



# PestFacts WA

Issue: 17  
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## Diamondback moth and native budworm activity update

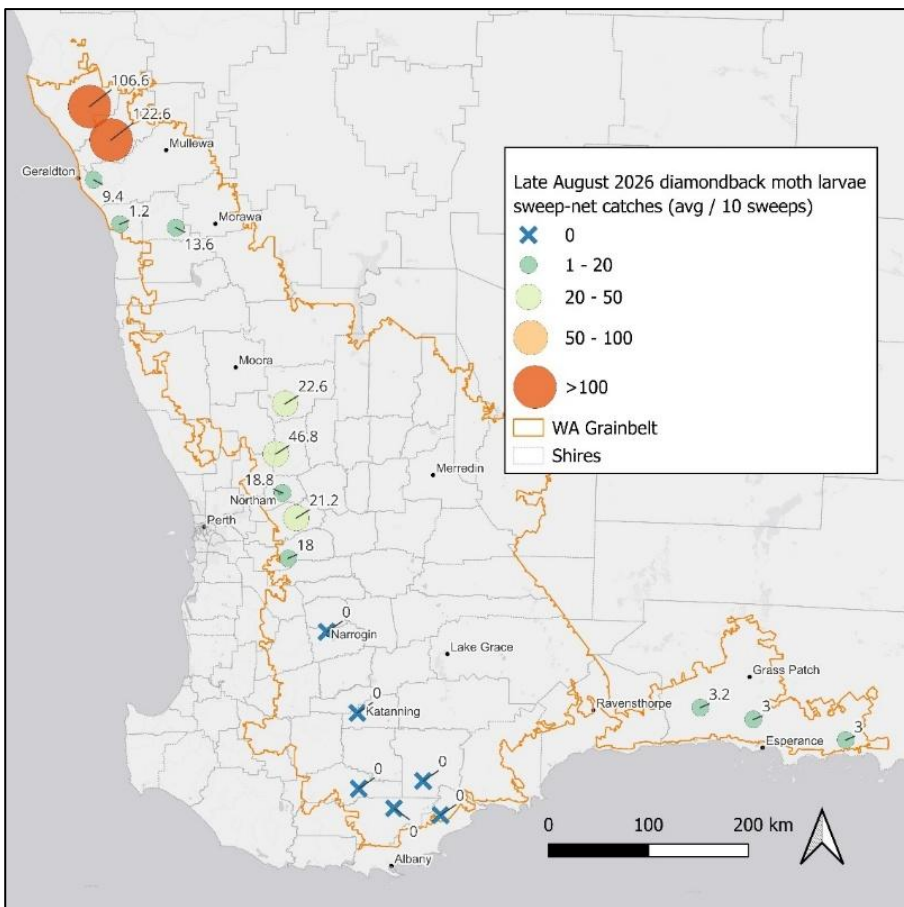
DPIRD's surveillance network has detected high numbers of diamondback moths (DBM) and caterpillars across parts of the grainbelt, with particularly high caterpillar numbers recorded at Ogilvie and Nabawa. High moth trap catches do not necessarily indicate a need for immediate control. Rather, they signal an increased risk of caterpillar activity in coming weeks. Growers should inspect crops regularly and base any spray decisions on caterpillar numbers and established economic thresholds.

While native budworm moth and caterpillar detections remain low in many areas, caterpillars have been reported in some locations and numbers are likely to increase and/or spread in the coming weeks. Growers are encouraged to monitor susceptible crops from flowering through to pod maturity using sweep nets or other monitoring methods.

## Diamondback moth activity

DPIRD's surveillance staff continue to detect diamondback moth (DBM) activity across the grainbelt through their trapping network at 22 sites.

DPIRD staff have recently recorded higher numbers of DBM caterpillars (more than 100 per 10 sweeps) in canola at Ogilvie and Nabawa. For more larvae numbers refer to Figure 1 below.



