

Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #21
OEC, 212 Darling Street 17 October 2013

Present:

Chair: Stephen Wolter (OEH)
Ray Scott, NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA)
Greg Bates, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)
Lachlan Gall, Pastoralists Association of West Darling (PAWD)
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) Phone Hook-up

Apologies:

Ray Borda, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)

Adoption of Minutes of Meeting # 20

The minutes were ratified. Moved Patrick Medway. Seconded Greg Bates

Adoption of Agenda of Meeting # 21

Stephen Wolter introduced himself to the Panel and gave them an overview of his background before coming to the Kangaroo Management Section

Three agenda Items were added to be discussed in general business:

1. Possibility of funding for a scholarship on Kangaroo Management offered by WPSA
2. Update of a Commonwealth publication called "Kangaroo Harvesting"
3. The long term impact of a male only cull

Item 1. Review of actions from meeting #20

Action 1: Manager KMP will talk to the non-commercial policy section about a media campaign targeting non-commercial and illegal shooting and the fines associated with non-compliance. Not sure if this has been done. Stephen will follow this up.

Action 2: Panel members will be given a further week to comment on the Annual Report. This will be COB 21 March 2013. The draft already provided to Panel members can be emailed within members ranks for comment.

Done

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.

This is on the agenda

Action 3: Manager KMP will provide to the Panel the Report "Red and Grey Kangaroos in Western NSW" by Dr Hone.

Done

Item 2: OEH re-Alignment – Director Monica Collins

Review of KMP Program

- Director North Monica Collins introduced herself to the Panel.
- Monica explained to the Panel the new structure of OEH and the savings that needed to be made across the board.
- The Agency will now be driven by Government agenda and priority. The Governments agenda is red tape reduction while still delivering accountability and transparency.
- Changes in the structure that will affect the Kangaroo Management Program are mainly involved around compliance.
- Compliance is now an identified team. This has already affected the program and will affect it further in the future. The compliance team now consists of specialists assisted by technical experts. OEH are currently looking at what training needs are required for Compliance officers to eventually take over Kangaroo Management in their Branches. The Kangaroo Management Section needs to promote Kangaroos so that the Compliance Section understands we are as important as all other compliance within OEH.
- The review of KMS aims to:
 - Increase efficiency
 - Reduce red tape
 - Align with other compliance programs
 - Still maintain the objectives of ecological sustainability and compliance level

Action 1:OEH to Email the restructure document to the Panel

- The review will involve internal talking, talking to Stakeholders and bringing the changes to the Panel for consideration. The review will dominate the March meeting of the KMAP.
- OEH will also make contact with the NPWS section to make sure Non Commercial shooting licences are up to date with efficiency. The Non Commercial licensing section at the moment is messy, and needs better systems in place.
- The question was asked as to whether Kangaroo Management will still run as a business unit.
- The review will also cover this, but at the moment because we are back in the black, as we have less staff to fund, now that Compliance component of the team sits separately, it makes sense to continue operating as a business model.

Extension of KMAP

- The Kangaroo Management advisory Panel's tenure is about to expire.
- The Minister has asked if the current KMAP as is, can be extended for another twelve months while the review of the Plan is underway.
- Paper work to extend will be sent to current members shortly.

Item 3: 2013 Tag allocation and harvest update

- The quota is 18% allocated for the year which equates to 315,648 animals.
- 13% of this has been harvested
- Similar to last year. A very slow year.
- Wallaroo quota in Upper Hunter is 100% allocated. This was a very small quota of 1,499 animals.
- There has been an increase in applications in the last few months.
- Allocation is only a concern to Industry when take is close to the quota
- OEH will continue to send out updates to the Panel

Item 4: Industry Update

- There are basically no changes to date with the export of carcasses overseas.
- Russia at the moment is still only dealing with Macro Meats and there are only one or two containers per week leaving Australia.
- There have been no developments with the Chinese markets. There were two high profile meetings to take place in October but these have been rescheduled to next year.
- The Chinese have raised animal welfare concerns. These concerns have been addressed by AQUIS and Industry, so the ball is now in China's court.

FDW current vacant licence

- The Minister has met with Devils Ark, a government funded feeding program running in the Barrington Tops, and because of their high running costs, has granted them a Fauna Dealer licence. Devil's Ark is a breeding program for Tasmanian Devils. They feed whole kangaroo carcasses to the Devils.
- Industry asked why a Fauna Dealers licence and not a "Special Licence".
- Devil's Ark have offered to give OEH an MOU to say they will not set up as a Fauna Dealer, but will only use the licence to buy from local Harvesters and will not sell to anyone else.
- The review will look at the current policy of only eleven Fauna Dealers.

Item 5: Draft Quota Report for 2014

- The surveys for the Northern Tablelands have been done but the results are not yet available. These figures will be sent to the Panel when they are available.

Action 2: OEH will email to the Panel quota figures from Northern Tablelands once they are available.

