

Kimberley Rangelands Biosecurity Association Invasive Species Activity Report

2014/15

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 135 active collars throughout the region.

In 2014/15 there were a total of eight runs in the West Kimberley, North Kimberley, and the Halls Creek areas. Results of animals culled on those runs are as follows –

- Donkeys – 644
- Horses – 488
- Camels – 82
- Pigs - 34

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.

Surveillance and control of the 6 geographic areas identified as gaps in April 2014 (Dampier Peninsula, Nookanbah/Mt Anderson, Drysdale Station, Oombulgurri, Woodhouse River and Kurunjie) was also carried out.

Wild Dogs

The KRBA runs two aerial baiting programs a year to support the individual ground baiting programs run by individual pastoral stations. They are usually programed for April and October to avoid the wet season. In 2014/15 both runs dropped baits on 23 pastoral stations across the Kimberley.

Prickly Acacia

Two control programs were carried out on the 10,578 hectare Nulla Nulla site in

partnership with Ord Land and Water over the 2014/15 wet season. In total 353 plants were controlled. Plant population now stands at only 3% of that it was in 2010.

Mesquite

Nicholson Station: Two control programs were carried out on the 10,754 hectare site in partnership with Ord Land and Water over the 2014/15 wet season. In total 1,569 plants were controlled. Plant population now stands at only 30% of that it was in 2012.

Thangoo station: A systematic aerial survey will be carried out in the later part of 2015 when flowering plants will make identification easier.

Jubilee Downs: A control program will be undertaken in November of 2015.

Rubber vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*)

Rubber vine control in the Kimberley is split between two regional locations, one in the east and the other in the west. Both programs run independently of each other with separate steering groups overseeing the planning and work carried out. The KRBA provides funding to both programs whilst other partner organisations 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 situated on the Forrest River, the Ord and Bow Rivers upstream of Lake Argyle and Limestone Creek adjacent to the Ord/Bow locations. A total of 15 field trips were carried out over the 2015 dry season covering 688 hectares, this was a 46% increase in country walked over on the previous year. A total of 6,957 plants treated, a 65% decrease on plants treated in 2014.

An aerial survey program was undertaken in March 2015 covering 34,133, this survey was more extensive than previous surveys as it focussed on potential locations seed could have been deposited after the 2010/11 wet season flooding that saw Lake Argyle expand its water reserves to just over 200%

West Kimberley: An aerial surveillance program covering 30,000 hectares over 12 days was undertaken to identify the locations of the plants with 61 detected a reduction of 30% on 2014. Digital images were captured during the survey for use in the Aquila project that utilises volunteers to scan the recorded images for signs of rubber vine. The results indicate rapid decline in populations in 139 active return sites with eradication a realistic target for the program.

Weed subsidies

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