



# Wild deer management

## State-wide review of pest animal management

### Final report



#### The issue

- Wild deer are one of the most important emerging pest animal threats in NSW.
- Wild deer impact negatively on production through grazing pressure and destroying fences. They also carry diseases and parasites, posing a significant biosecurity risk.
- Wild deer impact negatively on native ecosystems that are not adapted to their presence. They are also a transport hazard, involved in many vehicle collisions.
- There are four wild deer hotspots in NSW requiring urgent attention - Illawarra and the South Coast, Mid-north Coast, parts of the Upper Hunter and Northern Tablelands, and the Snowy Mountains.
- Wild deer distribution increased 30 percent across NSW from 2005 to 2009. Without a change in management approach, wild deer populations have the potential to occupy almost the entire state.



#### Current status

- In NSW deer are classified as game and there are restrictions placed on their control. These restrictions are designed to conserve wild deer as a recreational hunting resource.
- Although landholders can control deer on their property, they cannot be compelled to do so in order to control numbers. Shooters targeting deer on private land are required to be licenced, unlike for other pest animals like wild dogs, pigs or foxes.
- Evidence indicates that recreational hunting alone cannot control wild deer populations. Although landholders can apply to suspend the restrictions on their control, the process is an unnecessary burden for both the community and government.
- Controlling wild deer populations requires a co-ordinated and integrated control program across large areas. Such control programs may incorporate recreational hunting.

#### Final report recommendations

The final report recommends:

- Remove all species of deer from Schedule 3 Part 1 of the NSW *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* and include all species of deer in Schedule 3 Part 2 of that Act.
- Promote the use of approved hunting organisations membership and programs to link hunters with landholders.



Bottom image: Daryl Panther, courtesy Invasive Animals CRC. Natural Resources Commission, May 2017.