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FACTSHEET

Feral Animals and Weeds

Invasive species, such as feral animals and weeds, are one of the most major threats to biodiversity in Australia along with habitat loss and fragmentation. There are many different types of *invasive species* in Australia. In fact 15% of all of our plants come from other countries! Luckily not all of these plants are invasive i.e. become weeds.



What is an invasive species?

An invasive species is a plant or animal that has been introduced from another country and has negative effects on the environment, economy or our health. In Australia we call invasive animals, feral animals and invasive plants, weeds. Not all introduced species are invasive.

Why are invasive species a problem?

Introduced predators prey on native species such as small mammals, birds, frogs, reptiles and insects. Feral herbivores compete with native animals for food and shelter and sometimes overgraze an area which leads to soil erosion and degrades native vegetation. Invasive species also compete with native species for nesting sites, food and shelter, and can spread disease.

Introduced plants cause their own set of problems. Weeds grow much more rapidly than our native plants and displace, out-compete and smother them. In turn, this affects the food, shelter and other resources available for native animals. Weeds can also have an impact on the health of our ecosystems by causing changes in water flow, run-off, nutrient cycles and fire regimes. We help to spread weeds by transporting them accidentally in the tyres of our cars or tread of our boots, by increasing the nutrient levels of our soils with fertiliser providing good habitat for weeds and through inappropriate grazing and fire management.

Controlling feral animals and weeds

A range of methods are used to control feral animals in Australia including baiting, aerial culls and trapping. Weeds are controlled and managed by digging, cutting and spraying.