



Welcome to our biannual newsletter

Want to have your say on how we spend your Declared Pest Rate (DPR)?

What are your priority pests?

Members are invited to review our draft 2025/2026 Operational Plan and provide feedback before it is finalised at the AGM in October.

Find out how on page 6.

NBG updates

- The NBG spent approximately \$870,000 in FY 24/25. Details on spending and the NBG's future plans will be provided at the **AGM on Thursday, 9 October** (3pm, Lavender Valley Farm, Yetna).
Pop it in your diary!
- We welcome two new Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs), Sam Danischewsky and Andy Lockey, to the NBG team for 2025/26.
- The NBG only has guaranteed funding to end of financial year (FY) 2026/27. The review of the *Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act*, and subsequent State Government decisions, are yet to be published. As such, as one of the 14 Recognised Biosecurity Groups in WA, we are uncertain how pest management activities will be coordinated after FY 26/27. In October, we start planning for 26/27 and aim to provide you as much pest management assistance and education as possible, in case we aren't around after June 2027.
- We've been busy reducing pest numbers in the region. Since the rain, the pests will be busily increasing their numbers again. Please contact us if you'd like assistance with the management of declared pests.

Did you know?

On average, a cat in the bush will eat 791 mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs/year and 371 invertebrates/year
(National Environmental Science Programme)

From July, our LPMTs will set cat traps* as part of their standard work procedure when completing feral pig control>(*traps only, no poison).



Sam Danischewsky, from Northampton, has been a professional kangaroo shooter for 10 years and became an LPMT in 2023. Sam has worked as an LPMT for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and has completed feral pig control for landholders across the region. Sam joined the NBG in July.



Andy Lockey commenced in April, providing extra ground support for feral pig control. He is also an LPMT for the Midlands Biosecurity Group, working with them since 2019. Andy designed the Matlock Trap, a trap widely used in feral pig control across Australia, and is also very experienced in trapping feral cats.

Priority Pest Management *(January to June 2025)*

Wild dogs

All Wild Dog work is inside the State Barrier Fence

- **29 dogs** culled by trapping/shooting (confirmed by carcass)

Feral Pigs

- **11,809 pigs** culled by baiting, trapping and aerial cull (confirmed by carcass & camera monitoring)

Other

- **67 foxes** (shot)
- **21 cats** (shot)
- Opuntia cacti control completed in May & June

The above numbers are NBG work only.
We know landholders and hunters also cull large numbers of pests.

Landholder reports *(January to June 2025)*

31

Feral Pigs

22 control reports = 794 pigs
12 sighting reports
3 damage reports

10

Wild Dogs

1 control report
5 sightings
5 reports of stock attacks

4

Other

4 sighting/damage reports - 1 emu & 3 kangaroo

Thanks to the landholders who have submitted reports.

We still want reports, please.

We don't know you have a pest problem if you don't tell us.

11,809 pigs and \$1.3 million

The NBG's ground and aerial work removed 11,809 feral pigs from the region between January-June. Control efforts were increased following the adoption of a zoned approach, with more LPMT hours on ground control and 200 aerial cull hours over 4 aerial shoots.

Over the 4 aerial culls, our two aerial contractors, Vertebrate Pest Management Australia (Paul & Justin) and the DPIRD (Jack, Damien, Travis & Simon), covered 547,582 hectares and culled 10,182 pigs and 69 deer. Pig densities ranged from 0.1 to 14.49 pigs per square kilometre across the zones.

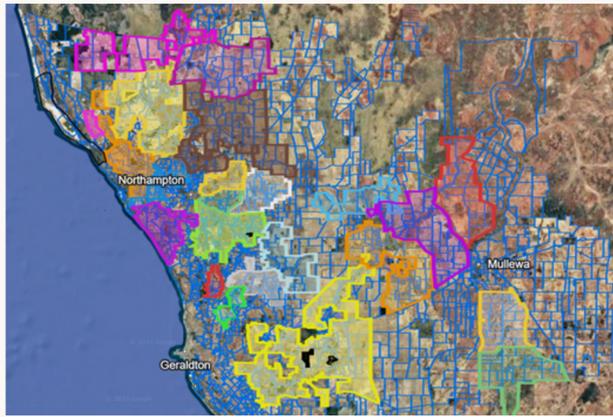


Image: The coloured areas represent the zones covered by aerial culls between March - June 2025.

Our plan was to first complete groundwork (trapping and baiting) followed by an aerial cull, if required. This approach worked well for the zones we completed. However, with increasing reports of pigs and decreasing time before the break of season, we changed plans. Rather than execute a perfect and best practice work plan, we went straight to aerial culls to remove as many pigs as we could, and to gain a better understanding of the size of the feral pig problem. Therefore, we didn't complete as much groundwork prior to aerial culls as we wanted, but we completed an additional 12 days of aerial culling.

Change of plan - pros & cons

The downside of going straight to aerial culls meant costs of aerial culling were higher, because no pigs were removed from the system using cheaper methods. We also potentially missed pigs that have learnt to hide from the helicopter; this behaviour has been observed in areas where there have been previous aerial culls. In addition, the incidental culling of other declared pests, such as cats and foxes, was missed.

The upside of the increase in aerial culls - we have a more accurate picture of feral pig populations, and our aerial crews have identified new problem areas, or 'hot spots' in region. We also determined that feral deer are widespread in the western side of the NBG region.

Future work

The next aerial culls are booked for February 2026; details will be available at the AGM and members of the aerial teams will be in attendance. At the AGM, we'll also discuss the 2025 cull data and maps, cost and time efficiencies, and the zones for next year's aerial culls.

