

Dog aware fact



Dogs and wildlife

Predation is a natural process that affects wildlife in different ways. For example, predation by wild dogs may affect the survival of remnant populations of endangered fauna, but is less likely to threaten populations of more abundant natives and introduced species such as pigs.

Dogs in settled areas

Wild dogs include dingoes, feral dogs and their hybrids. Uncontrolled domestic dogs that irresponsible owners allow to roam free also act like wild dogs. In settled areas, all these dogs put added pressure on wildlife populations that are already suffering from the loss of habitat and the effect of road traffic. As there is easy access to food in these areas, scavenging enables dog populations to be maintained at higher than natural levels, increasing pressure on wildlife and domestic stock.

Every year in Queensland, wild dogs and uncontrolled domestic dogs kill and injure large numbers of native animals. Ground-dwellers, such as wallabies and bandicoots, and tree-dwellers such as koalas and possums that cross open ground on foot are particularly vulnerable to dog attacks. Large reptiles, for example bearded dragons and blue tongue lizards, and ground-nesting birds such as coucals, curlews and swans are also vulnerable. Dogs also chase many animals, especially wallabies and koalas, into the path of oncoming road traffic causing widespread injury and death.

If you are dog aware:

You know that wild dogs and uncontrolled domestic dogs are a serious threat to native wildlife.

Dog control

As the supply of problem dogs is constantly replenished by dumping and neglect, it is challenging to manage wild dogs, and the problem is exacerbated by roaming domestic dogs in settled areas. Restrictions on the use of firearms and on baiting also make control difficult in these areas.

As well as controlling the dogs, it is vital to address the underlying cause of the problem. This involves raising community awareness of the effect of these dogs on wildlife and encouraging responsible dog ownership. Domestic dogs should not be allowed to roam, either during the day or night. Unwanted dogs should never be dumped in bushland or in rural areas, but should be given to the RSPCA or destroyed humanely.

What you can do

- Keep food scraps and compost heaps out of the reach of wild or straying dogs. The wildlife in your area will be at less risk if dogs are not encouraged to scavenge nearby.
- Keep your own dog under control at all times—at home, when on a walk, or when in a vehicle. Domestic dogs injured or lost when chasing wildlife may become part of the wild dog problem.
- Closely restrain female dogs on heat to avoid attracting wild or straying dogs and to help reduce the number of unwanted dogs.

- Report sightings of wild dogs and uncontrolled domestic dogs to your local council and encourage your neighbours to act responsibly.
- Report any injuries to wildlife to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, so that the animals can be cared for. This information will also help to identify problem areas where control measures and education campaigns can be implemented.

If you are dog aware:

You know that there are steps you can take to lessen the effects of wild and free-roaming dogs on wildlife.