



Phillip Island (Millowl) Wildlife Plan

Balancing the needs of wildlife
and the community

SUMMARY

PLAN OVERVIEW

Phillip Island lies at the entrance to the bay of Western Port, approximately 140km south east of Melbourne. It is known by its Traditional Owners, the Bunurong, as Millowl and forms part of the Kulin nation with a history dating back tens of thousands of years. Today the Island is a popular tourist destination, due to a range of nature-based experiences and attractions along with boating, fishing, sporting opportunities and national and international motor racing events.

The marine and coastal environment of Phillip Island is home to a diverse array of native species. These include high profile species, such as Little Penguins, which attract thousands of visitors to the Island annually, to the lesser known but equally important species such as Short-Tailed Shearwaters and Hooded Plovers. As a result, Phillip Island's wildlife has become an important part of the community's identity and economy with wildlife encounters contributing significantly to the Island's economy generating revenue, reputation and employment.

However, some species including Cape Barren Geese, Swamp Wallabies and Common Brushtail Possums have increased in numbers on Phillip Island and are impacting negatively on the viability of agriculture predominantly through crop and pasture damage, native vegetation, animal welfare, public safety, buildings, infrastructure and amenity.

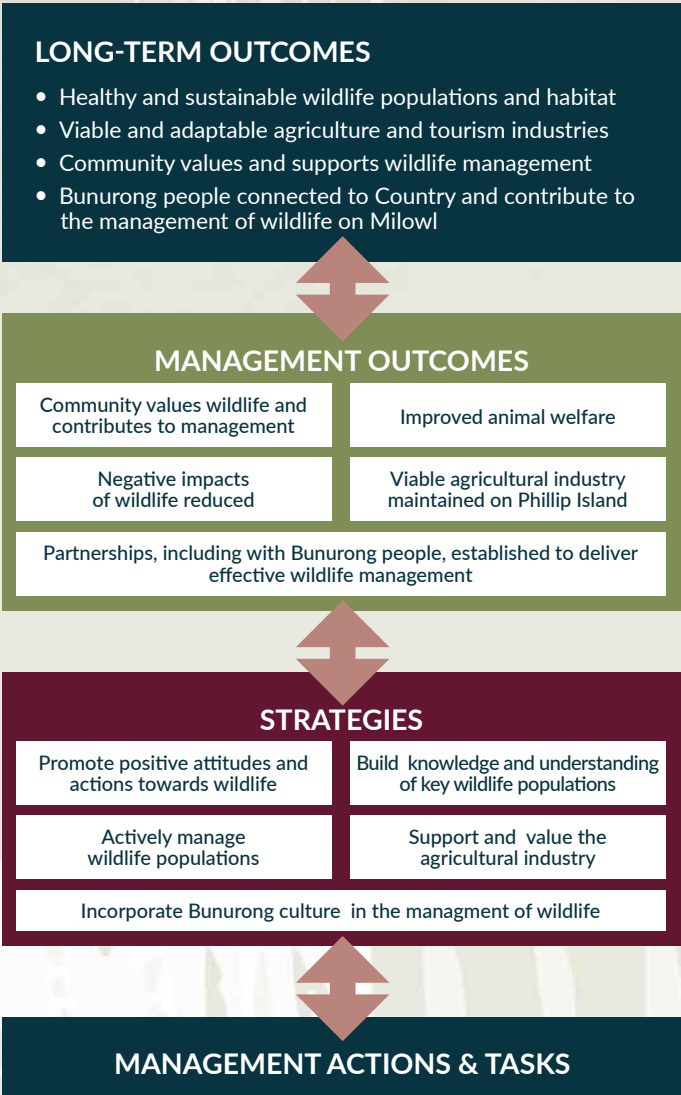
Due to the Island's environment and landscape, wildlife and its management are highly visible and interventions, such as lethal control of abundant native wildlife, can be a point of contention in the community. This plan has been developed in response to the community wanting more effective and alternative methods for managing wildlife.

