

Annual Report

For financial year
2024-2025

Southern Biosecurity Group



Pests and Weeds

Your environment · Your responsibility · Your legacy

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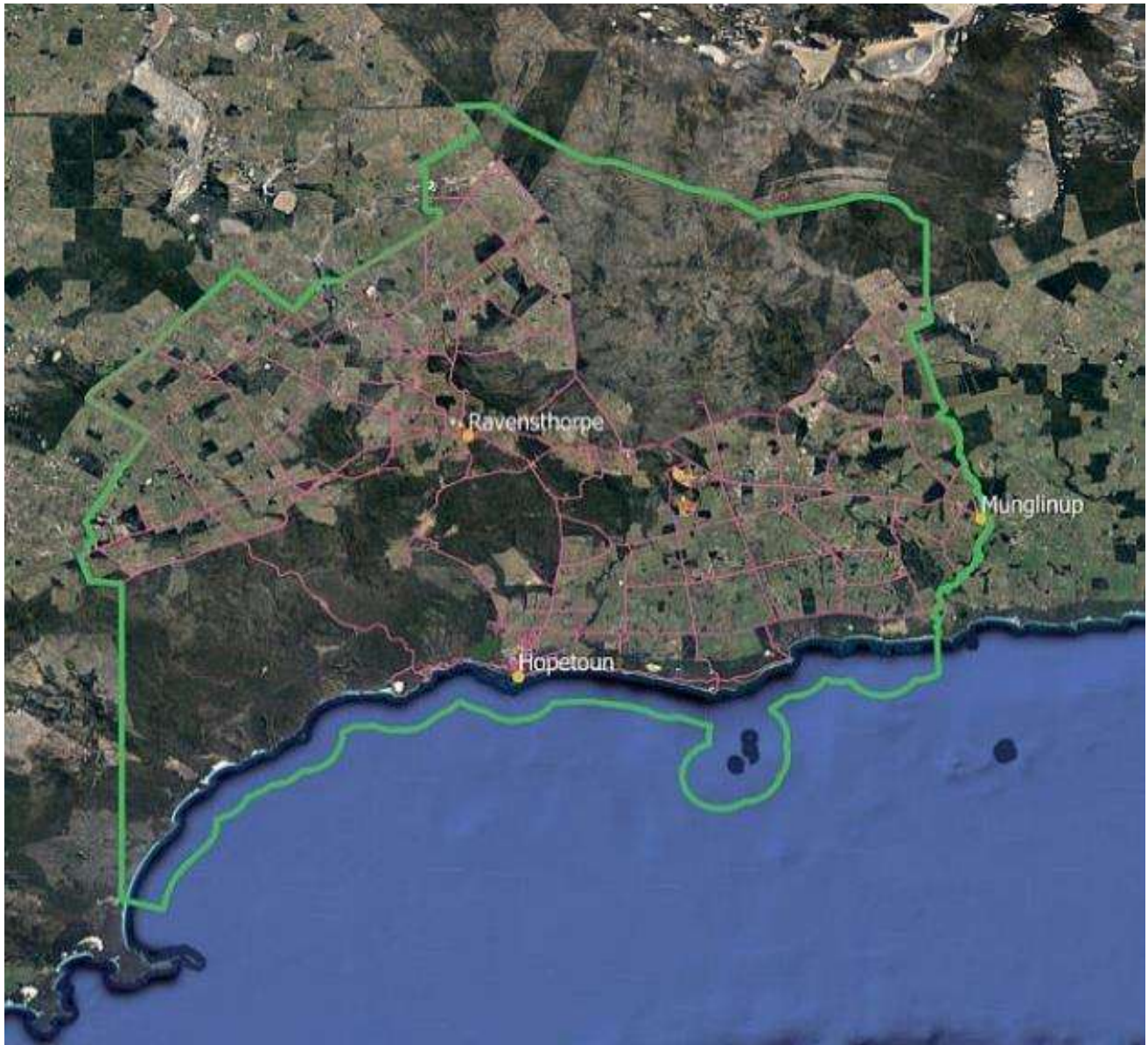
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“Together, we protect and preserve — proving that through collaboration and shared commitment, stronger communities and healthier landscapes can thrive.

