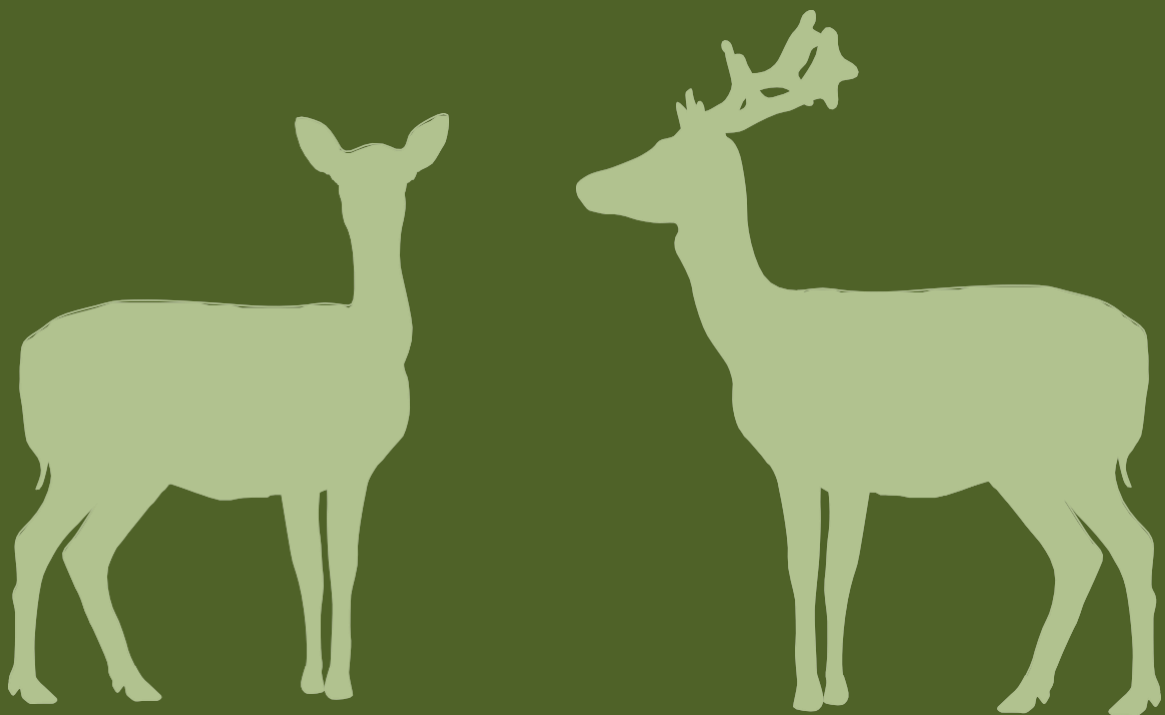


# Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer

## Implementation Strategy Progress Report 2025



*The Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
Tasmania acknowledges and pays respect to Tasmanian  
Aboriginal people as the traditional and original owners  
and continuing custodians of this land and acknowledges  
Elders past and present.*



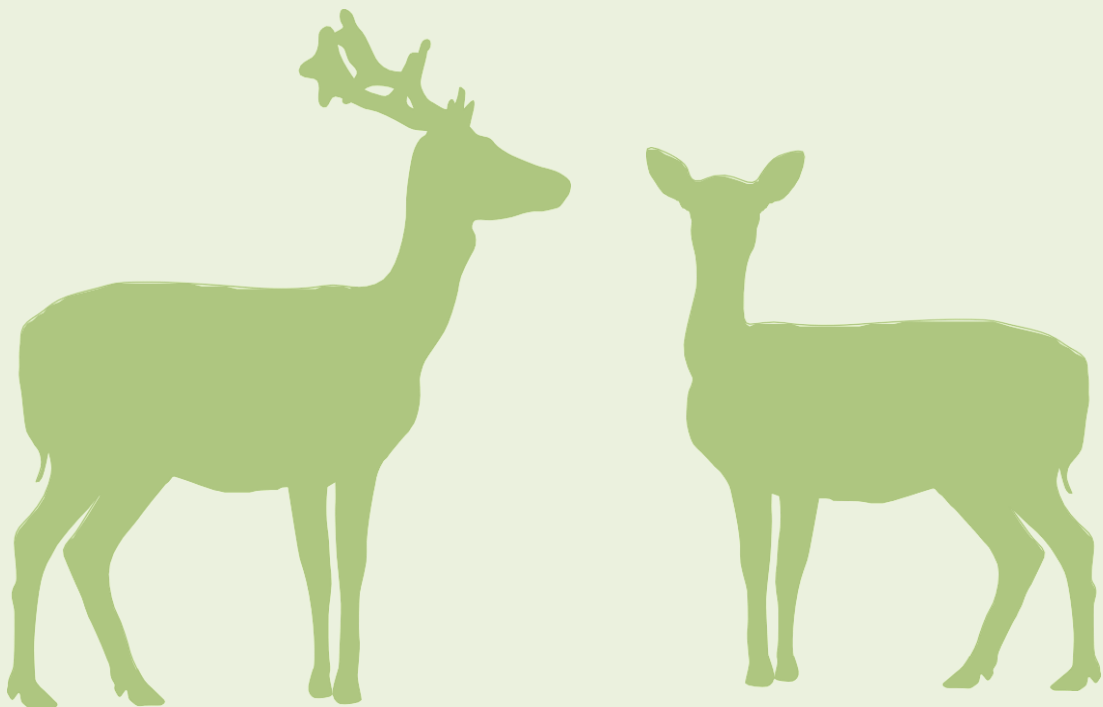
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# Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan

The Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan 2022-27 (the Management Plan) was released in February 2022.

