

Feral deer in New South Wales

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Invasive Species Biosecurity

Why are feral deer a problem?

Feral deer are a problem because their populations are increasing rapidly across NSW (see Figure 1).

Feral deer occur across a wide range of landscape types, including:

- in and around towns and cities
- agricultural production areas
- natural environments.

Deer can cause problems by:

- competing with livestock and native animals for food and water, especially during droughts
- damaging fences
- damaging native plants, including revegetation programs
- spreading weed seeds
- decreasing water quality by increasing soil erosion, wallowing and faecal contamination
- causing vehicle and train accidents
- being aggressive to people, pets and livestock
- damaging gardens
- making it harder to manage livestock diseases.

What can we do about it?

Feral deer are a priority pest animal in NSW and we need the help of the community to manage feral deer populations and impacts.

You can help by:

- gaining an understanding of why feral deer are a growing problem and why control programs must be undertaken to prevent current and future impacts

- reporting sightings of feral deer to your nearest Local Land Services office
- controlling feral deer on your land – landholders have obligations under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* to manage feral deer on their properties
- participating in cooperative programs to plan and manage feral deer populations across landscapes
- not transporting or releasing feral deer onto any land
- finding out more about feral deer and what can be done to manage them by contacting your Local Land Services office.

Requirements for hunting and shooting feral deer in NSW

From 6 September 2019, a NSW Game Hunting Licence is no longer required when hunting feral deer on *private* land. Individuals seeking to hunt deer must have permission to hunt from the landholder or manager as well as a current firearms licence where firearms are used. Feral deer can be hunted on private land in the same way that rabbits, foxes and feral pigs are, with no restrictions on seasons or use of aids such as lures and spotlights.

Deer remain a game animal for hunting on nominated *public* lands and require a NSW Restricted Game Hunting Licence (R-Licence) with associated hunting restrictions.

What type of deer live in NSW?

There are six feral deer species currently found in NSW, including:

- Fallow (*Dama dama*)
- Red (*Cervus elaphus*)
- Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*)
- Rusa (*Cervus timorensis*)
- Chital deer (*Axis axis*)
- Hog deer (*Axis porcinus*).

Fallow, Red, Sambar and Rusa deer are found in many parts of NSW. Chital and Hog deer are currently only found in relatively small and isolated populations. All species of feral deer have the potential to increase their spread and numbers throughout NSW and we need your help to prevent this.

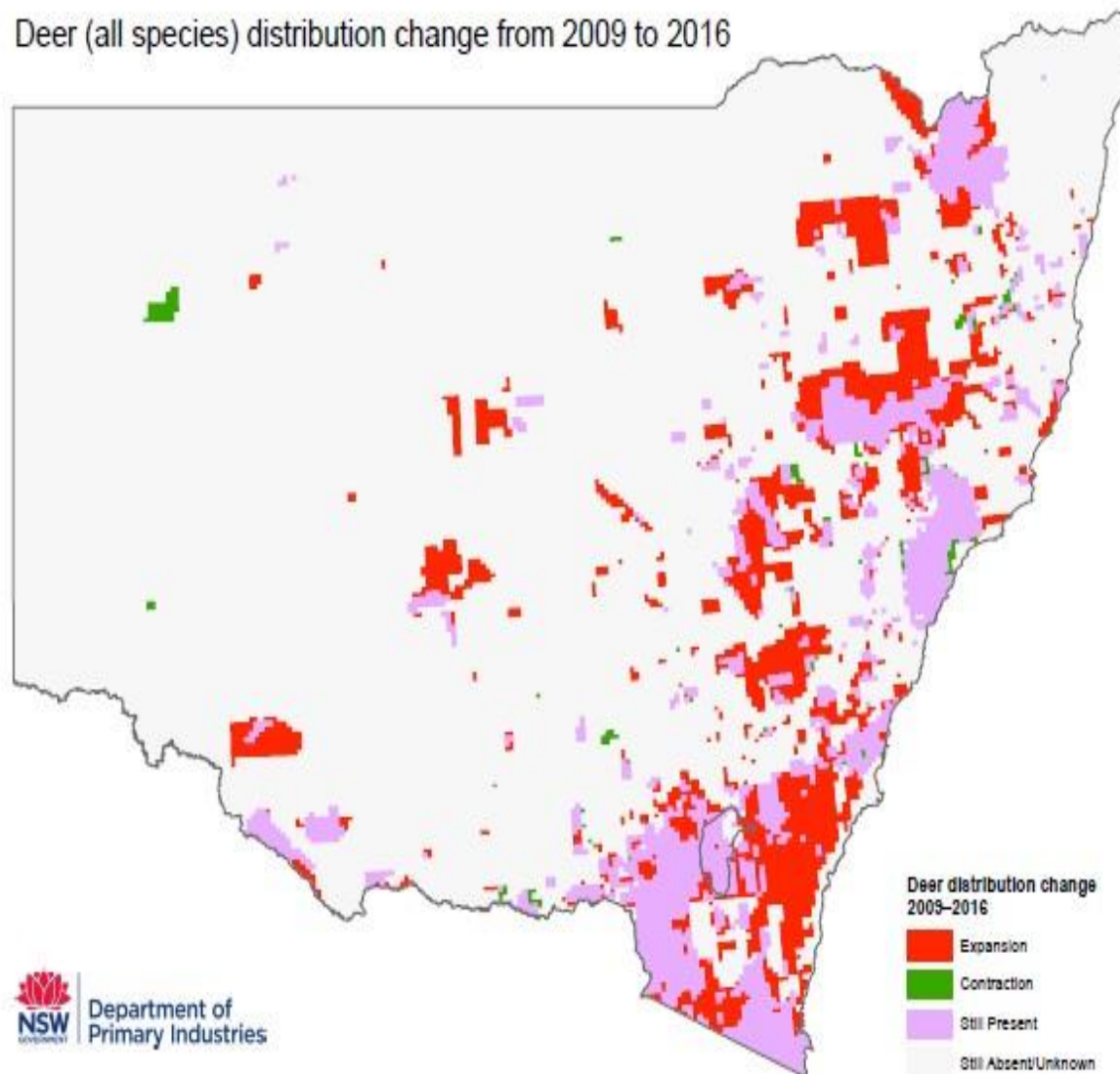
Further Information

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/vertebrate-pests/pest-animals-in-nsw/feral-deer/feral-deer>

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/pestplan>

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting>

Figure 1. Map showing the increase in feral deer populations in NSW between 2009 and 2016.



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