

Letter to the Editor, recreational hunting in NSW National Parks.

Nothing game about hunters!

Philip Creaghs recent letter to the BayPost (6-2-13) demonstrates that he is badly misinformed about the most effective means of feral animal control in NSW National Parks.

Effective feral animal control is about targeted programs that reduce feral animal populations by more than 50-90% in a short period. That is why park managers usually don't shoot foxes; poisoning and trapping are much more effective.

The Invasive Species Council (ISC) has produced several key documents that give a scientific critique of the effectiveness of volunteer/recreational hunting in controlling feral animals. The ISC has noted that genuine reductions in populations can only be achieved by sustained and carefully planned professional programs that meet specific targets for the numbers of feral animals removed. The ISC report titled "Is recreational hunting effective for feral animal control," states: To date, it is likely that greater harm than good has resulted from recreational hunting of feral animals, with most species having expanded in range and numbers despite hunting and, in some cases, because of hunting. The evidence indicates that recreational hunting is not effective as a major or primary method of feral animal control. Where there has been a comparison, professional cullers are far more effective.

The Friends of Durras see a conflict between the NSW governments aim of attracting increased visitors to national parks and the proposal to let hunters into the parks. Already, some shooters think they now have a free rein in parks and this is very concerning for the safety of park visitors and NPWS staff. Already there has been a number of illegal shooting incidents occurring in national park areas including a horrific incident where a horrified family were confronted by a group of hunters driving into a campground randomly shooting kangaroos. It seems that some in the hunting fraternity are under the impression that it is now "open season" in national parks.

No doubt most recreational hunters are decent human beings, though it is an odds-on bet that at least some aren't. None of this drivel about keeping the feral animals curbed-instead they should lobby their local member to increase funding for national parks if they are genuinely concerned. And spare us the image of the New Age Hunter, pitting nerve and sinew against unforgiving nature to bring home the bacon. How many, if given the opportunity would blast a lumbering pachyderm-a herbivore no less-into oblivion for the thrill? Small "h" hunters kill for the thrill, there can be no other conclusion, something we should bear in mind when we next step into our National Parks here in NSW.

John Perkins
Convenor, Friends of Durras
02 4478 6428 0427 009 044