

How is DPIRD controlling feral deer?

There is an opportunity in WA for DPIRD to target several known populations of feral deer to reduce numbers to manageable levels, using contemporary and innovative techniques.

In 2025, DPIRD will be implementing thermally-assisted aerial control to reduce deer populations. This method is highly effective, particularly in low-density populations. It is the preferable control option to control feral deer, while maintaining high standards of animal welfare.

Control of pest populations is most difficult, but most effective when populations are small, such as deer in WA. DPIRD aims to test, refine and develop tools tailored to suit WA conditions.



Contact us

DPIRD is developing control measures that are cost effective, humane and reduce the populations of feral deer in WA.

For more information visit dpird.wa.gov.au/feraldeer or email feraldeer@dpird.wa.gov.au

Seen a deer? REPORT it to DeerScan

DeerScan is a free resource for landholders, landcare groups, community groups, local councils, professional pest controllers and biosecurity groups. It has been designed by landholders for communities.

Download the FeralScan app (available on iPhone or Android) and open the DeerScan report to record your findings.

feralSCAN 



Important disclaimer

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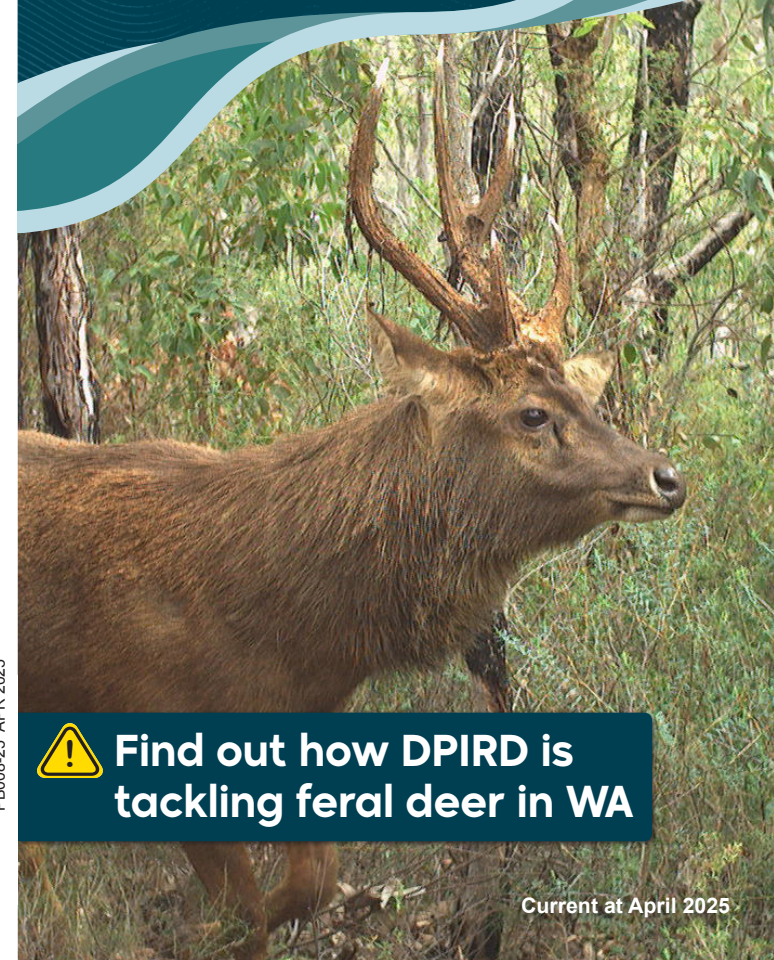
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Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Protect
Grow
Innovate

Feral deer in Western Australia



**Find out how DPIRD is
tackling feral deer in WA**

PB008-25 APR 2025

Current at April 2025

Why are feral deer a problem?

Deer are declared pests in Western Australia (WA), and land managers are responsible for controlling them on their properties. However, there are limited control methods available for managing feral deer.

Feral deer are becoming one of Australia's most damaging vertebrate pests, with their populations rapidly expanding in many parts of the country.

Estimates suggest there are between 1 and 2 million feral deer, primarily in the eastern states. This population growth has led to substantial damage to native flora and fauna by eating or ringbarking native plants, and damaging crops and infrastructure (including fencing). Feral deer also pose public health and traffic hazards.

