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ERADICATE

definition: (v) to completely remove a pest from an area

a newsletter for the
Invasive Species Branch

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www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/invasivespecies

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Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Not wanted: Rainbow lorikeets

Rainbow lorikeets are a controlled animal under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. Importation is prohibited in Tasmania.

Who's a pretty pest? Rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) are a serious threat to Tasmania's native biodiversity, environment and agriculture. If they were to establish here they would compete for food and other resources with native parrots, such as the musk lorikeet, swift parrot and green rosella.

Rainbow lorikeets also pose a potential disease risk as they are carriers of Psittacine beak and feather disease.

Rainbow lorikeets are a serious threat to Tasmania's agricultural industries. They have the potential to have high impact on cherry, apple, pear, stone fruit and grape crops.

Tasmania has small numbers of rainbow lorikeets in the Hobart and Launceston areas, and along the north west coast. It is suspected that the majority of these are intentional or accidental releases from private collections, although some may have flown across from Victoria.

Rainbow lorikeets are **NOT WANTED** in Tasmania.

What to look for…

Adult rainbow lorikeets are approximately 30 cm long with a 45 cm wingspan. They are brightly coloured with a blue head (which distinguishes them from all other Tasmanian parrots), green wings, tail and back, and an orange-yellow breast. Juveniles look very similar to adults but are duller in colour.

Rainbow lorikeets have a swift direct flight with rapid whirring wing beats and display flashes of dark green and bright red. Rainbow lorikeets will screech continuously while in flight, when at food sources and at roost sites.

What to do…

Do not let captive rainbow lorikeets loose in Tasmania. The community should be on alert for this species and report all sightings to **1300 369 688.**

Rainbow lorikeet.
Image: Department of Agriculture and Food (WA).

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REPORT FOX SIGHTINGS & POSSIBLE FOX ACTIVITY

1300 369 688

CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

Tasmanian Government

Progress in gorse biocontrol project

Dr John Ireson,
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA)

Gorse is a significant agricultural and environmental weed, and is listed as a Weed of National Significance (WoNS). It is a major land management issue in Tasmania but some recent work on biological control with the gorse soft shoot moth (*Agonopterix umbellana*) is showing some promising results.

The moth was first released by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) Weed Biological Control Unit at a site near Jericho in 2007. Site monitoring has shown that the moth has increased to high densities over at least a hectare (actually spreading over about two hectares) and was causing considerable damage to new growth. Although the moth is showing significant potential as a biological control agent for gorse it is initially very slow to spread, which is often typical of weed biological control agents.

Larvae and pupae from the moth are being collected from the Jericho site and transferred to other parts of Tasmania, as well as to South Australia and Victoria, in order to accelerate its establishment and spread. The aim is to get the moth established at as many sites as practical and as soon as possible. It is hoped that additional government funding will assist in this process and the progress of this work.

The TIA Weed Biological Control Unit is currently targeting eleven species of pasture weeds and five environmental weeds. For further information visit **www.tia.tas.edu.au**

The gorse biological control program is a collaborative project between the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, DPI Victoria and the South Australian Research & Development Institute. Funding support has been provided by the Australian Government.

Top: Gorse soft shoot moth larva. Image Wade Chatterton TIA.

Bottom: Soft shoot moth damage to gorse.Image Richard Holloway TIA.

Your invasive questions

In this forum we address your questions about invasive species issues.

Q. What is Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease?

A. Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD), also known as Rabbit Calicivirus Disease, is a viral disease which affects only European rabbits. The virus does not affect humans or other animals.

In Tasmania, RHD virus may be used to control rabbit numbers in areas where other techniques are unsuitable and there has been no evidence of RHD for over 12 months. RHD is widespread in the Tasmanian rabbit population.

RHD virus is introduced on carrot baits following pre-feeding to attract rabbits to the bait. Use of the virus is restricted to trained DPIPWE staff and other people who are deemed competent.

