



Wild dog risks to threatened wildlife

Wild dogs prey on a variety of animals including mammals, birds and reptiles of all sizes from insects to water buffalo. However, they prefer to eat small and medium-sized mammals when available, including native mice, dunnarts, bandicoots and wallabies¹.

Wild dogs can present significant risks to populations of many of these species², and the continual influx of domestic dogs into the wild means there is a constant feral population that puts pressure on vulnerable wildlife³.

Wild dogs have been implicated in the decline of several species, both historically and in the recent past. For example, dingoes may have been responsible for the mainland extinction of the thylacine (Tasmanian tiger)¹, as well as the decline of brushtail possums⁴ and other marsupials⁵ in the arid zone over the last 200 years.

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Predation by wild dogs was recently listed as a Key Threatening Process for threatened species, populations and communities in New South Wales³ and is a known or potential threat to a variety of other native species elsewhere.

There are presently 14 national-level recovery plans that identify wild dogs as a known or potential threat to some native mammal, bird and reptile species (Table 1). These species are all listed under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*⁶.



Image: Ben Allen

The recovery plans set out research and management actions that aim to stop the threatened species' decline and maximise their long-term survival in the wild. Several other plans are being prepared for the recovery of threatened species that would be potentially susceptible to predation by wild dogs should they re-establish in the places where these native species live.

Because the impact of wild dogs on populations of threatened species can be severe, the risk to all wildlife (threatened or otherwise) should be considered in regional wild dog management plans.



Table 1. Currently listed native species potentially or known to be threatened by wild dog predation⁶

Species type	Common name	Scientific name	Adult weight (kg)
mammal	marsupial moles	<i>Notoryctes typhlops</i> , <i>N. caurinus</i>	0.07
mammal	smoky mouse	<i>Pseudomys fumeus</i>	0.09
bird	black-breasted button-quail	<i>Turnix melanogaster</i>	0.1
mammal	golden bandicoot	<i>Isodon auratus</i>	0.7
mammal	northern quoll	<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	1.2
mammal	greater bilby	<i>Macrotis lagotis</i>	2.5
mammal	long-footed potoroo	<i>Potorous longipes</i>	2.5
bird	malleefowl	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	2.5
mammal	bridled nailtail wallaby	<i>Onychogalea fraenata</i>	8.0
mammal	Proserpine rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale persephone</i>	8.8
mammal	koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	12
mammal	northern hairy-nosed wombat	<i>Lasiorhinus krefftii</i>	31
bird	southern cassowary	<i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i>	60
reptile	marine turtles	various	-

More information

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3. Major R (2009). *Predation and Hybridisation by Feral Dogs (Canis lupus familiaris) - Key Threatening Process Listing*. New South Wales Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, Sydney.
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5. Allen BL (2011). A comment on the distribution of historical and contemporary livestock grazing across Australia: Implications for using dingoes for biodiversity conservation. *Ecological Management and Restoration* 12:26-30.
6. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Australian Government. www.environment.gov.au/epbc/



Bridled nailtail wallaby. Image: Peter Fleming

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