The Management Plan recognises the social, economic and environmental facets of deer presence and aims to achieve a balanced approach to deer management, recognising the desire to maintain the deer population to support recreational hunting whilst giving land holders the flexibility to manage deer on their land to minimise impact.



# Goals

To achieve a balanced approach to managing wild fallow deer, high-level goals are set out in two key areas:

## **1. Social, Economic and Environmental Goals**

- Provide increased options to farmers and land managers to effectively control the impacts of deer on their activities.
- Continue to provide for responsible recreational deer hunting as a legitimate and valued activity in Tasmania.
- Reduce public safety risks from deer.
- Reduce the risks to the natural and cultural values of Tasmania's conservation reserve estate and other public and private lands.
- Protect Tasmania's biosecurity by reducing the risks of deer as a potential disease vector.

## **2. Deer Population Goals**

- Avoid further potential spread of deer.
- Reduce the abundance and geographic range of deer with a particular focus on areas outside the traditional range.
- Support property-level management of deer to minimise economic and environmental impacts whilst providing for sustainable hunting in selected zones.

# Objectives

The Plan established four contemporary management objectives to manage the commercial, environmental and public safety impacts associated with deer populations in Tasmania.

## **Management Objective 1:**

Effectively manage the impacts of wild fallow deer throughout the state whilst maintaining a traditional and sustainable hunting resource.

## **Management Objective 2:**

Empower farmers, foresters, and other land managers to directly manage deer and to work collaboratively with hunters to achieve tailored deer management objectives.

## **Management Objective 3:**

Continue to provide evidence-based deer management.

## **Management Objective 4:**

Improve community involvement, education, and awareness of deer management.

# Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Implementation Strategy

The *Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Implementation Strategy 2022-2027* (the Implementation Strategy) establishes a five-year work program to progress the four management objectives outlined in the Plan. The Implementation Strategy identifies key deliverables to be completed by lead organisations and partners.

This report highlights the progress made against the Strategy between the last Annual Progress Report (31 October 2024) and 31 October 2025.

The Tasmanian Government has dedicated an additional \$2.25 million in the 2025-26 State Budget to continue implementation of the Management Plan.



# New Initiatives

Since the Implementation Strategy, the Government has announced new initiatives to support the Management Plan.

Progress on these initiatives is summarised below.

Initiative	How it's being met
<p><b>1. Streamline Zone 1 permits for the eradication of deer under the Deer Management Plan.</b></p>	
<p>Streamlining permits in Zone 1 to remove red tape and make it easier for farmers to manage deer on private land.</p>	<p>Public consultation is scheduled for the 2025 (Annual) Deer Plan Policy Review (the 2025 Review). The 2025 Review will propose some practical options to simplify permits (Property Protection Permits – PPP and Special Purposes Wildlife Permits – SPWP) across all zones, giving landholders a straight-forward management option.</p> <p>Feedback will also be sought on other complementary measures to support recreational hunters to increase their take and value from hunting licences.</p>
<p><b>2. Zone 3 is a complete eradication zone.</b></p>	
<p>The Deer Management Plan already allows for the eradication of deer in zones 2 and 3, which is subject to the landowner's choice.</p>	<p>Deer in Zone 3 can already be taken under Property Protection Permits (PPPs) and Special Purposes Wildlife Permits (SPWPs) for all classes, 365 days a year, at night with the use of detection devices, and from a conveyance. The 2025 Review will confirm Zone 3 as an eradication zone by consulting on a number of complementary red tape reduction measures, with the aim to further simplify and encourage deer take consistent with the Management Plan objective of 'no deer'.</p>
<p><b>3. Put in place a new Farm Assist Program to connect farmers with recreational shooters, so they can help participate in the eradication effort</b></p>	
<p>Farm Assist Program connecting farmers and hunters to control deer.</p>	<p>The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) is working with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA), the Australian Deer Association (ADA) and TasFarmers to develop a potential project that promotes and helps facilitate greater uptake of the SSAA's national farm access scheme in Tasmania.</p>

<b>4. Progress work with key stakeholders to unlock more public or private land for recreational hunting to manage deer and improve access management tools.</b>	
Increase access to public land for recreational hunting and control programs and ongoing management on Crown land, as well as continue to manage in peri-urban areas.	GST and the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) are collaborating with TDAC to identify potential additional reserves for recreational deer hunting. Access could then be facilitated through the annual male deer ballot and antlerless deer booking system. In 2025, nine reserves were opened for hunting, granting access to 421 hunting parties. Expansion planning continues.
<b>5. Develop the next deer plan, based on new survey data and input from farmers and key stakeholders.</b>	
This would be undertaken in 2027 before the current 5-year plan expires.	Following release of the 2024 Deer Survey results in September 2025, the review of the current Management Plan will be brought forward to commence in July 2026 and a new plan released before the current Plan expires in 2027.  This enables the 2025 Policy Review into streamlining permits and Commercial Wild-Shot Deer Trial to be completed and inform the development of the new Plan.
<b>6. Continue the trial of commercial use of wild fallow deer for human consumption, with the outcome to be consulted after 100 days of forming government.</b>	
Continued trial of commercial use of wild fallow deer for human consumption, consulting with stakeholders on the outcome of the trial within 250 days of forming government.	The Commercial Wild-Shot Deer Trial was extended through to April 2026. Food-safety validation is complete, and a second-stage socio-economic evaluation is underway, along with a potential market analysis. A discussion paper on all the outcomes of the trial will be released in early 2026 prior to the Government making a final decision on future commercial use.