- Over all there has been a substantial increase in the population of around 16%. This includes 8% red, 65% Eastern Grey and 116% Western Grey.
- NSWFA posed the question of how accurate the grey count increases were in light of what had happened with the counts in Lower Darling in 2012.
- South Australia has reported a slight decrease in red population which could explain the increase in NSW. Reds are nomadic.
- Qld have reported an increase of around 116% in greys also.
- Explanations could be above average rainfall in the last 3 years. Also observers can only count what they see, so pouch animals are not counted.
- Weights have stayed basically the same.
- There has been a small increase in male biased take.

- There are no issues with density, so no reductions in quotas.
- Industry asked how the review of the Plan will affect 2014.
- Nothing will be changed until the review has been finalised.

Item 6: Updates

Update on TSC Act nomination

- At the last meeting Panel members were given a link to the report on the nomination of kangaroos for listing under the Threatened Species Act, on the basis of significant declines in populations since European settlement.
- This report is currently before the Scientific Division and a decision should be made before the end of November

Action 3: OEH will let the Panel know the Scientific Division's decision as soon as it is available.

Steve McLeod – update on current research

- Trudy Sharp and Steve McLeod have completed their four and half year study into the Welfare of Dependant young, in pouch and at foot. This has been submitted to the RIRDC Steering Committee to read and release.
- Current practices of Euthanasia were looked at and a Trial of a Captive Bolt device done. What happened to orphaned young at foot that were not dealt with; what Harvesters and the General public thought about the welfare of the animals and which devices were acceptable forms of dealing with young in pouch and at foot.
- The research shows that Harvesters are concerned with the welfare of the animals, but euthanising of young at foot was quite low. Full time professional shooters were more likely to follow through. Industry should be encouraging full time shooters as they are more likely to care about the welfare of the animals.
- The public are very concerned about the welfare of the animals and professional shooters were rated higher than amateur shooters. The public also preferred the carcase to be used, not left on the ground as is the case with Non-Commercial shootings.
- Harvesters use various ways of dealing with young still in the pouch.
 - The blunt trauma method is unpleasant to do, but the best technique in concerns of animal welfare. This method is very confronting and the public don't like it, but it is a very good method and shooters apply it well.
 - Some use decapitation. The Code of Practice says a forceful blow to the base of the skull or decapitation with a sharp knife. Animals do not start to feel pain until they have developed fur.
 - Captive Bolt devices were trialled. In two out of three cases this was not effective as the skull was too soft and the animal was only stunned or brain damaged not killed.
- AWMS are still completing their work on survival of dependant young at foot. This will be completed in the next two weeks and submitted in February.
- The study so far shows that most young at foot are not dealt with by the shooter. This could just be that the shooter does not even see the animal or some shooters believe that if the animal is healthy and steady on its feet, that it may survive and they don't like to shoot them.
- Most of these animals will become distressed when they are separated from their mother and their mental state is poor.

- The majority of animals will not survive, but no one has yet done this kind of study on a wild population.
- AWMS are using tracking collars and GPS loggers to look at each individual animal three times per day. These animals are within a month of permanently leaving the pouch.
- Seasonable conditions will be taken into consideration when the results are interpreted.
- The evidence is that most of these animals will die and that all young at foot should be euthanised. Separation causes mortality.

Item 7:Other Business

Harvester's Association – issuing licences for six months

- The Harvester Association has asked if because of the current state of the Industry, licences could be issued for six months starting at the commencement of the new year.
- This is not possible at the moment because of the set-up of the data base, but will definitely be looked at in the Review. This flexibility should be closely looked at in the decision.

Scholarship for projects in Kangaroo Management

- WPSA feels that the Kangaroo Industry needs to be promoted to stop illegal shooting and the misconception of the program.
- They have offered \$1000 toward a scholarship and suggested OEH add another \$1000 to research by Uni Students doing a Master's Degree, into Kangaroo Management in the hope of conserving wildlife.
- KIAA indicated that RIRDC may also have some money available from the levy paid for each carcass by Industry, for new research.
- Until the "Skippy" conception is taken out of the picture, human consumption demand will never pick up.

Update of Commonwealth publication "Kangaroo Harvesting"

- WPSA have asked OEH if the Commonwealth publication "Kangaroo Harvesting" can be updated and reprinted.
- They feel this document could change public perception of kangaroo culling.

Long term impact of Male only culling

- AWMS have indicated that there are unlikely to be any real consequences to a long term Male only cull. It is likely that there will be more animals, rather than less as most females have a joey in the pouch and one at foot.
- Fieldwork to determine this would be expensive and would take a long time.
- OEH have no male/female regulations on gender based shooting.
- There are a number of reasons there is a male biased shoot not just the fact that Macro Meats and Game Meats will not accept female carcasses. These include:
 - More quota
 - Less shooters
 - Maximum shot (male carcasses weigh more than female carcasses)
- OEH have had Gipa act requests from Voiceless for information on male only shoot data.

List of Actions:

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Action 2: OEH will email to the Panel quota figures from Northern Tablelands once they are available

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