

**Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #20
Harrison Room, OEC, 214 Darling Street 14 March 2013**

Present:

Chair: Nicole Payne (OEH)

Ray Scott, NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA)

Greg Bates, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)

Lachlan Gall, Pastoralists Association of West Darling (PAWD)

Ray Borda, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)

Dr Tony English, (Australian Veterinary Association)

David O'Shannessy, (RSPCA NSW)

Patrick Medway, Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc (WPSA)

Greg Markwick, Department of Primary Industries

Steve McLeod, Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS)

Apologies:

John Farr (NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association Inc)

Adoption of Minutes of Meeting # 19

The minutes were ratified. Moved Ray Scott. Seconded Greg Bates.

Adoption of Agenda of Meeting # 20

No further agenda items were added for discussion.

Item 1. Review of actions from meeting #19

Action 1: Add all Panel members to the list to receive the detailed carcass weight analysis.

Done – all Panel members are now receiving the detailed carcass weight analysis.

Action 2: Panel members will be sent by email the final Quota report on Friday 9th November with the updated SENSW figures. Any comments back by 30th November.

Done. OEH are still waiting written confirmation of the Quota Report from the Commonwealth.

Action 3: A copy of the email from AWMS will be circulated to Panel members with the Draft members.

Sent 14 November 2012.

Item 2: 2013 tag allocation and harvest update

2012

- Final take for 2012 was about 336,000 (22% of the quota or 3-4% of the estimated population).
- There was a lot of variation between zones in terms of harvest utilisation - Armidale and Lower Darling were highest at 37% of their quotas.
- Some species in some zones eg Eastern Greys in Lower Darling, were close to full utilisation but in these cases, quotas were small.

2013

- The stand out is SENSW where only 250 tags have been allocated to date. There are no chillers operating in this zone.
- Broken Hill and Lower Darling zones are both at 9%, the highest allocations so far for this year
- Overall, only 5% allocated, almost three months into the year.
- Compared to 2012, allocation is about on par
- The actual harvest for January is about 21,000 animals - about 1% of the quota.

Comments

- PAWD – A lot of the harvesters now have other jobs and will only shoot to supplement their income if prices and demand improve.

Item 3: Small Holdings policy

- This issue was discussed at Meeting #19 in November 2012
- The initial reaction of Panel members at that time was not to licence properties < 40ha
- The Manager KMP called several NSW Farmers' Association regional contacts for perspectives relating to the east of the state.
- Those contacted did not support prohibiting licences for those properties but did support the requirement for additional information and issuing smaller allocations of tags.
- OEH policy now allows 10 tags per licence to be issued to properties < 40ha and 20 tags to properties 40ha to <100ha in response to concerns about sustainability of harvesting on small properties
- Occupiers of properties less than 100 ha who had been granted licences in 2011 or 2012 were advised in writing of the new policy.

Reactions

- There has been little reaction from harvesters and property owners to OEH's new policy
- NSWFA have had no adverse comments from land owners. People believe that there is a real need to be pro-active.

Comments and Discussion

- There were a lot of comments from the Panel regarding non-commercial and illegal shooting.
- The Panel believes that the animal welfare issues around non-commercial and illegal shooting need to be addressed – that is, the requirements for non-commercial shooters should be the same as for commercial shooters.
- OEH believes that if the requirements for obtaining a non-commercial licence are too onerous, there would be more cases of illegal shooting. However, competency testing for non-commercial licences should be seriously considered in the review of the Code of Practice relating to non-commercial shooting.
- AWMS pointed out that even though there are no competency testing requirements for a non-commercial licence, the requirements within the Code of Practice remain the same as commercial shooting.

- KIAA has noticed more cases of miscellaneous metal fragments in carcasses. This is more prevalent in grain growing areas where property owners shoot kangaroos to protect their crops. This is painting a bad picture for the industry and needs to be addressed.
- Non-commercial licences are issued by the Parks and Wildlife Group of OEH, not KMP. However, OEH can consider media campaigns that draw people's attention to illegal shooting and the licence conditions attached to non-commercial shooting.