# Key Achievements to Date

- Implementation of Tasmania's deer management zoning system through LISTmap, and maintenance of a comprehensive permit regime comprising more than 800 active PPPs and 150 SPWPs.
- Regulation of deer farming under the Nature Conservation (Deer Farming) Regulations 2022.
- Completion of three aerial-based control operations within the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and adjacent Central Plateau Conservation Area. Operations were assisted by the ground-based volunteer shooter program, consisting of 24 shooters. The Program removed a total of 1,340 deer over 54 operational days across 110,000 ha.
- Deployment of a dedicated Peri-Urban Deer Control Team trialing deer control techniques and partnering with stakeholders in five Local Government Areas.
- Conducted and publicly released the 2024 statewide aerial deer survey (over 25,000 km<sup>2</sup> including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area), expanding the footprint from 2019, to refine estimates of deer abundance and distribution.
- Advancement of the commercial wild-shot deer trial (commenced in April 2023) including evaluation of food safety, market and regulatory implications.
- A total of 81 Property-Based Wildlife Management Plans (PBWMP) have been implemented in Zone 1 since 2023. There are currently a further 12 PBWMPs under development. An area of 261,762 hectares is protected under active SPWPs in 2024-25.
- Broad stakeholder engagement and community awareness activities undertaken by NRE Tas, GST and PWS. Key activities included presence at Agfest, peri-urban project outreach to landholders and property-based wildlife management plans, to raise awareness of deer management, the control program in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) and permit reforms.
- Continuation of home-based game meat processing training, with ongoing participation, to support safe and sustainable use of harvested deer. In 2025, there were 33 participants, bringing the total to 197 participants since 2023.

## Headline Actions

The table below lists progress against Strategy actions and Plan management objectives during the reporting period. Further information, including previous reports, can be found here:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/game-services-tasmania/wild-fallow-deer-management-plan>

### Management objective 1 progress

*Effectively manage the impacts of wild fallow deer throughout the state whilst maintaining a traditional and sustainable hunting resource.*

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
1. Establish three distinct deer management zones	1.1 Develop and implement deer management zone map	Complete	Public access to deer management zone information has been enhanced through the release of a dedicated LISTmap layer. This interactive tool provides clear visibility of deer management zones across Tasmania at a property level, supporting greater awareness and understanding of where and how deer control activities can occur.
	1.2 Raise awareness of deer management zones	Complete	Permit information for each zone, along with guidance on application processes and broader deer management resources, is also accessible via the NRE Tas website. These improvements aim to support responsible hunting, improve transparency, and strengthen community engagement in deer management efforts.
2. Undertake research trials to improve the efficiency of existing deer management and investigate new management tools or control methods, ensuring consideration of animal welfare	2.1 Identify research priorities by identifying knowledge gaps	Ongoing	The Peri-urban Program as a pilot project has been identifying and addressing knowledge gaps through the testing and development of effective control methods. The project tests thermal technologies and trapping systems helping NRE Tas gain a better understanding of deer movements and behavior.

**Management objective 1 continued**

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
	2.2 Evaluate aerial and ground- based deer management tools	Complete & Ongoing	Pre and post operation monitoring has been completed each year as part of the TWWHA aerial culling operation. The final monitoring report will be released once finalised.
	2.3 Trials established for emerging and innovative options for management of deer	In progress	<p>Thermal Assisted Aerial Culling (TAAC), ground shooting and trapping are the primary innovative options utilised to reduce the impacts of wild fallow deer. PWS is currently drafting a Wild Fallow Deer Shooting Operational Procedure.</p> <p>PWS has been working closely with the National Feral Deer Coordinator to trial new technologies for deer control. This includes the use of aggregators to attract deer to desirable locations for more effective ground shooting at safe and reliable locations. AI feeders are currently being developed, and these may replace the aggregators, if deemed suitable.</p>

**Management objective 1 continued**

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
	<p>2.4 Work with other states research and extension organisations to share knowledge about deer management and control, improve practices and co-invest in research and development</p>	<p>Complete &amp; Ongoing</p>	<p>Partnerships and collaboration continue at the national level to support effective deer management and control. NRE Tas representatives are actively involved in key national forums, including the National Feral Deer Action Plan Steering Committee, the Terrestrial Vertebrate Pests Working Group, and the Environment and Invasives Committee through the annual pest metrics survey.</p> <p>NRE Tas participate in the Trans-Tasman Deer Forum with representation from all jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand. This Forum provides an opportunity for learning about the work that is occurring in other parts of Australia and the successes (or otherwise) of new innovations and technologies.</p> <p>In November 2024, the National Deer Coordination Team facilitated two workshops in Tasmania, one with a focus on strengthening inter agency relationships and opportunities for landscape deer control and the second day, a community focused workshop looking at the impacts and opportunities for deer control on public land or within the peri-urban setting.</p> <p>PWS coordinated an on-country site visit with the National Feral Deer Coordinator and a member of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community to look at the impacts of deer on the environmental and cultural landscapes near Great Lake, in particular the Miena Cider Gum.</p> <p>Ongoing information sharing and learnings are helping to improve approaches to monitoring and control, particularly in peri-urban environments and in refining deer management techniques.</p>

