

# Kimberley Rangelands Biosecurity Association Invasive Species Activity Report

2018/19

## Large Feral Herbivores

The Kimberley Rangelands Biosecurity Association (KRBA) has an annual Large Feral Herbivore culling program that includes feral donkeys, horses and camels with other animals such as water buffalo and pigs targeted when located. The program focusses primarily on donkeys, using the radio telemetry technique with horses and camels culled opportunistically during tracking. Currently there are approximately 90 active collars throughout the region.

There were four runs done in the year, three focussing primarily of donkeys in the North and West Kimberley. There was a further East Kimberley run that focussed on horses along the Great Northern Highway and adjoining land. Results of animals culled on those runs are as follows –

Donkeys	Horses	Camels	Pigs
315	167	nil	38

In addition to the culls six standard collars deployed on new donkeys in over the year and a further four satellite collars were deployed in August of 2018.

The horse cull should be noted as it was focussed on the Great Northern Highway between Warmun and Kununurra targeting wild horses located on Mainroads Reserve. The aim of the cull was twofold, reduce wild horse impact on pastoral activities and increase road safety in between the two towns.

It is recognised by the KRPG that land managers also contribute to controlling feral herbivores with both opportunistic and planned culling programs of their own however no figures of those programs are available.

No aerial shooting operations were carried out over Department of Parks and Wildlife managed land by the KRBA. However Department of Parks and Wildlife did undertake its own management shoot over the Drysdale National Park and the Ord River Regeneration area.

## Wild Dogs

The KRBA runs two aerial baiting programs a year to support the individual ground baiting programs run by pastoral stations. They are usually programed for April and September to avoid rains that will render the baits useless. The programs are coordinated by Animal Pest Management Services (APMS).

The September 2018 program covered 42 leases resulting in the following bait quantities dropped or supplied to pastoralists –

- 53,500 field prepared baits and injected by APMS
- 8,000 dried meat baits supplied by APMS
- 8 litres of 1080 CLC supplied to pastoralists to inject their own baits

The May 2019 program covered 32 leases resulting in the following bait quantities dropped or supplied to pastoralists –

51,100 field prepared baits injected by APMS

7,000 dried meat baits supplied by APMS

4 litres of 1080 CLC supplied to pastoralists to inject their own baits

## **Pigs**

Funding was provided to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) to carry out research on pig movement during both wet and dry seasons in the Kimberley and develop remote operated mobile feeders as a means to control populations. A final report is expected from the project in December 2019.

It was agreed that the RBG would support the North Kimberley LCDC'S application to State NRM to roll out the AWC mobile feeder concept into the North Kimberley.

## **Prickly Acacia**

**Nulla Nulla:** Two control programs were carried out on the 10,578 hectare Nulla Nulla over the 2018/19 wet season. In total 80 plants were controlled a further reduction on the previous year's control program. It's expected that total eradication could be achieved within a decade.

**Gordon Downs:** No survey work was carried out at this location this year.

## **Mesquite**

**Nicholson Station:** Only one control program was carried out in November 2018 on the 5,748 hectare site over the 2018/19 wet season as it was too dry for a follow up run in January 2019. In total of 75 plants were controlled, a significant decrease of plants found compared to the previous year.

**Thangoo/Yeeda:** No control was carried out on Thangoo Station but 52 plants were controlled 10,957hectres on Yeeda Station in December 2018.

## **Rubber vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*)**

Rubber vine control in the Kimberley is split between two regional locations, one in the East Kimberley and the other in the west. Both programs run independently of the other with separate steering groups overseeing the planning and work carried out. The KRBA provides funding to both programs. Other partner organisations also provide funding and in-kind contributions such as personnel to carry out the control and survey work.

**East Kimberley:** Rubber vine has been located at three locations in the East Kimberley – Oombulgurri, the Ord and Bow Rivers upstream of Lake Argyle and Limestone Creek adjacent to the Ord/Bow locations. A total of 11 field trips were carried out over the 2019 dry season covering 743 hectares on those locations, a significant increase on the previous year's program due to new locations found during the survey. A total of 3,471 plants were treated, less than half the number found and treated the previous year. An aerial survey program was undertaken in March 2019 covering 31,658 hectares locating 163 seeders.

**West Kimberley:** The annual helicopter survey with human observers detected 16 vines in the 270 square kilometres infestation area. Aquila Image Search Methodology, detected 7 extra vines missed by the chopper. Once again it is proved, detecting flowering rubber vine with Aquila provides superior detection rates to human observers.

A single 20-day ground control program to remaining Return Sites grid searched a small number of strategic areas. 728 plants, mainly juveniles and young adults controlled. A small number of the Return Sites will need revisits next year to provide confidence they are cleared. It is anticipated that after 2020, little ground work will be required mainly involving some surgical work and following up of the most recent Return Sites and dealing with the few vines possibly found by the annual helicopter mission and Aquila.

### **Gamba grass**

Funding was provided to the gamba grass steering group to carry out an ongoing eradication program on El Questro Station. Control was undertaken between March -June 2019 utilising contractors with EL Questro staff, DPIRP and DBCA assistance. 277 plants were removed this year (down from 3,086 in 2018).

### **Declaration of grader grass and neem**

A submission put to DPIRD requesting that the two weeds, grader grass and neem be declared in the Kimberley was successful.

### **Weed subsidies**

Weed subsidies were paid out to a number of pastoral stations for the control of declared weeds on those properties.

### **Risk Management**

A number of initiatives were undertaken in the 2017/18 financial year to reduce risks associated with the organisation's programs and membership activities, they were –

- Three 1080 injection workshops held for pastoralists to enable them to make their own baits on property.
- Visitor information pamphlets were reprinted and distribution alerting visitors to the region on activities that regularly occur on pastoral properties that they need to be aware of before entering any of those properties.
- The organisation's Risk Management Plan, various policies and the Health Safety and Environment System were all reviewed and alterations made as required

### **Member engagement**

The following engagement strategies were implemented in the 2018/19 financial year –

- Newsletters were sent to members.
- A number of stakeholder meetings were attended by the staff and members of the committee.