



Managing Interactions with Fauna that may Impact on the Community

Service Theme: Off/on Park Ecological Conservation

October 2009

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Introduction

Most people in the community encounter wildlife in their daily lives. The majority of these interactions are positive and provide many opportunities for enjoyment and appreciation of our natural heritage.

Inevitably though some interactions between people and wildlife, specifically fauna species, are not harmonious and may lead to serious conflict which can pose a legitimate threat to life or property or cause economic hardship.

The circumstances underlying these interactions are diverse, spatially and temporally complex in nature and often exacerbated by broad-scale factors such as land clearing and habitat modification, or a lack of awareness and understanding of animal behaviour and ecology.

The community hold a wide range of views and strong beliefs about managing conflict with fauna and has an expectation that the Department will intervene and provide rapid solutions to reported problems.

Landholders and the broader community also have a shared responsibility to coexist with wildlife and plan and manage their properties and commercial enterprises in such a way as to minimise the potential for conflict.

As wildlife custodians, the Department is responsible for the care and protection of fauna, but also has the power under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act) to issue a licence to harm fauna when required.

Parks and Wildlife Group (PWG) officers responsible for responding to calls, have the opportunity to influence and well as to respond to the caller's expectations, as well as giving well informed advice and where possible, effective long term, humane and ecologically sustainable management solutions.

This policy provides the framework for guiding the Department's management of human-fauna interactions in NSW.

Objectives

Establish the principles and overarching framework for managing interactions between humans and fauna.

Scope and application

This policy applies to all protected fauna in NSW that may impact on the community.

Definitions

Fauna: Means any mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian described in the NPW Act.

Protected fauna: Means fauna of a species not named in Schedule 11 of the NPW Act.

Harm: As defined in the NPW Act, includes hunt, shoot, poison, net, snare, spear, pursue, capture, trap, injure or kill, but does not include harm by changing the habitat.

Landholder: Owner or occupier of specified lands.

General licence: A licence issued under s120 of the NPW Act.

Occupier's licence: A licence issued under s121 of the NPW Act to an owner or occupier of specified lands.

Relevant legislation or other mandating instruments

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act)

The NPW Act makes the Director-General of DECCW responsible for the protection and care of fauna in NSW.

Under s121 of the NPW Act, an authorised officer may issue an Occupier's licence authorising an owner or occupier of specified lands to harm, or permit a person holding a General Licence under s120 of the Act, to harm a specified number of fauna found on those lands.

Policy

Management Principles

1. DECCW will manage conflict involving humans and fauna by:
 - Fostering within the broader community a tolerant approach to fauna;
 - Responding to real and demonstrated threats to public safety and property;
 - Promoting landholder responsibility for crop and livelihood protection;
 - Advocating viable non-destructive solutions as the initial, preferred and long term management response;
 - Acknowledging that issuing a licence to harm fauna is a valid management option, when it is considered to be effective at mitigating impact and other options are assessed as not practical or economically viable;

- Ensuring that management decisions are based on the best available information;
- Ensuring that animal welfare is not compromised;
- Ensuring that licenses permitting the destruction of fauna are commensurate with the scale and severity of damage observed and do not impact on the sustainability of fauna populations;
- Supporting the scale and extent of its licensing program within a centralised information management system.

Capacity Building

Developing community attitudes

2. PWG will foster the capacity of the community to manage its interactions with fauna by:
 - Guiding public perceptions and understanding of the behaviour, ecology and biology of fauna species; and
 - Developing and promoting educational resources on humane measures to reduce the risk of injury, property damage or economic loss.
3. PWG will review and update the DECCW website with useful advice, strategies and policy and procedural guidelines on managing interactions with fauna.
4. DECCW will make annual public announcements on recurring seasonal issues involving fauna species.

Developing staff expertise and decision support

5. PWG will give staff the skill and resources to appropriately and adequately respond to requests for assistance by:
 - Providing training in understanding and managing conflicts involving people and fauna;
 - Developing detailed policies and procedures for priority fauna species;
 - Ensuring its policies and procedures provide a framework for how a PWG officer will assess the nature, scale and severity of a problem and also determine and evaluate an appropriate course of action; and
 - Ensuring access to current resource material on strategies for managing negative interactions with fauna and relevant policy and procedural guidelines.

Science and Research

6. PWG will ensure that its advice and policy and procedures are informed by the best available information including current research and an understanding of species biology, ecology and population sustainability.

Animal Welfare

7. A licence will only be issued to harm fauna when there is a known approved method.
8. Unless otherwise instructed, licences to harm fauna will be signed by authorised PWG officers.
9. All licenses issued to a landholder permitting the destruction of fauna will either state on the licence or have attached to the licence the approved method of humane destruction.

Licence Fees

10. It is recommended that a licence to harm fauna for non-commercial purposes be free of charge.

Information Management and Reporting

11. Unless otherwise instructed by the responding PWG officer, all applicants for a licence to harm fauna will complete the application form in Attachment 1.
12. PWG will develop and maintain a single centralised database of licences issued to landholders to harm protected fauna;

Compliance and enforcement

13. DECC will undertake random audits of licence holders to assess compliance with licence conditions.

Media Management

14. When assessing whether to issue a licence to harm certain fauna, PWG officers should consider the potential for negative reactions within sections of the community and make every effort to notify DECCW Public Affairs Branch, if the issuing of the licence is likely to generate media enquiries.
15. All media enquiries must be directed to DECCW Public Affairs Branch.

Stakeholder Involvement

16. DECCW encourages landholders, businesses and Government departments approving investments into new enterprises, to identify and incorporate the potential costs of non destructive damage mitigation from fauna into their land management practices, business plans or development applications.
17. PWG Regions should, where appropriate, develop partnerships with key community stakeholders such as Local Councils, Police, peak industry

bodies and fauna rehabilitation groups to develop strategic solutions to recurring problems involving people and fauna.

Related policies and other documents

Department of Environment and Conservation (2005). Policy and Procedures for the Management of Possums Causing Damage to Residential or Commercial Property. DEC NSW.

Department of Environment Climate Change and Water (2009). Policy and Procedures for Managing Kangaroos that Pose a Threat to Human Safety. DECCW 2009.

National Parks and Wildlife Service (2003). Management of native birds that show aggression to people.

Accountabilities

Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit

Item	Topic
2	Develop educational resources to reduce the risk of injury, property damage or economic loss.
3	Review and update the DECCW website.
5	Develop staff expertise and decision support including policy and procedural guidelines for priority species.
11	Assist with the development of a centralised management information system.

Parks and Wildlife Group Area Manager

Item	Topic
8	Authorise the destruction of fauna.

Authorised PWG officers

Item	Topic
2	Develop community attitudes and promote educational resources.
6	Make informed management decisions.
7, 9	The issuing of a licence to harm fauna does not compromise the welfare of the animal.
10	Disseminate the licence application form.
11	Maintain the centralised licence database.
12	Undertake random audits.

13	Ensure Public Affairs are informed of problem issues.
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DECCW Public Affairs Branch

Item	Topic
4, 14	Make public announcements on fauna issues.

Policy review

The Protected Areas Policy and Programs Branch is responsible for coordinating the review of this policy.

Reviews will be undertaken at least every five years and more frequently if changes in legislation, policies or other areas require the amendment of this policy.

The next scheduled review is due on September 2015.

Contacts for further advice

Manager, Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit (02) 9585-6576.

Attachment 1: S121 Licence Application Form

(see attachment)