



# Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Management Plan 2020-2024



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## 1 Introduction

The Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association (GNRBA) Large Feral Herbivore (LFH) Management Plan details the Association's mission statement and LFH management plan. LFH is a collective term for feral camels, feral donkeys and feral horses.

The GNRBA Large Feral Herbivore Management Plan and budget clearly informs all stakeholders of the operational program, expenditure, roles and responsibilities.

## 2 Background

The GNRBA is the largest biosecurity region in Western Australia, covering an area of 933,814 square kilometres (see Figure 1), representing 37% of WA, and incorporating 100 pastoral leases. There is a mix of land tenure ranging from pastoral lease, to mining leases, Unmanaged Crown Land (UCL), Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) reserve and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's).

It has a relatively small population of 45,000 people mostly resident in Kalgoorlie/Boulder.

The GNRBA covers 9 local government areas and borders the Northern Territory and South Australia. It is surrounded by large areas of UCL, some of which is determined Native Title.

The GNRBA region has by far the greatest complexity due to the large areas of UCL which are generally unmanaged, provide habitat for Large Feral herbivores and are the source of reinvasion into adjacent pastoral properties.

The presence of UCL has a significant impact on the GNRBA's ability to manage biosecurity issues in the region and ensures that the GNRBA needs to be entirely reactive to pests and invasive weeds.

The impact of LFH in the GNRBA varies, however it is heaviest around Wiluna, Laverton and the Nullarbor.

The GNRBA's exposure to desert UCL makes it particularly vulnerable to feral camels, which are regularly moving into the pastoral zone.

Feral donkeys and feral horses are also prevalent in some areas, impacting heavily on the environment and pastoral production.

The GNRBA has worked closely with the Australian Feral Camel Management Project (AFCMP) in 2011-13. Over 25,000 feral camels were removed from the UCL around the GNRBA in this period. Since this time the GNRBA has developed and maintained partnerships with Wiluna Shire, Desert Support Services (DSS) and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to continue running annual aerial control programs.

The Large Feral Herbivore Management Plan is designed to be effective over the entire GNRBA region, including all land uses and types. Fully implemented, and driven by stakeholders, the plan focuses on integrated management of LFH.

## 3 Mission Statement

The GNRBA will work collaboratively with pastoralists, land managers, Shires and other stakeholders to reduce LFH densities and their consequent impact on pastoral production throughout its area.

The GNRBA is committed to an integrated LFH pest management strategy that uses the full range of management options available.