Action 1: Manager KMP will talk to the non-commercial policy section about media campaigns targeting non-commercial and illegal shooting and the fines associated with non-compliance.

- The Panel considers that most of the damage is being caused by "roo drives" rather than property owners, who are generally more responsible.

Item 4: Industry Update

Male only harvest

- Community perceptions about the death of dependent young is causing the most concern to industry.
- Still only one company shooting males only.
- Australia-wide only 10% of the harvest is female. If the actual harvest is only about 3% of the population (as was the case for NSW in 2012), this equates to about 0.3% of the population being females that are killed.

International markets

- Only one company so far has access to the Russian market. They remain cautiously optimistic that the trade will continue.
- Russia is a member of the WTO and has to be seen to be active in free trade. There are no guarantees and trade could be stopped at any time.
- So far in 2013 seven containers each of about 18 tonnes have been sent to Russia, but only two of these have been inspected. Both containers have been passed.
- Russian authorities find it difficult to put faith in harvesters who are basically unsupervised at the point of kill, in contrast to the constant supervision in place at abattoirs.
- Russia is paying industry less per kilo than four years ago and the costs to supply Russia are higher. Industry will continue to supply the market because of future possibilities.
- Chinese authorities are concerned about animal welfare issues as a result of campaigns by animal rights activists.
- Macro's policy of male only shooting is having a positive effect and has softened the Chinese market a little, but there are still no definite moves to allow imports.

Item 5: Draft Annual Report for 2012

- The information that is to be included in the Annual Report is set out in the NSW Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2012-2016 approved by the Commonwealth.
- The only new category of information in the Annual Report for 2012 is the inclusion of information about the number of licensed harvesters. This information was requested by the Thinkk Group based at UTS.

Harvest statistics- weights, male bias etc

Male Bias

- Red Kangaroos 84.2% male
- Eastern Grey 79.6% male
- Western Grey 82% male
- % of male bias has increased only slightly because of Macro's "male only" shooting, because this did not start until late in the year.
- AWMS expected these proportions to be higher, and suggested that there may be a reporting issue
- OEH believes most harvesters are reporting correctly, and KMP Compliance officers do spot checks of male bias in chillers where possible.
- Male bias is lower (ie. There are more females shot) in the newer zones than "traditional" zones. Male bias is quite high in zones such as Armidale, Coonabarabran and Bourke.
- KIAA feels that there will always be a strong male bias as it is related to income, and for some shooters, the understanding that females are "next year's breeding stock".
- Male bias in wallaroos will always be extreme because the females are so small.
- OEH expects male bias to be higher in 2013 because of Macro's male only shooting policy.

Average weights

- Average weights for 2012 are generally higher than the long-term averages
- None of the monthly analyses showed current weights below the long term average by more than the one standard deviation tolerance.
- KIAA asked if the change to the 14kg weight limit was allowed for in the calculation of long-term average data. The long-term average comprises all data from 1997-2010, including periods before and since the weight limits were introduced. This is not identified specifically in the data but is acknowledged in the text.
- The weight limit was introduced predominately for Industry benefit and at Industry request.

Non-commercial

- The non-commercial cull authorised in 2012 was equivalent to 3.6% of the commercial quota, or 16.5% of the commercial harvest. It is not part of the quota and therefore does not impinge on the number of kangaroos available to industry under the commercial quota.
- Cropping zones in particular had an increase in non-commercial shooting in 2012 because of the downturn in the commercial industry.
- KIAA asked if the actual take for non-commercial shooting could be included in the next annual report. This is difficult to do because the accuracy of the information will depend on data being returned from licensees. Enforcing submission of returns for non-commercial licences is not a high priority for some licensing offices.
- It was suggested that the majority of kangaroos shot under non-commercial licences are smaller or female kangaroos that the industry is not taking. These are shot by landholders to limit damage to crops.

