

Phillip Island (Millowl) Wildlife Plan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PHILLIP ISLAND (MILLOWL) WILDLIFE PLAN?

The distinctive coastal and rural landscapes of Phillip Island support an array of native wildlife, agricultural and recreational activities that are important to the Island's identity as a tourist destination and a place to live.

Unfortunately, there are current and emerging challenges associated with native wildlife and other values and land uses including biodiversity conservation, agriculture, cultural values, buildings and infrastructure, amenity, public safety and animal welfare.

The plan aims to achieve a sustainable population of native wildlife that allows environmental, social, cultural, economic and farming activities to continue on Phillip Island. The plan will achieve this by proactive community engagement and evidence-based approaches to manage current and emerging issues. This includes strategic and coordinated approaches to:

- Community education on ways to live with and manage wildlife.
- Supporting the aspirations of the Traditional Owners through opportunities for involvement in land management and access to wildlife.
- Providing opportunities for community to access and experience wildlife and nature in a sustainable and ethical way.
- Evidence-based decision making through research and monitoring.
- Development and testing of alternative methods and processes for managing wildlife.
- Supporting the agricultural community to maintain viable agriculture.

The plan complements current strategies and plans that contribute to the management and conservation of biodiversity and wildlife and will contribute towards balancing the needs of wildlife and the community over the next five years. There is already a lot of work being undertaken to support wildlife on Phillip Island and care has been taken to ensure this plan does not duplicate this effort.

HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

The plan was developed collaboratively through a steering committee with representatives from Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC), Phillip Island Nature Parks (the Nature Parks) and landowners.

The steering committee has worked closely with the community and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) to ensure their views and aspirations are incorporated into the plan.

The community has contributed to the development of the plan through meetings and workshops with individuals and stakeholder groups to understand community views on impacts and potential solutions.

Broader public feedback on the draft plan was also sought through the Engage Victoria website and online community consultation sessions.

Various communication channels (e.g. emails to stakeholders, Engage Victoria web page, social and local media) were used to keep the community informed throughout the development of the plan.

HOW WILL THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED AND RESOURCED?

Successful implementation of the plan will rely on a collaborative effort by key agencies and the community. There are clear roles and responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and review of the plan.

The plan will be resourced through contributions from the key lead agencies and partners.

A monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan will be developed to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose throughout its implementation.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Millowl (Phillip Island) the Bunurong People. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Phillip Island (Millowl) Wildlife Plan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN WILL THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

The plan will be launched in 2021 and delivered over five-years, with regular reviews to ensure it remains current and relevant.

WHAT ARE THE KEY WILDLIFE SPECIES THE PLAN'S ACTIONS WILL COVER?

Three key native wildlife species; Cape Barren Geese, Swamp Wallabies and Common Brushtail Possums are the current focus of this plan due to increases in these populations and concerns raised by the community regarding their impacts on agriculture, environment, public safety, amenity and animal welfare.

Any emerging wildlife issues will be captured through the monitoring and review processes of the plan to ensure they are addressed.

WHY DOES THE PLAN NOT INCLUDE THREATENED SPECIES AND PEST ANIMALS?

The plan does not include specific actions for the recovery and management of threatened species already on Phillip Island (e.g. Hooded Plovers) or the existing works to control non-native and pest species (e.g. rabbits). Links with other programs and conservation actions (e.g. cat regulations) are acknowledged and supported.

Pest species such as rabbits, foxes and cats are not included the plan as the focus is on native wildlife and issues with pest species are addressed through existing works delivered through the Integrated Pest Animal Strategies and work undertaken through Nature Parks and Landcare.

HOW ARE THE ACTIONS IN THIS PLAN DIFFERENT TO WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The plan presents a more proactive, coordinated and place-based approach that balances the needs of wildlife and the community. The actions in the plan are strategic and focused on delivering long-term outcomes and enabling better collaboration across key agencies and groups and the community.

The plan promotes positive attitudes towards wildlife and nature by informing, engaging and inspiring participation from the community to contribute to healthy and sustainable wildlife populations on Phillip Island.

A key focus of the plan is to continue to build knowledge and understanding of key wildlife populations and their impacts to inform evidence-based decision making to ensure the effective management of wildlife on Phillip Island.

WHAT MANAGEMENT METHODS WILL BE USED AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WILDLIFE?

The plan commits to exploring new and innovative management options that are effective and improve animal welfare outcomes. This includes, trialling innovative options for active wildlife management such as, establishment of alternative fresh water sources for wildlife away from roadsides to reduce collisions, controlling populations of Cape Barren Geese through egg removal and decoy crops, the use of browsing repellents (e.g. Sen-tree™) on revegetation areas to reduce impacts of browsing.

