

**Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #15**  
**Gleeson Room, OEC, 214 Darling Street**  
**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010**

**Present:** Josh Gilroy (DECCW), Nicole Payne (DECCW), Scott Murray (DECCW), John Farr (NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association Inc), Dr Tony English (Australian Veterinary Association), Ray Scott (NSW Farmers Association), Dick MacFarlane (Dubbo Field Naturalists & Conservation Society), David O'Shannessy (RSPCA NSW), Marie Russell (LHPA), Greg Bates (AGMPA), Greg Markwick (NSW DPI), Sandy Bright (PAWD)

**Apologies:** Ian Brown (KIAA), Patrick Medway (Wildlife Preservation Society), Dr Clive Williams (Wildlife Preservation Society)

**Formalities:**

- Ratification of minutes #14: Moved Marie Russell
- Adoption of Agenda. Harvester's Association would like a discussion of current Licensing fees in Other Business.
- Review of actions from meeting #14

**Action 1:** Kangaroo Management will run a report on the numbers of harvesters shooting high, medium and low numbers of animals per year.

***Done. Forwarded to Panel members***

**Action 2:** DECCW will organise a half hour teleconference with the Panel once the quota report is finalised.

***Done. No issues raised.***

**Action 3:** DECCW will forward a copy of the final FATE report plus the executive summary and the PowerPoint presentation to the KMAP Panel.

***Done.***

**Action 4:** DECCW will put the Bombala proposal on the agenda for meeting this time next year.

**Item 2: 2009 Annual Report**

**Discussion of draft**

- The content of the Annual Report is specified in the Management Plan and must include:
  - Harvest by zone and species;
  - Any special quota utilised;
  - Sex bias and average weights by zone and species;
  - Non-commercial culling within the commercial harvest zone;
  - Compliance statistics;
  - Any unusual situations that arose; and
  - Any experiments or research undertaken.

### **Harvest Statistics:**

- The Eastern Grey take for 2009 was 214,218 which was 37% of the quota
- Red take 182,858, 37% of the quota
- Western Greys 138,675, 31% of the quota
- Wallaroo 10,073, 58% of the quota
- The harvest for 2009 was low due to the decreased demand.
- Armidale was the only zone that required ballots to allocate quota.
- No special quota was needed in 2009.

### **Sex Bias:**

- Eastern Grey harvest 74% male
- Red 76% male
- Western Grey 80% male
- Wallaroo 98% male
- The information for recording male/female ratio comes from harvesters returns. This is why DECCW requires accurate recording by harvesters.
- Field based inspections also record male/female ratio.

### **Average Weights:**

- Average weights are a little higher than long term averages. This is because of weight limits imposed by processors and financial disincentives for harvesters shooting carcasses under 17kg.
- Harvesters are not asked to record individual weights so we can only work on averages.
- Small sample sizes result in higher peaks and lows.

### **Non-Commercial Culling**

- Some non-commercial culling always happens within the commercial zone but is less than 10% of the commercial harvest.
- Figures are only usually higher if the commercial cull is fully allocated or there is no market for commercial carcasses.
- These figures are considered by the Commonwealth to determine whether the 15% /17% commercial cull is sustainable.

### **Monitoring Compliance**

#### **Chiller inspections**

- The Kangaroo Management Plan requires each licensed chiller to be inspected on average of four times per year.
- These inspections are to target licence breaches eg. untagged roos; non-head shots.
- Inspections are also carried out on behalf of NSW Food Authority.
- Compliance officers carry out inspections of harvesters vehicles if the opportunity arises.
- In 2009 a total of 677 inspections were done on 239 chillers - 67 of these chillers were not licensed for the whole year and 60 chillers were inspected more than five times because they presented particular concerns.