It has been developed through a collaborative partnership involving Phillip Island Nature Parks (the Nature Parks), Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and agricultural community representatives. In preparing this plan, we worked closely with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) to ensure the views and aspirations of Bunurong People were incorporated.

This plan aims to achieve a sustainable population of native species that allows environmental, social, cultural, economic and farming activities to continue on the Island.

Long-term outcomes have been defined in the plan that will be delivered through the supporting management outcomes, strategies and actions. The plan also identifies clear accountabilities for these actions and establishes actions for effective governance, monitoring and review.

The success of the plan will be dependent on community support, participation and ownership of the challenges and solutions for wildlife management.



Millowl is the Bunurong name for Phillip Island. It is part of the country recognised as being the traditional land and waters of the Bunurong People and is steeped in cultural history dating back tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong People. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms have been defined for the purposes of this plan.

'Addling'	refers to the act of causing fertilised eggs to become infertile without breaking the shell or other outer layer. Methods may include shaking, piercing, freezing or oiling/waxing.
'Alternate control methods'	refers to methods of controlling negative impacts of wildlife that aren't currently used on Phillip Island. Alternate methods will focus on non-lethal methods.
'Community'	is used to describe residents, visitors, groups and businesses who have an interest in Phillip Island.
'Land manager'	refers to someone who administers, maintains and manages a property on behalf of someone else.
'Landholder'	in this plan, landholder refers to someone who owns a property.
'Stakeholder'	those individuals and organisations who will be directly affected by the plan. Examples include interest groups, local businesses and industries (e.g. tourism, agriculture).
'Wildlife management'	is managing wildlife populations and their habitats for the benefit of the community and the wildlife. It can include preservation and restoration of habitat, wildlife recovery programs, fencing to protect or exclude, harvesting and control programs.

ACRONYMS

ATCW	Authority to Control Wildlife
BCSC	Bass Coast Shire Council
BLCAC	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Nature Parks	Phillip Island Nature Parks

Wildlife Management is....

... managing wildlife populations and their habitats for the benefit of the community and the wildlife. It can include preservation and restoration of habitat, wildlife recovery programs, fencing to protect or exclude, harvesting and control programs.

A range of methods can be used in wildlife management including, captive breeding programs or fertility control, translocation, revegetation, feral animal and weed control, exclusion, scaring, harvesting and lethal control.

This report is available at
www.delwp.vic.gov.au
www.penguins.org.au
www.basscoast.vic.gov.au

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE PLAN

The Phillip Island (Mallowl) Wildlife Plan aims to achieve a sustainable population of native wildlife that allows environmental, social, cultural, economic and farming activities to continue on the Island.

To achieve this aim, it seeks to address current and emerging issues between native wildlife and other values and land uses on the Island including for agriculture, culture, conservation, tourism, road safety and public health. The plan focuses on addressing the high priority wildlife and people interaction issues where there are significant impacts on human activities or safety, buildings and infrastructure, animal welfare and biodiversity.

The three key species; Cape Barren Geese, Swamp Wallabies and Common Brushtail Possums are the current focus of this plan due to the increases in these wildlife populations and concerns raised by the community regarding their impacts. A detailed summary of the history and impacts of these species is outlined in Appendix A of the Full Plan.

This plan takes a collaborative and place-based approach to managing wildlife and recognises that community ownership of the plan and involvement in the conservation and management of wildlife will be critical to achieve its objectives.

The plan recognises the connection of Traditional Owners to Country and acknowledges their contribution in the management of land, water and the natural landscape. It is committed to engaging with and fostering mutually beneficial and lasting relationships with all Traditional Owners. It acknowledges the importance of incorporating Aboriginal cultural use and the involvement of BLCAC. The development of this plan will support continued sharing of knowledge and involvement that will inform land and wildlife management practices and build greater cultural understanding, respect and opportunities for self-determination.