SOUTHERN BIOSECURITY GROUP AREA OF OPERATION



Wild Dogs

Numbers through uptake of dried meat baits will not be reflected in the figures below, as it is very rare to locate an animal following this event. On-ground activities were delivered by the Southern Biosecurity Group (SBG) in partnership with our Licensed Pest Management Technician (LPMT), providing continued surveillance and control across the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

Table 1. Wild Dog and Predator Control Outcomes 2024–2025

Wild dog baits laid	Wild dogs shot	Wild dogs trapped	Foxes trapped/shot	Feral cats trapped/shot	Reported stock losses
1,892	0	2	0	1	50

This year, 1,892 wild dog baits were deployed, and 2 wild dogs were trapped. While no dogs were shot, the program recorded 50 reported stock losses attributed to wild dogs, highlighting the continued threat to livestock despite low direct captures. One feral cat was also removed, demonstrating additional benefits of ongoing predator control.

Foxes

The integrated control program at Longcreek and Cheadanup Reserves continued under the oversight of LPMT Gavern House (Alpha Pest Management Solutions). Pre-operational activities included auditing and replacement of 1080 baiting signs at all reserve entry points, with additional signage installed at track road entrances to ensure public awareness.

A total of 409 fox baits were deployed across these reserves during October 2024 and again in March 2025. These strategic operations support long-term suppression of fox populations, reducing predation pressure on both livestock and native wildlife.

In addition, SBG and the Hopetoun Clay Target Club once again hosted the Red Card Fox Shoot in March 2025, achieving a strong community-led outcome:

- 230 foxes removed
- 7 feral cats removed
- 35 rabbits removed

Discussion and Future Focus

The 2024–2025 reporting year recorded a significant increase in bait deployment (1,892 wild dog baits), reflecting the proactive effort to limit incursions and protect local farming enterprises. The low numbers of wild dogs physically trapped (2) or shot (0) contrast with the 50 stock losses reported, underscoring the ongoing challenge of detecting and removing highly mobile and evasive individuals.

Key priorities moving forward:

- Sustained baiting programs across both private and reserve lands to maintain pressure on populations.
- Community vigilance and reporting via FeralScan to capture early activity and reduce losses.
- Integrated management approaches combining professional LPMT activities with community events like the Red Card Fox Shoot.

SBG will continue to adapt and strengthen its predator management program to ensure the long-term protection of agriculture and biodiversity across the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

Rabbits

The Southern Biosecurity Group (SBG) continued its commitment to reducing rabbit populations in priority areas within the Shire of Ravensthorpe during the 2024–2025 reporting period. Activities were focused on Hopetoun and Krystal Park, with the program later extended to include Jerdacuttup.

The strategy centred on the targeted release of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV), delivered using oats and carrots as host food. In line with community safety and environmental considerations, no toxins were used in either program

Program Timeline

- December 2024 – RHDV release across Hopetoun and Krystal Park.
 - April 2025 (Autumn) – Follow-up RHDV release across Hopetoun and Krystal Park, extended to Jerdacuttup and Kukenarup Memorial
-

Control Areas

The following areas were systematically treated:

- Krystal Park – Cambewarra Dr, Banksia Rd, Willow Lane, Boronia St, Rosea Wy.
 - Hopetoun – Esplanade, Scott St, Dawn St, Chambers St, Price St, Sports Oval (remnant vegetation), CWA Hall grounds, Caravan Park perimeter, Foreshore.
 - Jerdacuttup (Autumn 2025 extension) – Mallee St, Banksia St, Munji St, Primary School/Fire Shed & Oval.
 - Kukenarup Memorial – South Coast Highway roadside verge
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Survey Findings

December 2024

- Hopetoun Townsite – Light rabbit activity, no active warrens found.
- Krystal Park – Light/medium rabbit density, with large active warrens observed on private properties.
- Recommendation – Follow-up RHDV release in Autumn 2025 to address high rabbit density in Krystal Park