### **Penalty Notices:**

- During 2009, 118 infringement notices were issued, predominantly for the offence of contravening conditions of licence:
  - Non-head shot (13)
  - Unauthorised species (3)
  - Exceed number authorised (1)
  - Untagged carcasses (2)
  - Fail to submit returns (harvester) (86)
  - Fail to return unused tags (1)
  - Fail to submit returns (chiller) (3)
  - Submit false information (4)
  - Transfer tags (1)
  - Harm protected fauna (4)
- DECCW officers seized 82 carcasses as a result of licence conditions being breached. Seized carcasses that meet the commercial licensing requirements are sold by DECCW to avoid wastage. Carcasses that do not meet the licence requirements (that is, are underweight or body-shot) are not sold.
- One harvester's licence was cancelled in 2009 following repeated failure to comply with licence conditions despite two successful prosecutions and one infringement notice. The harvester lodged an appeal with the Minister for the Environment, who determined that the licence would be reinstated.
- DECCW prosecuted two licensed harvesters for separate offences:
  - harm protected fauna and breach of licence conditions (shooting of kangaroos on unauthorised property); and
  - breach of licence conditions (sale of body-shot carcasses).In both cases, the prosecutions were successful and the harvesters were fined by the Court. Penalties were \$3,500 fines (two) and \$500 costs to DECCW and \$1,200 fine plus \$500 costs respectively.

### **Research Involvement in 2009**

- The Kangaroo Management Program did not initiate any new research proposals in 2009 because of lack of funds.
- The research into field metabolic rate of kangaroos compared to sheep has been completed and published.

### ***Action 1: Send a copy of published report into "Field metabolic rate of Kangaroos compared to sheep" to Panel members***

- The FATE program concluded in June and the only published report has already been sent of to Panel members.
- Steve McLeod's project into the Impact of Kangaroo harvesting on Biodiversity is ongoing.
- In 2009 the Kangaroo Management Program pledged in-kind contributions of data and human resources to a project looking at humane methods of euthanasing orphaned pouch young. This project aims to determine the most appropriate euthanasia methods for young kangaroos to reduce as much as possible unnecessary pain, distress and suffering. Field work was due to commence in February, but was delayed because young kangaroos of appropriate age were not available.

## **Performance Indicators**

- Most performance indicators were met during 2009 with the exception of Project involvement, due to lack of funds.

## **Issues arising**

- 2009 was not a good year with the most significant factor affecting the commercial harvest being the decision by the Russian government to cease importing kangaroo meat.
- The suspension of the harvest quotas for eastern/western grey kangaroo in the Griffith zone, and western grey kangaroos in the Coonabarabran zone because population estimates indicated that populations had fallen beneath their thresholds.

## **Comments by the Panel**

- LHPA commented that conditions within the kangaroo industry seemed to be improving.
- PAWD asked if harvesters were getting used to the ballot situations.
  - DECCW has received very few complaints now that the processes have been fine-tuned.
  - The Harvester's Association believes once conditions improve and demand increases, other zones that previously went to ballot would again. They asked if there was any way full time shooters could be advantaged in the ballot situation.
  - As quota is issued to the landholder and not the harvester the ballot situation is the fairest recognised so far where demand exceeds supply. Every application has equal standing and equal chance. DECCW is open to suggestions but where there is simply not enough quota to go around, some shooters and property owners will inevitably miss out.
- AGMPA asked if false or inaccurate information provided by harvesters could actually shut a zone such as the event occurring in Griffith at the moment.
  - The Harvesters Association commented that harvesters were not fully aware of the importance of the statistics they provide to DECCW, but are slowly being educated in the need for accurate reporting.
- The Panel congratulated DECCW on the 2009 Annual Report.

## **Date for comments back**

- The Annual report captures the information from the previous years cull.
- This is the third Annual Report and will be available on the website when it is approved by the Commonwealth.

***Action 2: A copy of the 2009 draft Annual Report to be emailed to Panel members tomorrow 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010. Paper copies will be sent to those not on email. Comments due back to DECCW by the 22<sup>nd</sup> March***

## **Item 3: YTD 2010 allocation & take** **Comparison with previous years**

- Allocation for the first two months is 11% of the quota or 120,000 tags. This is similar to 2009.

