

**Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #19**  
**Harrison Room, OEC, 214 Darling Street**  
**Wednesday 7th November 2012**

**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)  
John Farr (NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association Inc)  
Ray Borda, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)  
Dr Tony English, (Australian Veterinary Association)  
David O'Shannessy, (RSPCA NSW)

**Apologies:**

Patrick Medway, Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc (WPSA)  
Greg Markwick, Department of Primary Industries  
Steve McLeod, Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS)

**Adoption of Minutes of Meeting # 18**

PAWD asked for some changes to be made to the draft minutes #18. Following these changes the minutes were ratified. Moved Ray Scott. Seconded Greg Bates

**Adoption of Agenda of Meeting # 19**

Three agenda items were added for mention/discussion in Other Business

1. Six monthly licences commencing 1 January 2013
2. Industry Update
3. Number of Kangaroos in rural areas

**Item 1. Review of actions from meeting #18**

Action 1: OEH to send a summary of carcase weight analyses for 2011 to the KMAP Panel. This summary is sent monthly to Panel members. A more detailed analysis is provided on request – several panel members asked to be included on this list, and as a result, all will now receive the more detailed analysis.

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

Action 2: OEH to send carcase weight analysis summary data for 2011 to KIAA. Sent. This summary is also being considered for posting on the KMP web page.

Action 3: OEH will provide a more accurate estimate to NSW FA for the cost of a new survey in the Lower Darling zone.

Additional survey was not done as the increasing temperatures would have exacerbated the problem with visibility. All species in the Lower Darling zone will be available in the quota for 2013.

Action 4: OEH will email the summary page of the Quota Report to the Panel when the figures are made public.

Done. This is also available on our web page.

Action 5: OEH will email the discussion sheet (that the triennial helicopter survey technique does not offer adequate precision for managing the commercial harvest of wallaroos within this environment) to the Panel members when it is completed.

The Commonwealth is happy with the 3 yearly technique and does not require further surveys.

There was a further Action from meeting #18. PAWD were to approach the CMA's to see if external funding for surveys of Euros in the Barrier Ranges could be secured. The answer essentially was "no".

## **Item 2: Tag allocation and harvest update**

### **Key Points:**

- Approximately 23% (342,750) of the quota has been allocated to date.
- Eastern greys in Lower Darling, and wallaroos in the Upper Hunter, have been fully allocated and are being re-allocated as returned tags are received.
- Western greys in Broken Hill are at 90% allocation.
- The projection for 2012 is about 25% allocation of the quota.
- There is a steady trickle of licences going out with harvesters buying fewer tags at a time.
- The harvest as of 30 September is 17% which is approximately 250,000 animals.
- OEH will send updates to the Panel as they are done.

## **Item 3: Draft Quota Report for 2013**

### **1. Populations and quotas – survey issues**

- SENSW figures are now available but have not yet been added to the Quota report.

***Action 2: KMP will email panel members the final Quota report on Friday 9 November with the updated SENSW figures. Any comments due back ASAP as final report is due to Commonwealth by 30 November.***

- Western Plains fixed wing survey results and stand outs:
  - 1) Overall increase of 18%
  - 2) Red kangaroos – 4% increase, so not much change
  - 3) Eastern grey kangaroos – 28% increase. Overall this is reasonable but some extreme results in particular zones are difficult to explain.
  - 4) Western grey kangaroos – 72% increase. Some of this increase may be because of the difficulties associated with the surveys in the Lower Darling area in 2011. Over a two year period there was an increase of 24% across the board.
  - 5) Bourke – increases of over 200% in both eastern and western grey kangaroo numbers. There is no obvious explanation for this degree of increase, may include movement of animals down from Queensland ahead of floodwaters.
- Central Tablelands North and South and the three Northern Tablelands zones were not surveyed this year; population estimates will remain the same.
- SENSW surveys were only completed three weeks ago because bad weather interrupted the survey earlier and it could not be completed in one block. Goulburn transects were affected.

- 2013 quota is expected to be higher than 2012 quota, but the exact numbers will not be available until the SENSW figures have been included and all tables/charts updated.
- 2. Adjustments due to low populations**
- Western greys in Broken Hill rose from 2011 but remain under the threshold. Quota will be calculated at 10% of the population estimate.
  - Wallaroo quota in Upper Hunter will still be at the reduced rate of 10% because of no new surveys in the Northern Tablelands.
  - No suspensions for 2013.
- OEH was asked if only adult kangaroos were counted in the surveys.
    - The planes fly at 250 feet and all kangaroos visible from that distance are counted. This includes larger young at foot, and visibility depends on habitat.
  - PAWD believed there was an undertaking from OEH at the last meeting to include Euros in the counts at this year's survey.
    - OEH did approach the observers who thought it would be too difficult for them to add another species to their count and OEH believe that a fixed wing aircraft could not be flown safely over the Ranges.
    - Over the past few years more stringent restrictions have been placed on fixed wing aircraft due to increasing air safety requirements.
    - OEH will take another look at this and see what can be done for surveys in 2013
  - Goats are also counted in the survey, but not much has been done with the data in the past. Recently Western CMA contracted DPI to calculate correctional factors for goats to supply genuine population counts from the observations recorded during kangaroo surveys.
- 3. Bombala update**
- Southern Rivers CMA paid for a survey to be conducted within the Bombala LHPA.
  - The survey has been completed and a baseline population estimate has been calculated – 76,700 eastern grey kangaroos.
  - Industry position at the moment does not justify adding a new zone, so for 2013 at least this is not a viable option.

