

What is a wild dog?

The term wild dog refers collectively to purebred dingoes, dingo hybrids and domestic dogs that have escaped or been deliberately released.







Legislation

The wild dog is a restricted invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be moved, kept (if a dingo), fed, given away, sold, or released into the environment without a permit. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants and animals under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO).

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants and animals in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on certain species. Some of these actions may be required under local laws.

Description

Wild dogs weigh between 8 and 38 kg, depending on the breed of the parent dogs (dingoes weigh 12 and 15 kg). Their coats can be yellow, black, white, brown or any variation or combination of these.

Some wild dogs may have larger heads in proportion to their body size, and larger canine teeth than domestic dogs. Wild dogs can live for up to 12 years, although most live only 5 to 7 years. Wild dogs howl to attract pack members and repel intruders from their territory

Location and Movement

Wild dogs are found on grazing land, on the fringes of towns, in rural-residential estates, or in forests and woodlands, anywhere there is food, water and shelter. Many of the changes that people make to the landscape make more of these things available.

Wild dogs rest during the day, often not far from water. Their travel routes to and from resting or den sites may be well defined. Their tracks depend on the size and weight of the animal.

Their home ranges vary considerably and are influenced by the availability of food. Wild dogs that depend primarily on rubbish may remain in the immediate vicinity of the source, while those that depend on livestock or wild prey may travel up to 20 km.



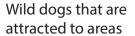
Food and Water

Wild dogs feed opportunistically. That is, they will eat whatever is easiest to obtain when they are hungry and are therefore attracted to places where they can scavenge food or are deliberately or inadvertently feed by humans. They will eat animal or vegetable matter, hunt for live prey, or eat road-killed animals, dead livestock, scraps from compost heaps or rubbish tips, domestic dog food that is left out and fruit that has dropped from trees.

Wild dogs are attracted to places where they can scavenge food, and deliberately or inadvertently feeding them can make them dependent on humans. This is the source of many conflicts between people and wild dogs. Habituated wild dogs expect food from everyone. Pups of habituated wild dogs may not be taught to hunt properly and become dependent on hand-outs and scavenging for waste.

Habituation

Wild dogs are usually timid and do not often stray into urban areas unless they are encouraged. However, those with a recent domestic background or regular close contact with people may approach dwellings or people.





where people live lose their natural fear of humans and will ignore threats and come close to people.

When people try to encourage wild dogs to come closer or feed them, wild dogs may try to dominate or steal food by aggression.

If people leave wild dogs alone, they will shy away from human activity.

Small or young animals are more vulnerable to attack by wild dogs, and need special protection. If you live in an area where there are wild dogs, you must protect domestic animals be ensuring that are effectively enclosed and not wandering.

Social structure

Wild dogs in remote areas live in packs, often of 3–12 animals, with a dominant (alpha) male and female controlling breeding. Packs establish territories (home ranges) which do not usually overlap. The size of a territory seems to



be directly related to the availability of food in the area. In pastoral areas where there are regular wild dog control programs and where hybridisation is prevalent, social structures may differ and packs may be less stable.

Breeding

Wild dogs are often heard howling during the breeding season which, for pure dingoes, occurs once a year, mostly between April and June. Hybrid dogs have two oestrus cycles each year, although they may not always successfully raise young in each cycle.

After a nine-week gestation, four to six pups are born in a den that provides protection from the elements and other animals. Dens may be in soft ground under rocks, logs or other debris, or in logs or other hollows. Pups are suckled for 4-6 weeks and weaned at four months.

Pups become independent of their parents when they are 6-12 months old, with those becoming independent at the later time having a higher rate of survival. Increased food supplied by people also enables more pups to survive to maturity.



What to do If you feel threatened

If you are threatened by a wild dog:

- Stand still at your full height and fold your arms across your chest.
- Face the dog, then calmly back away.
- If you are with another person, stand back to back.
- Confidently call for help.
- Wait until the dog or dogs are gone before you continue on your way.
- Do not run or wave your arms.



Councils role in wild dog management

Council's officers work closely with State Government departments to ensure that issues are approached from a regional perspective.

Council, through Pest Management officers, are responsible for controlling invasive restricted animals on council land and enforcing offences and obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

Council's Pest Management Officers also provide advice to residents in the Rockhampton Region.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (OPWS) role

QPWS actively manages pest plants and animals in parks, forests and other areas gazetted under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992 and Forestry Act 1959*, in order to protect the biodiversity and natural processes in these areas.



Remember

- Never feed a wild dog, although they may appear skinny, they can get food from the environment. It is illegal to feed wild dogs.
- Never try to be riend or approach a wild dog.
- Never leave food out for domestic dogs, this can attract wild dogs.
- Keep your pets inside at night and keep them behind an enclosure during the day – do not let them wander.
- Tell your children to stay away from wild dogs and to remain still and not run away if they are threatened by one.
- If a wild dog approaches a horse with rider, the rider should calmly walk the horse away from the dog.