The plan complements current strategies and plans that contribute to the management and conservation of biodiversity and wildlife and fills the gaps that will contribute towards balancing the needs of wildlife and the community over the next five years.

There is already a lot of work being undertaken to support wildlife on Phillip Island and care has been taken to ensure this plan does not duplicate this effort. Existing key areas of work include:

Habitat conservation, revegetation and establishment of wildlife corridors. The Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes and the Bass Coast Biodiversity Biolinks Plan are the leading processes for these outcomes and include an action plan for the implementation of revegetation across land management boundaries. This is also addressed through existing works undertaken through Nature Parks and Landcare.

Control of non-native and pest species (e.g. rabbits and feral cats). This work is delivered through the Nature Parks' Weed Management, Integrated Pest Animal Strategies and work undertaken through Nature Parks and Landcare.

Reducing the impact of development and urbanisation on wildlife. This is led through planning and approvals processes managed by BCSC and various supporting strategies and plans.

Enforcement of wildlife protection and animal cruelty laws. These are enforced through existing legislation and processes.

Reducing roadkill through road/traffic management. Includes initiatives such as trialling virtual fencing along high-risk roadsides, scientific research and developing a program to reduce traffic speed limits across Phillip Island.

Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. This has an important role in wildlife welfare across Phillip Island and is supported by the Nature Parks, Wildlife Victoria volunteers and local community shelter.

Plan Principles:

Evidence-based

Collaborative and inclusive

Outcome focused and place-based

Humane and effective

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND TASKS

The following table provides a summary list of actions and tasks to be delivered for each strategy through implementation of this plan including the lead, partners and timeframes for each task.

Tasks	Lead (Partners)	Timeframe
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GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

ACTION 1

Identify and establish governance arrangements to oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of the Phillip Island (Millowl) Wildlife Plan.

1. Governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of the plan are developed.	DELWP (Nature Parks, BCSC)	Immediate Year 1
2. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan developed.	DELWP (Nature Parks, BCSC)	Short Term Year 1-3

STRATEGY 1:

Promote positive attitudes and actions towards wildlife and nature through education and providing opportunities to access and experience wildlife and nature in a sustainable and ethical way.

ACTION 2

Develop an education/community program to support conservation and management of wildlife by the community.

3. Develop and implement a collaborative education program for Phillip Island focused on supporting and providing information to the community and landholders on wildlife values, challenges and ways to live with and manage wildlife.	Nature Parks, BCSC, DELWP, (community groups e.g. Landcare)	Ongoing Year 1-5
4. Incorporate community and visitor involvement opportunities (e.g. citizen science) in wildlife research on Phillip Island.	Nature Parks (BCSC, DELWP)	Ongoing Year 1-5

STRATEGY 2:

Build understanding of key wildlife populations and their impacts on agriculture, public health, conservation and tourism through research to inform evidence-based decision making and wildlife management practices.

ACTION 3

Understand populations of Cape Barren Geese, Swamp Wallabies and Common Brushtail Possums and their negative impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and community.

5. Identify and establish benchmark data and monitoring requirements to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of wildlife management undertaken as part of this plan (e.g. reduction in crop loss, habitat regeneration, population numbers).	Nature Parks, DELWP (BCSC, Universities and Research Institutions, landholders, managers, community)	Immediate Year 1
6. Identify the key factors resulting in sick, injured and orphaned wildlife on Phillip Island.	Nature Parks (DELWP, BCSC, Universities and Research Institutions, wildlife groups)	Short Term Year 1-3
7. Identify emerging wildlife issues on Phillip Island to inform plan review and implementation.	DELWP (Nature Parks, BCSC, Universities and Research Institutions)	Ongoing Year 1-5
8. Determine the impacts of Cape Barren Geese on agricultural production.	Nature Parks, Federation University and landholders	Short Term Year 1-3 (In progress)
9. Understand the microbiome and internal parasite loads of Cape Barren Geese and potential impacts to agriculture.	Federation University, Nature Parks and landholders	Short Term Year 1-3 (In progress)
10. Annual monitoring of Cape Barren Geese on Phillip Island.	Nature Parks (Birdlife Bass Coast and community)	Ongoing Year 1-5 (In progress)

