National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination

National Vertebrate Pest Management Report Card (2026)

Foxes

1. National Snapshot

European foxes are considered one of the worst invasive species, contributing to the decline and extinction of native wildlife across Australia. Foxes are estimated to kill about 300 million native animals each year (Stobo-Wilson et al, 2022) and threaten at least 76 species listed under the EPBC Act. Foxes also prey on lambs and poultry, resulting in an estimated economic loss of more than $198 million a year (ABARES 2023). They can also spread parasites and diseases affecting livestock, wildlife and domestic animals.

European foxes are widely distributed across 80% of mainland Australia, occurring in all mainland states and territories and many islands. Tasmania remains fox free due to strong biosecurity controls. Foxes occupy agricultural land, forests, semi-arid environments and urban fringes and are well established in many suburban and metropolitan areas.

Over the past five years, fox distribution, abundance and associated impacts remained largely unchanged across Australia. However, at more local scales fox numbers, distribution and associated impact have been reported to have increased. Fox populations can recover quickly or invade surrounding areas where control programs are not maintained at a sufficient level to suppress populations.

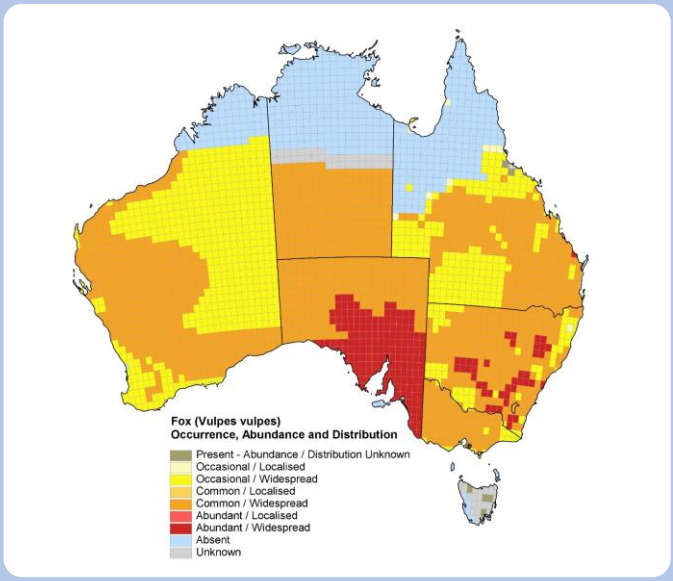
Across Australia, fox management primarily focuses on protecting native wildlife, especially threatened species, and livestock from predation. In Queensland, sustained coastal fox control programs have reduced turtle nest predation and increased hatchling success, demonstrating the benefits of ongoing sustained management.

Long-term, integrated control programs using baiting, trapping and ground shooting continue to be the most effective approach for reducing fox populations at landscape scale. However, foxes' widespread distribution presents a significant long-term biodiversity and biosecurity challenge. Except for isolated populations where eradication is feasible, fox control is largely focused on suppression and preventing reinvasion.

Predator-proof fences now play a critical role in protecting many threatened species from fox predation, particularly where conventional control methods alone are not enough. Community engagement and participation also remain critical to landscape-scale management.

Landholders in most jurisdictions have a legal obligation to take reasonable and practical measures to manage foxes and reduce the risks associated with them.

2. Current Distribution



Source: National Land & Water Resources Audit (2008)

3. National 5-year trends

- Abundance
- Distribution
- Environmental impacts
- Agricultural impacts

Trend:
Increased= ▲
Largely unchanged = ■
Decreased = ▼

Confidence:
High = ●
Moderate = ◐
Low = ○



Photo credit: FeralScan

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Foxes – State & Territory Snapshot

4. State/Territory 5-year trends

Across Australia, fox abundance, distribution and associated impacts have remained largely unchanged over the past five years. However, increases in abundance, distribution and associated impacts were reported nine Queensland local government areas. Confidence in trend estimates was generally low to moderate due to the difficulty in monitoring fox numbers over vast areas. Tasmania continues to remains fox free.

ABARES (2024) pest animal and weed management land manager surveys indicated that foxes remained a widespread problem for landholders, although the proportion reporting foxes as a problem declined slightly between 2016 and 2022. FoxScan also indicates consistent damage and control records over the past five years, reflecting ongoing control efforts of widespread fox populations.

Fox trend information is not based on consistent or standardised monitoring. Jurisdictions rely mainly on local observations, landholder reports, control program data, and expert opinion, with limited use of systematic surveys in some areas. As a result, national trend information is fragmented and largely qualitative and should be considered indicative only. Reported impacts may lag behind changes in pest distribution or abundance and are also influenced by seasonal conditions, asset vulnerability and management effort.

5-year trend	QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	NT
Abundance	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ○	■ ◐	NP ●	■ ○	■ ○	
Distribution	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ○	■ ●	NP ●	■ ◐	■ ○	
Environmental Impact	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ◐	NP ●	■ ○	■ ○	
Agricultural Impact	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ◐	■ ◐	NP ●	■ ○	■ ○	

5-year trend:
Increased= ▲
Largely unchanged = ■
Decreased = ▼
Data unavailable = ▨
Not Present = NP

Confidence:
High = ●
Moderate = ◐
Low = ○

5. Asset protection priorities

Fox control programs across Australia primarily aim to protect native wildlife, with a strong focus on threatened species and ecological communities, and livestock. New South Wales and some Queensland local government agencies listed public health and protection of pets as one of their top three management priorities. Four Queensland local government agencies also listed cultural sites or values in their top three management priorities for fox control.

