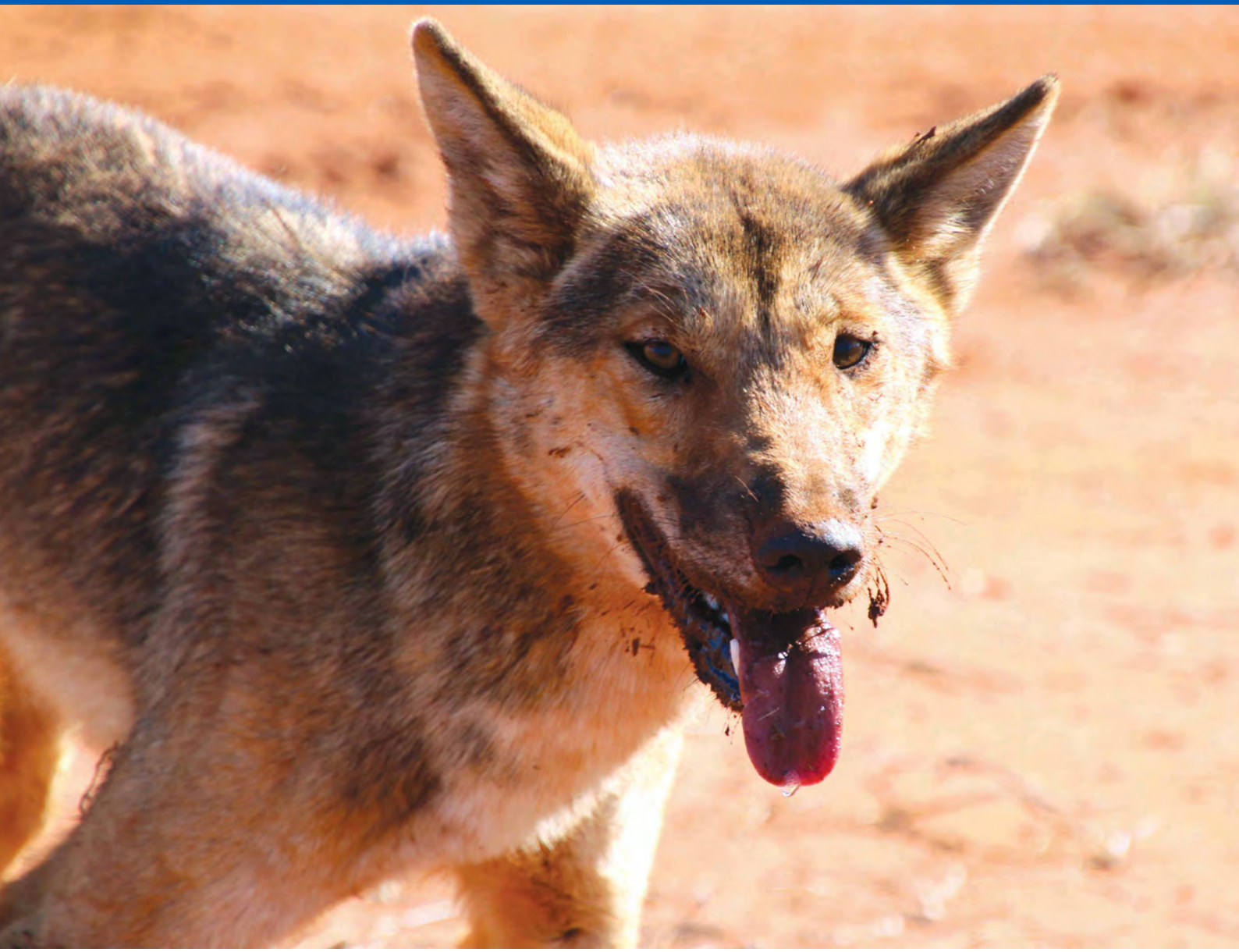
Wild dog

Canis familaris (other than a domestic dog)



The term wild dog refers collectively to purebred dingoes, dingo hybrids and dogs that are not owned by a person.

Wild dog control methods include baiting, trapping, shooting, fencing, and the use of guardian animals to protect stock. Effective management involves a planned strategy using a combination of these methods and considers wild dog behaviour.

Legal requirements

The wild dog is a category 3, 4 and 6 restricted invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be moved, fed, given away, sold, or released into the environment. The dingo is a category 3, 4, 5 and 6 restricted invasive animal under the Act. It must not be moved, kept, fed, given away, sold, or released into the environment.

The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive animals under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation.

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive animals in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on wild dogs. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Control

Managing wild dogs

Control programs may be coordinated among adjoining properties to increase effectiveness. This fact sheet provides information and some options for controlling wild dogs.

Queensland research has shown that, in some situations, wild dogs can quickly re-colonise baited areas. Re-colonisation can be due to a number of factors including inconsistent bait programs that do not provide comprehensive wild dog control across the landscape. Producers should work together using a variety of control methods to prevent livestock attacks and enhance wild dog management.

