

Key Messages

- The objective of the program is to protect biodiversity by removing deer which are damaging natural values within Warrandyte State Park, Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve and the Yarra Valley Parklands.
- Deer populations are impacting on environmental assets. Deer are not a natural part of the Australian environment. Deer can cause serious damage to native plants and animal habitat through trampling and destroying plants, increasing grazing pressure, ringbarking young trees, fouling waterways, causing soil erosion and spreading weeds.
- As part of the implementation of the Victorian Deer Control Strategy, Parks Victoria is delivering a state-wide control program targeting the rapidly growing deer population. The Victorian Government developed the Strategy to address the impact of deer across Victoria.
- Only ground shooting will be used for the Middle Yarra Deer Program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need to undertake the Middle Yarra Deer Program?

The Warrandyte State Park, Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve and the Yarra Valley Parklands form a habitat corridor that links the Kinglake National Park with the Yarra River. This corridor and the surrounding landscape are critically important to threatened flora and fauna species such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Powerful Owl, Slender-tailed Dunnart, Superb Lyrebird, Rosella Spider Orchid, Round-leaf Pomaderris and numerous other threatened species.

Currently, both Sambar and Red Deer are known to utilise and reside within these corridors on both private and public land. Their presence and associated impacts are a threatening process that is compromising the values in this landscape.

These threats and impacts include:

- Extensive deer browsing, habitat structure damage and 'rub' pressure on native vegetation, natural regeneration and revegetation.
- Impacts to adjoining local landowners, agriculture, market gardens, private gardens and remnant bushland.
- Water quality and vegetation impacts through wallowing, trampling and erosion.
- Animal-vehicle collisions.
- Competition for food with native wildlife.
- Potential to carry and harbour disease and pathogens.



What if we don't do anything?

If deer are not controlled the condition of significant environmental values and threatened species will continue to decline in the Middle Yarra corridor, as populations expand.

What species of deer occur within the Middle Yarra corridor?

- Sambar and Red Deer
- Deer were introduced into Australia in the 19th and 20th century.

Will you be completely eradicating the Sambar and Red Deer populations?

- Deer will be targeted over a number of nights in the park. The desired outcome will be a reduction to impacts on values both in the park and neighbouring private properties.

Why has Parks Victoria chosen ground shooting as a control method for this program?

- Ground shooting is an effective method of humanely controlling feral animals when undertaken by appropriately trained and experienced professional shooters. Ground shooting is an accepted standard practice across Australia. Parks Victoria has an established deer control program which has delivered coordinated control programs since 2015.
- Ground shooting helps maintain pressure on target animal populations in important habitat areas.
- This is a successful approach used across other parks in peri-urban Melbourne including Dandenong Ranges National Park, Plenty Gorge Parklands and Yarra Ranges National Park.

How will you ensure that deer control will be humane?

- All professionals delivering deer control activities are appropriately authorised, skilled and experienced and must comply with all relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Shooters are trained to only shoot in situations where they can achieve a humane result.
- The successful contractor will be selected from a panel of contractors who have undertaken deer control elsewhere on public land in Victoria.

When will control operations happen?

- Parks Victoria will be conducting deer control operations in Warrandyte State Park, Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve and the Yarra Valley Parklands on a number of nights during 2025.

Exactly where will the shooting happen?

- Refer to attached map.

Will I be informed if a deer control zone adjoins my property?

- Yes, you will be notified if your property adjoins a control zone. This will either be by letter or phone call, or both, at least a week prior to the operations commencing.

How will I know if shooting is going to be taking place when I enter the park?

- There will be signs at the entrance to the park informing you when the shooting will be undertaken. Please do not enter the park between dusk and dawn if the sign has the date of your visit.

Will I hear constant shooting during the night?

- Contractors will be using suppressors on their firearms, this dulls the sound of the firearm, significantly reducing the firearm noise, however, you may still hear gun shots.

Will my livestock be in danger?

- No. Operations will only be undertaken within the park estate. Parks Victoria will not be controlling deer on private property.
- Experienced contractors use drones and specialised equipment to confirm the identity of target animals.

What happens to the carcasses?

- Carcasses will be harvested by a contractor with a PrimeSafe licence and delivered to a licenced harvesting facility.



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