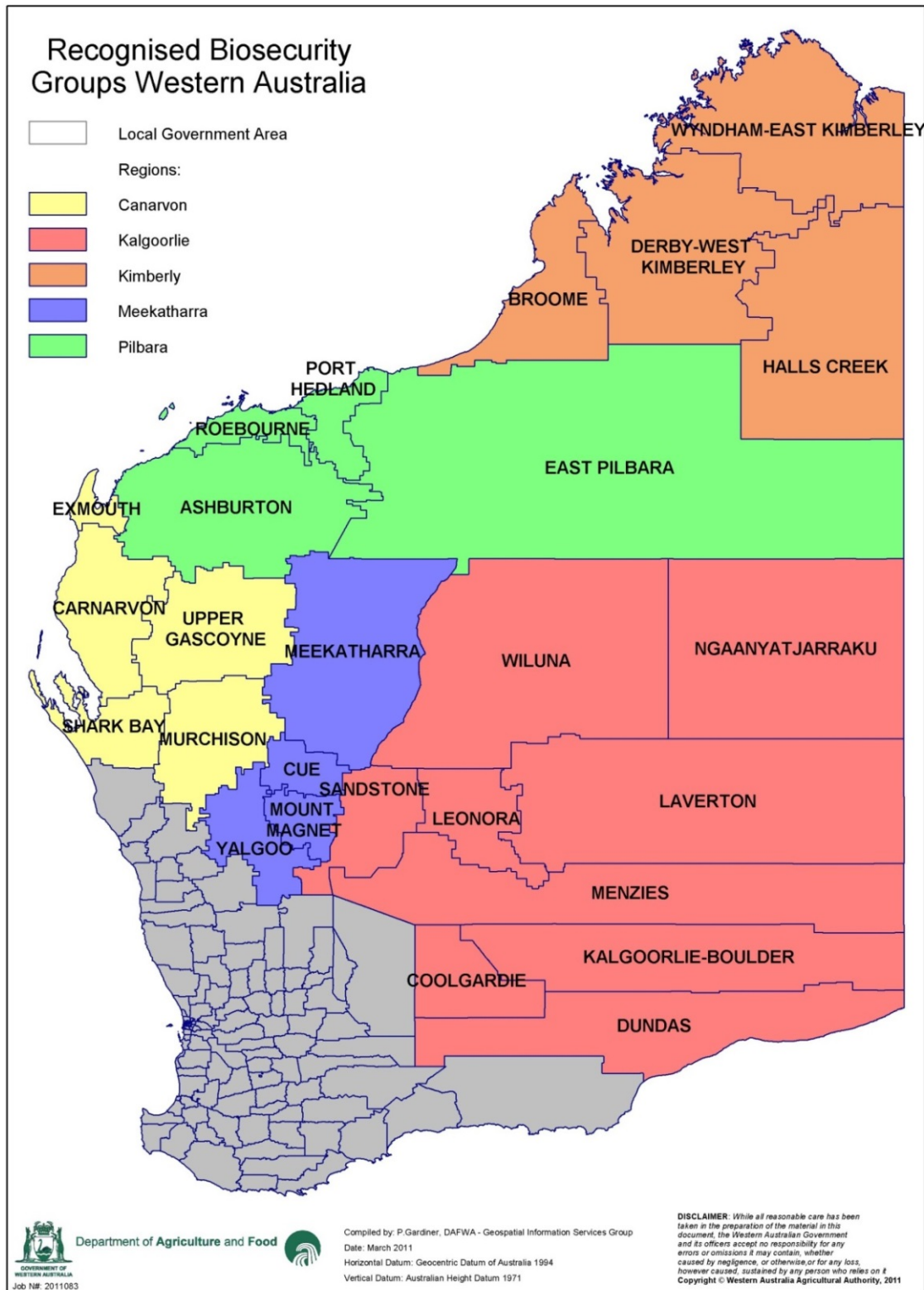


Figure 1: Recognised Biosecurity Groups in WA

## 4 GNRBA Area

The GNRBA area covers approximately 933,000 square kilometres and incorporates 100 pastoral properties. Of these 100 pastoral properties, there is a mix of tenure ranging from pastoral lease, to mining leases, UCL, DBCA reserve and indigenous managed pastoral leases.

In addition to pastoralists, other stakeholders in the GNRBA area are listed in the table below:

**Table 1: GNRBA stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Contact Details
Goldfields Nullarbor Rangelands Biosecurity Association	Michelle Donaldson PO Box 417 Kalgoorlie 6433 0439 363 263 <a href="mailto:ceo@gnrba.com.au">ceo@gnrba.com.au</a>
Department of Parks & Wildlife	Nigel Wessels Regional Manager DBCA Goldfields Region (08) 9080 5555 <a href="mailto:nigel.wessels@dbca.wa.gov.au">nigel.wessels@dbca.wa.gov.au</a>
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	DPIRD 3 Baron-Hay Crt, South Perth (08) 9368 3333
Rangelands NRM	Joy Sherlock RNRM Southern Rangelands 0419 328 535 <a href="mailto:joys@rangelandswa.com.au">joys@rangelandswa.com.au</a>
Mining Co	Various
Local Governments	<a href="mailto:ceo@menzies.wa.gov.au">ceo@menzies.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@leonora.wa.gov.au">ceo@leonora.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@sandstone.wa.gov.au">ceo@sandstone.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@wiluna.wa.gov.au">ceo@wiluna.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@coolgardie.wa.gov.au">ceo@coolgardie.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:shire@dundas.wa.gov.au">shire@dundas.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@laverton.wa.gov.au">ceo@laverton.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@ckb.wa.gov.au">ceo@ckb.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:ceo@ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au">ceo@ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au</a>
Traditional Owners	Birriliburu Native Title Determination and Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)  Spinifex Native Title Determination  Martu Native Title Determination  Ngadju Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance Pty Ltd	Ross Wood 0439 918 492 <a href="mailto:rosswood1@bigpond.com">rosswood1@bigpond.com</a>

## **5 Sub-Regions**

With the largest area of management of any Recognised Biosecurity Group in Western Australia, the GNRBA has created four sub-regions in which it operates, all of which have unique biosecurity management issues.

### **5.1 Nullarbor**

The Nullarbor is a fully productive pastoral zone with a mixture of cattle and sheep properties. It is entirely surrounded by UCL and is particularly exposed to feral camel impacts.

Feral camels are impacting right across the Nullarbor on pastoral infrastructure, including fences and water points. Feral Horses are an issue on the north east Nullarbor

### **5.2 Kalgoorlie**

The Kalgoorlie area is comprised of many former sheep pastoral leases that are destocked, leases owned by mining companies and kept unstocked or leases converted to cattle stations.

Feral camels have a low but increasing impact in this area, which is being monitored by the GNRBA and KPA.

### **5.3 Laverton/Sandstone /Leonora (LSL)**

The Laverton/Sandstone/Leonora sub-region comprises mostly ex sheep stations now running cattle, DBCA stations managed for conservation and mining company destocked stations.

Feral camel impact is high around Laverton (particularly on the eastern pastoral interface), but relatively low elsewhere in this sub-region. Feral Horses are impacting around Laverton. A small feral donkey population is resident north-west of Leonora, around Tarmoola Station.

### **5.4 Wiluna**

The Wiluna region is comprised of cattle stations with some DBCA stations managed for conservation.

Feral camel impact is very high in the north and east of this sub-region (including Lake Carnegie), and also impacting at low-moderate levels in the western portion of this sub-region. Feral horses are impacting heavily on all stations around Lake Carnegie. Feral donkeys are impacting in the north and east of this sub-region, particularly in the harder country.