- Glen Innes (5%) and Upper Hunter (7%) zones are still at low levels. The petfood processing facility in these zones switches to beef at times, leaving a few months where there is reduced demand for kangaroo carcasses.
- Lower Darling is 6% allocated. This could be related to the ceasing of the eastern grey cull in the Griffith area. Harvesters from the Griffith zone are looking to cull in other zones, and have detected a few properties which were originally created in Griffith that should have been in Lower Darling. These properties have now been zoned correctly.
- DECCW are anticipating a slow down now because of the widespread rain.
- The take in the first two months is at 3% of the quota or 36,000 animals and is better than expected.

### **Predictions for rest of year**

- AGMPA states there have been no real market developments since the last KMAP meeting.
- The Chinese have been invited to inspect, but no date has been set. This could mean 1-12 months down the track
- The talk in the media is that Russia is ready to inspect again.
- Industry have pinned their hopes on these two markets.
- No change in the European Markets with their main concern being able to trace back the animal to its source should there be a problem. AQIS seem to be happy with the NSW tag system, which can be traced back to origin by the sequential number.
- AGMPA reported that the petition doing the rounds at the moment for support for the KIAA is lagging behind 10-1 in support of stopping the commercial cull.
- The SBS TV show "Dave in the Life" filmed in 2009 was investigated by DECCW. It now appears that the show was filmed in Queensland and has been referred to Queensland authorities for further investigation. Scott Murray will chase this up.
- KIAA policy requires harvesters to refer to the Association before participating in any media activities.

### **Implication for budget.**

- Slow tag sales will continue to have a negative impact on revenue.

### **Item 4: AAT Decision and quota closures**

#### **Current impact**

- DECCW would like to use this forum for all KMAP members to take back to their respective groups the reason why the decision to close quotas was made, why it has happened and how it was imposed.
- The AAT decision was: if kangaroo populations decline to specific trigger points, the commercial harvest of particular species in particular zones will be suspended.
- The AAT decision was provided to all KMAP members, is available electronically and is posted on our website.
- The Griffith population had decreased from 500,000 to 260,000 which is a decline of 45%. This is consistent with comments by various local harvesters that there are not a lot of kangaroos around.

- NSW DPI is not surprised with the decrease because of the lack of water available in that area.
- There are currently 51 harvesters licensed in the Griffith zone with only 715 animals taken year to date. This figure is approximately half of the licensed harvesters in the Griffith zone for 2009. Zone quotas are available for red kangaroos but for most harvesters this is not economically viable.
- The Griffith zone this year will be the focus for compliance, to discourage harvesters who may be tempted to shoot eastern greys in the Griffith zone and tag the carcasses with other zone tags.

### **Mid-year surveys /moving forward**

- If aerial surveys in June/July indicate that the populations in the Griffith zone for these species have increased back to above the thresholds, the quota will be reinstated at 10% of the new population estimate. If the new population counts indicate the population has not increased above the trigger point, the quota will remain closed.
- DECCW believes that a population increase of this magnitude is very unlikely.

### **Item 5: Compliance update.**

#### **Statistics and discussion**

- During 2009, 118 infringement notices were issued, predominantly for the offence of contravening conditions of licence. These figures were discussed earlier in the 2009 Annual report session.

#### **Priorities for 2010**

- The last few months have been spent seeking ways to improve compliance. A pro-active approach will be taken in 2010, identifying issues and addressing them.
- Generally there has been a lot less reminder letters sent to harvesters for overdue returns and more calls from harvesters saying why their returns are late.
- A PIN is usually only issued to harvesters who have ignored letters and phone calls.
- Early indications are that this approach is working.
- Another concern is OH&S obligations with chiller boxes. The majority of chiller set-ups are good and when problems are detected by DECCW they are generally addressed by the chiller manager.
- A letter has already been sent to Fauna Dealers informing them of their obligations.
- The main problem encountered with chiller inspections in 2009 related to the displayed chiller DECCW rego numbers not being current.
- High risk harvesters will be identified in 2010 and informed that they are being targeted. Month by month audits to reconcile harvester, chiller and fauna dealer returns will be done until the problem is rectified.

