



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter

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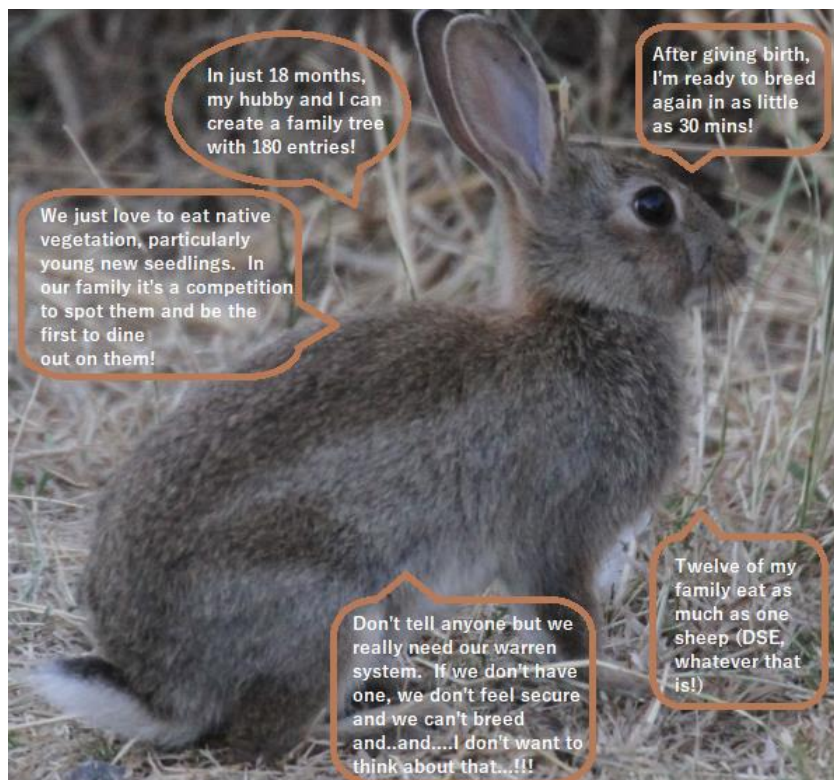
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Rabbit...friend or foe (to the Australian landscape)?



What can BRLG members do about rabbits? Read on...we've got resources to help you!

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Pest of the Month

This month's award goes to the *wascally wabbit*. The European Rabbit, whilst appearing soft, cuddly and endearing is one of the most damaging species introduced into the Australian landscape.

Twenty-four wild rabbits released at Winchelsea in 1859 grew to 10 billion in 1945 prior to the release of myxomatosis (which killed 99.9% reducing the population to 1 million). In 2013, the population had climbed again to 200 million (20 million in Victoria).

Large populations of rabbits are relatively easy to detect as the damage they cause is usually wide spread and highly visible. However the damage caused by low density rabbit populations can be harder to identify – and may be more serious (eg preventing regeneration of an endangered plant species). Rabbit numbers, and changes in their impact, can vary dramatically in a short period of time.

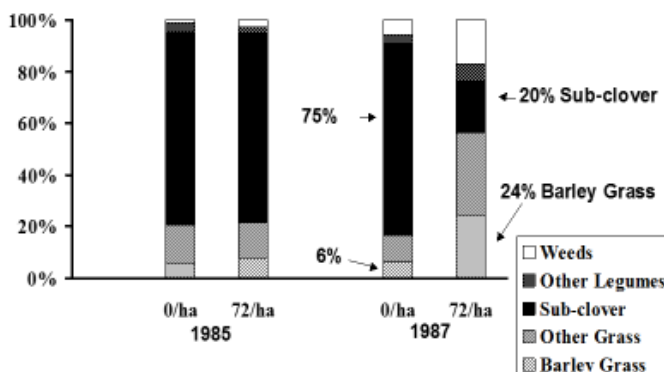
Reproduction



Breeding Cycle.....

- ⊗ June: 20% does pregnant
- ⊗ July: 1st litters 4-6 born
- ⊗ August: 90% pregnant. Dispersal may begin
- ⊗ Sept.: 90% preg./ lactating
- ⊗ Oct.: Season full swing.
- ⊗ Nov.: Season slowing
- ⊗ Dec.: Last litters weaned. Some mxyo present
- ⊗ Jan.: Season ends
- ⊗ Feb: Dispersal continues. Mxyo present
- ⊗ March: Low feed. Reduced survival opportunities
- ⊗ April: Autumn break
- ⊗ May: Early breeding
- ⊗ Breeding can be 9-12 months in southern Vic.