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Tasks	Lead (Partners)	Timeframe
11. Determine the breeding success and chick survival to determine annual recruitment (clutch size, hatching rates, and fledging rates).	Nature Parks (Universities and researchers)	Short Term Year 1-3
12. Understand dispersal and movements of Cape Barren Geese (colour banding to determine composition of flocks, dispersal, including off the island, and seasonal movements).	Nature Parks (Universities and researchers)	Short Term Year 1-3
13. Develop a population model for Cape Barren Geese to assess impacts of management options.	DELWP (Nature Parks)	Short Term Year 1-3
14. Estimate population sizes of Swamp Wallabies and monitor trends over time. (These will include considerations of habitat-specific densities, home ranges and movements).	Nature Parks (DELWP, Universities and researchers and community)	Short Term Year 1-3
15. Demographic modelling of wallaby and brushtail possum populations to determine the most significant factors contributing to population growth.	DELWP (Nature Parks)	Short Term Year 1-3
16. Assess the effectiveness of a virtual fence ¹ on reducing the number of wildlife killed on roads, particularly wallabies.	BCSC (Victoria University, Nature Parks, Regional Roads Victoria and community)	Short Term Year 1-3 (In progress)
17. Review deterrent and exclosure opportunities for wallaby and brushtail possum management and examine the efficacy and impact of strategies for Phillip Island.	Nature Parks (DELWP, Universities and researchers)	Short Term Year 1-3
18. Determine the impacts of grazing/browsing by geese, wallabies and brushtail possums on conservation works.	Nature Parks, DELWP, Universities and researchers and landholders	Short Term Year 1-3

ACTION 4

Explore the current and potential role native predators play in the management of wildlife on Phillip Island.

19. Explore the potential contribution of introducing/attracting native predators on Phillip Island (e.g. owls, quolls) and evaluate the associated risks of introducing new predators to non-target species.	Nature Parks	Long Term
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ACTION 5

Undertake a comprehensive cost benefit analysis (cultural, economic and social) of wildlife to the Phillip Island and visitor community.

20. Continue to build the relationship with BLCAC and better understand the views of its members regarding wildlife management on Phillip Island (Millowl).	DELWP (BLCAC, BCSC, Nature Parks)	Ongoing Year 1-5
21. Understand the views of the local community and visitors about wildlife and its management on Phillip Island.	DELWP (BLCAC, BCSC, Nature Parks)	Ongoing Year 1-5
22. Evaluate the economic value and importance of wildlife to Phillip Island's community (social and cultural).	BCSC (Nature Parks)	Short Term Year 1-3

STRATEGY 3:

Actively manage wildlife to balance conservation, natural and built environments, public safety, social and economic values on Phillip Island.

ACTION 6

Establish and implement a coordinated and collaborative approach to managing impacts of wildlife on agriculture, built assets, public safety and conservation areas on Phillip Island.

23. ATCW conditions developed for Cape Barren Goose, Swamp Wallaby and Common Brushtail Possum control to facilitate the use of carcasses for research or Aboriginal cultural use.	DELWP	Short Term Year 1-3
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¹The virtual fence is a series of devices attached to guide posts along the side of the road. When headlights from an approaching vehicle hit the device, it triggers an audible alarm and flashing lights. The combination of noise and light is aimed at deterring wildlife from the road, before the vehicle gets there.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND TASKS

