

Aerial Pest Animal Control Operation

Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park

July 2026

Deer, goat, fox and cat control to be undertaken in July 2026

Parks Victoria is conducting a conservation program to respond to the impacts of the recent fires within Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. The program aims to reduce deer, feral goat, fox and cat populations and is supported by the Victorian Government's Protecting Biodiversity Program.

The most effective method for controlling deer and feral goat populations is shooting. Where possible, the team will also undertake control of foxes and cats as usual predator control methods, such as baiting and trapping, are currently unavailable in the fire impacted areas. This operation will help minimise impacts on vulnerable native plants and animals currently under further pressure from the impacts of bushfire. The control programs are carried out under strict conditions designed to ensure safe, effective, and humane practices are implemented. Contractors are expert markspeople and experienced shooters who have been through an assessment process prior to selection for operations.

When will control operations take place?

Deer, feral goat, fox and cat shooting operations commenced in July 2026 and will continue for the remainder of 2026 and 2027.

The next aerial operation will commence Monday July 27th until Friday 31st July 2026. Park closures will be in place during operations for visitor safety. The extent of the upcoming operation will be in the current fire affected areas.

No additional closures of visitor sites or campgrounds are being implemented, including the Grampians Peaks Trail – the trail will be buffered out of the operations area.

Why control deer, goat, fox and cat populations?

Deer and goats are not a natural part of the Australian environment. They are one of our most serious environmental, cultural and agricultural threats. Victoria's deer population is now estimated to be over a million animals.

Deer and feral goats cause serious damage to native plants, animals, and habitat by trampling and destroying plants, increasing grazing pressure, ring-barking young trees, fouling waterholes, causing soil erosion, and spreading weeds. They compete with native animals for forage in remaining in unburnt areas and set back the recovery of burnt native plants by browsing new regrowth and seedlings.

Foxes and feral cats prey on Grampians native animals such as the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby, Long-nosed Potoroo, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Smoky Mouse, Heath Mouse, and Grampians Mountain Dragon. These native animals are now more exposed to predation due to the loss of vegetation cover because of the recent fires.

Introduced Red Deer



Frequently asked questions

What's involved in aerial and ground control operations?

Parks Victoria use a combination of ground and aerial control programs (involving shooting), to manage the deer, goat, fox and cat populations to protect and preserve other important park values.

All Parks Victoria's invasive animal control programs are informed by science, are thoroughly planned and implemented under strict protocols and oversight, and ensure that operations are safe, effective, humane and meet obligations of all relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures.

Who will be conducting the feral animal control?

Parks Victoria will conduct aerial operations using expert markspeople. These professional shooters have the required licenses, certifications, and accreditations and must meet a high level of standards and experience to participate in the program.

Ground shooting operations will use contractors and Parks Victoria staff. These experienced contractors and staff have the required licences and accreditations to participate in the program.

Will you shoot anything other than deer?

Shooting operations will be focused primarily on deer, goats, foxes but will also include other invasive species including cats and feral pigs if they are encountered and when safe to do so.

What will happen to the animal carcasses?

Standard practice is to leave a carcass where it falls, as it would be if the animal had died by natural causes. Carcasses may be removed in circumstances where leaving the carcass where it falls poses a health or safety risk or would impact on returning visitors. Some carcasses may be harvested. Harvesting animals will be in line with Prime Safe game meat harvesting standards and guidelines.

At what time of the day will the control operation take place?

The aerial shooting operation will be carried out during daylight hours under strict conditions designed to ensure safe, effective, and humane control of target pest animal species.

Exactly where will the shooting happen?

The control operation will be confined to targeted areas within the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park of known populations (please see control operations map).

How will you ensure no one is in areas where shooting occurs?

Parks Victoria are notifying neighbours, local businesses, licensed tour operators, schools and park visitors of this operation. Signage will be located at key closures to provide guidance to visitors. Parks Victoria and/or Forest Fire Management staff will patrol the operation area (as required).

Will you shoot near picnic or camping areas or walking tracks?

The aerial shoot will only be undertaken within targeted operational areas across the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. Visitor sites, campgrounds and walking tracks including the Grampians Peak Trail will remain out of the operational areas.



Red Deer in Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park

Stay updated

For further detail please visit

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/grampians-national-park>

DEECA website, [Forest and road closures \(ffm.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/grampians-national-park)

For more information regarding Parks Victoria's deer control programs, please visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call Brambuk the National Park and Cultural Centre on (03) 8427 2058.

