



ACT
Government

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PEST ANIMALS DECLARATION

CONSULTATION SUMMARY
REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the consultation process that the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (the Directorate) carried out in relation to Proposed Amendments to the Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration (the pest animals declaration).

A community consultation period commenced on 20 May 2019 and concluded on 10 July 2019.

This summary report provides an overview of the consultation data received and a summary of the major issues raised.

CONSULTATION AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The consultation and promotional methods used were designed to meet the Directorate's objective to ensure stakeholders' views, concerns and ideas were both heard and captured.

The following opportunities were implemented to allow people to present their views:

MEDIA RELEASE

A media release promoted the consultation period on the pest animals declaration and informed the public how to get involved. The media release resulted in a 2CC radio interview featuring the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman.

YOURSAY WEBSITE

The consultation period was promoted on the ACT Government's engagement website, YourSay, as one of two initiatives to manage invasive animals to protect our biodiversity, ecosystems and way of life. Consultation was supported by a discussion paper outlining the rationale behind the proposed amendments to the pest animals declaration and the species to which they would apply.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Directorate posts informed the public of the proposed amendments to the pest animals declaration and how to get involved.

STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION

Key stakeholders were notified of the consultation via email and were provided with a link to YourSay, a letter of invitation to attend a public consultation session and the discussion paper.

Key stakeholders included pet and aquarium traders, identified fish, bird, reptile and deer interest groups, selected community councils, animal exhibitors, research institutions, peak animal welfare, conservation and invasive species organisations, the NSW and Australian Governments, the aboriginal community and selected non-government land managers.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SESSION

The community were invited to a consultation session through YourSay and letters of invitation to key stakeholder groups. Attendees received a presentation on the proposed amendments followed by the opportunity to have their questions addressed.

Individual meetings were also organised with key stakeholder groups on request.

PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSE RATE

The YourSay site was viewed 1964 times by 1170 visitors during the consultation period; 49 submissions were received, with additional comments captured during the public consultation session and meetings with key stakeholder groups.

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS

Submissions and comments provided a range of views on the proposed amendments including both support for, and opposition to, the declaration of certain invasive species or groups of species as pest animals.

ISSUES RAISED

Topics raised that were within the scope of the consultation process (as outlined in the discussion paper) included:

Birds

- Opposition to, concern about and support for the declaration of Indian/Common Peafowl as pest animals, noting the ACT Government has given assurances that the declaration of peafowl would have no impact on the Narrabundah peafowl population
- Opposition to and support for the declaration of the Indian/Common Myna, Common/Eurasian Blackbird, Canada Goose, House Sparrow, Spotted Dove and Starling as pest animals, including their prohibition from supply or keeping.
- Opposition to, concern about and support for the declaration of Indian Ringneck Parakeet/Rose-ringed Parakeet, Alexandrine Parrot, Monk Parakeet, European Goldfinch and Barbary Dove as pest animals, with proposals that wild birds of Indian Ringneck Parakeet, European Goldfinch and Barbary Dove also should be prohibited from supply or keeping.
- Support for the declaration of Northern Wild Mallard and Wild Rock Dove/Wild Common Pigeon as pest animals, and a proposal that wild birds of these species also should be prohibited from supply or keeping.
- Concern about the prohibition of any birds kept as aviary birds from supply or keeping.
- A general concern that declaration of aviary birds as pest animals may lead to their prohibition from supply or keeping in future.
- Concern about the application of the national risk assessment process to caged birds.
- A recommendation that 'wild' be used to denote species of birds declared as pest animals that are also commonly kept as captive aviary populations.