#### **Item 4: Tag limits and small holdings policy**

##### **1) Adjustments to property size classes/tag limits**

- OEH proposes to allow a maximum of 100 tags on properties of more than 500ha (size limit was previously 1,000 ha). This number of tags can realistically be utilised on properties of this size, and the change will reduce the number of licences staff need to produce. Approximately 348 properties licensed in 2012 would benefit from the change. However, there is no requirement to apply for the maximum number of tags.
  - There were no objections from the Panel.

## **2) Small properties/residential landuse**

- OEH has received a few complaints relating to licences that have been issued on small holdings. At the moment only properties smaller than 10ha are required to provide additional information before a licence will be considered.
- For 2013 OEH proposes to implement a change in procedure for properties less than 40ha. Applicants will need to provide additional information, which may include:
  - § Land use
  - § A map showing the property location, shape and proximity to neighbours houses
  - § A requirement to consult/notify neighbours
  - § A requirement to consult/notify NSW Police.
- OEH may also limit the number of tags to 10 tags per licence for properties less than 40 ha, and 20 tags per licence for properties between 40 and 100 ha.
- Out of 4,687 licences issued in 2011, only 28 properties were less than 40 ha. Harvesters need to be advised of any changes for 2013, so the Panel needs to make a recommendation without delay.
- After a discussion the Panel suggested that it would be more appropriate to not licence properties under 40ha for commercial harvesting because additional assessment as proposed is necessarily subjective and may be administratively difficult.
- The restriction would not be a problem in the Far West or Central West as very few properties are this small. NSWFA will provide names and contact numbers for NSWFA representatives in the east of the State where properties are smaller and these restrictions would have a greater impact. If there is an objection from NSWFA, then the above restrictions will apply.
- OEH will write to landowners licensed in 2011 and/or 2012 who are directly affected and advise the harvesters of any changes in their renewal packages.

## **Item 5: Managing dependent young**

### **1. Political activists – KIAA**

- KIAA would like to make people aware of what the industry is up against as far as activist groups are concerned.
- For the past 20 years these groups have been gaining ground.
- The RSPCA alone accepts that culling needs to happen and also believes it needs to be done as humanely as possible.
- The latest promo from activists is \$1.5million worth of free to air commercial TV Community Service announcements. Activists are passionate and effective in what they do and industry historically has chosen to ignore them. Macro Meats believes that industry cannot continue to ignore them.
- Public perception about the way harvesters deal with pouch young is damaging and because of this Macro Meats has chosen to only accept male kangaroo carcasses until a more publicly acceptable way of dealing with young can be found.
- Macro Meats is now challenging the community announcements under the Code of Practice for Free to Air TV, seeking to have these ads removed because the shooting of females no longer applies across the whole industry.
- Despite intensive lobbying of relevant groups, PAWD is the only organisation that has responded, writing to the Government in support of the resumption of trade with Russia and possible commencement of trade with China.

- Macro Meats' in-house study indicated that female kangaroos are a higher contamination risk because of the pouch. By shooting male only kangaroos the rate of *E. coli* contamination in the product has been halved, although this finding was not supported by other industry representatives. Macro Meats believes this will be a significant breakthrough in re-establishing the Russian markets.
- DAFF has produced a 28 minute DVD which includes animal welfare, why, how and legal compliance of the industry. Public perception needs to change for the industry to be viable again.
- The shooting of males only is voluntary and not all processors will follow suit.
- PAWD and NSW Farmers Association do not support male-only shooting.

## **2. Research update**

- The captive bolt trial for euthanising young is continuing. Funding for the survey has been extended until March 2013 so there is still time for harvesters to get involved. The survey has not been as successful as hoped because few harvesters are willing to participate.
- Panel members were encouraged to talk to any harvesters they have contact with to get them involved, because without sufficient data the result from the trial will be open to question.
- Panel members suggested the harvester questionnaire might be better conducted as a tick box exercise done while researchers are out in the field with the harvester.

