

Managing Feral Animals on Your Property

Landholders have a range of responsibilities when it comes to managing pests — both animals and plants. Effective feral animal control is vital, as these species have significant impacts on biodiversity and agricultural productivity.

Feral animals threaten biodiversity by eating native plants and animals, including rare and endangered species. Surprisingly, rabbits have been shown to have the **greatest impact on threatened species** of all pest animals in Australia. They eat native vegetation, compete with native animals for food and shelter, and modify habitats by digging warrens.

If you've ever noticed how rabbits clear the ground around their warrens, it's so they can spot predators — but this clearing makes the area unsuitable for native animals to hide or forage. Their droppings and urine also enrich the soil with excess nutrients, which encourages weeds and suppresses native plant growth.

Under the **Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 (BAM Act)**, landholders are responsible for managing vertebrate pests such as **foxes, rabbits, and feral cats** on their properties. There are several control methods available, with shooting being a common one across species.

Species Control Options

Foxes	Baiting, den fumigation, den destruction, trapping, exclusion fencing, shooting
Rabbits	Baiting, warren fumigation, warren ripping/destruction, trapping, exclusion fencing, shooting, biological control (calicivirus, myxomatosis)
Feral Cats	Trapping, shooting, Felixer units

Firearms and Access for Pest Control

With the current changes in firearms legislation, some landholders may not be able to undertake shooting themselves and may need help from licensed shooters.

To access assistance, it's essential to have your land **registered for hunting**. You can do this through the **Firearms Portal** or by phoning **WA Police (WAPOL) on 1300 894 474** and following the voice prompts.

Once your property is registered, you can:

- Issue up to **15 written authorities** for gun owners to apply for a firearms license.

- Issue **temporary hunting permits** (valid for 14 days) to licensed firearm holders via letter, email, or text.

A temporary hunting permit must include:

- Landholder's name and address
- Hunter's full name
- Firearms license number
- Calibre/type of firearm
- Animal type to be hunted
- Start date and duration

Suggested format:

I _____, of _____
First name, Surname of landowner/leaseholder *Farm/Business Name*

_____ *Address* _____ *Town*

permits _____ (_____) to
First name *Surname* *Firearms license Number*

shoot _____ on my property with their firearm
animal type (eg foxes, rabbits, feral cats)

_____ with a start date of _____
calibre/type of firearm *date*

How Wheatbelt NRM Can Help

If you need help navigating this process, contact **Jacquie**, our Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator. She can assist with:

- Setting up your **MyID** and **Firearms Portal** registration
- Accessing the correct documentation
- Directing you to relevant **WAPOL resources**

Together, we can ensure feral animal management is effective, compliant, and supportive of healthy agricultural landscapes.