

Ngarkat Feral Goat and Feral Deer Aerial Shooting

Autumn 2024 Information for Landholders

Limestone Coast Landscape Board

The Limestone Coast (LC) Landscape Board in partnership with the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board and National Parks & Wildlife Services, Murraylands district is providing practical support to landholders to control feral goats and eradicate feral deer in the Ngarkat area of the upper Limestone Coast.

Landholders with properties adjoining the Ngarkat Conservation Park (CP) and the surrounding area are invited to sign up their properties to be included in the shooting operations.

The shooting operation is free for participating landholders and provides practical support to reduce the economic burden of managing pest animals.

Ngarkat feral goat and deer aerial shooting operation

The Ngarkat feral goat and deer aerial shooting operation is part of two projects. Firstly, the Ngarkat Pest Animal Control Program which is seeking to control foxes and feral goats and eradicate wild dogs and feral deer from Ngarkat CP and the surrounding area in the upper Limestone Coast.

Secondly, the LC Landscape Board is committed to achieving feral deer eradication through the Feral Deer Eradication Program (the Program) which aims to protect agriculture, biodiversity and improve public safety from the impacts of feral deer.

Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the Act), landholders are required to eradicate feral deer and control feral goats on their property.

The aerial culling operation is free to join and provides support, resources and activities to assist landholders to meet their legislative responsibilities.

The aerial culling will be coordinated by the Murraylands and Riverland (MR) Landscape Board and National Parks and Wildlife Service (Murraylands). These organisations have allocated landscape levy, and general revenue funds for aerial control and survey techniques to reduce populations of feral goats and deer across the Billiatt and Ngarkat areas.

Aerial shooting

Aerial shooting can remove pest animals missed by other control methods such as ground shooting, helping to achieve landscape scale control in a short timeframe.

Eradicating feral deer and controlling feral goats is best achieved when all landholders in the local area are involved. Shooting operations take into account local terrain and individual landholder circumstances to improve the intensity and scale of the program.

Landholder Access Agreements

Participating landholders in the Ngarkat Feral Goat and Deer Aerial Shooting are required by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to sign a Landholder Access Agreement.

The Landholder Access Agreement:

1. Allows property access for accredited government staff and professional contractors engaged by DEW and the MR Landscape Board to undertake feral deer aerial or ground shooting, and/or monitoring activities.
2. Captures the relevant property information including the unique land parcel ID number, area of property approved and not approved for access, livestock to be moved and other requirements such as farm biosecurity.
3. Requires landholders to conduct follow up goat control and feral deer shooting to maximise the effectiveness of the operation.
4. Will expire on 30 June 2024, unless terminated by the landholder, MR Landscape Board, LC Landscape Board or DEW prior.

Information provided by the landholder participating in the operation is confidential and participant or property details are not made publicly available.

Property geographic information systems (GIS) spatial data are used for the purpose of the operation and the management of pest animals by MR Landscape Board.

DEW will contact participating landholders at least four weeks prior to shooting operations to confirm shooting dates and property information. Participating landholders will then be contacted via text message at 72 hours and a day prior to aerial shooting operations commencing.

This will be landholders final opportunity to withdraw participation by contacting the number listed in the text message. The landholder will only be notified via the 72 hour/ day prior text messages, not on specific days of operation.

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Qualifications and experience

Aerial shooting operations are undertaken by a small team of experienced and accredited government staff.

Operations are conducted to ensure the humane shooting of feral animals in accordance with best practice protocols and procedures for the humane shooting of feral animals. All marksmen hold the applicable firearms license categories to undertake this work and operate under the helicopter operators approvals for aerial shooting.

Likewise, helicopter operators engaged hold the applicable Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) approvals to undertake aerial shooting operations. Helicopter pilots hold the required licenses and approvals, being appropriately skilled and experienced to undertake aerial shooting operations.

Insurance

All approved aerial shooting operations are covered by DEW under its insurance arrangement with the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA).

All contractors engaged are verified as holding all appropriate insurance.

Recording

Recording of the location, number and species of feral deer and goats shot is conducted using a GPS enabled data logger. For aerial shooting operations tracking data (track logs) are also recorded via GPS.

Property information provided by landholders is used to create digitised operational maps. This enables aircraft to use GPS to ensure they are operating within property boundaries and operational areas. All recorded data associated with the shooting operation is used for the purpose of monitoring feral goats and feral deer.

Autumn 2024 aerial shooting

The NPWS Murraylands district are coordinating the aerial feral goat and deer shooting program. The operation will run for up to four days from 23-26 May 2024.

Please note dates and locations are subject to change.

National Parks and campground closures

National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia will close access to the mallee parks and campgrounds during the operation. Parks closed will be Billiatt Wilderness Protection Area, Billiatt Conservation Park, Peebinga Conservation Park and Ngarkat Conservation Park from 23 - 26 May 2024.

Participating landholder responsibilities

- Landholders who want to include their property in the shooting operations MUST fill in and sign the online Landholder Agreement form.
- Landholders must, unless previously provided, supply a map of all participating properties, showing areas to be included in the Program.
- Landholders are requested to make time to discuss the details of their property, with government staff.
- In the interests of public safety and avoiding unnecessary concern, it is a requirement that all landholders ensure that any tenants on, or visitors to, their properties are notified of the operation activities and prevent access to ensure the safety of the public when operations are being undertaken.
- Landholders taking part in the operation agree to undertake follow up feral deer and goat destruction on their property.
- During or after the period the Landholder is a participant in the operation, they shall not use or disclose to any person or company any confidential information relating to the project undertakings, distribute any photographic images or communicate directly with the media.
- The landholder agrees not to make or permit a public announcement or statement to any media outlet about any aspect of this agreement without first consulting with and obtaining the MR Landscape Board and DEW consent in writing. This includes social media and online platforms.

Limestone Coast Landscape Board

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