

Time to declare deer a feral pest

# Submission guide: NSW pest animal management review



# Make a submission: NSW pest animal management review

**F**eral deer are out of control in NSW, and have been declared the state's 'most important emerging pest animal threat'.

For years their numbers have been allowed to grow, and now we're suffering the consequences – they are a major environmental threat to Australia's oldest national park, the Royal, and are becoming a menace on our roads – in the Illawarra region feral deer have caused nine fatalities in a seven year period and 100 collisions with trains.

## What you can do

In March 2016 an independent review by the NSW Natural Resources Commission recommended the state declare deer a pest species. Currently they are protected as a game species, and managed as a hunting resource.

Making feral deer a pest species would give land managers and governments the power to tackle this growing environmental and agricultural threat head on, rather than being constrained by current laws that protect feral deer.

## Make a submission

The NSW Government wants to hear from you on this issue. Just make a simple submission to the Natural Resources Commission pest animal management review endorsing its recommendation to declare feral deer a pest species in NSW.

The NSW Government will decide whether to implement the NRC recommendations after it has received a final report in June 2016.

This is a once-in-a-generation chance to tackle the growing feral deer threat.

## What to put in your submission

When making your submission it's important to explain in your own words why deer should be declared a feral pest and why the Natural Resources Commission draft report should be supported.

You can speak from personal experience, carry out your own research or draw on the material we have provided in this submission guide.

Key points you could make supporting the recommendation to declare deer a pest species in NSW

- **I support the recommendation made by the Natural Resources Commission to declare deer a pest in NSW.**
- The grazing habits and environmental degradation caused by deer are considered so severe they have been listed as a key threatening process in NSW. A key threatening process 'threatens or may threaten the survival, abundance or evolutionary development of a native species or ecological community'.
- Feral deer can now be found in most regions of NSW, threatening the Royal National Park and the Illawarra escarpment rainforests, Kosciuszko National Park and the coastal forests between Newcastle and Coffs Harbour.
- Deer are known to graze and browse young plants, disturb soil and damage the bark of trees by rubbing their antlers on tree trunks, particularly in autumn.
- Deer activity can impede natural and planned revegetation and

often results in the establishment of weeds. This occurs as a result of deer browsing young plants and damaging ground cover with their hooves. The reduction in ground cover can often lead to a decline in soil stability, water quality, habitat for ground-dwelling animals and foraging habitat.

- The average daily intake of one deer can be up to the equivalent of five sheep. Therefore grazing by deer also has a heavy impact on valuable grazing land where they compete with livestock for limited resources.
- Deer damage fences and crops and can spread weeds and diseases.
- Deer have been recognised as the most important emerging pest animal threat in NSW.
- In NSW deer are still managed as a recreational game animal, aimed at keeping stock numbers high enough to act as a game resource. To tackle the deer threat they need to be recognised and treated as a pest species, not protected as a 'game' animal. A statewide containment plan must be implemented to prevent their further spread.
- We need to reduce and control the impacts of feral deer on human health, environment and agriculture.
- Deer are an extreme threat to both our natural environment and agricultural sector.
- Deer have increased 30 per cent across NSW over a five year period to 2010. Without a change in management approach, feral deer populations have the potential to occupy nearly all of NSW.
- The ecological impacts of sudden spikes in deer populations are numerous – heavy browsing and grazing alters vegetation, they impact on bird populations.



- Deer are not native to Australia. In Royal National Park the population began with just seven deer in 1906, there are now some 3000 established deer in that park.
- Deer impact regeneration of rainforest trees by reducing seed production and seedling recruitment.
- Before the Illawarra Wild Deer Management Program deer caused collisions resulting in nine fatalities. There are around 100 collisions between trains and deer every year costing up to \$3 million in damage annually.
- QLD, SA and WA have declared deer a feral pest. In Victoria and Tasmania they are protected as a hunting resource.

## Other key recommendations

The Natural Resources Commission report on pest management made other key recommendations that have been endorsed by the Invasive Species Council, Nature Conservation Council of NSW and the National Parks Association of NSW.

### **Please also show your support for these recommendations in your submission.**

- I support the following points jointly promoted by conservation groups Invasive Species Council, Nature Conservation Council and the National Parks Association of NSW:
- Pest declaration for feral deer and cats and a statewide feral deer containment plan.
- Mandatory cat desexing and designation of areas requiring cat containment.

## Send submissions to:

**Please remember to put the key points in your submission in your own words.**

- You can submit your submission via the Invasive Species Council website: [www.invasives.org.au/act-now/](http://www.invasives.org.au/act-now/)
- You can also send your submission directly to the Natural Resources Commission via its website at [www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/pest-animal-management](http://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/pest-animal-management)

OR mail or email your submission to:  
Natural Resources Commission  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Email: [nrc@nrc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nrc@nrc.nsw.gov.au)

**Submissions close 5pm, 18 May 2006**

- Remove game status of deer and invasive exotic birds.
- Aerial and ground shooting of feral horses under RSPCA endorsed protocols.
- More emphasis on prevention, surveillance and early eradication.
- More resources for strategic pest control and research including research for novel approaches such as rewilding.
- Stronger controls on keeping invasive pet birds and compliance for illegal pet collecting.
- Act to prevent the spread of aquatic pests such as carp and tilapia and preventing new escaped aquarium fish.
- Oppose commercialisation of feral animals due to the unintended consequences of assisting their spread.
- Retain dingo conservation areas inside national parks under the Biosecurity Act.

## Further information

Natural Resources Commission

- [www.nrc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au)

Invasive Species Council

- [www.invasives.org.au/project/feral-deer/](http://www.invasives.org.au/project/feral-deer/)

Pest Animal Fact Sheet: Deer

- [www.molonglocatchment.org.au/PestAnimals/Documents/deer.pdf](http://www.molonglocatchment.org.au/PestAnimals/Documents/deer.pdf)

Cover photo used courtesy of Federation Training students.



Deer are affecting sphagnum bogs in Kosciuszko National Park. Photo: Parks Australia

