

# Fact Sheet

## How will Parks Victoria control feral horses in the Alpine National Park?

The *Draft Feral Horse Action Plan 2021* outlines Parks Victoria's approach to stopping the environmental damage caused by feral horses and removing them humanely from the Alpine National Park.

This fact sheet describes how feral horses will be removed from the park.

A range of methods exist for the control or removal of feral horse populations.

In deciding which methods should be applied to remove feral horses from the Alpine National Park, Parks Victoria has considered a range of factors including humaneness, efficacy, cost, practicality, operator and public safety and environmental impact.

Following consultation with independent veterinary, welfare and ecology experts, public consultation on the 2018 Action Plan and subsequent feral horse management experience, Parks Victoria has determined that the following methods are the most appropriate to achieve the goals of feral horse management in the Alps:

### Trapping

Passive trapping involves establishing temporary or semi-permanent trap yards at water points or by salt or feed as an enticement. Once horses are inside the trap yard, a tripwire triggers the closure of the entry gate. Trap yards are established in areas with trees and shade to provide shelter for captured horses. Trapping can be an appropriate method of capture where trapping locations, times and conditions provide reasonable accessibility for horse transport and when suitable rehoming opportunities have been secured.

The level of trapping effort in the Alpine National Park will remain dependent on the capacity of approved rehomers for feral horses.



Horse trapyard, Bogong High Plains, Alpine National

### Rehoming

To enable successful rehoming to occur, Parks Victoria will build a cooperative partnership with groups or individuals that have an interest and appropriate skills in rehoming captured horses. Potential rehoming partner organisations or individuals will need to demonstrate their ability to accommodate the horse and meet animal welfare standards.

### Ground Shooting

Experts consider ground shooting as the most humane, safe and effective method available and an acceptable technique for the removal of individual, or small groups of horses from a location, when performed by skilled operators who hold the appropriate licenses and accreditation.

Parks Victoria only use highly accredited and qualified professional shooters to ensure high welfare outcomes.

### Aerial shooting (for exceptional circumstances, as required)

Aerial shooting is conducted from helicopters and is considered to be an effective method for reducing feral horse populations at landscape scales, and where feral horse densities are high.

As aerial shooting can be performed to standards that minimise animal suffering, aerial shooting may be applied in exceptional circumstances, or if other methods fail to remove sufficient horses to reduce ecological impacts.

### Fenced exclusion (for small areas)

Feral horses are widely distributed across the Victorian Alps, and the habitats and vegetation communities they impact on are widely scattered along drainage lines and valley floors or surrounding seepage areas on hillsides. Exclusion fencing requires significant capital investment as well as ongoing inspection and maintenance. It can also restrict native animal movements, potentially act as a trap or snare to species such as turtles, introduce a flight danger to some birds, and is visually intrusive in the natural landscape.

Until feral horse numbers are brought under control, fenced exclusion plots may be appropriate for the protection of populations of rare or threatened flora species of limited distribution, that are at risk of extinction from the grazing or trampling impacts of feral horses.

### Tell us what you think

The *Draft Feral Horse Action Plan 2021* is open for feedback on *Engage Victoria* until 23 April 2021.

Anyone is welcome to review the plan and supporting material and provide feedback – <https://engage.vic.gov.au/alpine-feral-horse-action-plan>.

### More questions?

For the answers to many Frequently Asked Questions on this issue, go to the Parks Victoria website - [www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/conservation-and-science/conserving-our-parks/feral-animals/feral-horses/feral-horse-fqs](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/conservation-and-science/conserving-our-parks/feral-animals/feral-horses/feral-horse-fqs).