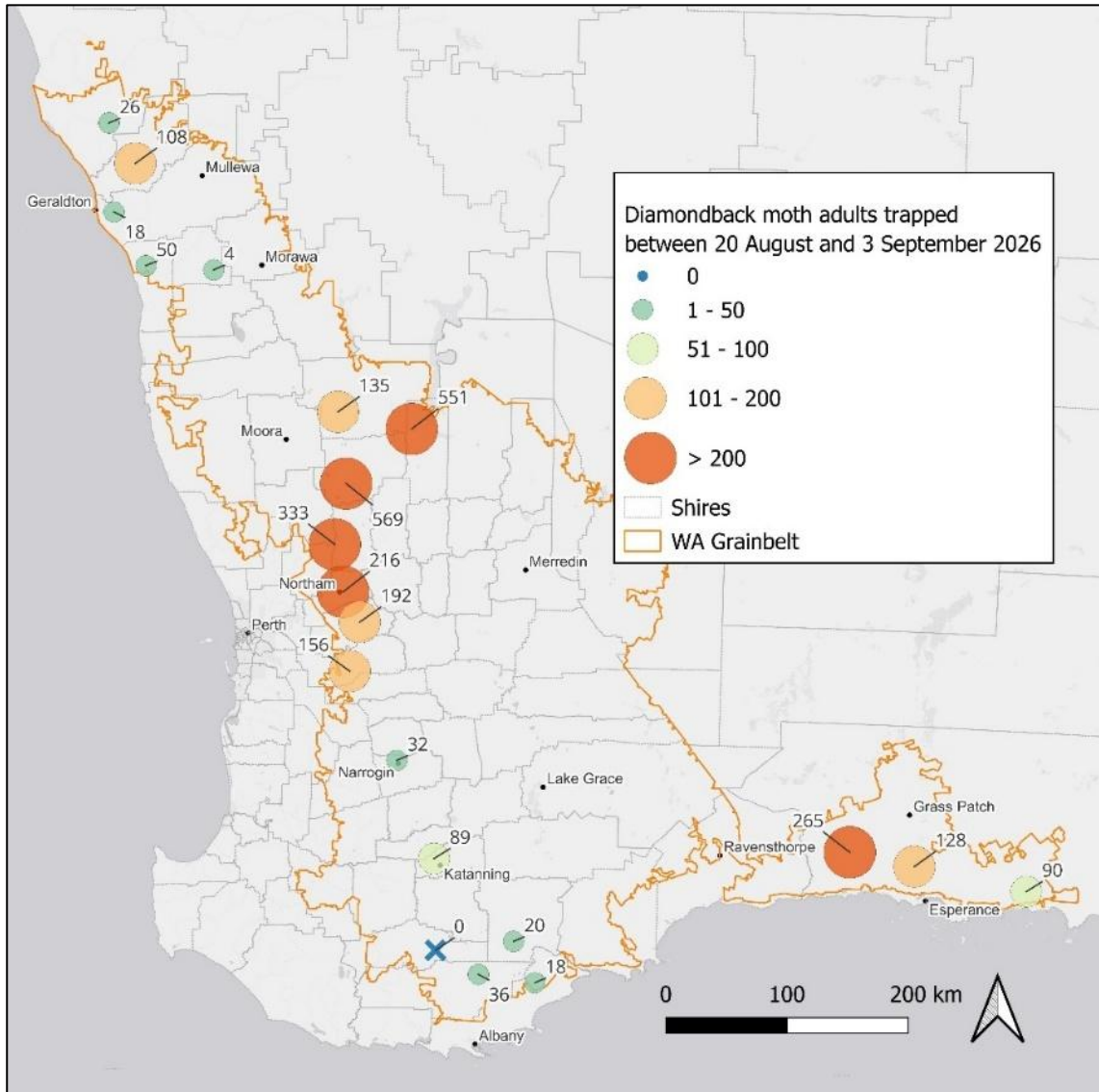
**Figure 1: Diamondback moth larvae sweep net catches (average per 10 sweeps) in canola surrounding the pheromone traps across the WA grainbelt and recorded between 20 August and 3 September 2026.**

The PestFacts WA team has also recently received reports of DBM caterpillars in canola near Geraldton, Mullewa, Latham, Moorine Rock and Salmon Gums.



*Diamondback moth caterpillars that have been sweep netted in canola. Photo courtesy of Sam Stubna (South East Rural Traders).*

The moth numbers shown on the map represent the total number of adult DBM captured during the fortnight between DPIRD's trap inspections. The highest moth captures were recorded at: Wongan Hills (569 moths), Kalannie (551), Bolgart (333) and Cascade (265). Refer to Figure 2 for moth numbers recorded at the other sites.