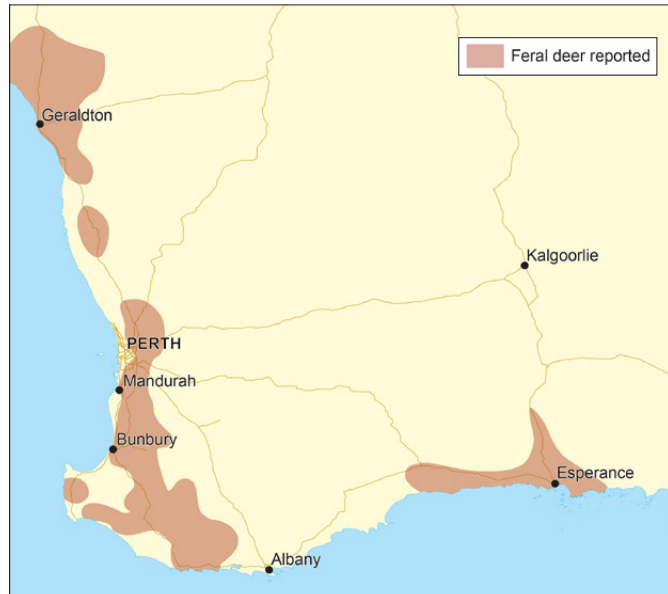
In 2021, feral deer cost the Australian economy approximately \$91.3 million, including \$69 million in agricultural losses.

Deer may also transmit animal diseases and may spread dieback which threatens the health of numerous plant species.

While feral deer populations in WA are relatively small, the state has a unique opportunity to prevent widespread establishment seen in the eastern states, where control efforts have cost \$17.8 million. Given their potential for rapid growth, DPIRD is prioritising efforts to prevent high numbers establishing before the problem becomes too difficult and expensive to control.

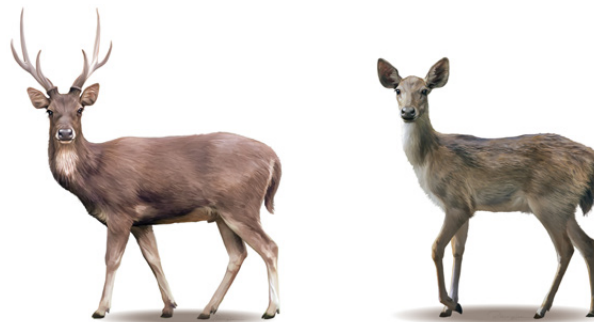
Which deer species are in WA?

Three species of feral deer are found in Western Australia: rusa, red and fallow. All three species are declared pests and need to be reported. Feral deer were introduced to WA through deliberate release and by escaping from deer farms.



Rusa deer (*Cervus timorensis*)

Rusa deer are classified as a prohibited species in WA with plans to eradicate them from the region.

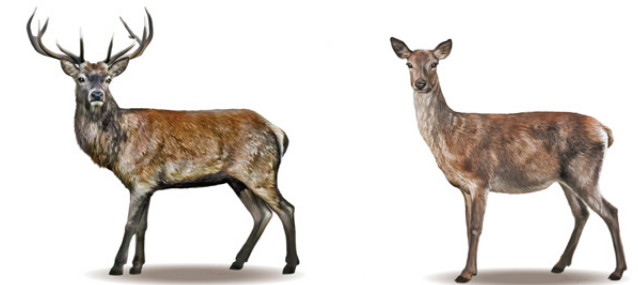


Male stag (left), (right) female

Their summer coat is sparse and reddish-brown, darker on the rump, lighter on the chest and white around the chin and throat area. In winter, the coat is greyer in colour and thicker. The tail is long and brown. Fawns do not have spots and are reddish-tan in colour with white underparts.

Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Red deer have a reddish summer coat with a distinctive light-coloured patch on the rump. In winter, the coat is slightly greyish-brown in colour. Fawns often have white spots that fade as they mature.



Fallow deer (*Dama dama*)

Fallow deer are highly variable in colour including red, black, white and menil (spotted). Heart-shaped pale rump patch with black outline and a long tail. Bucks make an unmistakable croak, like a grunting pig.