In the meantime, LPMTs will continue to remove pigs from across the region. It's crucial that landholders don't solely rely on aerial culls. See the table on page 4 for NBG methods on offer.

Landholder feedback is appreciated to improve our operations. The most important feedback is whether our activities make any difference. For example, we'd hope you see a reduction in crop damage, less fouling of your water sources and an increase in the health of remnant vegetation. If not, we need to review how we do things: is the spend and effort worthwhile?

Now to the \$1.3 million.. That's a rough guess of what we've saved. Read how on the next page.

Methods used by the NBG for control of feral pigs*

1080 baiting	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cost & effort effective · Useful to cull large mobs
	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Effective pre feeding is essential – patience & monitoring cameras recommended · Secondary poisoning is a risk to non-target animals · 1080 is toxic to humans; appropriate training and handling is essential
Trapping	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Target specific – may catch non targets but they can be released · Important technique where baiting or aerial culling is not possible
	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Effective pre feeding is essential – patience & monitoring cameras recommended · Pigs can become trap shy; limited effectiveness for large scale control
Aerial culling	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Target specific & very effective, particularly in high density areas
	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Relatively expensive & less effective in areas with thick cover · Pigs become 'helicopter aware' and hide under canopy
Ground shooting	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Suitable for small operations
	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Labour intensive; not cost effective

*This table was adapted from the *NSW Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures for the Effective and Humane Management of Feral Pigs* - a useful resource, find the link at the NBG website (nbg.org.au: External links).

HOGGONE® (sodium nitrite) is another bait option for feral pigs. The NBG trialled it previously, and Wayne Heal completed another trial this year. We had limited success across several sites, with pigs clearly avoiding the bait and placebo (captured on camera). Our LPMTs can bait with Hoggone at landowner request, but the bait and placebo must be provided by the landholder.

The cost of 11, 809 pigs in a year - a rough estimate

Feral pigs eat around 3-5 % of their body weight per day.



The DPIRD team that dissected 1497 pigs from the NBG culls in 2018-2024 reported:

- the average weight of culled pigs was 38.9 kg
- average age was 10 months
- the average wet weight of stomach contents - 1.5 kg (up to 70% was wheat as grain, chaff or stubble)

Using the above information with rounding for simplicity:*

If 1 pig eats 1 kg a day = 365 kg/year

11,809 pigs eat 11,809 kg a day = 4,310 tonnes/year

For simplicity, let's assume their diet was all wheat at \$300/tonne

(not to suggest your wheat is of low value but pigs don't eat only top shelf wheat)

11, 809 pigs could consume \$1.3 million of your wheat in a year.

*The calculation is based on many assumptions, but it does provide a starting figure to ponder.

Calculation concept thanks to Jack, Damien & Travis. They were doing sums while looking for pigs during the June cull

Sows can have up to 3 litters a year.

The DPIRD team observed *on average*: 51% of the culled pigs were female and 51% of those sows were pregnant with 5 piglets.

11, 809 pigs could have 46,000 piglets in a year.

(51% of 11809 = 6023; 51% of 6023 = 3072; 3072 x 5 = 15358. Multiply by 3 for 3 litters/year = 46,073)

There are still plenty of pigs out there.

Contact us if you'd like help.

Do you want help with emu control?



The NBG has budgeted for an aerial cull of emus in 25/26. However, to participate landholders must hold a **Fauna Causing Damage Licence**, issued by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Contact the NBG or see our website for more information.

There are also contractors in the region that can complete private culls. Please contact us if you would like their details.

Upcoming events

August

RCP Permit sessions:

- book to complete your RCP Permit training & application with Jay
- if there is interest, we can provide a review of the May/June aerial culls
 - Mullewa, Thursday 14th August
 - Binu - to be confirmed depending on landholder interest

September

RCP Permit sessions:

- book to complete your RCP Permit training & application with Jay
 - Yuna - to be confirmed, dependent on landholder interest
 - Geraldton - to be confirmed, dependent on landholder interest

October

Thursday, 9 October: AGM & Planning Workshop

- 3 pm, Lavender Valley Farm, 1852 Chapman Valley Road, Yetna
- Aerial cull zones for February 2026 will be confirmed
- Food & drinks provided

Members can get a **free** Restricted Chemical Product (RCP) Permit through the NBG.

We also provide assistance in completing the application.

The NBG will hold **RCP Permit Sessions** - 'pop-up' training and application around the region, if there is landholder interest.

Contact Jay for information or to book in.

The Hon. Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food, published the Declared Pest Rates in the Government Gazette (Gazette 74 of 2024 - legislation.wa.gov.au)

FY 25/26 - Declared Pest Rate

0.0280 cents in the dollar on the unimproved value of freehold land

in the local government districts of Chapman Valley, Greater Geraldton and Northampton, that is no less than 100 hectares in area with a minimum rate payable amount of \$80.

Our team:

Board members

Chapman Valley

- Jason Batten (Chair)
- Ashley Eastough

Northampton

- Scott Bridgeman (Deputy Chair)
- Lloyd Cripps

Greater Geraldton

- Darren Cobley
- Mike Kerkmans
- Carlie Rowe
- Anthony Hollins



Licensed Pest Management Technicians (LPMTs)



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Penny Walker
Finance Officer & Board
Secretary/Treasurer

Have your say

Members are invited to provide feedback on our Operational Plan

Text, phone or email Clare or your local board member for a print or electronic draft copy

Provide your feedback to your local board member or Clare.