## **3. Discussion**

- AWMS provided some comments via email regarding potential impacts of a male-only harvest. Not much research has been done, but consequences may include the following.
  - 1) Faster rate of increase in populations
  - 2) No reduction in population size compared to unharvested over the long term
  - 3) The ratio of males to females required to ensure females can be mated is undefined.
  - 4) Reduced fecundity of females from mating with less mature males.
  - 5) Reduced fertility of males
  - 6) A male only shoot needs to be monitored to determine if anything is going wrong.

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

- OEH - a male only harvest has some benefits but will need to be monitored over a long period of time to see if there are any consequences.
- The Kangaroo Harvester's Association agrees that industry has sat back for too long with the Activists, but does not agree with a male only harvest, suggesting a weight limit on females of around 17kg may be a better option. There may be genetic implications in the long term and there should be dialogue with activist groups to find a middle ground.
- Other processors accept the decision to only buy male carcasses and appreciate the situation but believe it to be a more complicated issue. Male only shooting will not be good for the gene pool and won't be viable in dry times. Radical groups will still oppose the harvest.
- PAWD - feedback from landholders who do not like a male only harvest and will not support harvesters who are shooting males only. If processors put something in writing to explain why they consider this necessary, PAWD will put it in its newsletter.
- NSWFA - similar response to PAWD. A male only shoot may be okay until new markets are found, if industry can assure landholders that populations are being controlled. It would prefer to see the commercial industry continue, as the other option, non-commercial shooting, only assures that the wild dog population is being fed.

- RSPCA - if the industry moves up to full harvest again, population increases will be a concern with a male only shoot. Activists will still be an issue, and it is the international audience who has to be convinced that the harvest is humane.
- The Australian Veterinary Association congratulated the processor on the male-only initiative, calling it a good start.

## **Item 6: Updates**

### **1. OEH re-alignment**

- Most groups within OEH are undergoing restructure. Parks and Wildlife Group's restructure is more advanced than Regional Operations, the group that KMS sits in.
- More information should be available February or March 2013, until then it is business as usual.
- It seems unlikely that the Kangaroo Management Program will be discontinued, but there may be changes to administration, such as the way that it is funded.

### **2. Compliance update**

- It has been a quiet year for compliance.
- There are 128 chillers registered; compliance staff have done 433 inspections.
- 28 fines issued, mostly relating to harvesters failing to submit returns and unused tags.
- 18 caution letters sent. Caution letters do not attract a fine but are listed on the licensee's record and are taken into account for future penalties.
- Two joint operations run, involving groups such as Police and other state fauna protection agencies.
- Three prosecution briefs currently with our Legal Services Branch.
- Two 'Show Cause' letters issued, one for a chiller premise and one to a harvester.
- Several more harvesters may receive show cause letters in 2013 if they re-apply for their licences.
- OEH explained that the MoU with NSW Food Authority involves the sharing of information and does not include taking compliance action on behalf of the other organisation.

### **3. Budget and implications**

- KMS is expected to run as a self funded business.
- Over a number of years the costs of running the program have increased as a result of more stringent regulation, at the same time revenue has decreased due to market failures and weather conditions.
- The re-alignment of OEH may include changes to the way KMS is funded.
- The Panel asked why there were no costs to the landholders for a Non-Commercial licence. OEH believes that landholders may be deterred from obtaining a licence if the process is more onerous, leading to an increase in illegal shooting.

## **Item 7: Other Business**

### **1. Six Monthly Licences**

- The Kangaroo Harvester's Association asked if OEH would again look at the possibility of having six monthly licences, as this may encourage more harvesters to re-licence.

- Harvesters currently have the option of applying for their licence on or after 1 July at half the annual fee. To introduce six monthly licences starting at any other time of the year would require significant changes to the database because of interactions between licence types, incurring potentially significant additional costs to the program for unknown benefit.
- It is unlikely that approval will be given for this expenditure.

## **2. Updates.**

- In field auditing of harvesters will come into effect in 2013. This is a new requirement in the NSW Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2012-2016, and is designed to help address criticism of the Code of Practice and the lack of monitoring at the point of kill.
- Audits will involve OEH advising selected harvesters that a compliance person will accompany them on their nights shoot, and arranging in advance the time, place, etc. OEH will primarily be looking for issues that arise from lack of education, and any other issues that can be addressed with training.
- Harvester licence conditions will be amended to include a requirement to comply with the audit process.

Greg Bates from KIAA acknowledged the passing of Tom Thompson who was a Fauna Dealer involved in the Kangaroo Industry for many years. Tom passed away last week after a short illness.

### **List of Actions:**

***Action 1: Add all Panel members on the list to receive copies of the full details of the carcase weight analysis.***

***Action 2: Nicole will email panel members the final Quota report on Friday 9 November with the updated SENSW figures. Any comments due back ASAP as final report is due to Commonwealth by 30 November.***

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