Compliance statistics

- Licensed harvesters for 2012 - 496
- Registered chillers -119
- Penalty notices issued -36
- Formal cautions issued -18
- Licence cancellations – none in 2012
- Prosecutions – none in 2012. However, investigations are continuing which could result in action against one Harvester for offences committed during 2011, and one harvester and one fauna dealer for offences committed during 2012.

Research

- No new research projects in 2012.
- Biodiversity – research completed – reports by the end of the year.
- Euthanasia of dependent young – captive bolt guns – funding has been extended until the end of the year. Field work almost completed – reports by the middle of the year.

Performance Indicators

- All performance indicators that needed to be met in 2012 were done.
- In-field auditing of harvesters did not commence in 2012, but has commenced in early 2013.

Action 2: Panel members will be given a further week to comment on the Annual Report. This will be COB 21 March. The draft can be emailed within members ranks for comment.

Item 6: Updates

OEH re-alignment

- Re-alignment is still in process.
- Kangaroo Management now exists on the organisational structure of Regional Operations in North Branch, reporting to the Director North Branch (Monica Collins).
- North Branch is divided into 3 operational regions and they are now recruiting the Regional Managers. This will not affect KMS as we report to Director North Branch
- The next stage of restructure will include Section Managers (including Manager KMP).

Compliance update

- Number of Harvesters so far for 2013 is 246
- There are 88 chillers registered
- 23 PINs have been issued and two written cautions sent
- KMP has commenced in-field auditing of Harvesters. Legal advice indicates that the audits need to be voluntary. Results will be reported in the 2013 Annual Report.

Budget & implications

- Our expected net cost of services (ie. difference between income and expenditure) for 2012-2013 financial year is around \$66,000.

- For the year to end February, expenses have exceeded revenue by about \$7,000 due to fewer than expected licence applications and tag sales.

Item 7: Other Business

Presentation by Patrick Medway re: USA

- Patrick Medway (WPSA) gave a short presentation on the management of abundant wildlife in the USA and Canada, from his recent study tour. Species included seals, Canada Geese, Coyote, White tailed Deer, Moose and Snow Geese.
- WPSA noted that the Kangaroo Management Plan is a much better example of sustainable management than any of the practices observed in the USA, and is aligned with the WPSA policy of “wise use”.

Recent media re: TSC Act nominations

- A story in the Sydney Morning Herald on 25 February 2013 reported on the nomination of kangaroos for listing under the Threatened Species Act, on the basis of significant declines in populations since European settlement.
- The person making the nomination was critical of our survey methodology and the analysis of the data for population estimates.
- He has done his own surveys and believes there is a downward trend. Further, he believes the decline in harvest rate is because the animals are not there to be shot, rather than a result of downturn in markets.
- OEH has met with the person making the nomination and is discussing the basis for his concerns.

Action 3: Manager KMP will send Panel members a link to the report (TSC Act nomination) and a link to the article in the Sydney Morning Herald.

- Challenges such as these are useful as a trigger to go back and review our processes. OEH will do further analysis and look at our survey methods to confirm that they are appropriate.
- OEH consults independent scientists regarding survey results. Dr Jim Hone (Professor of Wildlife Management at the University of Canberra) conducted an analysis of population trends in red, western and eastern grey kangaroos over the Western Plains between 1993 and 2012, and found no declining trends.
- Does OEH believe Kangaroos are declining? No
- AWMS believes there is an issue in relation to understanding various scales of survey, and the different techniques and analyses that are appropriate to each scale.
- KIAA expressed concern that the article could place doubt in people’s minds and OEH need to refute these claims.

Action 4: The Manager KMP will provide to the Panel the Report “Red and Grey Kangaroos in Western NSW” by Dr Hone.

Discussion

- WPSA believe Panel members should be more vocal in defending the Program. It is sustainable, humane and has a basis in wise use. Farmers have a vested interest in keeping the commercial harvest management plan operating.
- KIAA believes that it is necessary to take into account the messages promoted by animal rights activists because they have the capacity to impact significantly on the industry.

List of Actions:

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