

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Thank you for accepting my submission into the Parliamentary Enquiry into Dingoes in National Parks. I am the owner of a 60 hectare property surrounded on 2.5 sides by Khatumbuhl National Park and Nature Reserve. This property, 668 Cundle Flat Rd, Cundle Flat NSW, was purchased 12 months ago with the express purpose of regenerating it and putting it under a conservation trust because of its high ecological potential. Since its purchase I have had a number of communications with National Parks staff about the feral pig problem that is plaguing the property and the National Park itself, to little or no avail. However, in that brief 12 months of ownership I have been informed twice about aerial baiting of 'wild dogs' in the neighbouring National Park.

Each time I have expressed my deep concern and requested that this not take place within the vicinity of my property. I have strongly argued that taking out a top predator, known to predate on feral pigs, whilst remaining inactive in culling pig numbers, despite my offers to collaborate and assist with a pig trapping and culling operation, is madness. Essentially, culling the only predators of feral pigs whilst doing nothing to control their numbers, results in the further explosion of these particularly destructive pest species that have already impacted our ability to regenerate the property as they continually dig up the trees and other natives that we have planted.

Regardless, the aerial baiting progressed although I was assured that it would not occur within 500 metres of our boundaries. Given animals are known to travel considerably further than half a kilometre, this gave me no comfort.

Dingoes have been part of the ecology of Australia now for thousands of years (unlike of course, cats, rabbits, hares, foxes, pigs and various weed species). My understanding is that research evidence is mounting, that the presence of Dingoes in the environment, similar to the re-introduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park, has an overall net positive impact on biodiversity. In the Australian context, in regulating the presence of foxes, cats, rabbits and, please note again, feral pigs (Letnic, Ritchie, & Dickman 2012), (Letnic, Baker & Nesbitt, 2013).

Further, research has indicated that the premise that most wild dogs are hybrids, i.e. interbred between dingoes and domestic species, is also largely a myth. Instead, it seems most dingoes are pure-breed from an ancient line of DNA linked to the 'singing dogs' of Indonesia.

We are not running stock on our property but are aware that some of our neighbours are. I note that they are also making use of Maremma dogs that are effectively protecting their stock. I also understand that Alpacas are effective protectors of stock from wild dogs and roaming domestic dogs. Essentially, therefore, there are cost effective alternative means of protecting stock that calls into question the need to continue to use a quite cruel method of poisoning dingoes.

To reiterate, my concern is regenerating the conservation value of a property bought for that express purpose, surrounded by National Parks. My efforts to join in a collaborative effort with National Parks to control the feral pigs has been met with zero results. The aerial baiting of the only predator of these major pest species, twice in one 12 month period, despite my pleas, with provided evidence, that this will contribute to the feral pig population explosion has also been futile.

I am an ardent supporter and defender of National Parks. However, it is clear that one day, the baiting of dingoes, in light of increasing scientific evidence and other feral species, will one day be looked back on with the same disbelief that baiting of wedge-tail eagles is currently regarded.

Letnic, M., Ritchie, E.G. and Dickman, C.R. (2012), Top predators as biodiversity regulators: the dingo *Canis lupus dingo* as a case study. *Biological Reviews*, 87: 390-413. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-185X.2011.00203.x>

Ecologically functional landscapes and the role of dingoes as trophic regulators in south-eastern Australia and other habitats

M Letnic, L Baker, B Nesbitt - *Ecological Management & ...*, 2013 - Wiley Online Library