

Monster Mouse-ear hunt Kosciuszko National Park



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The 'Monster Mouse-ear Hunt' is a volunteer program supporting the eradication of a noxious weed in Kosciuszko National Park.

MOUSE-EAR HAWKWEED

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

This weed is a member of the daisy family and originates from Eurasia. 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 mono-cultures and out compete native species. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is committed to eradicating mouse-ear hawkweed.

Volunteers have been instrumental in protecting sensitive environments from the hawkweed invasion, by helping to find plants during the summer season. This season, NPWS will conduct three and a half day surveys that coincide with peak mouse-ear hawkweed growth.

VOLUNTEER FITNESS

A high level of physical fitness is needed as surveys require a lot of walking.

Volunteers should be able to walk at least 4 km a day and be able to negotiate natural terrain (no paths) and moderate to steep slopes on uneven surfaces.

2019 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The **Monster Mouse-ear Hunt** runs for 10 weeks between January and mid-March 2019.

Week 1 – 7 to 11 January 2019

Week 2 - 14 to 18 January 2019

Week 3 – 21 to 25 January 2019

Week 4 – 28 Jan to 1 Feb 2019

Week 5 – 4 to 8 February 2019

Week 6 – 11 to 15 February**

Week 7 – 18 to 22 February 2019

Week 8 – 25 Feb to 1 March 2019

Week 9 – 4 to 8 March 2019

Week 10 – 11 to 15 March 2019

Maximum of 3 volunteers per week.
Inductions held Mondays at 16:00.

Note – weeks marked with an asterisk **requires previous experience on the program.

Bookings are essential.
Khancoban (02) 6076 9373
Tumut (02) 6947 7000

WHAT TO EXPECT

Mouse-ear hawkweed likes good views, which means surveys are conducted in some of the most scenic areas on 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 activities. Bookings are essential.

NPWS will supply basic food for breakfast and lunch. Volunteers are asked 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 survey for plants in the wild.

Four-wheel drive 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
- 1-2 litre water bottle (for 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 employed during the program to 'sniff out' hawkweed. NPWS is currently working two dogs, Sally and Connor, to assist with detecting those hard to find plants.

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).



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

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. Surveying these remote survey areas is critical for 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 chance 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 Tumut or Khancoban NPWS Offices during business hours.



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

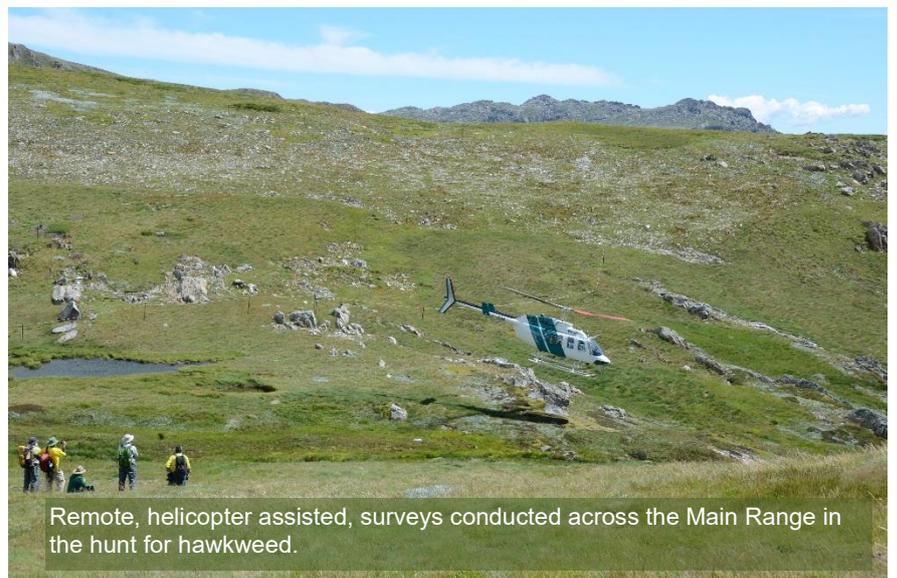
OTHER PROGRAMS

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.



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