Tasks	Lead (Partners)	Timeframe
24. Establish a process for reporting the number and types of ATCW permits issued on Phillip Island.	DELWP (Landholders and land managers)	Immediate Year 1
25. Develop an approved wildlife management plan template available for landholders and managers on Phillip Island to support wildlife management planning.	DELWP	Short Term Year 1-3
26. Support coordinated ATCW applications from landholders to manage key wildlife species.	DELWP (Landholders)	Short Term Year 1-3
27. Investigate opportunities to issue long-term ATCWs (up to 3 years) in accordance to agreed wildlife management plans that incorporate a range of control options, including non-lethal methods.	DELWP (Landholders)	Short Term Year 1-3
28. Register of landholders/managers wanting to participate in trials of alternate control methods.	DELWP (Landholders, land managers)	Immediate Year 1
29. Provide input into the Speed Review Communications and Engagement Plan.	BCSC (Nature Parks, DELWP, Phillip Island landholders and community)	Short Term Year 1-3

ACTION 7

Undertake trials of alternate control methods for mitigating damage and financial loss by wildlife and improving wildlife welfare outcomes.

30. Trial egg removal, replacement and addling ² as management options for Cape Barren Geese.	DELWP (Landholders, Nature Parks, BLCAC, universities and researchers)	Short Term Year 1-3
31. Trial establishment of alternative fresh water sources for wildlife away from roadsides.	BCSC (Landholders, land and water managers, Nature Parks, DELWP, universities and researchers)	Long Term
32. Trial use of "decoy" crops at certain times of year to remove pressure on commercial pasture and crops in peak season.	Nature Parks (Landholders, DELWP, universities and researchers)	Short Term Year 1-3
33. Investigate the potential use of browsing repellents (e.g. Sen-tree™) on revegetation areas.	Nature Parks (Landholders, land managers, community groups)	Short Term Year 1-3

STRATEGY 4:

Support and value a viable agricultural industry on Phillip Island.

ACTION 8

Maintain existing agricultural land as part of Phillip Island landscape.

34. Phillip Island's rural landscape is recognised and protected as a significant landscape in relevant strategic and planning documents.	BCSC (DELWP)	Ongoing Year 1-5 (In progress)
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ACTION 9

Support opportunities for landholders to maintain viable farms that also support wildlife and conservation.

35. Opportunities for alternate and diversified options and incomes for farms on Phillip Island are identified and supported.	BCSC (Landholders)	Ongoing Year 1-5
36. Explore opportunities to incorporate conservation into viable farming practices (e.g. wildlife corridors).	Landholders (BCSC, Nature Parks, Landcare, DELWP, Universities and Research Institutions)	Ongoing Year 1-5
37. Investigate grant opportunities for up-front cost of exclusion netting/fencing to protect crops and pasture, and to support wildlife conservation.	Landholders	Ongoing Year 1-5 (In progress)

²Addling refers to the act of causing fertilised eggs to become infertile without breaking the shell or other outer layer. Methods may include shaking, piercing, freezing or oiling/waxing.

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STRATEGY 5:

Identify and support opportunities to incorporate Bunurong culture into the management of wildlife on Phillip Island (Millowl).

ACTION 10

Bunurong People access wildlife from Phillip Island (Millowl) for cultural use.

38. Agreed conditions for BLCAC to access wildlife on Phillip Island (Millowl) for cultural use by its members.	BLCAC and DELWP	Short Term Year 1-3
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ACTION 11

Bunurong culture is acknowledged and incorporated into wildlife management on Phillip Island (Millowl).

39. Opportunities and capacity requirements for BLCAC to be involved and contribute to the management of wildlife are identified.	BLCAC (DELWP, Nature Parks, BCSC)	Medium Term Year 4-5
40. Applications to access wildlife on Phillip Island (Millowl) for Aboriginal cultural use are referred to BLCAC for endorsement.	DELWP (BLCAC)	Immediate Year 1
41. Feasibility study on the commercial use of wildlife by BLCAC (e.g. harvesting eggs).	BLCAC (DELWP, Landholders)	Medium Term Year 4-5



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