

## Permit Procedures for Macropods – Damage Mitigation

### Background

It is widely accepted that the larger bodied kangaroo species in Australia have generally been advantaged by European settlement through the provision of pasture and additional water sources, and control of predators such as the Dingo (Pople and Grigg, 1999). European settlement has had a greater negative impact on the smaller macropod species such as the smaller wallabies, hare-wallabies and bettongs.

Of the 50 species of macropod found in Australia, 15 were present in the Northern Territory at the time of European settlement (Table 1). Subsequent changes to the natural landscape of the Northern Territory, such as agriculture, pastoralism and urban development, have markedly changed the abundance and distribution of some macropod species. In 2009, 10 macropod species in the Northern Territory remain extant in the wild.

**Table 1: Macropod species of the Northern Territory, and their conservation status in the Northern Territory and Australia (up-dated from Neave, 2008).**

Species	1996 Action plan*		Conservation status	
	IUCN red list category	% decline	Northern Territory <sup>1</sup>	Australia
FAMILY MACROPODIDAE				
<i>Lagorchestes asomatus</i> – Central Hare-wallaby	EX	100	EX	<sup>2</sup> EX
<i>Lagorchestes conspicillatus leichardti</i> – Spectacled Hare-wallaby (mainland)	LR-nt	10–50	LR-nt	<sup>3</sup> Moderately common in the north
<i>Lagorchestes hirsutus</i> – Rufous Hare-wallaby or Mala (central mainland)	CR	>90	EW	<sup>2</sup> EN
<i>Macropus agilis</i> – Agile Wallaby	LR-lc	<10	LR-lc	<sup>3</sup> Abundant
<i>Macropus antilopinus</i> – Antilopine Wallaroo	LR-lc	<10	LR-lc	<sup>3</sup> Sparse, some populations possibly declining
<i>Macropus bernardus</i> – Black Wallaroo	LR-nt	<10	DD	<sup>3</sup> Common, limited
<i>Macropus robustus</i> – Euro	LR-lc	Increased	LR-lc	<sup>3</sup> Common, can be locally abundant
<i>Macropus rufus</i> – Red Kangaroo	LR-lc	Increased	LR-lc	<sup>3</sup> Abundant
<i>Onychogalea lunata</i> – Crescent Nailtail Wallaby	EX	100	EX	<sup>2</sup> EX
<i>Onychogalea unguifera</i> – Northern Nailtail Wallaby	LR-lc	<10	LR-nt	<sup>3</sup> Common
<i>Petrogale brachyotis</i> – Short-eared Rock-wallaby	LR-lc	<10	LR-lc	<sup>3</sup> Common, limited
<i>Petrogale concinna</i> – Nabarlek	LR-nt	50–90	LR-nt	<sup>3</sup> Rare, limited
<i>Petrogale lateralis lateralis</i> – Black-footed Rock-wallaby (MacDonnell Ranges race)	VU	50–90	LR-nt	<sup>2</sup> VU
FAMILY POTORIDAE				
<i>Bettongia lesueur graii</i> – Burrowing Bettong (inland)	EX	100	rEX	<sup>2</sup> EX
<i>Bettongia penicillata</i> – Brush-tailed Bettong (subspecies unknown)	†	†	rEX	†

<sup>1</sup> Status under schedules of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2006*.

<sup>2</sup> Species listed on threatened species schedules under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

<sup>3</sup> Status according to Van Dyck and Strahan (2008).

\* The 1996 Action Plan for Australian Marsupials and Monotremes (Maxwell *et al.*, 1996).

† Status depends on what subspecies occurred in the Northern Territory.

Conservation status codes:

EX = Extinct; EW = Extinct in the Wild; rEX = Regionally Extinct in the Northern Territory; CR = Critically Endangered; EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; LR-nt = Lower Risk-Near Threatened; LR-lc = Lower Risk-Least Concern; DD = Data Deficient.

There have been no attempts to systematically survey the distribution and abundance of macropod species across the Northern Territory, with the exception of the Red Kangaroo.

Some monitoring of red kangaroo numbers has been carried out by Parks and Wildlife in the Northern Territory in response to concerns raised by some pastoralists over high densities. Concerns have also been raised over agile wallaby numbers which are the dominant macropod species found in the Katherine and Top End regions of the Northern Territory. Permits have periodically been granted to landholders for the non-commercial destruction (shoot-and-let-lie) of red kangaroos in central Australia and agile wallabies in the north of the Territory.

At present, there is no commercial harvest of kangaroos or wallabies permitted in the Northern Territory.

## **Non-commercial destruction of Kangaroos and Wallabies**

Under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2006* (TPWC Act), macropods are classified as protected wildlife throughout the Northern Territory. The TPWC Act prohibits the taking, interference with, possession, control or movement of protected wildlife unless authority to do so is granted. Provisions for the killing of protected wildlife are provided for under the TPWC Act. Authorisation to take or interfere with protected wildlife is by permit issued by the Director of Parks and Wildlife. The Director may apply terms, conditions or limitations to the permit to regulate the non-commercial destruction of kangaroos or wallabies.

### ***Determining kangaroo / wallaby densities and level of impact***

Requests for the non-commercial destruction of kangaroos or wallabies for damage mitigation purposes are assessed on a case by case basis to determine whether there is a kangaroo or wallaby problem that warrants management action. In most cases, the preferred management action is destruction rather than translocation based on animal welfare concerns (stress and risk of injury to animals) and the logistics of translocation.

