melting pot set up with a gas ring, a ladle and thermometer. This can be a very dangerous activity so a well-ventilated space and all the personal protection/safety gear (gloves, face shield etc) is a must.



With nearly 50,000 members, the on-line forum called Cast Boolits is an incredible source of information on bullet casting <http://castboolits.gunloads.com/>



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/2018-calendar>

CWM Contacts

<http://cwm.ssaaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/contacts>

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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