### **Management objective 1 continued**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress Statement</b>
3. Eradication of deer from World Heritage areas and National Parks	3.1 Implement pilot program for aerial shooting in Walls of Jerusalem National Park (WoJNP)	Complete	<p>In 2025, the Tasmanian Government funded a third aerial operation to continue building on the gains achieved in 2023 and 2024. This aerial culling operation focused predominantly on the eastern most section of the project area within the Central Plateau Conservation Area. 323 deer were humanely destroyed within the project area. The 323 deer consisted of 114 stags, 198 antlerless deer and 11 immature deer.</p> <p>Over the three years of the program 1,340 deer have been removed over a total of 54 days.</p>
	3.2 Implement a pilot partnership with hunting organisations for ground shooting associated with the program to control deer in Walls of Jerusalem National Park	Complete	<p>The 2024-25 aerial control program was supported by a volunteer ground shooting program. 16 volunteer ground-shooters supported the aerial cull.</p> <p>The volunteer program involved members from the ADA and the SSAA. Also in 2025, ten volunteers successfully completed required training for participation in future programs.</p>
	3.3 If required develop a standard deer management plan for Tasmanian world heritage areas and national parks	Complete & Ongoing	<p>A total of 1340 wild fallow deer were removed from the WoJNP and Central Plateau Conservation Area, over the three years of the project, by way of thermal-assisted aerial culling and volunteer ground shooting. Pre and post monitoring occurs for each cull with post cull monitoring in August indicating the project has been successful in the removal of deer from the WoJNP.</p> <p>Sentinel cameras have now been placed within deer movement corridors inside the project area. These cameras are designed to detect the movement of deer before they reach the WoJNP. This monitoring will inform planning and operations for deer control programs for future years including a standard deer management plan.</p> <p>Under the Plan, wild fallow deer management in the TWWHA and other Zone 3 areas aims to eradicate deer.</p>

### **Management objective 1 continued**

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
	3.4 Support opportunities to increase the involvement of recreational hunters in control programs on public land	Complete & Ongoing	Multiple volunteer shooters have now been trained and continue to actively participate in the volunteer shooting program within the TWWHA. Work is progressing on the development of a dedicated web portal to support recreational hunting on public land. The portal will facilitate a streamlined public hunting application process providing resources and guidance to hunters.
4. Eradication of deer from peri-urban areas	4.1 Using monitoring to develop an understanding of peri-urban deer populations	Ongoing	The Peri-urban is a pilot project that undertakes testing and development of control methods using thermal technologies and trapping systems. This project has helped NRE Tas gain a better understanding of deer movements and behavior in peri-urban environments.  While motion cameras help manage reduction efforts in targeted areas, tracking population trends is not the primary goal of the program.
	4.2 Gather information on scale of deer hazards in peri-urban areas	Complete	A Peri-Urban Deer Control Public Safety Plan has been developed addressing the potential hazards wild fallow deer in peri-urban can cause.
	4.3 Evaluation of wild deer management strategies in Tasmania and mainland Australia peri-urban areas	Complete & Ongoing	Work in this area remains ongoing, with continued engagement with other states to exchange insights and experiences on peri-urban deer control activities. Collaborative partnerships are supporting the evaluation of management tools, informed by both successful approaches implemented elsewhere and our own trials across multiple sites in Tasmania. These combined learnings are helping to refine and improve the effectiveness of strategies for managing deer in peri-urban environments.

**Management objective 1 continued**

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
	4.4 Develop and promote a Ground Shooting Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for deer control in peri-urban areas	Complete	The SOP was reviewed based on learnings from peri-urban operations and has been updated this year.
	4.5 Work with appropriate experts, including the National Deer Coordinator on development communications programs to raise awareness of deer in peri-urban areas	Complete & Ongoing	NRE Tas continue to engage regularly with the National Deer Coordinator. A targeted communication program is ongoing, with a strong focus on engagement with local governments and communities to support coordinated deer management efforts.
	4.6 Work with LGAs in Tasmania to undertake management of deer in peri-urban areas	In progress	Engagement continues with the five target local government areas (LGAs): Tasman, Kingborough, West Tamar, Meander Valley, and Clarence City Councils, to collectively progress more strategic and proactive deer management. Work is underway to support the development of site-specific operational plans and their implementation.
	4.7 Implement the Launceston region peri-urban deer management project	Ongoing	As above, West Tamar and Meander Valley LGAs were engaged as part of the broader peri-urban deer management project. Deer management activities have been undertaken in areas including Blackstone Heights and Trevallyn.

**Management objective 1 continued**

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
5. Prevent the establishment of new deer populations	5.1 Implementation of the Nature Conservation (Deer Farming) Regulations 2022	Complete & Ongoing	<p>All 136 known deer farms have been advised of the requirements for licensing under the Nature Conservation (Deer Farming) Regulations 2022.</p> <p>Of these deer farms;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 have ceased to operate;</li> <li>• 90 are licensed and compliant;</li> <li>• 22 are licensed and transitioning to compliance; and</li> <li>• 3 are unlicensed and non-compliant (NRE Tas is working directly with these owners).</li> </ul>

## Management objective 2 progress

*Empower farmers, foresters, and other land managers to directly manage deer and to work collaboratively with hunters to achieve tailored deer management objectives.*

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
6. Enable land managers to control deer with greater flexibility	6.1 Establish take conditions for property protection permits consistent with deer management zone	Complete	Permits and associated conditions were developed to allow more flexible deer management in Zone 1 and a less restrictive Property Protection Permit was established for Zones 2 and 3. This permitting program has been running successfully since 2023.
	6.2 Establish the Property Based Wildlife Management Plan (PBWMP) system	Complete & Ongoing	81 PBWMPs have been completed since 2023 for Zone 1 and five PBWMP completed for Zones 2 and 3. There are currently a further 12 PBWMPs under development.
	6.3 Develop a Wildlife Action Plan	Complete & Ongoing	GST provide assistance and advice to TasFarmers as required to inform their wildlife policies and activities. This support remains available as needed.
	6.4 Development of region- specific deer management plans	Ongoing	The project supported the initiation and development of a draft regional deer management strategy for southern Tasmania, in collaboration with local councils and NRM South.
7. Ensure that compliance activities are effective and efficient	7.1 Continue to ensure that compliance and enforcement approaches are contemporary and best practice	Ongoing	GST staff have undertaken compliance authorisation training as part of an updated Deer Farm Compliance Framework to support the Nature Conservation (Deer Farming) Regulations 2022.  Wildlife compliance and enforcement activities continue to be delivered by NRE Tas's Investigation and Enforcement Services Team.
	7.2 Investigate and evaluate innovative technologies to support compliance	Under consideration	This initiative will be developed further in the scope of the \$2.25 million Deer Plan implementation budget initiative.

