

Question on Notice

No. 468

Asked on Thursday, 20 April 2023

MR S O'CONNOR ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (HON M SCANLON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to feral pig management in Queensland—

Will the Minister provide details of the department's current work to control this threat, including (a) a summary of the results of any surveys on feral pig population numbers across Queensland, (b) management activities carried out by the department in the last two years (reported separately by region and quarter), (c) any available data on the number of pigs killed by region and quarter for the last two years, (d) a summary of any available data the department has on the population of feral pigs in Queensland's protected estate and (e) how much funding has been specifically allocated to manage feral pigs within the protected estate?

ANSWER [MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON L LINARD)]:

I thank the Member for the question.

On 18 May 2023, I was appointed as Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and as such, I am now the responsible Minister to answer this Question.

The Department of Environment and Science, through the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), manages more than 1,000 parcels of protected area and State forest estate covering more than 13 million hectares of Queensland.

The department has a strong commitment to the management of pest plants, animals and pathogens on its estate. Managing these pests reduces their impacts on the environment, economy, social amenity, and human health.

Consistent with all landholders in Queensland, the department has obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise the likelihood of further spread or impacts of pests to neighbouring properties and surrounding communities.

The department recognises that pest management is a shared responsibility of all landowners and partners and works closely with First Nations peoples, governments at all levels, natural resource management bodies, neighbours, and community groups.

Given the scale and remoteness of land managed by QPWS, it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the feral pig population estimates on protected area. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, through Biosecurity Queensland, has oversight for the management of feral animals across the State generally. In 2021, it was estimated that there were approximately 2.3 million pigs across Queensland.

The eradication of feral pigs is not practical in Queensland. QPWS like other land managers, aims to reduce the impacts of feral pigs on the special values of our national parks and on values important to our neighbours.

QPWS utilises a range of established techniques to control feral pigs. This includes trapping, ground and aerial shooting, and the use of registered poisons. Where possible, QPWS will coordinate control on parks with other feral pig management programs occurring across the landscape. The department has also partnered with CSIRO to track pig movements in the Bunya Mountains National Park to better understand their behaviours and design more effective control programs.

In the 2022-23 financial year, QPWS allocated \$8.86 million to pest control programs which included feral pig management, resulting in 5,955 confirmed dead feral pigs to 31 March 2023. In the 2021-22 financial year, \$8.4 million was allocated to pest control programs which included feral pig management, resulting in 6,147 confirmed dead feral pigs.

I draw the Member's attention to the fact that a significant proportion of the feral pig management undertaken by QPWS, and in keeping with best practice generally, is done using poison baits. In many cases and especially in remote areas, almost all of this baiting is done over very large areas using aircraft. Poison baiting is an effective method for reducing the numbers of feral pigs; however, it is not possible to obtain specific data on the numbers of feral pigs killed in this manner. For this reason the figures below are partial and should be interpreted with considerable caution.

Reported feral pig treatment data for Financial Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 (to 31 March 2023)

QPWS Region	2021/22				2022/23		
	Qtr.3	Qtr.4	Qtr.1	Qtr.2	Qtr.3	Qtr.4	Qtr.1
Central	279	13	88	194	50	154	451
Coastal and Islands			23	24	3		3
Great Barrier Reef and Marine Parks		319	15	32		228	58
Northern		2085	489	1950	23	3011	264
South East Queensland		3			2	56	8
South West		610	6	17	33	2	1609
Qtr. Totals	279	3030	621	2217	111	3451	2393
Financial Year Total	6147				5955		