

Public Administration Committee

From: Mike Wood
Sent: Friday, 28 March 2014 3:09 PM
To: Public Administration Committee
Subject: Submission: Inquiry into the potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems

To whom it may concern,

I support the introduction of recreational hunting for the control of feral pest animals in Western Australia.

In my experience as an environmental scientist having worked in some very remote areas of Western Australia I have seen firsthand the destruction caused by feral cats, foxes, wild dogs (not dingos), goats, donkeys and camels. Even in the remote areas of the Great Sandy Desert I have personally witnessed feral foxes and dogs. Some of the State Parks and areas of Crown Land that do not come under pastoral lease or private land holdings have very little if any feral animal control measures. The main reason I have taken up recreational shooting of feral animals on private land is due to the incredibly destructive effects of feral animals that I have witnessed in this state. As well as seeing firsthand the destruction caused by feral animals I have also been fortunate enough to have been involved in some very successful feral animal hunting activities on private properties. I hope to be able to extend these hunting activities on to Crown Land so that they can be even more effective.

I do not believe that any of the reasons for preventing recreational hunting in Western Australia are unmanageable. Risks can be mitigated and the dangers involved are no greater than the dangers associated with other government regulated recreational activities such as boating and fishing.

Having recently returned from Canada where there is a very well established hunting industry. I believe that Western Australia is more than capable of introducing an industry best practice system here.

This would be beneficial to Western Australia because as well as contributing to the management of feral animals it would allow for more controlled access for law abiding hunters.

As it currently stands, I as well as many of my friends only hunt feral animals on private properties. To me this poses several problems:

1. We cannot access the habitats that are most vulnerable to feral animals (outside of private lands).
2. Feral animals often live outside of private land holdings and can only be shot once they enter private lands.
3. There is an equity issue for people interested in hunting feral animals. Unless you own a large private landholding or know someone who gives you permission to shoot on their property there is no avenue for the general public to undertake the legitimate activity of hunting.

The fact that hunting is only allowed on private property in Western Australia discriminates against those who do not have access to large private land holdings. Given that Western Australia is one of the largest states in the world being around the size of Western Europe I truly believe that there is ample scope to allow for a well-managed hunting system, similar to our recreational fishing or hunting arrangements found around the western world (Canada, New Zealand, USA, The state of Victoria, many European Jurisdictions etc).

Please give this a serious consideration, I am a conservationist and a hunter, I was taught to hunt ethically by my father as he was taught by his in Western Australia.

Regards,

Michael Wood