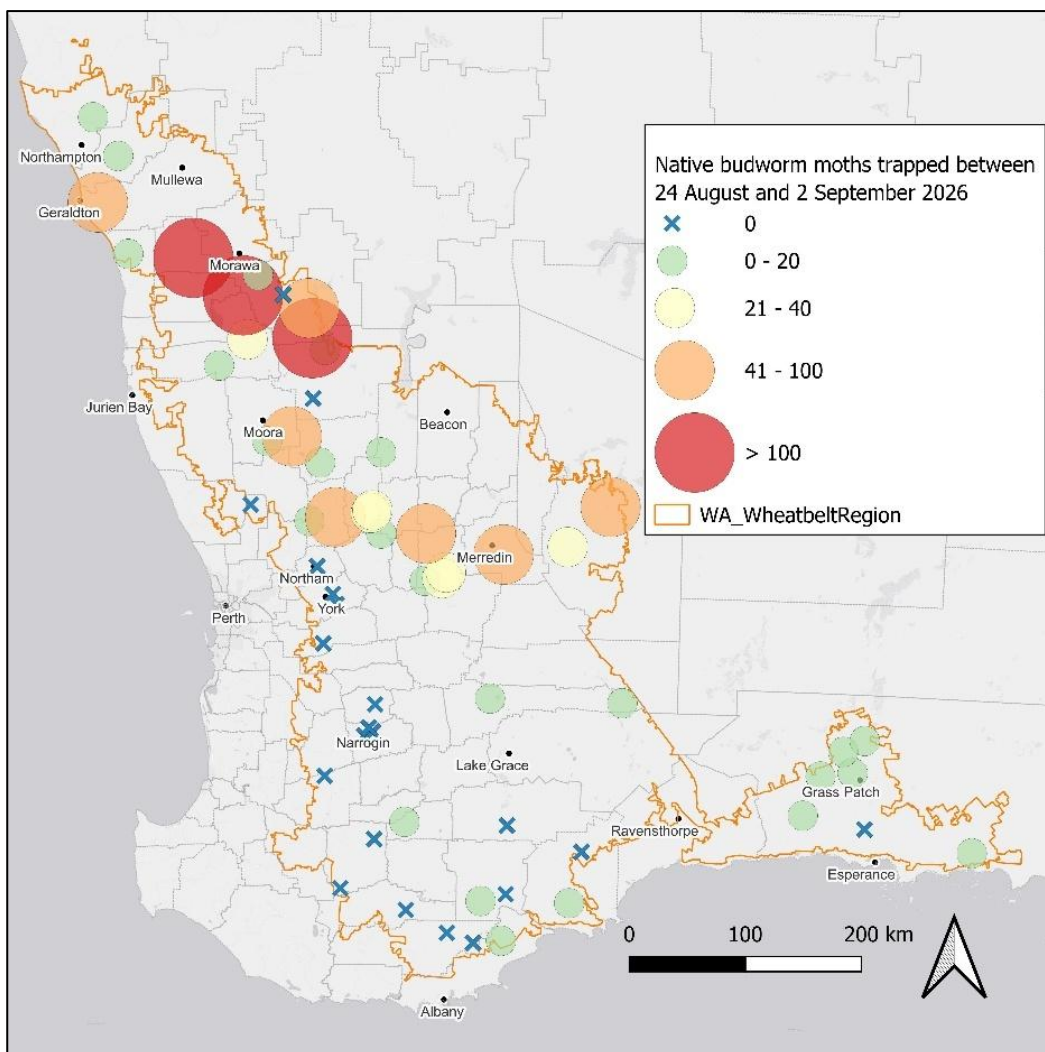


**Figure 2: Diamondback moth numbers captured in pheromone traps across the WA grainbelt and recorded between 20 August and 3 September 2026.**

## Native budworm activity

Low native budworm caterpillar numbers were recorded in canola (3 or less caterpillars averaged per 10 sweeps) at DPIRD's trapping sites at Nabawa, Moonyoonooka and Ogilvie in late August and early September.

The PestFacts WA team has received reports of native budworm caterpillars in canola and lupins near Northampton, Geraldton, Mullewa, Mount Budd, Carnamah (3 larvae per 10 sweeps), Salmon Gums and a lentil crop near Southern Cross (6 larvae per 10 sweeps).



**Figure 3: Native budworm moth numbers captured in pheromone traps across the WA grainbelt and recorded between 24 August and 2 September 2026.**

The highest moth catches recorded by volunteer trappers and DPIRD staff during 24 August and 2 September were for traps located in the northern areas of the Kwinana port zone and in the Geraldton port zone (see Figure 3 above).

You can also view this season's native budworm trap results at the [MothTrapVisWA](#) page and DPIRD's [Native budmoth moth trap results](#) page.

## Management

Growers should continue monitoring canola, lupin and lentil crops for DBM and native budworm caterpillars during spring.

Thresholds for control of DBM caterpillars in canola crops are:

- early to mid-flowering: 50 or more per 10 sweeps
- mid to late-flowering: 100 or more per 10 sweeps
- podding: 200 or more per 10 sweeps.

Growers and agronomists can use DPIRD's MyPestGuide [CropScout app](#) to help determine native budworm spray thresholds in the field. For more information on native budworm spray thresholds, refer to DPIRD's [Native budworm spraying threshold guide](#).

