

Guideline

for the management of European foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Purpose and scope

This guideline has been prepared under section 15 of the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* (Qld) to support successful management of foxes, declared as a Class 2 pest. It sets out an objective, and statutory and non-statutory actions which are consistent with the eight principles of pest management listed in section 9 of the Act.

Operational objective

To reduce fox numbers, particularly where they have or could have economic, environmental or social impacts.

Operational actions

1. Integration

- Incorporate fox management into related planning and management programs.

2. Public awareness

- Raise public awareness of the impacts of foxes, and the techniques and strategies for their management.
- Ensure the public is aware that it is illegal to introduce (s. 39), feed (s. 40), keep (s. 41), release (s. 42), or supply (s. 44) foxes without a permit.

3. Commitment

- Enforce compliance when landowners do not take reasonable steps to contribute to fox control.

4. Consultation and partnership

- Build working partnerships between key stakeholders to generate a holistic approach to fox management and a sense of community ownership of the problem.

5. Planning

- Refer to the *Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by the European Red Fox* for additional guidance.
- Map the extremities of fox infestations
- Ensure that fox management plans are consistent with plans in neighbouring areas.
- Secure adequate resources (i.e. time, funds and personnel) to carry out the actions in this guideline.

6. Prevention

- Prohibit the keeping (s. 41), release (s. 42), and sale or other supply (s. 44) of foxes, except under permit.
- Eradicate isolated or small new infestations, using compliance procedures if necessary.

Guideline

7. Best practice

- Reduce numbers by trapping, baiting, shooting, den fumigation and/or exclusion, particularly where foxes have or could have an impact on rare or threatened native animals and livestock production.
- Collate and distribute fox best practice information to landholders.

8. Improvement

- Evaluate the impacts of foxes in Queensland.
- Keep up-to-date with research on the management of foxes.

Background

European red foxes were first released near Melbourne in 1845, for sporting purposes. They spread rapidly and are now present in all states and territories. They are adaptable and can be found in a variety of habitats that range from deserts to urban environments but exclude the tropics, depending on the local availability of food and shelter.

Foxes are opportunistic feeders that will eat fruit, invertebrates, small mammals, frogs, fish, and birds. They are a threat to the survival of many ground-dwelling native animals, such as rock wallabies. In rural Australia, foxes kill a significant number of lambs and goat kids. They are also a pest in urban areas due to their scavenging and predation of wildlife, poultry, and domestic pets. They would probably become a significant vector of rabies should it enter Australia.

Poisoning with 1080 is the most effective large-scale control option; trapping and shooting are also effective when used appropriately. In some situations, the fencing of high-value livestock or conservation areas may be the only effective means of control.

Responsibility

Landowners: destruction and control of pest animals.

Local governments: compliance, surveillance, local planning, mapping, and raising awareness.

DEEDI: statewide planning, mapping, coordination, raising awareness, and research.

References

Environment Australia 1999, *Threat Abatement Plan for the Predation by the European Red Fox*, Department of Environment and Heritage, available at www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened

The fox fact sheet available at www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Map

- Fox distribution, available at www.dpi.qld.gov.au > Biosecurity > Weeds, pest animals and ants > Pest mapping > Annual pest distribution maps > search for a map > select Fox species.

The maps are updated as new information becomes available, and the latest maps must be accessed from the website.

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