#### **Handbooks**

- The Harvester Handbook has been updated and formatted for publication and should be available by the end of March.

- The Chiller Handbook is almost at publication stage and should be ready by the end of April.

#### **Comments:**

- The Harvester's Association asked if tags issued to a specific property could be shot on a different property.
- Legislation as it is requires the issue of tags for one property.
- DECCW are noticing improvement in harvester behaviour and advice from the field suggests most shooters are happy for those that do not want to comply with the new AQIS rules to be managed up or out of the industry. There are still some harvesters who do not understand the implications of sloppy work.
- The Harvester's Association reported that the leg tags issued by the fauna dealers, which are an AQIS requirement, were not adequate to be attached in the field *ie* tags tend to blow off the carcass before they can be put into the chillers. The tags are time consuming and even though AQIS are happy for the leg tags to be attached at the chiller, this means the carcasses spend longer outside of the chiller sometimes up to 2-3 hours more.
- DECCW feels this is a major problem as it is a key requirement for overseas markets. This needs to be taken up with the fauna dealers via the Harvester's Association.

#### **Item 6: Review of Centralisation:**

##### **Presentation of statistics and Budget Overview**

- Kangaroo Management is currently experiencing a diminished workload with the slow market for kangaroos, and is not running at full capacity. One licensing officer's position has not been backfilled while she is on maternity leave and the project officer's position is vacant.
- The bulk of costs are employee related and if centralisation had not occurred, would be \$500,000 more expensive, as the positions in the Area offices would still need to be filled regardless of the workload.
- Kangaroo Management's budget has been going backwards for sometime, which is why the fee review was needed and why fees increased.
- The centralised licensing model has now been in place for 12 months and a report will soon be done for DECCW Executive.
- There were relatively few problems encountered in the first few months of centralisation. The biggest issue was the slow delivery of tags –this was addressed by DECCW changing service providers. The level of complaints due to centralisation has dropped off to virtually nil.
- With only two offices it is easier for DECCW to ensure that clients receive correct and current information.

#### **Item 7: Major Projects in 2010**

##### **Reconvene KMAP**

- This will be the last meeting of the current KMAP.
- Around April DECCW will write to member organisations thanking them for their past involvement and inviting nominations for the next Panel.
- DECCW will also advertise generally, seeking interest from stakeholder groups encompassing animal welfare, kangaroo industry, landholders, Aboriginal communities, conservation organisations and government. Where

possible, recognised peak bodies eg RSPCA for animal welfare issues, will be targeted.

- A recommendation on membership will be made to the Director-General of DECCW. Once member organisations have been appointed, they will be asked to provide contact details for primary and alternate representatives.
- The first meeting of the new Panel will be held at the end of October 2010.

### **Tag supply tenders 2011-2013**

- Department of Commerce policies have recently been changed, allowing DECCW to run its own tender process.
- The dollar value involved is such that we only need to obtain three quotes, but in the interest of fairness and a good deal we will advertise an open tender.
- The first requirement is that tags are adequate for our needs; price is secondary consideration.
- An industry representative will be invited to assist with the selection process.
- Industry suggested that it would be more appropriate for the Harvester's Association to be involved. They also asked if combining with SA and Qld would save costs.
- Our present supplier ITW Fastex, who also supply Qld, the combined volume of production is the reason they can supply at the price they do.

### **Commence review of Plan**

- The review of the current plan, and drafting of the NSW Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2011-2015 will commence no later than twelve months prior to the expiry of this plan.
- The content of the review is specified in the Management Plan and includes:
  - Strategic planning prior to a full review of the program;
  - Compilation of reports including reviews of relevant literature;
  - Public meetings/forums including the KMAP and invited scientists;
  - Public exhibition of new draft program;
  - KMAP review of public submission;
  - Rewrite to consider submissions; and
  - Approval by the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth may or may not ask for major changes.
- The current plan is effective and not hard to deliver on.
- PAWD asked if the AAT decision on thresholds which has closed the Griffith zone will remain in the new plan.
  - DECCW believes that the Commonwealth will require thresholds in the next plan, but there may be scope to rework the numbers, as there was very limited time during the AAT process. A consultant may need to be engaged to fully assess appropriate threshold populations.
- AGMPA asked if we could go from 15% of the population culled to maybe 5% of the population culled, rather than just stop.
  - The Tribunal required a definite suspension not just a wind back of the percentage culled.