Impact of Rabbits on Pasture Composition



(Croft. et al 2002)

Help us control rabbits in our area! Read on for control strategies for your property. The best time for treating rabbits is the next few months when the population is all out of the burrows feeding and feed sources are reduced.

Thanks to Tim Bloomfield for above slides

What is the rabbit problem?

- Just **1 to 3** rabbits per hectare will stop regeneration of *Allocasuaria* sp. (eg. buloke)
- Rabbits stop regen of *Callitris* sp. (native pines)
- Rabbits change the landscape by selectively grazing (nutritious/edible) and not eating thistles, blackberry, boxthorn, gorse, serrated tussock, briars and other weeds
- Rabbits make land weedy & will make more & more harbour for themselves

Best Practice Rabbit Management

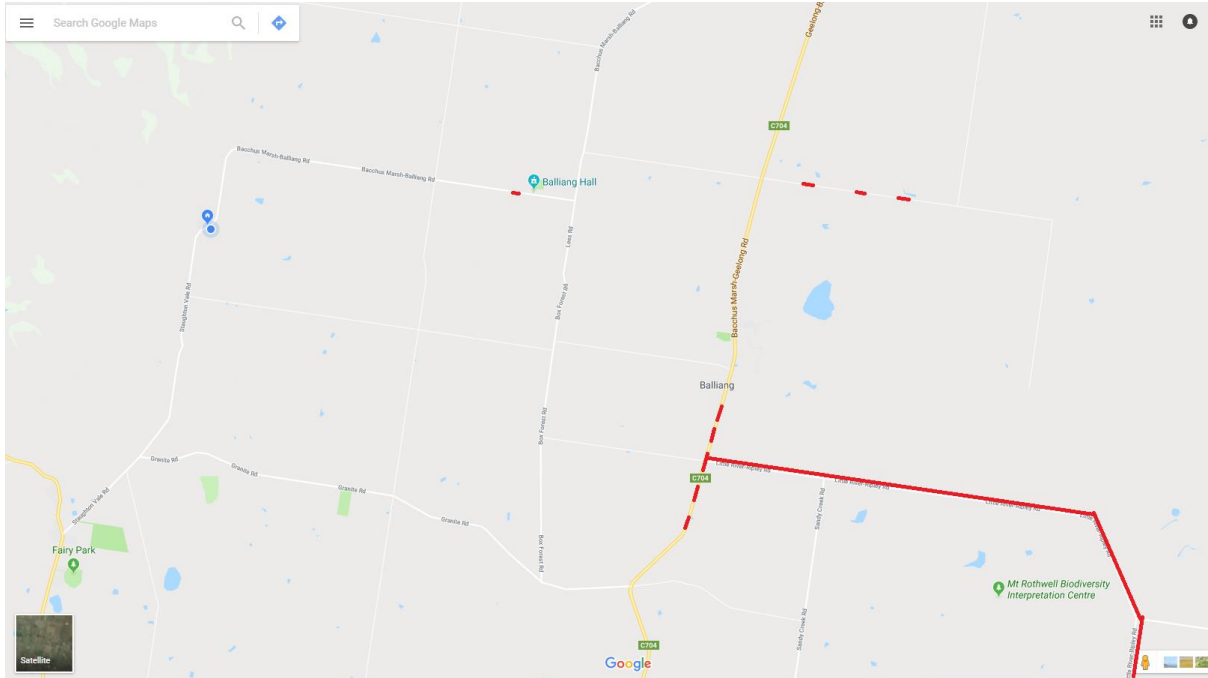
The Moorabool Landcare Network has led the development of an excellent [Rabbit Management Guide](#). Have a read as it is full of practical information. The [Pest Smart website](#) is another comprehensive toolbox of rabbit control information, including the latest on rabbit virus release.

The key steps to effective rabbit control – *and how the BRLG can help you implement them* – are summarised below:

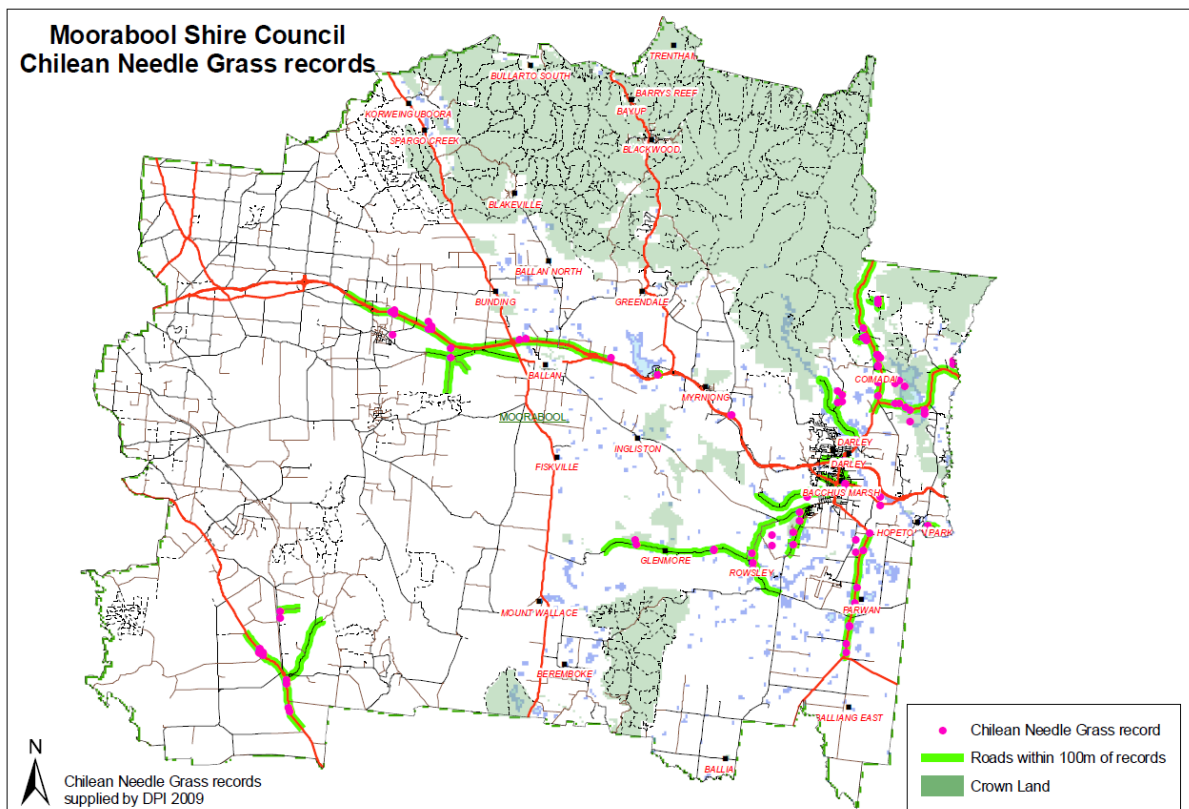
Steps for Effective Rabbit Control	More info	How the BRLG can help:
1. Assess, map and record the problem	<p>Are those rabbits really coming from your neighbour? Take the time to look for rabbit warrens and record where they are so you can later check if your control strategies are working.</p> <p>A great method is to do a spotlight count along a fixed path around your property and then repeat this after implementing your control method/s.</p> <p>Also see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid rabbit assessment guide • The FeralScan website and app 	<p>There are various free or inexpensive apps for your phone to record GPS locations of rabbit warren entrances.</p> <p>Contact us if you need help with setting them up or you would like an electronic or hard copy A3 aerial map print out of your property to mark up.</p>
2. Bait with Pindone bait or 1080 to reduce (but not eliminate) rabbit numbers	<p>Specific licencing is required to use 1080 but any landholder is able to access and use Pindone rabbit bait. Unlike 1080, there is an antidote available for Pindone if it is inadvertently eaten by a pet.</p> <p>LAYING OF BAIT: bait should be placed in a shallow trail, made using a ripper, grader blade or by hand using a mattock or garden tool. Rabbits are attracted to disturbed ground, but may take a night or two to start eating the carrot.</p> <p>FREE FEED: A bit of free feed certainly helps to get the rabbits used to going to the trail, and helps you see where the rabbits are. It means that you don't waste valuable Pindone from your first day's poisoning. You must do all three days baiting as Pindone is a cumulative poison.</p>	<p>In conjunction with Maude Landcare, the BRLG can help with the purchase (see below), collection and delivery of Pindone bait to your property on each of the following dates:</p> <p>FRIDAY 9 FEBRUARY MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY</p> <p>If you are interested, email newsletter.brlg@gmail.com or phone Robert on 0401-404-899 by Thursday February 1 with the quantity you require for each feed</p> <p>PRICES are: 20KG BAG \$69 10KG BAG \$39 5KG BAG \$24</p>
3. Remove surface harbour	Remove boxthorn, gorse, blackberries, rubbish heaps and access under sheds to drive more rabbits underground.	
4. Destroy the rabbit warrens! Ripping wherever possible, otherwise fumigate .	<p>The most important step of all is to demolish the hotel. Don't leave the five star accommodation in place for the next wandering rabbit to occupy and breed!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch this video on single tyne ripping. 	
<p>Special offer for BRLG Members: Up to \$200 total per BRLG member family is available to fund the purchase of rabbit bait (step 2) or towards a contractor to rip or fumigate rabbit warrens (step 4). Funding provided following provision of receipts to the BRLG Treasurer on or before 30 April 2018.</p>		

Report back: Chilean Needlegrass

The last newsletter's *Weed of the Month*, Chilean Needlegrass, has been seen stealthily creeping into our community. Here's where you have observed it along roadsides. Please email through any further additions to newsletter.brlg@gmail.com. We will publish this map again next spring.