Autumn 2025

- Hopetoun – Light rabbit activity, no active warrens located.
- Krystal Park – Medium density on council verges; large warrens on private land persisted.
- Jerdacuttup (extension area) – Low to medium density; no active warrens observed during release.
- Recommendation – Follow-up RHDV release in Spring 2025 to further reduce rabbit numbers

Outcomes

- RHDV releases successfully covered all key public land areas in Hopetoun, Krystal Park, and the extended Jerdacuttup control zone.
- Rabbit densities across Hopetoun remained consistently low.
- Krystal Park continued to present challenges, with medium densities persisting despite successive releases and significant warrens on adjoining private properties.
- Extension of the program into Jerdacuttup in 2025 provided broader control coverage and increased regional impact

Forward Planning

- Spring 2025 – Scheduled follow-up RHDV release to consolidate control efforts.
- Continued monitoring of rabbit population densities and dispersal across all treated sites.
- Engagement with private landholders in Krystal Park to address warrens outside of public control areas.

Conclusion

The 2024–2025 Rabbit Control Program demonstrated the effectiveness of sustained RHDV releases in managing rabbit populations across the Shire of Ravensthorpe. While Hopetoun sites

showed encouragingly low densities, Krystal Park remains a priority area for follow-up releases and landholder engagement.

The extension of the program to Jerdacuttup in 2025 allowed SBG to expand its coverage, ensuring that rabbit control efforts supported biodiversity protection and community land management goals across a wider landscape.

Control Program and Release Areas

December 2024

Hopetoun Townsite RHDV Release Transect



Krystal Park



Autumn 2025

Hopetoun Townsite RHDV Release Transect



Krystal Park



Jerdacuttup Site



Control Program and Release Areas Location	Street Name	Treated Council Verge Both Sides
Krystal Park	Cambewarra Dr	Yes
Krystal Park	Banksia Rd	Yes
Krystal Park	Willow Lane	Yes
Krystal Park	Boronia St	Yes
Krystal Park	Rosea Wy	Yes
Hopetoun	Esplanade	Yes
Hopetoun	Scott St	Yes
Hopetoun	Dawn St	Yes
Hopetoun	Chambers St	Yes
Hopetoun	CWA hall	Grounds around Building
Hopetoun	Sports Oval	Remnant Vegetation Area
Hopetoun	Price St	Yes

Southcoast Hwy	Kukenarup Memorial	Yes
Jerdacuttup	Mallee St	Yes
Jerdacuttup	Banksia St	Yes
Jerdacuttup	Munji St	Yes
Jerdacuttup	Primary School / Fire Shed & Ovel	Yes

The Southern Biosecurity Group (SBG) continued its declared weeds management program during 2024/25, focusing on three high-priority species: Apple of Sodom, Cacti, and Bridal Creeper. Control work was carried out across multiple sites in partnership with contractors, landholders, and supporting agencies.

Apple of Sodom

Targeted control was undertaken around the Hopetoun area. Treatments were effective in preventing seed germination and reducing regrowth at previously treated sites. Some new plants were observed following early seasonal rains, highlighting the importance of ongoing monitoring. Seven photo monitoring points were established to track progress.

Cacti

Follow-up inspections were conducted at previously treated sites across Ravensthorpe, including Manitup Rd, Pioneer Cemetery, Old Rubbish Tip, Hoskin Rd, Scott St, Rosemary Jaspers, and Rose Cliffs. No regrowth was detected, indicating strong success of earlier control efforts. A small infestation at a quarry site will be managed through mechanical excavation and burial in partnership with the landholder.

Bridal Creeper

Control programs were delivered across Krystal Park and Hopetoun:

- At Krystal Park, rust fungus was applied as the primary control method, with minimal spread into surrounding bushland.
- In Hopetoun, herbicide treatments significantly reduced infestations, with previously treated areas showing only limited regrowth.

Both approaches demonstrated ongoing success, with further follow-up treatments planned for the optimal seasonal window to prevent re-establishment.

Across all three weed programs, substantial reductions in infestations were achieved during the 2024/25 year. While seasonal conditions and landholder engagement remain challenges, the combined use of chemical, biological, and mechanical control methods continues to deliver positive results.