Insecticide options for the control of DBM and native budworm caterpillars can be found in DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

## Further information

### Diamondback moth

For more advice on monitoring and managing DBM activity this season, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA articles in:

Issue 15 [Diamondback moth activity update](#)

Issue 13 [Monitor canola for diamondback moth caterpillars](#)

Issue 7 [Caterpillars are active](#).

For more DBM information, refer to:

DPIRD's [Diamondback moth and its management in canola and crop weeds factsheet](#)

GRDC's [Diamondback moth best practice management guide - southern factsheet](#)

GRDC's [Managing diamondback moth video](#).

### Native budworm

To read about native budworm activity earlier in the season, and how to manage this pest, refer to the 2026 PestFacts WA articles in:

Issue 15 [Native budworm caterpillars detected in northern cropping regions](#)

Issue 12 [Waves of native budworm moth migration detected](#)

Issue 9 [Early native budworm moth flights detected in northern and central regions](#)

Issue 7 [Would you like to host a native budworm moth trap this year?](#)

For more information about the native budworm, and its impact on crops, refer to the department's [Native budworm](#) page.

For more information on these pests, contact Senior Research Scientist [Svetlana Micic](#) in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591 or Principal Research Scientist [Dustin Severtson](#) in Northam on +61 8 9690 2160.

Article authors: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin) & Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

## Aphid management in lupins

Cowpea aphids, bluegreen aphids and green peach aphid are the most common species that attack lupin crops.

Aphids cause damage through both feeding and virus transmission of cucumber mosaic virus or bean yellow mosaic virus. At this time of year, with crops out in flower, virus transmission and impact are not effectively managed with insecticide, however there are management options for aphid feeding damage. Growers are encouraged to regularly check their lupin crops for aphids.

### Identification

Correct identification of aphid species is important.



*Cowpea aphids, adults and nymphs.*

Cowpea aphid adults can grow up to 2 mm long. They are usually easy to identify by their black colour and the dense clusters they form around plant growing points. On close inspection with a magnifying lens, they have distinctive black and white legs.



*Bluegreen aphid adult and nymph.*

The bluegreen aphid (BGA) can measure up to 3 mm long. They are oval-shaped, with long legs and antennae. They have 2 large cornicles that extend beyond the base of the abdomen. Both the winged and wingless forms are a matte bluish-green colour. Nymphs resemble adults but are smaller in size. Large numbers of winged BGA can migrate from pastures into lupin crops later in the growing season. This species can develop into large colonies throughout susceptible lupin crops.



*Green peach aphids on canola.*

Adult green peach aphids (GPAs) grow up to 3 mm long, are oval shaped and may appear shiny pale yellow-green, green, orange or pink. They also have, long antennae and long siphuncles (pipes) on either side at the rear of the body. Winged adults have a distinct black patch on the abdomen under the wings. Nymphs look similar to wingless adults, but smaller in size. They are typically found on the underside of young canola leaves and are often more evenly distributed in the paddock.

## Management

The extent of feeding damage depends on the varietal susceptibility, the growth stage of the crop, the percentage of plants infested and the duration of the infestation.

The spray threshold for aphid control in lupins is when more than 30% of flowering spikes have 30 or more aphids present. Inspect 15 plants in each of 4 different sections of the paddock and examine the youngest inflorescences for clusters of aphids or symptoms such as leaf curling.

In some cases, a perimeter spray may be sufficient rather than a whole paddock treatment, as aphid infestations often begin along the edges of a crop.

Beneficial insects, including parasitoid wasps, ladybird beetles, hoverflies and lacewings, can be effective at reducing aphid numbers during spring. When spraying, consider products that are less harmful to predators. For more information, refer to Cesar Australia's Beneficial's chemical toxicity table page.

Green peach aphids have developed resistance to many insecticides in grain growing regions across Australia. Some BGA populations in South Australia and New South Wales have also developed resistance to organophosphate and carbamate insecticides. If you notice BGA or GPA surviving insecticides applications, you can submit aphid samples to Cesar Australia for insecticide resistance testing. Reimbursements for shipping costs may

also be available for some submissions. For more information on this insecticide resistance testing, contact [Karyn Moore](#) (Cesar Australia) on +61 3 9349 4723.

For a list of insecticides registered for lupin aphid control, see DPIRD's [2026 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

## Further information

For more information, refer to DPIRD's [Managing aphids and viruses in lupins](#) factsheet.

For more information, contact Senior Research scientist [Svetlana Micic](#) in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591

Article authors: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin) and Svetlana Micic (DPIRD Albany).

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