

FERALS IN THE CLASSROOM



Designed by the
Institute for Applied Ecology
University of Canberra
Invasive Animals CRC

WHAT IS A PEST?

A pest can be described many different ways.

FERAL



**EXOTIC, INTRODUCED,
NON-INDIGENOUS, ALIEN**



INVASIVE



PEST



WHAT IS A PEST?

The definition of a pest –

- ❑ one that pesters or annoys
- ❑ an animal detrimental to humans or human interests

Action Name as many non-native animals as you can.

Include:

- mammals
- birds
- amphibians
- reptiles
- fish

Which is the most abundant?



84 SPECIES AND COUNTING

At least **25** mammals, **20** birds, **1** amphibian, **4** reptiles and **34 fish species** have established wild populations **so far**.



released by the Perth Zoo Acclimatisation Society
1898



arrived in imported plants
1966



discovered in the Tweed River NSW
2008



released by Acclimatisation Societies
1912

WHAT IS A PEST?

A pest is a matter of opinion

It is important to note that people decide whether an animal is a pest.



PEST – the fastest colonising pest animal in Australia

PET – a cherished family pet



AUSTRALIAN ICON – native bird species

PEST – a pest who modifies unique Tasmanian habitats



PEST – a serious agricultural and environmental pest

A RESOURCE – worth 20 million a year to the game meat industry

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Red kangaroo



- a unique **native** animal
- Aussie **icon** and tourist attraction
- a **pest**, causing millions of dollars of damage to vehicles each year
- a **resource** to be harvested for commercial gain
- a **delicious** and healthy meat source
- a **competitor** of livestock and grain production
- an indigenous peoples' **totem** animal
- a **pet**

WHY AM I SUCCESSFUL?

EXTENT OF ESTABLISHMENT

now established in Tasmania

FEMALE LIFESPAN

3 – 4 yrs (up to 10)

SEXUAL MATURITY OF FEMALE

10 months

OFFSPRING PER YEAR

4 – 10 cubs

MIGRATION PATTERN

up to 10km a day

DIET

wide ranging

IS IT A PEST OVERSEAS?

YES

FIRST YEAR OF INTRODUCTION

1871

NUMBER OF INTRODUCTIONS

multiple

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

homesick
sport



AM I A PEST?

Which is the most effective pest?



up to 60% loss of horticulture crops

FUTURE RISKS

Unfortunately there is a real risk of new exotic species establishing as pests in Australia.

The risk includes species already kept in captivity such as:



or, animals that may be imported into Australia in the future.

Can the **giraffe** become an established pest in Australia?

YES or NO

Answer: **YES**

The giraffe is considered a **SERIOUS THREAT**



ERADICATION

The complete and permanent removal of a pest.

No pest animal has ever been eradicated from mainland Australia despite:

- intensive effort
- millions of dollars being spent
- development of new technologies
- powerful legislation that requires pests be controlled



RUN RABBIT RUN

Past and present methods of eradicating rabbits include:

- ❑ poison baiting (ground and aerial)
- ❑ trapping (cage)
- ❑ rabbit proof fencing
- ❑ shooting
- ❑ ferreting
- ❑ hunting
- ❑ snaring
- ❑ scaring (using noise and visual disturbances)
- ❑ releasing rabbit predators such as foxes
- ❑ fumigating warrens
- ❑ destruction of warrens using rippers and ploughs
- ❑ blasting of warrens using explosives
- ❑ biological control using myxomatosis
- ❑ biological control using Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease virus (also known as calicivirus)
- ❑ introduction of imported fleas to encourage the spread of disease



ERADICATION, IS IT POSSIBLE?

SIX requirements for successful eradication

1. The control operation can remove pests faster than they can reproduce.
2. Re-invasion can be prevented.
3. The entire population is targeted by the control operation.
4. The socio-political environment support eradication.
5. The benefits of the eradication program justify the cost.
6. Animals can be detected at very low densities.



WHAT CAN WE DO?

- ❑ do not release unwanted pets
- ❑ stay alert to future invasions
- ❑ continue to research
- ❑ accept that eradication is not possible
- ❑ monitor existing pest animals
- ❑ provide resources to manage pest animals and their impact effectively
- ❑ educate future land managers