### Management objective 3 progress

*Continue to provide evidence-based deer management.*

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
8. Improve knowledge of current deer distribution and abundance	8.1 Coordination and implementation of surveillance and monitoring to quantify current distribution and abundance and identify new wild deer populations	Complete & Ongoing	The Tasmanian deer monitoring strategy continues to evolve, integrating both established and emerging monitoring technologies. The second aerial survey was completed in October 2024, with the results published in October 2025. DeerScan remains a valuable 'citizen science' tool for detecting and tracking emerging deer populations across the State.
9. Enhance knowledge and best practice management for populations monitoring	9.1 Evaluate emerging population monitoring technologies	Complete & Ongoing	New monitoring technologies were trialed in the 2024 aerial survey. As part of an upcoming review, emerging technologies will be evaluated to ensure continual currency and efficiency in deer monitoring.  eDNA monitoring is also underway. eDNA can aid presence/ absence detection in remote areas of Tasmania. This work is being led by PWS as part of a new Australian Heritage Grant that supports management of deer (and invasive species) within the TWWHA. This eDNA analysis will inform further monitoring with remote cameras and adaptive management techniques such as ground shooting.
10. Improve knowledge of the role of wild deer in farm biosecurity	10.1 Investigate the biosecurity risks to domestic livestock and potential impacts on cultivated plants	Under consideration	This initiative will be scoped in 2026.
11. Quantify the environmental, social and economic value (including costs and benefits) of deer in Tasmania	11.1 Analyse the environmental, social and economic value of deer in Tasmania	Complete	The outcomes of the study on the economic contribution of recreational hunting in Tasmania was published in 2023. The full report is available <a href="#">here</a> .

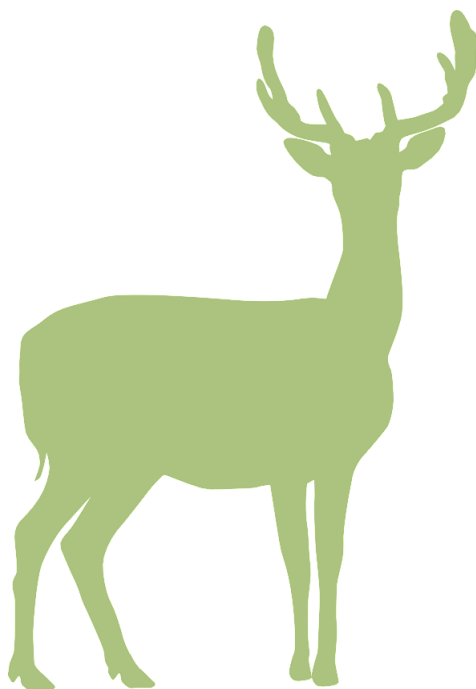
## Management objective 4 progress

*Improve community involvement, education, and awareness of deer management.*

Initiative	Action	Status	Progress Statement
12. Community Engagement	12.1 Annual fora for land managers and other key stakeholders to share information to inform planning and management activities	Ongoing	NRE Tas has actively connected with stakeholders through a variety of channels, including tailored consultations, sector-specific forums, community gatherings, and broad public outreach via media and the NRE Tas website. These interactions contribute meaningfully to the annual exchange of knowledge that informs planning and management decisions.
	12.2 Community awareness activities at key events	Complete & Ongoing	Participation at Agfest provided an opportunity to share information and raise community awareness as part of key outreach activities.
	12.3 Development of appropriate stakeholder communication tools	Complete & Ongoing	The annual Game Tracks magazine continues to be published providing information for hunters and landholders on regulations, licensing, seasons and wildlife and game species data.
	12.4 Development of community education and engagement strategy focusing on managing satellite and peri-urban populations	Ongoing	Targeted engagement by the PWS Peri Urban Program is ongoing to support efforts in addressing satellite and peri-urban population management.
13. Reducing antisocial behaviour	13.1 Development of communication strategy for improving antisocial behaviour based on contemporary compliance principles	Under consideration	This initiative will be scoped in 2026
	13.2 Development of education programs to improve antisocial behaviour	Under consideration	This initiative will be scoped in 2026
	13.3 Contemporary and effective enforcement activities	Under consideration	This initiative will be considered post the communication and education activities.

**Management objective 4 continued**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress Statement</b>
14. Commercial use of wild shot deer	14.1 Identify opportunities and barriers to the use and sale of wild shot deer	Nearing completion	The Trial was extended and will be finalised in April 2026. Outcomes of the Trial will be released for public consultation in early 2026.
	14.2 Identify appropriate strategies and initiatives to support the ongoing deer farming industry in Tasmania	In progress	The \$2.25 million Deer Plan implementation budget initiative will support the employment of a new and dedicated deer farming officer within GST.
15. Provide leadership and coordination through strategic partnerships	15.1 Appropriate partnership and project agreements in place to support deer management	Complete & Ongoing	We continue to collaborate with national partners, universities, local councils, recreational hunters, and farming groups to ensure the work delivered is practical, relevant, and inclusive of all stakeholders.



