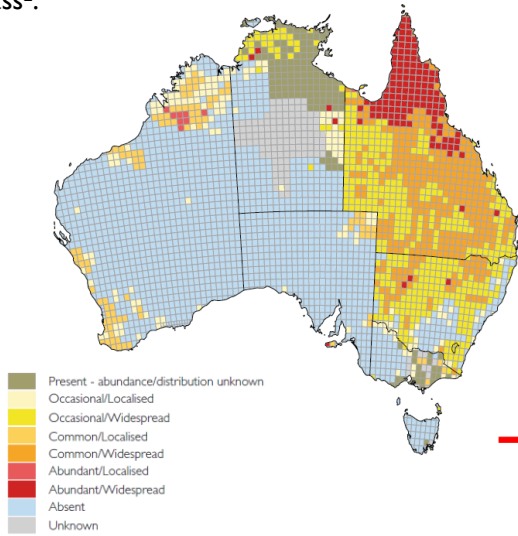


# Feral pigs in Australia – why they're a problem

## Population

Population estimates of feral pigs in Australia were updated<sup>1</sup> to be 3.2 million (95% confidence interval: 2.4 to 4.0 million), at an average density of 1.03 pigs/km<sup>2</sup>.

Feral pigs inhabit up to 45 per cent of Australia's land mass<sup>2</sup>.



## Growth

Sexual maturity of sows is reached at about 25 kg liveweight, usually at around six months of age. In favourable conditions, populations can increase by up to 86% annually.



Photo credit: Central West Local Land Services

## Control

Combinations of best practice methods including baiting, trapping, aerial shooting, ground shooting and exclusion fencing need to be strategically used by landholders to manage feral pigs.

Control programs should remove at least 70% of the population over a short period of time to suppress population growth

## Agricultural impacts

Feral pigs cost Australian agriculture more than \$100 million each year<sup>3</sup>, destroying crops and pasture, spreading weeds and disease, preying on livestock and damaging infrastructure.



Photo credit: Primary Industries and Regions South Australia

## Environmental and cultural values

By wallowing and rooting around the edges of watercourses, wetlands and swamps, feral pigs reduce water quality, cause land degradation and erosion, damage native vegetation, and destroy native wildlife nesting sites and food sources.

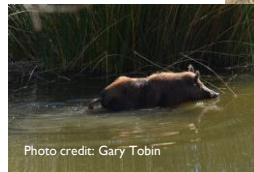


Photo credit: Gary Tobin



Photo credit: Cape York NRM

## Biosecurity risks

Feral pigs may aid the transmission of exotic diseases, including African swine fever and foot and mouth disease, endemic and zoonotic diseases including leptospirosis, brucellosis, as well as spread weeds and plant diseases.



<sup>1</sup>Hone, J. (2019). How many feral pigs in Australia? An update. *Australian Journal of Zoology*, <https://doi.org/10.1071/ZO20077>

<sup>2</sup>West, P. (2008). *Assessing invasive animals in Australia 2008*. National Land and Water Resources Audit and Invasive Animals CRC, Canberra

<sup>3</sup>Bomford, M. and Hart, Q. (2002). Non-indigenous vertebrates in Australia Chapter 3. In: *Biological invasions, economic and environmental costs of alien plants, animals and microbes* pp. 25-44.