SBG remains committed to annual follow-up work, community engagement, and long-term monitoring to protect local biodiversity and agricultural productivity.

Funding sourced in addition to the Declared Pest Rate

Cactus Control (State NRM Funded):

The Southern Biosecurity Group is pleased to provide an update on the *Opuntia Monocantha* eradication project (CSGL23062) along the Oldfield River, which is now in its final stages. Funded through a **State NRM Community Stewardship Grant**, this important project is on track for completion by October 2025.

Between February and May, our team carried out targeted control across approximately 400 hectares of challenging terrain. Due to the landscape, only manual removal and the use of the Cochineal biocontrol agent were feasible. Encouragingly, only small seedlings were found—no large plants were detected—indicating the effectiveness of previous control work.

All manually removed seedlings were collected to support the offsite Cochineal nursery, helping to maintain a sustainable supply of biocontrol agents. Monitoring has shown that Cochineal continues to perform exceptionally well, with nearly 100% success on previously treated cacti.

While flooding at the end of the treatment period temporarily restricted access and delayed photopoint monitoring, a natural choke point in the river has likely prevented any significant downstream spread. Monitoring south of Coxal Road is ongoing to confirm that the infestation has not extended further, although thick vegetation has slowed progress.

As we approach project completion, these results highlight the success of integrating biocontrol and manual methods in difficult terrain. The Southern Biosecurity Group thanks the State NRM Program for its support and the local community for its ongoing engagement in protecting our natural environment.

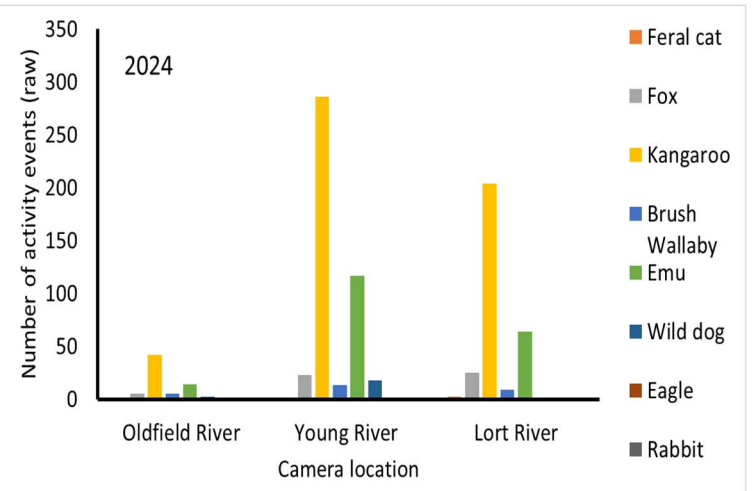
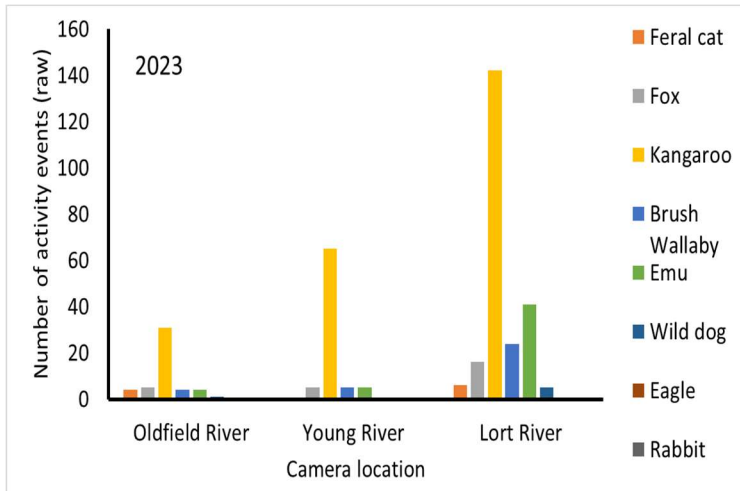
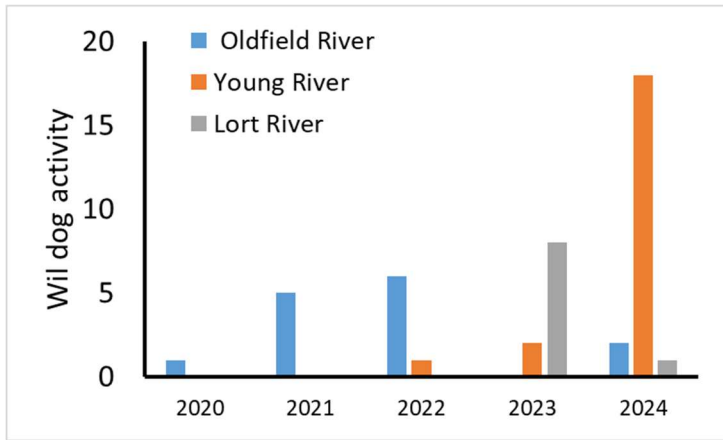