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Other species

- Support for the declaration of species known to be invasive, or those that have recently been detected as introduced animals, in NSW and the ACT.
- Support for declaration of the Large Earth Bumblebee and Cane Toad as pest animals that are notifiable on detection and prohibited from supply or keeping.
- Support for declaration of the Argentine Ant as prohibited from supply or keeping, and a proposal that it should also be declared notifiable on detection.
- A range of potential regulatory impacts and enforcement issues that could arise from declaring new fish species and invertebrates as prohibited from supply or keeping and from declaring most prohibited fish and invertebrates to be also notifiable on detection (for consistency with NSW).
- Opposition to the current declaration status and future notifiable status of Alligator Gars (*Atractosteus spatula* syn. *Lepisosteus spatula*) and Sutchi Catfish (*Pangasianodon hypophthalmus*), which are included on the National Noxious Fish List and are already prohibited from supply or keeping in the ACT but are not prohibited in NSW.
- Concern about potential limitations to keeping animals for research and exhibition purposes in the ACT should they be prohibited from supply or keeping prior to the enactment of new ACT biosecurity legislation.
- Transitional arrangements for the declaration of pest animals including the risk of animal owners releasing animals into the environment and euthanasia of surrendered or seized animals.
- A range of comments relating to application of the current legislation and the declaration process, including support for harmonisation of regulatory requirements with NSW and Victoria.
- Opposition to declaration as pest animals of certain species of mammals (e.g. *Murexia* spp., *Antidorcas marsupialis*) and geckoes, skinks, lizards and tortoises listed in Table 3 of the discussion paper, and to the declaration of Spotted Dove and the Green Tree Frog from Table 5 of the discussion paper.

Other issues outside the scope of the consultation process were also raised, including:

- Proposals for and opposition to the declaration of Wild (feral) Cats as pest animals.
- A proposal for the declaration of Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout as pest animals.
- A proposal to remove the Wild Dingo from the pest animal declaration and recommendations for its protection.
- A call for the removal of wild species of mammals (including *Sus scrofa*), birds, reptiles and fish already declared and listed in Table 2 of the discussion paper based on the assertion that these animals do not cause adverse impacts on the environment.
- Concern about the current declaration status of Carp, Redfin Perch, Gambusia and the European Wasp.
- Support for retention of the Red-whiskered Bulbul as a declared pest animal.
- Management of non-native animals generally including use of lethal control methods such as baiting and poisoning, and associated animal welfare concerns.
- Management of Indian/Common Mynas, Indian/Common Peafowl, Starlings, Wild Rock Doves, dangerous domestic dogs, Wild Dogs, Wild Cats, Wild Rabbits, invasive plants including African Lovegrass, mosquitoes, hornets and wasps, and insects affecting crops and trees.
- Legislation and regulatory requirements relating to deer, Wild Rabbits and Wild Pigs.
- Native animals including Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, possums, Eastern Grey Kangaroos and fish
- General threats posed by invasive animals to bird life.
- Interstate and international trade in ornamental fish, pets and exhibition animals.
- General concerns about keeping, breeding, and preventing the escape and abandonment of pets and exhibition animals.
- Barriers to caring for, rehabilitating and seeking treatment for species such as foxes and dingoes.
- The rights of sentient animals and the terminology used in association with invasive species.

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- Proposals for increased community education on invasive animals generally and for certain species or groups of species.
- The need for clear reporting lines with respect to notifiable pest animals and other declared pest animals that escape or are found at large.
- Issues relating to the legislative provisions of the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*.

These views may be forwarded to relevant business units within government for consideration as appropriate.

ACTION TAKEN

Submissions and comments within the scope of the consultation are being considered by the Biosecurity Planning and Policy unit within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

WHERE TO NEXT

All submissions will be considered in the finalisation of the pest animals declaration. Notification of the declaration on the ACT Legislation Register (<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2005-21/>) is anticipated in late 2019.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS



Environ Plan ACT @EnvironPlan
 Did you know invasive animals can pose a significant threat to the ACT? Over 380 species are being considered for declaration as pest animals in the ACT, including Indian Myna birds. Tell us what you think. Check out the proposed amendments at <http://bit.ly/invasiveanimals>
pic.twitter.com/FxFF9SHGyV

Impressions	1,059
Total engagements	1
Link clicks	1



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