

Vertebrate Pest Research

The Vertebrate Pest Research Unit (VPRU) undertakes research which addresses industry priorities in relation to vertebrate pest management and, increasingly, the management of environmental pests. The aim is to improve agricultural production and enhance conservation values through the reduced impact of vertebrate pests.

The unit's applied research has direct relevance to the agricultural community in particular. It services the needs of all land managers, be they graziers, farmers, foresters, national parks rangers or personnel of other agencies such as Local Land Services.

Key research

Research centres on the scientific application of best practice management methods for pest animal problems. Our work involves using the highest standards of scientific research methods to provide reliable and information based advice. The VPRU staff specialise in a range of fields such as:

- improved integrated management strategies for wild dogs, foxes, feral cats and deer
- rabbit biocontrol
- development of new survey methods for counting and analysing wildlife abundance
- development and refinement of animal welfare best practice for the control of pest animals
- aerial survey techniques and training
- quantifying non-target impacts of pest management
- calculation of sustainable harvest rates for kangaroos and waterfowl
- citizen science and mapping
- application of social psychology to understand the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the stakeholders to the management of pest animals.

Research staff

To know about the research team, please use the links below to view their current projects and publications:

- [Andrew Bengsen](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/andrew-bengsen) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/andrew-bengsen>).
- [Andrew Claridge](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/andrew-claridge) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/andrew-claridge>).
- [David Forsyth](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/david-forsyth) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/david-forsyth>).
- [Guy Ballard](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/guy-ballard) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/guy-ballard>).
- [Jessica Todd](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/jessica-todd) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/jessica-todd>).
- [Paul Meek](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/paul-meek) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/paul-meek>).
- [Peter Fleming](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/peter-fleming) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/peter-fleming>).
- [Peter West](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/peter-west) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/peter-west>).
- [Sebastien Comte](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/sebastien-comte) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/sebastien-comte>).
- [Shannon Dundas](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/shannon-dundas) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/shannon-dundas>).
- [Steven McLeod](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/steve-mcleod) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/steve-mcleod>).
- [Tarnya Cox](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/tarnya-cox) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/tarnya-cox>).
- [Trudy Sharp](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/trudy-sharp2) (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/staff/profiles/trudy-sharp2>).

Key research collaborations

R&D (research and development) funders and providers: NSW Environmental Trust; Centre for Invasive Species Solutions; Commonwealth Department of Agriculture; NSW Planning, Industry and Environment (including Local Land Services; the Game Licensing Unit; Saving our Species and National Parks and Wildlife Service); and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Universities: University of New England; University of Canberra; University of New South Wales; University of Wollongong; University of Queensland; University of Southern Queensland; and James Cook University.

International: University of York, UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Landcare Research NZ and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service US Department of Agriculture.

Centre for Invasive Species Solutions

Our department is a member of the [Centre for Invasive Species Solutions](https://invasives.com.au/). (<https://invasives.com.au/>).

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