Wild dog ecology and seasonal variations can also influence the likelihood of wild dogs coming into contact with a control tool. The timing of control should consider seasonal variations and water availability. Many landowners bait using 1080 twice a year to target wild dogs during peaks in activity associated with breeding (March–May) and then again in September–November to target pups and juveniles. However, baiting and trapping is recommended at all times when wild dogs are active.

Fencing

Property fencing suitable to exclude wild dogs is readily available. Regular maintenance is required to repair damage caused by fallen timber, fire, floods, feral and domestic animals, as well as vegetation regrowth. A properly maintained fence can restrict movement into an area where wild dogs have been controlled.

Electric fences suitable for wild dogs have also been developed.

Fencing is particularly effective method of protecting livestock and pets from wild dog attack on small acreage blocks near urban areas. Exclusion fencing for wild dogs is common in many areas of western and southern Queensland, especially in areas where small livestock such as sheep and goats are kept.

Regionally agreed cluster fencing arrangements where producers cooperatively fence adjacent properties have also been seen to be particularly effective. A fence can also be a good area to place baits and traps when wild dogs are active.

Trapping

A key success to trapping wild dogs (using foot-hold traps) depends on the skill of the operator. Visit feral.org.au to watch a PestSmart video on best practice techniques for wild dog trapping.

A mixture of dog faeces and urine is a popular lure used by trappers. Attractiveness of lures varies with seasons and locations. No single lure has yet been found that is consistently attractive to all wild dogs and repeated use of one lure can lead to aversion among remaining dogs.

Traps are best placed in areas of high wild dog activity (known as leads), where a wild dog is most likely to find and investigate the decoy/odour.

A wild dog scent post is an area where urine or faeces have been deposited. It can be found by walking with a domestic dog on a lead along a known pad. Trap placement in relation to the scent post can be optimised by observing the domestic dog's behaviour as it approaches. Factors to consider are:

- where on the bush it smells
- placement of feet while urinating/defecating/sniffing
- how it approaches and where it scratches in relation to the pad and scent post.

Padded, laminated or offset foot-hold traps, in a well tuned and functioning state are recommended.

Shooting

Shooting is a humane method of destroying wild dogs when it is carried out by experienced, skilled and responsible shooters; the animal can be clearly seen and is within range; and the correct firearm, ammunition and shot placement is used.

Only head (brain) or chest (heart-lung) shots should be used. Shots to the head are preferred over chest shots as they are more likely to cause instantaneous loss of consciousness.

Shooting is an opportunistic method, and mostly used for control of small populations or individual problem animals.

Livestock guardian animals

Livestock guardian animals have been used to protect livestock from predators in Europe, Asia and America. Some producers in Queensland have decreased predation on sheep and goats using this method. The use of trapping and poisoning in conjunction with guardian animals must be well planned and managed to ensure guardian animal safety.

Baiting

Poison baits are the most economic, efficient and effective method of controlling wild dogs, especially in inaccessible or extensive areas. Baits can be laid quickly by hand, from vehicles and from aircraft.

Currently there are two poisons legally available for wild dog control. These are 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) and para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP).

Subject to restrictions, 1080 baits, either manufactured or prepared from fresh meat can only be obtained through a person approved under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019*. PAPP can only be supplied as a manufactured bait. Permits from Queensland Health are required for landowners to purchase, possess and use PAPP. The use of 1080 and PAPP require adherence to the associated conditions of supply.

Meat baits are attractive both to wild dogs and a range of non-target species. When using meat baits, they can be strategically positioned as wild dogs' keen sense of smell enables them to find baits intentionally buried in sand or otherwise hidden under bushes or in hollow logs. Meat baits may also be tied to prevent their loss to non-target species.

These meat bait placement techniques help to:

- reduce the risk of poisoning non-target species
- increase wild dog contact, hence receiving a lethal dose
- minimise bait removal by non-target scavengers
- deter ants (ant-covered baits are believed to be less attractive to wild dogs).

Heavy rain within two weeks of baiting can leach 1080 from baits, but baits may still remain toxic for a considerable time.

Ejectors are a new tool in the delivery of 1080. They require a wild dog or fox to pull the ejector head to be activated. This is done by attaching a lure reward to the ejector head. A capsule of lethal dose 1080 is propelled into the wild dog's or the fox's mouth. Ejectors are fixed in one stop and are only able to be activated by foxes and dogs.

Baiting activities should be coordinated among adjoining properties to effectively reduce the short- and long-term impact of wild dogs. Baiting on individual properties will only provide short-term success due to the high mobility of wild dogs resulting in rapid re-invasion.

More information

Visit feral.org.au to watch a PestSmart video on best practice techniques for wild dog trapping, shooting and baiting.

For more information contact your local government or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Exclusion fence

Guardian animal protecting sheep from invasive species predation

Fact sheets are available from biosecurity.qld.gov.au. The control methods recommended should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, the department does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.