Current approaches to managing the impacts of wildlife are reactive, occurring when or after the impact has occurred and are proving to be ineffective, impractical or prohibitive (e.g. lethal control, exclusion or scaring, translocation). Lethal control is only available as a last option on Phillip Island through the Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) system.

The plan supports local landholders seeking alternate and more effective means of managing impacts as well as supporting them to identify and take advantage of opportunities to adapt and diversify farming practices that contribute to their sustainability and to support wildlife conservation.

WHAT IS AN AUTHORITY TO CONTROL WILDLIFE (ATCW)?

Under the Wildlife Act 1975, it is illegal for anyone to control (take or destroy) wildlife (including eggs) without an authorisation to take or destroy wildlife known as an Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW). An ATCW allows wildlife to be controlled in certain circumstances, where the wildlife is posing a risk to human health or safety, damaging property, crops or pasture or impacting on biodiversity. Wherever feasible and practical, DELWP encourages the use of non-lethal means of controlling wildlife.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Millowl (Phillip Island) the Bunurong People. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Phillip Island (Millowl) Wildlife Plan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO MANAGES WILDLIFE ON PHILLIP ISLAND?

The conservation and management of wildlife is a shared responsibility by all members of the Victorian community. Achieving the best for our wildlife, the environment, public amenity, safety and industry (tourism and agriculture) requires communities, government and industries to work together and share the responsibility.

All native wildlife is protected in Victoria and it is an offence to kill, take, control or harm wildlife under the Wildlife Act 1975. DELWP regulates protection and use of wildlife consistent with the Wildlife Act in Victoria, including on Phillip Island.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS GUIDING THE ACTIONS OF THE PLAN?

The development of the plan has been guided by existing and ongoing research undertaken by independent universities and agencies such as the Nature Parks and BCSC. This includes research on the populations of key species and their impacts. The key findings of this work have been included in the case studies and appendices in the plan.

A key focus of the plan is to continue to build knowledge and understanding of key wildlife populations and their impacts to inform **evidence-based decision making**. The research and development tasks will be delivered, reviewed and communicated effectively to ensure the information is credible, reliable and transparent.

DOES THE PLAN CONSIDER TRANSLOCATION FOR NATIVE SPECIES?

Translocation is not included as an option in the plan as the translocation of non-threatened wildlife is generally not supported by DELWP. This approach can rarely be successfully applied and can result in fatality for the animal. Animal welfare for translocated wildlife is compromised by;

- Stress of capture and transportation.
- Competition (sometimes aggressive) at new sites over food, shelter, territory etc.
- Increased vulnerability to predators, vehicles and other threats while seeking new nesting places and territory.
- Risks to existing populations e.g. introduction of disease.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN DO TO ADDRESS ROAD SAFETY?

The plan will address the issue of road safety through supporting existing projects and new trials. Existing projects include virtual fencing alongside high-risk roadsides, Regional Roads Victoria's (RRV) review of road speeds and ongoing research commissioned to investigate wildlife roadkill numbers and solutions.

The plan will assess the effectiveness of the virtual fence trial and provide input into RRV's Speed Review Communications and Engagement Plan. The plan will also establish a trial for the creation of alternative water sources for wildlife away from roadsides. Opportunities to raise awareness of the issue throughout the community and its visitors may also be identified through the delivery of the plan's community education program.

WHY DOESN'T THE PLAN FOCUS MORE ON INCREASING AND PROTECTING NATURAL HABITAT, PARTICULARLY FROM DEVELOPMENT?

Protecting natural habitat and reducing impacts on wildlife from development is important in protecting the welfare and maintaining viable populations of native species on Phillip Island. However, while implementation of the plan will support these objectives, they are already addressed through planning and approvals processes managed by BCSC and various supporting strategies and plans. These include, the Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes, the Bass Coast Biodiversity Biolinks Plan and the Nature Parks' 5-year Conservation Plan (2019-2023) and 30 Year Conservation Vision – Beyond the Horizon.

DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE WILDLIFE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION?

The plan has a focus on proactive actions to protect animal welfare through improvements in wildlife management. Examples of these actions include reducing wildlife collisions with vehicles and innovative and humane methods to reduce negative impacts on crops, pastures and other assets. It does not include new actions for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation as this is already undertaken across Phillip Island through the Nature Parks, Wildlife Victoria volunteers and local community shelters.

www.delwp.vic.gov.au

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Millowl (Phillip Island) the Bunurong People. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.