Q. What are Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)?

A. These are weeds that are considered to require a national response for their management due to their degree of invasiveness, high potential to spread, and their high social, environmental and economic impacts.

There are currently ten WoNS listed for Tasmania including gorse, willows, serrated tussock, Chilean needle grass, bridle creeper, blackberry and boneseed. A number of weeds have recently been added to the national WoNS list, of which, boxthorn, English broom and Montpellier broom occur in Tasmania.

Locations of

Fox Activity in Tasmania

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE
(1998 to 31 March 2013)

Carcasses	4
Skull	1
Blood	1
Footprints	2
Scats	61

www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fox

Evidence update (as at 31 March 2013)

No physical items indicating fox activity in Tasmania have been collected since July 2011. No evidence of fox activity has been identified from any area baited since commencement of Stage 2 operations.

68 hotline reports were received from members of the public during January – March 2013. For the same period, 85 reports were received in 2012 and 98 reports in 2011.

Weed management after fire

The risk of weed invasion and the impact on farms and the environment dramatically increases after bushfire. Resource availability increases following a fire, which generally favours weed species and can lead to burned areas becoming heavily infested if quick management action is not taken.

After a fire, it is important to have a weed management strategy for burned and adjacent areas in place as soon as possible. Development of an integrated weed management plan for burned areas will help the land manager prevent weed establishment, mitigate the reestablishment of declared weeds, and establish and maintain healthy plant communities.

The overall goal is to enhance the reestablishment of desirable plants and healthy plant communities and reduce the opportunities for weeds to establish.

POST-FIRE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Step up surveillance for new weed outbreaks and be suspicious of unfamiliar plants. Identify suspect plants as soon as possible (contact the ISB for help with identification).
- ☐ Buy certified weed-free fodder and seed where possible. Keep records of where fodder and seed is purchased.
- ☐ Feed out fodder in a confined area, away from drainage lines to reduce the likelihood of weeds being spread.
- ☐ Quarantine new livestock in a single location for 14 days to allow time for viable seed to pass through the animal.
- ☐ Check for weed seeds in fleece and continue to check for weeds in areas with new stock.
- ☐ Monitor stock routes and roads for up to 12 months after fire to detect new weeds.
- ☐ Ensure all vehicles and equipment of agencies, contractors and advisers are clean and weed free before entering and leaving your property.
- ☐ Seed, mulch, soil and rock to be used for rehabilitation programs should be free of weed seed and propagules.
- ☐ Increase integrated weed control treatments - the first two years are critical.

Serrated tussock can spread rapidly after fire. Image Tasphoto Services, DPIPWE.

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'Like' the Tasmanian Invasive Species Facebook page to receive regular updates on invasive species issues in Tasmania.

Website

Facebook

Fox Program 2012 summary

During 2012, the strategic fox baiting program completed treatment of over 255 000 ha of core fox habitat in rolling baiting fronts in the south and north of Tasmania.

The fox baiting program involved over 800 properties and seven local council areas, with the support of key industry and conservation stakeholders, local councils and the community being vital for this progress.

Post bait monitoring using scat detector dog teams was completed in over 150 000 ha of treated core fox habitat during 2012. No physical evidence of fox activity was identified in any baited region. Investigations of fox activity reports received during 2012 similarly identified no physical evidence of fox activity.

Baiting operations involved large numbers of properties during 2012 posing some significant administrative challenges in managing the community consultation process to obtain property access permission. Baiting operations were also impacted by weather conditions during winter and spring of 2012. This resulted in baiting being suspended due to difficulties in property access (by vehicle and on foot) and the potential for saturated soils to reduce lethality of fox baits. Baiting operations recommenced during October and November once weather conditions were suitable for baiting.

The FOX OUT hotline received an average of six fox activity reports per week during 2012.

Detector dog doing post bait monitoring. Image DPIPWE.

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