# Project Updates

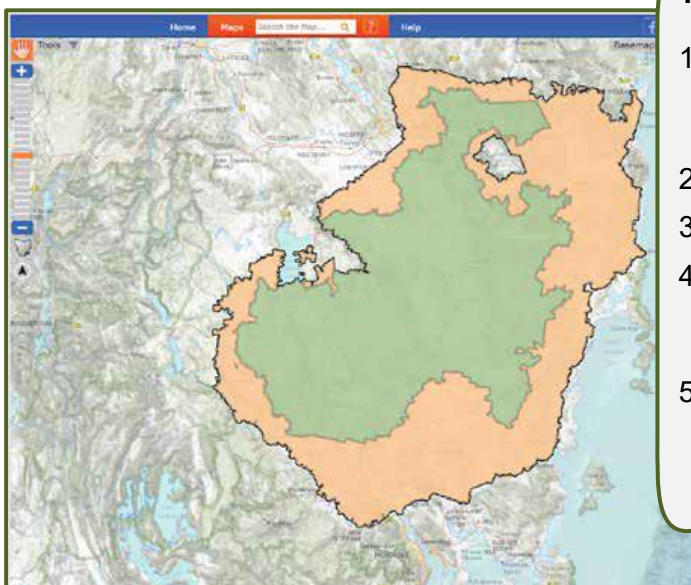
## Deer Management Zones and Permits

The Deer Management Zones were established in the Deer Management Plan 2022-2027 and are available at LISTmap (instructions below):

<https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map>

- To manage deer numbers on private property you can apply for a Property Protection Permit (PPP) or Special Purposes Wildlife Permit (SPWP).
- PPPs are available to assist property owners/managers to prevent the destruction of, or injury to, any stock, crops and equipment or infrastructure used in the production of crops and stock, caused by wildlife.
- SPWPs are designed to protect conservation values including covenant land, threatened species and plant communities.
- During the period 1 November 2024 – 16 October 2025 the following number of permits to take deer were active:
  - 822 PPP (407 in Zone 1, and 415 in Zone 2/3)
  - 157 SPWP (153 in Zone 1, and 4 in Zone 2/3) covering an area of 261,762 ha in Zone 1
  - 463 Crop Protection Permits (PPPs replaced CPPs from 1 December 2021, however some 5-year CPPs remain active)
- SPWPs in Zone 1 protect 144 threatened flora species, 20 threatened fauna species, 14 State listed threatened vegetation communities and three nationally listed threatened ecological communities present on the properties.
- In 2025 the Tasmanian Government committed to streamlining permits in Zone 1.

### Deer Management Zones in LISTmap



#### To access the LISTmap layer

1. Click on the link: <https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map>
2. Go to the layers tab
3. Add Layer
4. Search '**Deer – Administrative Boundaries**'
5. Click the '+' for Deer Management Zones and Deer Management Zone Boundaries

## Deer Farm Licensing in Tasmania

GST continues to support deer farm licence holders work towards, compliance with the Nature Conservation (Deer Farming) Regulations 2022.

Commencing with 136 operational deer farms, 21 deer farms have now ceased to operate, 90 are fully compliant with Regulations and licensed, 22 are licensed but still progressing to compliance with Regulations and 3 unlicensed and non-complaint (NRE Tas is working directly with these owners).



## Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Deer Control Project

From the period 28 April to 23 May 2025, 323 deer were humanely destroyed within the project area.

- The 323 deer consisted of 114 stags, 198 antlerless deer and 11 immature deer.
- The aerial control program was supported by 16 volunteer ground shooters between 28 April 28 and 8 May.
- The volunteer group included members of the ADA and the SSAA. Volunteers operated in units 2 to 5 over the first two weeks with the aerial program commencing at the conclusion of the ground program. In this way the ground program supported the aerial program to achieve its goals in a safe and methodical way.
- A total of 27 flights were conducted and the aircraft operated for 65 hours.
- The aircraft traversed 136,800 hectares, travelling 4,217km in a search grid pattern.
- The entire project period was monitored to assess animal welfare outcomes by an independently contracted veterinary officer.
- PWS continued to use lead-free ammunition this year. An assessment undertaken by the independent veterinary officer indicated the lead-free ammunition continued to be accurate and had the appropriate animal welfare outcomes. Lead free ammunition will be used where it is possible to do so to reduce impacts on the environment and non-target species such as eagles, quolls, and devils.



## Management of peri-urban deer in Tasmania

This project is jointly funded by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments and has been operational since October 2024. In 2025 the project has:

- Trialed a range of thermal equipment (scopes, binoculars and drones) to assist control operations, including incorporating thermal drones into control operations.
- Trialed a range of trapping methods to provide control tools in areas where firearms are not an option. Good results have been achieved with drop net traps.
- Developed and implemented a collaborative management approach with local government and local communities to facilitate a bigger footprint for control operations.
- Increased community and local government awareness of the need to proactively undertake deer control in peri-urban areas.
- Worked with LGAs in southern Tasmania to develop a regional deer management strategy for the south of the state.

Project activities continue across five LGAs: Kingborough (Bruny Island), Clarence, Tasman, West Tamar and Meander Valley.

