

Annual Report

Policy and Procedural Guidelines for the Mitigation of Commercial Crop Damage by Flying-foxes

2009/10 Fruit Growing Season

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

July 2010

1. Introduction

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has a policy in place for the protection of commercial fruit crop damage by flying foxes.

This policy advocates full exclusion netting as the only reliable method for protecting fruit crops, but also makes provision for the issue of licences to commercial growers under s120 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* to harm limited numbers of flying-foxes.

The policy applies to three flying fox species in NSW, the grey-headed flying fox, black flying fox and little red flying fox.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes are listed as a threatened species under Commonwealth and NSW legislation. Licences that permit the harming of flying foxes by shooting are issued in accordance with the now defunct national quota of 3040, which is approximately 0.95% of the minimum population estimate for that species.

Black flying fox and little red flying foxes are listed as protected species in NSW.

Licences issued for all three flying fox species must be implemented in accordance with standard operating procedures to protect the welfare of these animals. These procedures were introduced for the first time this season.

In 2009-2010, the Department introduced an enhanced compliance program for its licensed growers and targeted illegal shooting of flying foxes by unlicensed persons. An analysis of the outcomes of that strategy are provided in this document.

An annual report on licence applications and licences issued has been prepared each year since 2001. This report provides a summary of the 2009-2010 season and includes the distribution and number of licences issued, animals harmed, a brief analysis of trends with previous years and a summary of any compliance actions undertaken by the Department.

2. Licensing Outcomes

The following is a summary of licenses issued and the number bats harmed in 2009-2010.

- Licences were issued to 61 commercial orchardists in NSW.
- The 61 licences plus 19 variations authorised the harm of 1635 threatened grey-headed flying foxes (GHFF), which is approximately 54% of the now defunct NSW quota of 3040 animals.
- An additional 18 black flying foxes and 60 little red flying foxes were licensed to be harmed.
- The majority of licences (23, 38%) were issued by PWG Lower Hawkesbury Area. Parks and Wildlife Group (PWG) Areas in the Sydney basin and surrounds accounted for 72% of all licences issued (Table 1).
- Licences were issued for the first time for grey headed flying fox damage in Orange and the Riverina Highlands.
- The number of licences issued was the highest since 2002-2003 (Figure 1). The number of variations to licences issued was also the highest since records were collated.

- The number of GHFFs actually harmed, estimated from Flying-fox Record Sheets is 1054 animals or 35% of the NSW cull limit.
- The number of GHFF killed is the largest recorded since 2003-2004 (Figure 2).
- An additional 1 black flying fox and 22 little red flying foxes were also harmed.
- Two warning letters were also issued to licensees for non-compliance with licence conditions.
- A debrief of staff who issue licences to harm flying foxes was undertaken in May 2010.

Table 1: Licensing Data for the 2009-2010 Growing Season by DECCW PWG Branch

PWG Branch/Division Name	Region	Area	Number of licences issued	Number of variations issued	Total number GHFF licensed to be harmed	Reported Number GHFF harmed	Number FFRS returned
Coastal	Northern Rivers	Richmond River	1	0	2 + 2BFF + 2LR	0	1
	North Coast	Macleay	3	0	16 + 16BFF	1 + 1BFF	3
	Central Coast Hunter Range	Yango	3	0	150	131	3
	South Coast	Illawarra	3	4	140	123	6
Metropolitan	Metro Nth East	Lower Hawkesbury	23	4	730	440	25
	Metro Sth West	Cumberland Sth	2	0	35	0	2
		Nattai	5	3	180	116	6
	Blue Mountains	Upper Mtns	0	0	-	-	-
		Hawkesbury	8	8	190	111	8
Park Mgmt Division	Southern Ranges	Riverina Highlands	5	0	65	45	
Western	Northern Plains	Dubbo	1	0	40LR	0 + ?LRFF	
	Western Rivers	Macquarie	7	0	127+ 18LR	87 + 22LR	7
TOTALS			61	19	1635 GHFF 18 BFF 60 LRFF 1713	1054 (GHFF) 1 BFF 22 LRFF 1077	

