

Kangaroos

Population management

Victoria's environment has changed over the past 200 years. Some Victorian kangaroo species have adapted well and expanded in numbers.

Kangaroos are found in varied habitats across Victoria. They are protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and are an important part of Victoria's ecosystems. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has a role in the management of these species and their impacts.

The arrival of European settlers has had a significant impact on kangaroos in Victoria, through habitat modification such as the development of improved pasture, and the removal of predators like the dingo. Several species, like the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, have adapted well and their populations have expanded.

Population management on public land

Kangaroo populations can require management to prevent them from crashing (dying in large numbers from starvation) during droughts, to prevent damage to vulnerable native vegetation and habitat from overgrazing, to allow heavily grazed areas to regenerate, or to protect water catchments.

Management techniques for kangaroo populations include fertility control, fencing of agricultural or environmentally sensitive areas, and culling. These techniques vary in effectiveness depending on the situation and the size of the population being managed.

Culling is often the only method available to land-managers. Alternative non-lethal methods such as fertility control are not feasible to be applied to large free-ranging populations due to population movement, or are too slow in addressing the animal welfare concerns in situations where the population has become significantly larger than what the habitat can support and kangaroos are suffering as a result. If culling is required, it must be undertaken by professional shooters and carried out in accordance with the *National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies* to ensure they are controlled humanely.

Kangaroo control on public land is often guided by kangaroo management plans based on detailed surveys and assessment of impacts and control methods available. The plans are also often reviewed by independent experts.

Case Study: Woodlands Historic Park – Eastern Grey Kangaroo Management

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*) is a threatened species in Victoria. The presence of foxes, habitat loss and overgrazing by rabbits and kangaroos has contributed to the species' decline. To enable its recovery, there is a large reintroduction program across the state. One of the key reintroduction locations is Woodlands Historic Park managed by Parks Victoria.

In the 1990s bandicoots were released in the park and it became an important breeding area for them. Before the release a fox-proof fence was constructed to prevent foxes from preying on them. However, kangaroos were also present in the park. With the kangaroos unable to migrate outside due to the fence, the population increased to the stage that the vegetation became severely degraded by grazing, this in turn had a significant impact on the bandicoots.

Bandicoots require the coverage of large tussocky grasses to nest, reproduce and seek food. Eventually, the impact was so severe that the bandicoots disappeared. It was decided that the kangaroo population required management in order to reduce the overgrazing. Fertility control was unable to be applied as the population was too large, and so a program of culling was conducted to bring the population down to a sustainable level.

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As a result of this management program the overgrazing impacts ceased and a bandicoot reintroduction was able to be conducted. Woodlands Historic Park is again a key location for the recovery of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot while also providing habitat to other wildlife, including a sustainable population of Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

Greater transparency in kangaroo control

DELWP and other public land managers have been working together on a coordinated approach to kangaroo management on public land, where information on upcoming kangaroo management programs will be made available to the Victorian public.

To promote transparency and explain the reasoning behind kangaroo control works on public land, the Victorian Government is making available details of upcoming large-scale kangaroo works scheduled for the year on Victorian public land. See below for the approved schedule of works for 2016.

Approved kangaroo control works for 2016 across public land*:

Area	Land manager	Species	Approx # for control	Reason for control
Woodlands Historic Park	Parks Victoria	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	150	Protection of habitat for the endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoot from overgrazing by kangaroos.
Hattah-Kulkyne National Park	Parks Victoria	Red Kangaroo	2120	Population control is part of a restoration program across 22,600 hectares of threatened woodland vegetation communities historically overgrazed by stock, pest animals and kangaroos. The program is responding to strong population growth following seasons of good rainfall.
		Western Grey Kangaroo	2200	
Murray-Sunset National Park	Parks Victoria	Red Kangaroo	8560	Population control is part of a restoration program across 124,700 hectares of threatened woodland vegetation communities historically overgrazed by stock, pest animals and kangaroos. The program is responding to strong population growth following seasons of good rainfall.
		Western Grey Kangaroo	5170	
Wyperfeld National Park	Parks Victoria	Western Grey Kangaroo	3085	Population control is part of a restoration program across 22,800 hectares of threatened woodland vegetation communities historically overgrazed by stock, pest animals and kangaroos. The program is responding to strong population growth following seasons of good rainfall.



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Swan Island	Commonwealth Department of Defence	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	165	Population is in a contained area and therefore requires management to ensure it is sustainable and to avoid risks to animal welfare from starvation.
Puckapunyal	Commonwealth Department of Defence	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	3000	Population is in a contained area and therefore requires management to ensure it is sustainable and to avoid risks to animal welfare from starvation.
Greenvale Reservoir	Melbourne Water	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	150	Population is contained within the reservoir's fenced area and requires management to protect animal welfare and the water catchment.
Edithvale Wetlands	Melbourne Water	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	35	Population is contained within fenced area and therefore requires management to ensure it is sustainable. Fertility control will also be applied to remaining females.
Dutson Downs	Gippsland Water	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	200	Population requires control due to crop and asset damage from overgrazing by kangaroos, and competition for livestock.
Mirboo North Treatment Farm	Gippsland Water	East Grey Kangaroo	50	Population requires control due to overgrazing.
<i>Gresswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve</i>	<i>Parks Victoria</i>	<i>Eastern Grey Kangaroo</i>	<i>ATCW for fertility control of 30 kangaroos</i>	<i>Population is enclosed within the reserve and has shown signs of malnutrition, starvation and death. The population is being closely monitored. Kangaroos that are emaciated and suffering will be assessed by a veterinarian and may be euthanased. Fertility control has also been undertaken.</i>

*Details of kangaroo control works on public land are accurate at time of publication. Details are subject to change due to kangaroo population fluctuations over time or changes due to environmental variations (e.g. drought periods).