### **Audit of database property records**

- At present DECCW has over 21,000 records listed as current on the database. A lot of this is out of date and needs to be authenticated.

- Ownership will remain a problem and cannot always be expected to be up to date.
- DECCW has written to LHPA asking to link with their database but a response has not yet been received.
- Another option will be to download data from each zone and write to each property owner individually asking them to up-date their information.

### **Item 8: Other Business**

#### **Euro survey Barrier Ranges**

- PAWD is requesting euros to be surveyed in the Barrier Ranges as there have been a number of queries re non-commercial shooting. PAWD is aware that revenue is short, but is there a way DECCW can have this done, for example, have property owners conduct the survey and submit a Statutory Declaration; or have the general public pay for the survey?
  - In the last 8 years of the commercial cull of euros there were 932 licences issued that included wallaroos for a total number of 29,310 animals.
  - Since commercial culling stopped, non-commercial licences have been issued. Between 2003 and 2009 there have been 14 NC licences issued for a total of 320 animals.
  - Euros were not a harvestable species under the 2002-2006 plan. They are under the current plan, but no survey has been conducted because of low numbers and therefore at present they cannot be harvested commercially.
- DECCW cannot justify the cost of a helicopter survey every three years (about \$35,000) for a possible 5,000 yearly harvest, but if the money were to come from other sources we would be happy to conduct the survey.

***Act 3: Nicole to generate euro historical data and send to Panel members by Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March.***

#### **Harvester Licence Fees (raised by Harvester's Association).**

- The Harvester's Association would like to see a flat \$800 fee for a harvester's licence throughout the year or the chance to have a six month licence either at the beginning of January or 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- It feels harvesters are abusing of the pro-rata licence fee that kicks in at the beginning of the new financial year, to delay their licence fee until winter cropping season.
- A fee for a six monthly licence at any time during the year would cause too many flow-on affects eg length of four monthly s121 licences- the data base in its current form is not programmed to handle this. It would therefore be easier to remove the pro-rata reduction altogether.
- As this was part of the fee structure approved by the Minister, any changes would need to be approved up the line and could not be done in 2010.
- If the Harvester Association feels it has a case for removing the pro-rata fee or having it kick in later in the year it will need to put in a submission to DECCW. DECCW will then pass it on to the rest of the Panel.
- DECCW believes there has not been a history of winter licensing and will keep track of how many Harvesters license in July in 2010.

### **Epidemic Mortality (raised by DECCW)**

- The conditions that occurred in previous years to produce epidemic mortality are now prevalent again. There are huge surface areas of water and large rainfall on top of this.
- There is no response strategy in place should this happen.
- DECCW has been in touch with the Wildlife Health Network (AWHN) just to give them the heads up. Should an epidemic occur there would need to be a vet on the ground within two weeks to examine the kangaroos. There may also need to be a licence issued to obtain healthy kangaroo samples for comparison.
- DECCW would appreciate a phone call if anyone observes sick or dying animals. This would more likely become apparent to property owners in the first instance. Landholder groups agreed to be vigilant and give DECCW a call should they become aware of unexplained deaths.

### **List of Actions**

***Action 1: Send a copy of published report into “Field metabolic rate of Kangaroos compared to sheep” to Panel members.***

***Action 2: A copy of the 2009 draft Annual Report to be emailed to Panel members tomorrow 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010. Paper copies will be sent to those not on email. Comments due back to DECCW by the 22<sup>nd</sup> March.***

Sent 3 March 2010.

***Act 3: Nicole to generate Euro historical data and send to Panel members by Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March.***

Sent 2 March 2010.