Funded by the Sheep and Goat Industry Fund, this project aims to establish baseline data on animal movement before the State Barrier Fence construction.

Regular SD card and battery replacements, along with data collection, are ongoing.

Following a successful extension grant, the project will continue through 2025, monitoring three gaps in the Esperance Extension of the State Barrier Fence across the Oldfield, Young, and Lort rivers.

Data collected is being used to develop control charts for key species, such as wild dogs, and to track ecosystem changes post-construction.



Sample of images from remote sensor cameras



Biosecurity Event

The Southern Biosecurity Group proudly showcased its **innovative training trailer**—funded by a grant from Australian Wool Innovation—for the third consecutive year at the Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show. Positioned near the entrance, the trailer has become a **major attraction**, drawing strong interest with its taxidermy display of two wild dogs.

The setup promoted the management of declared weeds and pests not only to **local community members** but also reached a **broader national audience**, sparking meaningful discussions and engagement. Alongside the visual displays, we presented our media production *A Biosecurity Update*, delivered an informative PowerPoint on invasive weeds, and distributed educational materials on wild dogs, foxes, rabbits, and feral cats, as well as our annual newsletter.

This event continues to provide an excellent platform for showcasing SBG's community initiatives and fostering conversations with landholders and visitors about biosecurity challenges and solutions.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CONTRACTORS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

The SBG Management Committee would like to thank Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (RAIN), Executive Officer, Finance Officer (Esperance BAS & Books) for having been engaged to undertake bookkeeping management. We extend our appreciation to other stakeholders for their ongoing collaboration with the SBG as we all work together to achieve positive results.

Committee members for the 2024-2025 financial year comprised of volunteer community members:

- Gemma Walker
- Reece Laycock
- Ross Gibson
- Khiara Daw (RAIN Rep)

Contractors

- **Licensed Pest Management Technicians**
Gavern House
- **Licensed Weed Technician**
Mark Cronin
- **Executive Officer**
Michelle Grobler

Stakeholders:

- Biosecurity Council of WA
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Industry Funding Scheme (Sheep and Goat) Committee
- Local communities within the Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Main Roads Western Australia
- Other Recognised Biosecurity Groups
- Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- South Coast NRM
- State Natural Resource Management
- Water Corporation Western Australia

During the 2024-2025 financial year, SBG consistently kept the community updated on current projects and biosecurity matters through regular publications in the local newspaper. These updates provided timely information on various projects and milestones, ensuring the community stayed informed on SBG's ongoing work. This open communication promotes transparency and encourages residents to engage with and support SBG's efforts in the region.

In March 2025, SBG organized a successful Red Card fox shoot within the Shire of Ravensthorpe, attracting eight registered teams. Following an action-packed night, participants gathered for breakfast—supported by SNRM—to celebrate their impressive results. The SBG Executive Officer extended gratitude to all teams, acknowledging their dedication and the positive impact their participation has on biosecurity and the protection of local wildlife.

SBG's Annual Newsletter, which included the Annual Survey, was mailed to all Shire landholders. This survey invites community input on species control priorities to inform the upcoming Operational Plan and budget. Given the large number of absentee landholders in the Shire, this annual mail-out is an essential tool for keeping all landholders engaged and informed about SBG's initiatives.

END