Figure 1: Number of licences issued by DECCW PWG from 2011 to 2010

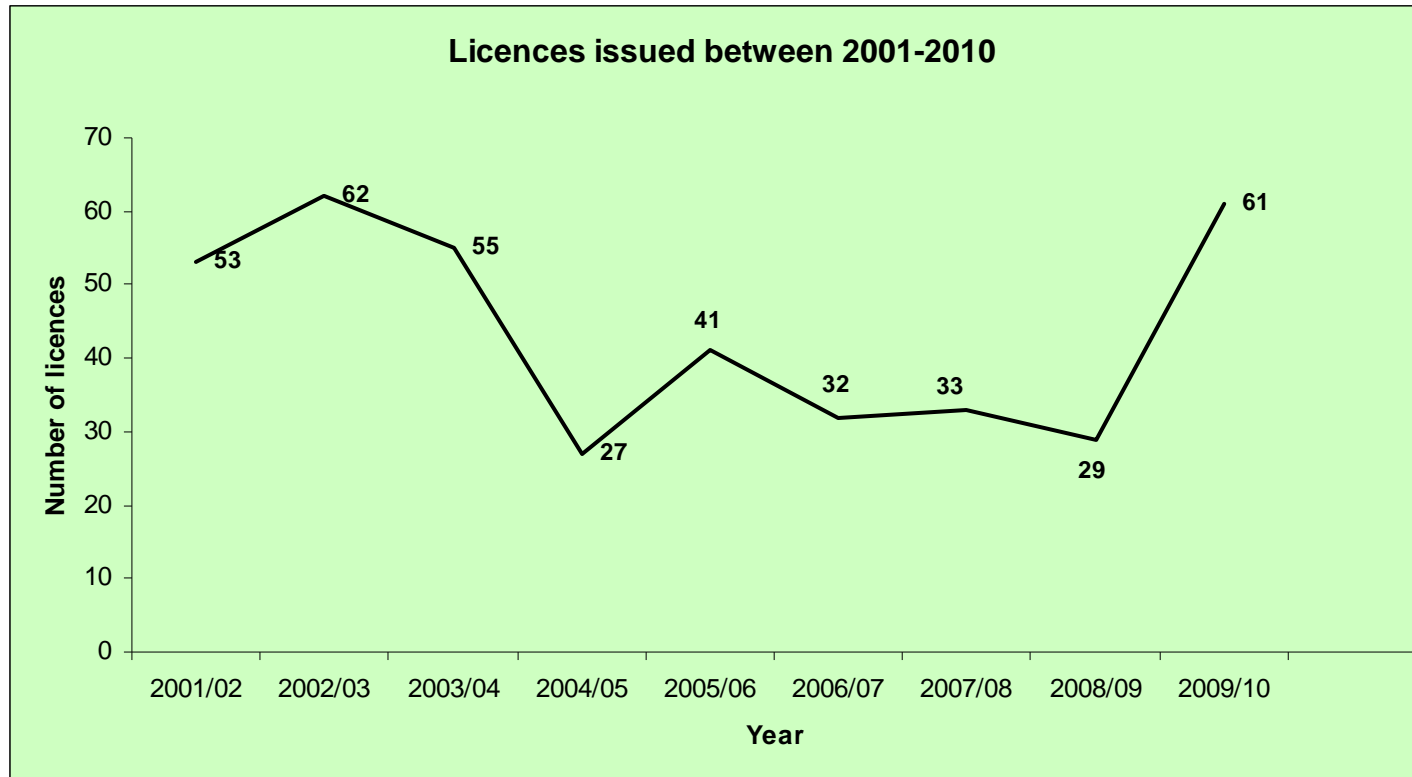


Figure 2: Number of Grey headed flying foxes licensed to be harmed compared with those reported harmed from flying fox return sheets