Applications for the non-commercial destruction of kangaroos or wallabies are independently assessed by authorised Parks and Wildlife officers. The assessment process may involve:

- the consideration of property size and characteristics;
- number of previous permits issued and compliance with the conditions of these permits;
- nature of kangaroo or wallaby populations on the property and neighbouring properties including estimated population densities; and
- recent climatic conditions.

## **Permits**

A person wishing to kill a species of protected wildlife cannot do so unless he or she has been granted a permit to do so, or is a nominee under a permit granted to another person to do so. The permit process in the Northern Territory as it relates to the non-commercial destruction of kangaroos and wallabies is summarised in Figure 1.

### ***Permit to Take Protected Wildlife***

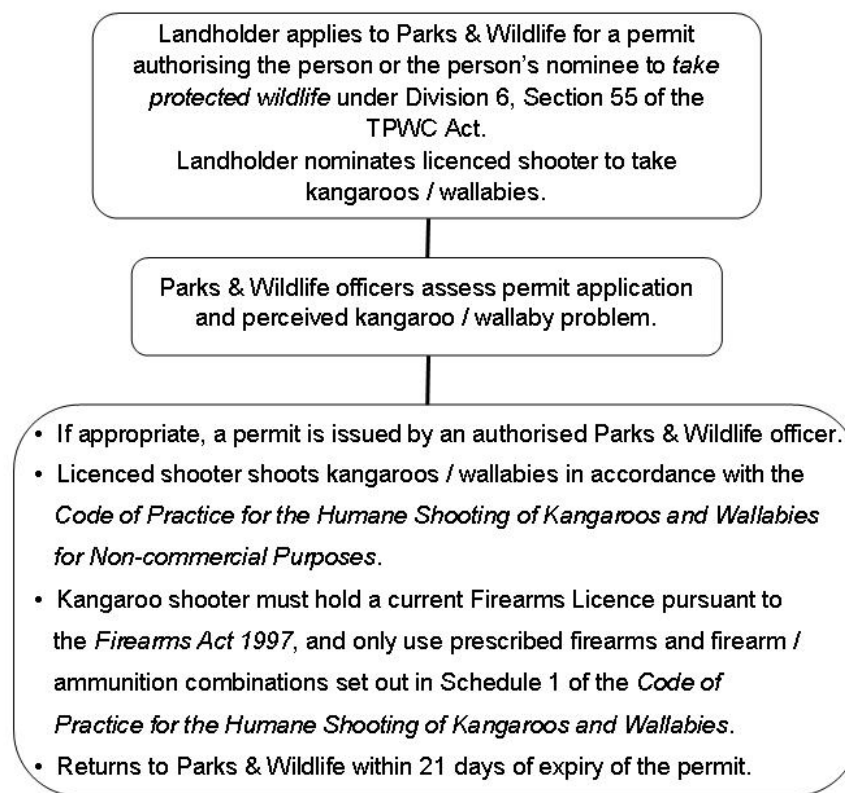
A *Permit to Take Protected Wildlife* may be issued for the removal of problem animals (e.g. non-commercial destruction of kangaroos or wallabies). Written permission of the landholder or relevant lands authority must be obtained prior to applying for a permit.

The landholder must provide the reason destruction is warranted by listing the unwanted impact/s of kangaroos or wallabies on their property.

A permit for non-commercial destruction (shoot-and-let-lie) of wallabies is subject to conditions. The permit applicant or nominated kangaroo shooter must:

- hold a current Firearms Licence;
- have successfully completed approved firearms accuracy accreditation;
- shoot kangaroos or wallabies in accordance with the nationally endorsed Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes (DEWHA, 2008b);
- carry their permit with them at all times while operating in the field and provide the permit to any authorised officer on request; and
- provide returns to Parks and Wildlife in the prescribed format within 21 days of expiry of the permit stating the number of animals destroyed on permit.

A permit may be revoked if Parks and Wildlife gain information indicating that conservation management measures may be required to protect a kangaroo or wallaby population.



**Figure 1: Permit procedure in the Northern Territory for the non-commercial destruction of kangaroos and wallabies.**

## **National Codes of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies**

At present, shooting is the most economical, humane and cost-effective way to cull kangaroos and wallabies. The current nationally-endorsed commercial and non-commercial codes of practice for the humane shooting of kangaroos and wallabies outline an achievable standard of humane conduct and is the minimum required of persons shooting kangaroos and wallabies (DEWHA, 2008a & b).

## References

- DEWHA (2008a), *Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes*. Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra. [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)
- DEWHA (2008b), *Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes*. Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra. [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)
- Neave, H.M. (2008). *Assessment of the Conservation and Management of the Red Kangaroo *Macropus rufus* and Euro Macropus *Macropus robustus* in the Northern Territory*. Northern Territory Government Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, March 2008, 65 pp. <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/publications/wildlife/science/2008.html>
- Maxwell, S Burbidge, AA and Morris, K (Eds.) (1996), *The 1996 Action Plan for Australian Marsupials and Monotremes*. Australasian Marsupial and Monotreme Specialist Group and IUCN Species Survival Commission.
- Pople, T. and Grigg, G. (1999). *Commercial Harvesting of Kangaroos in Australia*. Environment Australia, Canberra.  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/harvesting/index.html>
- Van Dyck, S. and Strahan, R (Eds.) (2008), *The Mammals of Australia*. Third Edition. Reed New Holland, Australia.