

A growing threat?

There are some new creatures appearing at the edges of our tropical forests. They're feral deer, they're here and they have the potential to be a major feral pest animal.

There aren't many at this stage, but recent sightings suggest their numbers could be increasing rapidly.

Elsewhere in Australia and overseas large numbers of feral deer are a threat to the environment, agricultural production and road safety. They breed rapidly and destroy native vegetation and agricultural crops through overgrazing. The number of feral deer has quadrupled in the last 20 years with an estimate now of 200,000 nationally with about 30,000 in Queensland.

It is important that we do not allow deer numbers to increase locally to cause similar concerns in Queensland's Wet Tropics.

Action taken

The Wet Tropics Management Authority in partnership with a number of state and local government agencies, has begun a public program to better understand the extent of feral deer in the Wet Tropics, and to consider ways in which they can be managed to prevent them from becoming a major pest animal.



How you can help

If there are deer in your area, we would like to know:

- *Location (as specific as possible)*
- *Time/date of sighting*
- *Species (if known)*
- *Numbers (if possible the number of bucks, does and young)*
- *What the deer were doing (eg. on the move, feeding on the edge of the forest etc)*
- *Have you seen them at this location before?*
- *Is it an open or fenced area?*
- *Did you see identification tags or brands?*

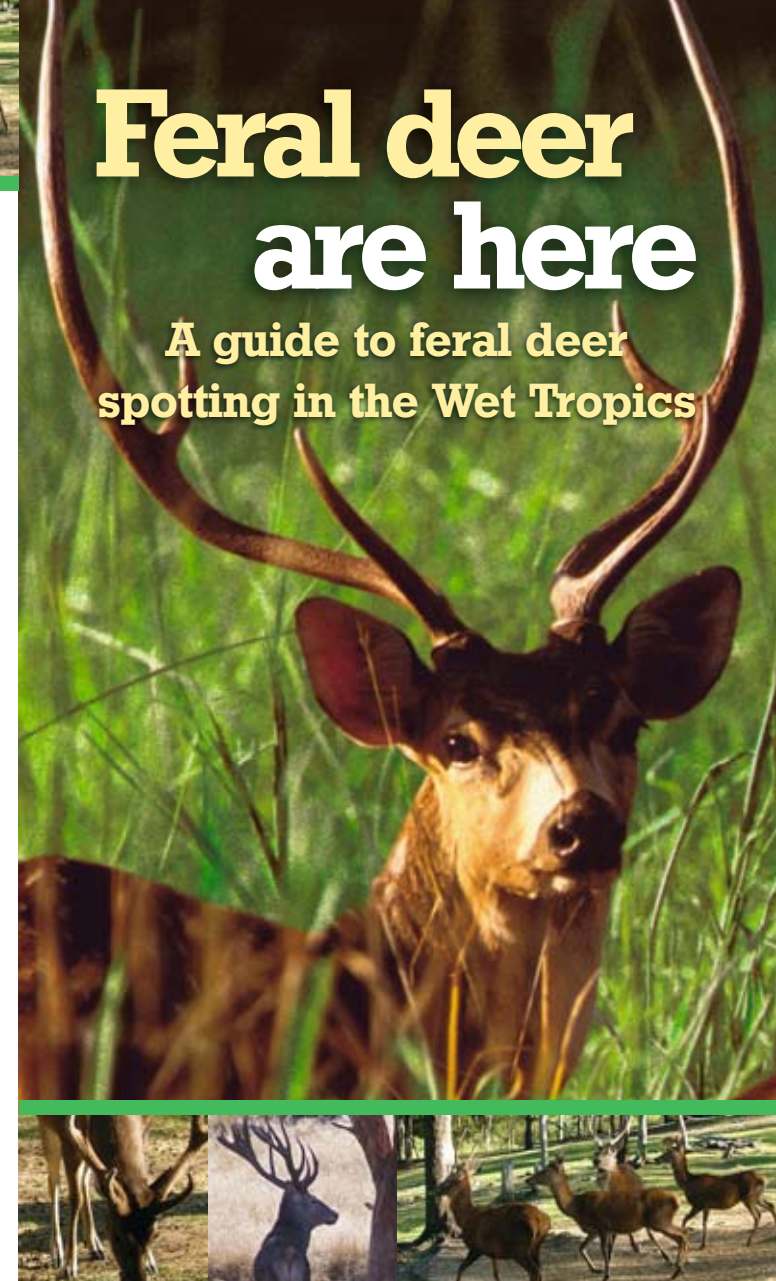
Please call the deer spotting hotline on 1800 119 829 with your information.

What to do about feral deer

A number of government agencies and community groups are considering ways of managing the emerging feral deer threat in the Wet Tropics. Information supplied by landholders and the general public will be collated and assessed by relevant government agencies before deciding on future actions.

Feral deer are here

A guide to feral deer spotting in the Wet Tropics



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Deer spotting – a guide to species that may be in the Wet Tropics

Eighteen species of deer have been released in Australia but only six species have been known to establish wild populations. Four species of feral deer are found in Queensland - red, rusa, chital and fallow. Rusa is the dominant feral species in the Wet Tropics region.

Although not present in Queensland, sambar and hog deer are tropical species that, if introduced, could pose a significant environmental threat in this region.



Rusa deer (*Cervus timorensis*)

Largish deer with a coarse sparse coat. No white spots on flanks. Stags have three pointed antlers in distinctive lyre shape.

Most feral deer reported in the Wet Tropics bioregion appear to be rusa deer with sightings in the Eacham, Johnstone, Cairns and Mareeba local government areas.



Fallow deer (*Dama dama*)

White spots on flanks, a long black tail, white underneath. White rump outlined by characteristic black horseshoe mark. Flattened, palmate multi-pointed antlers.

Fallow deer have been seen in the East Russell and Graham Range areas.



Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Large reddish-brown to brown deer (up to 120cms at shoulder). Distinctive multi-point antlers.

Not yet sighted in the Wet Tropics bioregion.



Chital deer (*Axis axis*)

Distinctive white spots appearing as broken lines along the body, dark dorsal stripe along the spine, prominent white throat and light coloured inner legs, stomach and under tail. Three-pointed antlers.

Herds of chital deer found near Charters Towers and Greenvale. Sightings in the Wet Tropics bioregion are unconfirmed.