

Monster Mouse-ear hunt

Kosciuszko National Park



nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

The 'Monster Mouse-ear Hunt' is a new volunteer program assisting with eradication of a noxious weed.

MOUSE-EAR HAWKWEED

Mouse-ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) was first detected on the Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park in December 2015.

This species is a member of the daisy family and originates from northern and central Europe. It is a serious weed in many countries, including the USA, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, where it threatens biodiversity and agricultural productivity. Mouse-ear hawkweed poses a major threat to the Australian Alps because it can create a mono-culture and out compete all other species. Since discovery, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has been committed to eradication of mouse-ear hawkweed.

Volunteers have been instrumental in protecting sensitive environments, like alpine bogs, from hawkweed invasion, by helping to find plants during the summer season. This season, NPWS will conduct week-long surveys that coincide with peak plant development, which makes mouse-ear hawkweed easier to detect.

VOLUNTEER FITNESS

A high level of physical fitness is needed as surveys require a lot of walking. Volunteers should be able to walk approximately 4 km a day and be able to negotiate natural terrain (no paths) and moderate to steep slopes on uneven surfaces.

2018 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Monster Mouse-ear Hunt runs for eight weeks from January to mid-March 2018.

Week 1 – 15 to 19 January

Week 2 – 29 Jan to 2 February

Week 3 – 5 to 9 February

Week 4 – 12 to 16 February**

Week 5 – 19 to 23 February

Week 6 – 26 February to 2 March

Week 7 – 5 to 9 March

Week 8 – 12 to 16 March

Maximum of 3 volunteers per week.

** Note: special conditions apply for week 5.

Bookings are essential.

Jindabyne (02) 6450 5600

Khancoban (02) 6076 9373

Tumut (02) 6947 7000

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkVolunteering

WHAT TO EXPECT

Mouse-ear hawkweed likes good views, which means surveys are conducted in some of the most scenic areas of the Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park.

Volunteers will be accommodated in shared lodgings, but at no cost to volunteers. Accommodation is available from the Monday afternoon through to the Saturday morning of the week's program. Bookings are essential.

NPWS will supply the basics foods for breakfast and lunch. Volunteers are

responsible to provide their own evening meals.

Each Monday afternoon of the volunteer week, volunteers will meet at the designated accommodation for an induction (plant identification and survey techniques) and safety briefing. The following day, Tuesday, volunteers will be taken into the park to find plants in the wild and assist with detection work.

Transport to and from the mouse-ear hawkweed survey areas will be provided by NPWS.

WHAT TO BRING

In addition to toiletries and casual clothing, please bring bedding (sleeping bag, pillow) and towels.

To ensure your experience is safe and comfortable please bring the following:

- Personal medication (e.g. EPI pen, hay fever prevention)
- Special dietary requirements
- Good walking boots (water proof)
- Thick socks
- Long pants and long sleeved shirts
- Hat (broad rimmed, that shades face and neck)
- Warm clothing and wet/wind weather gear (weather changes rapidly, even in summer months)
- Gaiters
- 1 litre water bottle (drinking water)
- Day pack/back pack
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
- Lunch box
- Camera (for capturing the views)

WEED DETECTION DOGS

Weeds Eradication Detector Dogs are highly trained working dogs used to find hawkweed in hard-to-detect locations. NPWS is currently working two dogs, Sally and Connor, for hawkweed detection.

These animals are confident in the detection of both hawkweed species, mouse-ear and orange hawkweed. They are a part of the NPWS Field team and volunteers are welcome to support this activity (when in operation).

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Remote Helicopter Assisted Surveys

This activity uses a helicopter to deploy ground teams, of five people per team, to remote areas to survey for hawkweed. These remote survey areas are critical in delimiting the extent of hawkweed across the Main Range.

Teams are supervised by NPWS accredited officers and comprised of experienced team members, to provide the best chances of detecting hawkweed. This activity is only open to volunteers who have previously participated in a week of ground surveillance in either the Mouse-ear Hawkweed or Orange Hawkweed volunteer programs.

For bookings or inquiries, please call either Jindabyne, Tumut or Khancoban NPWS Offices during business hours.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Orange hawkweed (*Heiracium aurantiacum*) is also found within Kosciuszko National Park. It has similar characteristics to mouse-ear hawkweed and is as competitive and aggressive in nature. The bright orange flowers, displayed between December and February, are the major difference between the two hawkweeds.

Orange hawkweed was first discovered in Kosciuszko National Park in 2003 and has been under eradication since.

NPWS has a separate volunteer program for orange hawkweed, "Hunting Hawkweed" which is managed out of Khancoban, NSW.

For more information please contact the Kosciuszko NPWS Offices during business hours.



Weed detection dogs, Sally (left) and Connor (above) sniff out hawkweed.



Volunteers survey high priority areas of the Main Range in Kosciuszko National Park in the hunt for mouse-ear hawkweed.



Remote, helicopter assisted, surveys conducted across the Main Range in the hunt for hawkweed.