### **5.5 Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions**

DBCA manage a range of ex-pastoral leases, conservation reserves and nature reserves throughout this area, on top of UCL. DBCA conduct limited LFH control activities and support the GNRBA with their on ground programs.

## **6 GNRBA Minimum Standards for Large Feral Herbivore Management**

The GNRBA Management committee has endorsed the national codes of practice as minimum standards for LFH management (see Appendix 1).

All legislation regarding use of firearms and animal welfare must be adhered to at all times. Shooting must be conducted in an ethical manner that reduces the likelihood of unnecessary suffering of animals.

The GNRBA supports the use of National Codes of Practice for the Humane Control of LFH and associated Standard Operating Procedures.

## **7 GNRBA Strategy, Roles and Responsibilities for LFH Management**

The GNRBA Management Committee is responsible for determining, on an annual basis, the rates and budget and how the budget is to be expended. In doing so, the GNRBA Management Committee determines the funds required to carry out biosecurity activity and where the money is spent. As a general rule, 6% of the GNRBA annual budget is spent on LFH control.

The GNRBA will assist members to manage LFH, wherever possible. **The GNRBA is committed to an integrated LFH pest management strategy that uses the full range of management options available.** The integrated program includes ground shooting, commercial contracts for LFH fresh meat baits and coordinated aerial shooting programs.

### **7.1 Ground shooting ammunition**

GNRBA members can receive a reimbursement of up to \$500/year for ammunition purchased for LFH control. This is negotiated directly with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the GNRBA

### **7.2 Commercial LFH meat contracts**

GNRBA members who have the capacity to cull, butcher, appropriately box and freeze LFH for use as baits can negotiate supply contracts with the CEO, should the demand exist.

The GNRBA has a range of LFH fresh meat bait suppliers culling LFH from the GNRBA region. For example, Gunnadorah Station supplies the GNRBA with LFH meat for the Nullarbor, all harvested on the northern and eastern Nullarbor. Glen Ayle station supplies the GNRBA with LFH meat for the northern Wiluna area. A pet meat operator operates around Laverton and Wiluna supplying the remaining Wiluna, Laverton, Sandstone, Leonora and Kalgoorlie areas.

### **7.3 Coordinated aerial shooting**

The GNRBA contracts DPIRD to conduct aerial shooting activities on an as required basis. Members on properties where LFH impacts are high can contact the CEO for inclusion in any aerial shooting activities being conducted in their area.

Aerial shooting is an expensive enterprise (up to \$10,000 per day) so the GNRBA actively seeks partners to assist in funding the activities, preferably Shires. Pastoralists are expected to contribute the avgas requirements for their station(s), with the GNRBA and partner(s) supplying the balance.

Aerial shooting is most effective in a landscape-scale coordinated approach.



## 8 Current aerial shooting programs

GNRBA, the Shire of Wiluna and DSS have collaborated and delivers an aerial shoot annually to GNRBA members north and east of Wiluna, principally around Lake Carnegie where feral camel, donkey and horse impacts are very high.

This combined with co-ordinated ground shoots has resulted in 8580 LFH removed from the landscape by the GNRBA (this does not include numbers shot by Pastoralists) from 2015-2019.



Figure 2: Aerial control of LFH near Wiluna

## 9 Impacts of LFH in Goldfields Nullarbor area

LFH have significant impacts on pastoral activities. These include:

- Land degradation, including (wind and water) erosion and soil compaction from over grazing (particularly around water points) and their deep foot pads;
- Competition with domestic stock for feed and water, particularly when/where it is scarce;
- Decrease in stock carrying capacity, particularly after damage to perennial grasses and herbage;
- Damage to pastoral infrastructure such as water infrastructure, fencing, mills, buildings etc;
- Fouling surface water and competition with domestic stock for drinking water;
- Drinking excessive pastoral water supply and creating possible animal welfare issues during droughts, wind droughts or other times of low pastoral water supply;
- Stressing stock animals at water points.



## **9.1 Other impacts**

LFH have impacts on the environment, not related to pastoralism. These include:

- Public health and road safety;
- Cultural impact on Aboriginal lands (eg rock holes, damaging sites of cultural significance);
- Environmental impact (eg badly damage native trees through over grazing).

## **10 Reporting of LFH Management Activities**

The GNRBA CEO will report LFH management activities to the GNRBA Management Committee and also to members at the AGM.

## **11 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The GNRBA carry out monitoring and evaluation of aerial shooting programs, and provide a written report for members. The GNRBA will continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of ammunition subsidies and commercial LFH contracts.

## **Appendix 1: GNRBA Minimum Standards For Large Feral Herbivore Management**

### **Standard Operating Procedures – 2011/12**

Ground shooting of feral horses  
Ground shooting of feral camels  
Ground shooting of feral donkeys

Aerial shooting of feral horses  
Aerial shooting of feral camels  
Aerial shooting of feral donkeys

### **Codes of Practice - 2012**

Model Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Feral Horses  
Model Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Feral Camels

These documents are available from the GNRBA