To provide a sense of the progress of this invasive weed, back in 2009, DPI commissioned a survey of Chilean needlegrass along roadsides in Moorabool Council (only). Here's where it was then...



BRLG 20th Anniversary Celebrations

The Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group celebrated its 20th anniversary just before Christmas on December 15th. A relaxed night was had by all with the highlight being BRLG President James Bufton's launch of the world premier screening of a video outlining the Group's achievements. These include 52kms of fencing along Little River and the planting of 150,000 trees.

If you missed the evening, you can enjoy the video from our website <http://brlg.org.au/>.

Chris Winfield who has been a dedicated Treasurer and active Committee Member over the whole 20 years received a well-deserved recognition award from both BRLG and the Geelong Landcare Network.



Wine of the Month



Okay, it's not a wine but still worthy of the award.

Matso's, iconic brewery in Western Australia's north west, produce an extremely refreshing ginger beer that is the perfect beverage for a hot summer's day.

Or, for drinking when you are pondering that question that's been bugging you for ages, "What the #@% is a phascogale?!"

Phascogales in Balliang

Brush-tailed phascogales are squirrel-sized marsupial mice with a head and body length (excluding the tail) of between 160-230mm. Tail length varies from 170-220mm, or roughly half of body length. They are a deep grey color and creamy, pale white on the underside. The tail is dark black and it is characterized by having long, black, silky hairs that are erected during normal activity producing a "bottle-brush effect". The erected tail hairs is thought to distract the attention of predators away from the body.

Phascogales are rare in the Brisbane Ranges National Park but there has been a recent sighting near Gilmores Road. Colin Cook from the Friends of the Brisbane Ranges has been setting up camera traps and is interested to hear from anyone who may have seen a "rat with a dunny brush tail"! Learn more about the [FoBR Phascogale Project here](#).

WANTED

Brush-tailed Phascogale



aka Phascogale tapoatafa

Brush-tailed Phascogales are a little known threatened species that occurs across much of central and north-east Victoria. The Friends of Brisbane Ranges (FoBR) is undertaking projects to protect and restore the phascogale and its habitat. We are a member of the working group that oversees and promotes the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Plan for the phascogale.

We are often asked "What's a phascogale? Never heard of them." We then have to describe the phascogale (rat-sized, hyperactive and a tail like a dunny brush), why we work so hard to help it (disappearing from much of its range due to habitat loss and degradation) and what can be done to turn the situation around (revegetation, prevention of "tidying up" of habitats, nest boxes and just plain awareness).



We would like to hear of any sightings of these animals and would also like to be notified if you find any dead animals, as we can take a tissue sample for DNA testing.

For reporting sightings, or for any further information, please contact:

Colin Cook
0417 770 765

Friends of Brisbane Ranges
friends.brisbane.ranges@gmail.com
<http://fobr.org.au/>



SWIFFT State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams



Landcare Resources

I want to know about...	Here is a good place to start...
Aboriginal cultural heritage location mapping	https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/heritage-tools-and-publications/heritage-tools.html then select "online map tool"
Biodiversity mapping and recording	http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit http://natureshare.org.au/ http://avh.chah.org.au/
Boxthorn	http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/africanboxthorn/docs/African_boxthorn-national_best_practice_manual.pdf
Chilean needle grass	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-neesiana.pdf
Feral goat control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/feral-goat/
Fox control	https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-fox/
Gorse	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/u-europaeus.pdf
Landcare networks	Moorabool Landcare Network Geelong Landcare Network
Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Grants	https://www.melbournewater.com.au/community-and-education/apply-funding/stream-frontage-management-program
Rabbit management	http://www.mln.org.au/images/PDFS/rabbitactionguide.pdf https://www.pestsmart.org.au/pest-animal-species/european-rabbit/
Serrated tussock	https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/n-trichotoma.pdf
Weeds - identification and control	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/a-z-of-weeds
Weed status in Victoria	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plant-classifications http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria-from-pest-animals-and-weeds/legislation-policy-and-permits/declared-noxious-weeds-and-pest-animals-in-victoria

Last Laugh

Don't worry about that rumoured black panther in the Brisbane Ranges, if you spot one of these whilst undertaking your spotlight count of rabbits, we really do have something to worry about!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Fo236Hfaq5>