**Right: Deer under drop net**

**Below: Deer at feed station**

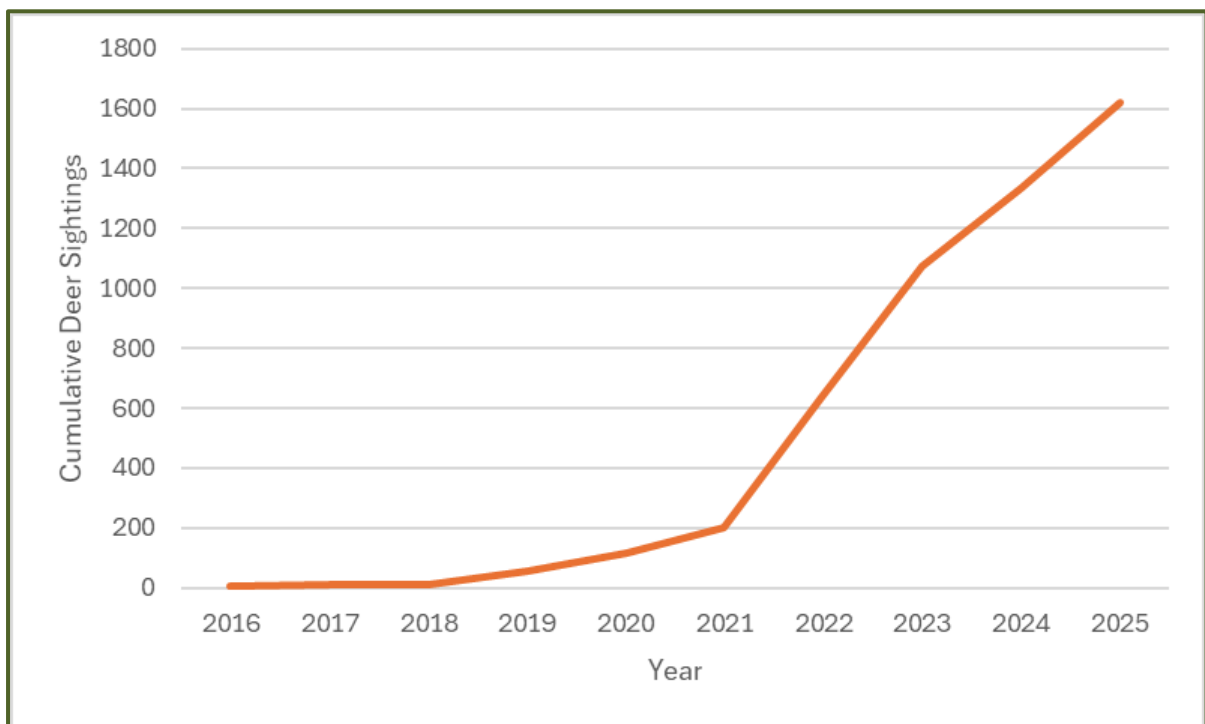


## Monitoring Tasmania's Deer Population

The second aerial deer survey was conducted in October 2024.

- The 2024 aerial survey report was released in 2025 and can be viewed on the NRE Tas webpage: [Wild Fallow Deer Population Monitoring | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania](#)
- Citizen Science using the Deer Scan app continues to help NRE Tas become aware of deer, deer scats, and roadkill sightings, with 264 submissions by the public in the 2024 calendar year and 284 from January to October 2025. These reports are vital to the ongoing monitoring of the distribution of deer. These sighting reports can inform NRE Tas where we need further investigation.

### Cumulative number of deer records logged in DeerScan Jan 2016 - Oct 2025.



## Fixed-term commercial wild shot deer trial

The Commercial Wild Shot Deer Trial commenced in April 2023. Participation in the Trial is voluntary, with participating game harvesters requiring a Commercial Purposes Licence (endorsed for fallow deer) and participating meat processors requiring a Commercial Wildlife Traders Licence to buy, process and sell wild shot deer products. Due to some delays at the commencement of the Trial, it was extended by 12 months, with completion expected in April 2026.

The Trial was split into phases. Phase 1 of the Trial, undertaken by an experienced food safety consultant, was completed in September 2024, which evaluated:

- Whether wild shot deer carcasses meet microbiological food standards.
- If wild shot deer carcasses meet residue standards for agricultural chemicals.
- Effects of seasonality on microbiological and chemical parameters.

The Phase 2 report is expected in December 2025. Phase 2 includes:

- Consideration of an appropriate carcass royalty rate.
- Impact of commercial use on deer carcass wastage
- Impact of commercial use on recreational hunter access to properties for hunting and the hunting experience.
- Impact of commercial use of locally harvested deer on the quantity of imported wild shot deer products to Tasmania.
- Impact of commercially available wild shot deer products on the farm deer sector.
- Impact of commercial use on the ability of farmers to attract shooters and control deer on their properties.
- Impact of commercial harvest on the wild deer population by deer management zone.

Phase 3 of the Trial analyses the potential commercial market for wild shot deer and is currently underway.

Public consultation on the outcomes of the Trial is proposed in early 2026 (within 250 days of forming government).

## Collaboration, partnerships, and engagement

Over the past 12 months, NRE Tas has continued to strengthen its collaborative approach to deer management by maintaining existing partnerships and establishing new ones across the community, industry, and national government sectors. Key engagement activities and partnerships include:

- **Agfest Participation:** NRE Tas attended Agfest to share updates on deer management activities and gather feedback from the Tasmanian community on local priorities and experiences.
- **Peri-Urban Deer Management Engagement:** Extensive community consultation (ten workshops) was undertaken across five local government areas to build support for deer control operations near urban environments. This included collaboration with councils, landholders, and residents to ensure transparency and local ownership.
- **Tasmanian Game Council (TGC):** As the primary advisory body on game management, the TGC has provided invaluable input into the implementation of the Deer Management Plan. The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Hon Gavin Pearce MP will be appointing the new TGC in the near future with an updated Terms of Reference for the Council. NRE Tas acknowledges the time, expertise, and strategic advice offered by members to date and looks forward to working in partnership with the newly appointed TGC.
- **TasFarmers:** NRE Tas worked closely with TasFarmers to align deer management with agricultural priorities. This included joint advocacy for legislative reform, improved access to control tools for landholders, and exploration of commercial opportunities for wild-shot deer.
- **Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee (TDAC):** TDAC provided strategic guidance on recreational hunting access, harvest regulation, and stakeholder engagement. The committee also supported efforts to integrate conservation and recreational hunting objectives.
- **National Feral Deer Action Plan Steering Committee:** Tasmania actively contributed to national discussions on best-practice deer control, biosecurity risk mitigation, and cross-jurisdictional coordination, ensuring alignment with broader national strategies.