Fox management programs help protect vulnerable marine turtle populations by reducing fox predation on eggs and hatchlings. Coastal fox control, monitoring and community partnerships support improved turtle survival outcomes and help conserve important coastal ecosystems.



Photo credit: Helga Dalla -Sunshine Coast Council. Turtle Care Citizen Scientists applying predator exclusion meshing to a nest at Buddina.

Fox management programs protect native wildlife, livestock and cultural and social assets.

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6. Control tools and efforts

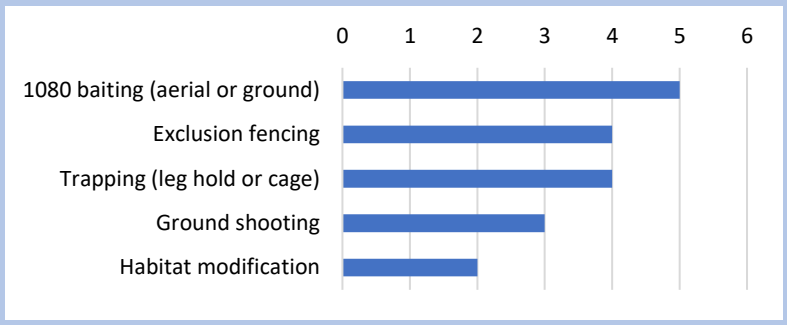
Across Australia, fox control was undertaken over more than 20 million hectares of public and private land. With significant investment through broader invasive species programs that included fox control.

Ground baiting (1080 and PAPP) remains the core control tool for foxes across most jurisdictions. Exclusion fencing, trapping (leg hold or cage) and ground shooting were reported as core control activities by at least three of the six responding jurisdictions. Habitat modification is also used to a lesser extent.

Baiting efforts were greatest in Western Australia and New South Wales. New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria also undertook a substantial amount of trapping and ground shooting in 2024-25.

Community engagement and monitoring were considered core activities by most jurisdictions. Other indirect control activities reported included planning, research and securing of funds.

Number of jurisdictions using each control tool for fox management in 2024–25.



Over 20 million hectares
of combined fox control

Over 600,000 trap night
targeting foxes

7. Program goals and achievements

National goal score

Goal	ACT[A]	NSW	QLD	TAS[B]	VIC	WA	SA	NT[C]
On track to reduce impacts		●	●			●	●	
On track to reduce future impacts		●	●			●	●	
On track to reduce abundance		●	●				●	



Achieved
Partially achieved
Not achieved
Unsure
Not nominated
Data unavailable

Blank responses indicate that no goal was nominated, reflecting differences in management objectives between programs, regions and jurisdictions.
[A]ACT agencies reported no feral fox program undertaken in 2024-25.
[B]Tasmania remains fox free (Not Present = NP).
[C]NT agencies reported no specific feral fox program undertaken in 2024-25.

Jurisdictions reported varying levels of confidence in the effectiveness of fox management programs across Australia. Most jurisdictions considered programs to be partially achieving objectives related to reducing impacts.

Programs in New South Wales are considered on track to achieve reduce fox abundance and impacts. While Tasmania has remained fox free.

Variation in program achievements across jurisdiction highlights challenges posed by increasing fox numbers and the scale of control efforts required to reduce numbers and impacts.

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8. Where to from here?

Foxes remain widely distributed across Australia and continue to exert significant pressure on native wildlife and livestock. Their adaptability, high reproductive capacity and ability to rapidly reinvade areas following control make sustained management essential.

Governments, landholders, Traditional Owners and conservation organisations are implementing coordinated fox control programs using baiting, shooting, trapping, Canid Pest Ejectors (CPEs) and exclusion fencing. Jurisdictions continue to support landholders through targeted baiting and trap loan programs, while research and innovation are improving the effectiveness of control tools, including reducing non-target lure take from CPEs.

Achieving long-term reductions in fox impacts requires coordinated action across land tenures, broader community participation, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and continued adoption of effective control technologies. Expanding these efforts will maintain control gains, reduce reinvasion and better protect biodiversity and livestock.



Photo credit: Sea World Foundation



Photo credit: Agriculture Victoria

Queensland's coastal fox control programs aim to reduce fox predation on marine turtle nests and protect vulnerable coastal wildlife. During 2024–25, coordinated fox management continued across key nesting areas through targeted baiting, trapping, monitoring and collaboration with local partners. Sustained control efforts have reduced turtle nest predation and supported improved hatchling survival outcomes, demonstrating the value of long-term integrated fox management for threatened species conservation.

Canid Pest Ejectors (CPE) are being used as part of integrated fox management programs across Australia. These targeted control tools help improve fox management by delivering control measures directly to target species while reducing risks to non-target wildlife. During 2024–25, programs in states including Victoria and Queensland continued to use and improve CPE technology, including lure delivery and device design. CPEs complement baiting, trapping and monitoring approaches to support more effective fox control outcomes.

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National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordination: https://feralcatandfox.com.au/

Glovebox Guide: https://pestsmart.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/03/CISS-Glovebox-Guide-Fox-web.pdf

pestSMART European foxes toolkit: https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkits/european-foxes/

FoxScan: https://feralscan.org.au/foxscan

National Vertebrate Pest Management Report Card: LINK

This score card has been developed by the National Vertebrate Pest Coordinators, in collaboration with state and territory government agencies, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Terrestrial Vertebrate Working Group.
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