These partnerships and engagements reflect the Tasmanian Government's commitment to a collaborative, adaptive, and evidence-based approach to deer management, balancing ecological protection, agricultural productivity, and community values.

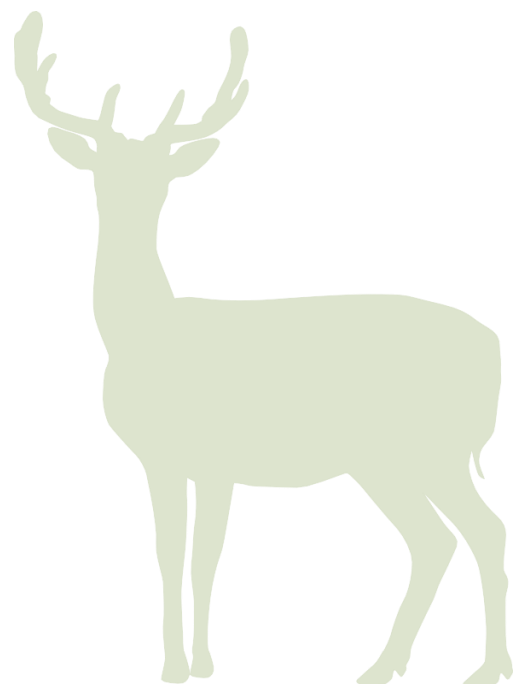
## **Opening more public land for deer hunting**

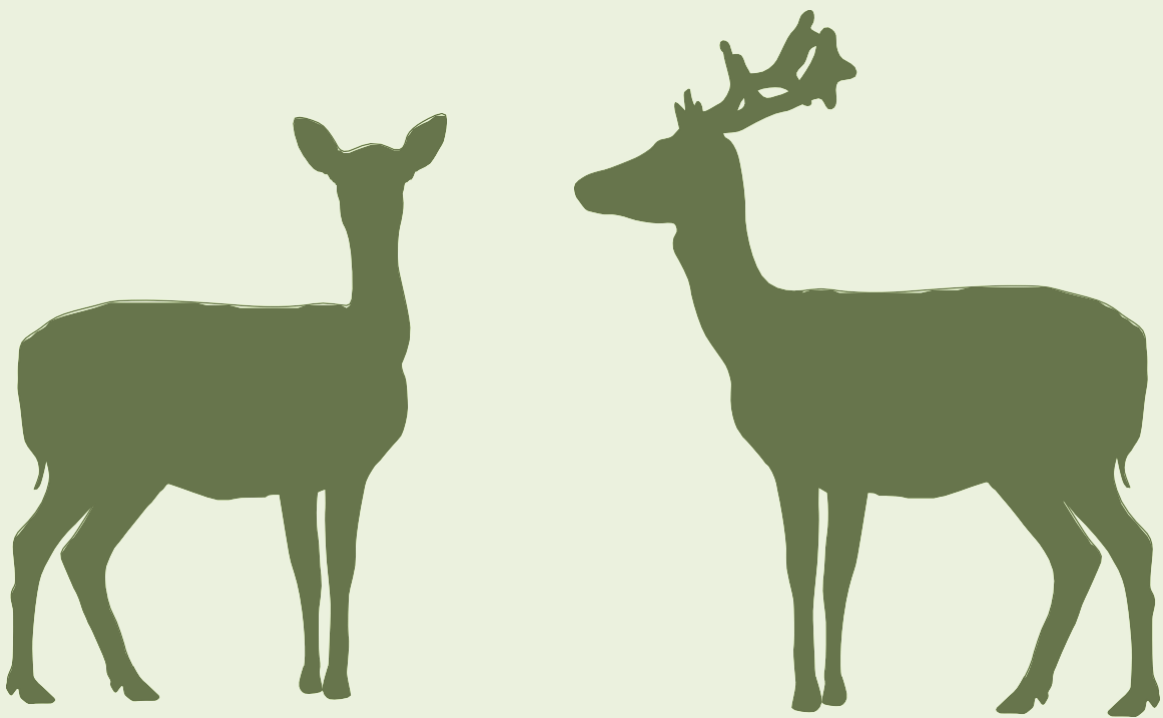
As part of the commitment to managing the impacts of wild deer whilst maintaining a traditional and sustainable hunting resource, the Tasmanian Government has made it a priority to work with stakeholders to unlock more public and private land for recreational hunting.

NRE Tas has been closely conferring with the Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee to identify new parcels of public land suitable for recreational hunting. Feasibility assessments on several public land parcels are underway. Considerations include accessibility, deer abundance, natural and cultural values, other user groups and neighbouring land holders.

## **Homebased Game Meat Processing**

It has been another successful year for the rollout of the Homebased Game Meat Processing course, delivered by TasTAFE with continued support from NRE Tas. The course equips participants with practical skills in carcass and meat preparation, enabling them to produce a variety of products such as sausages, hamburgers, and smoked meats. TasTAFE reported strong uptake, with a total of 197 participants attending courses held across Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport since 2023. This marks a continued trend in positive engagement with 33 participants in 2025, 113 in 2024 and 51 in 2023. The course remains well received by the community, particularly among recreational hunters seeking to enhance their processing skills in a safe and sustainable way.





### **Further information**

The Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Implementation Strategy Progress Report is available at:  
<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/game-services-tasmania/wild-fallow-deer-management-plan>

### **Enquiries**

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