

CASE STUDY

Protecting Blackwater's biodiversity

The years flooding events impacted heavily on the environment. Along with the floodwaters that spread across the Curragh mining lease came a countless mass of weed seeds. As the waters receded the weeds grew rapidly, dominating post-flood vegetation growth.

Snakes were found on a regular basis in and around mining infrastructure after being washed out of their natural habitats. The increased mice presence also attracted the displaced and hungry snakes.

Feral pigs encroached on the main administration building and car-park, digging up gardens and alarming staff. Feral dogs and cats experienced easier hunting through the increase in prey populations. Off lease was similarly affected by the flooding; including the highly endangered Bridled Naitail Wallaby population at Taunton Scientific Wildlife Reserve 50 kilometres east of Curragh.

The reserve experienced an increase in wild dogs, cats and foxes that prey on the endangered wallabies. Weeds out-competed the natural food source of the wallabies and flood waters destroyed valuable scientific research equipment.

To combat these issues the Curragh Environmental Department has undertaken intensive weed eradication and feral animal control programs.

These programs have proved very successful, with many areas now free of major weed infestations and many feral pigs have been removed from Curragh. Revenue raised by selling feral pig carcasses on the market is being donated to help the remaining 100 Bridled Naitail wallabies at Taunton Reserve.



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Curragh **Training and Communication** days have been utilised to improve environmental awareness

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Snake handling training was conducted by the Environmental Department. A total of 36 Curragh employees and community members were trained to safely capture and relocate snakes. Curragh Training and Communication days have been utilised to improve environmental awareness and inform the workforce of the necessity in controlling pest plants and animals.

Ecologists and the Environmental Department surveyed the proposed new Curragh West mining area and mapped the flora and fauna composition.

A wide variety of animals were found including Knob-tailed geckos, Eastern Chestnut mice and Striped Burrowing frogs.

The old Blackwater Creek area saw Ecologists and the Environmental Department conducted a wildlife relocation program in order for mining to progress into that area. A wide range of animal species including snakes, bats, frogs and sugar gliders were relocated. They were released into the Blackwater Creek Diversion area where new habitats have been made available to them through strategic placement of logs, wildlife boxes and trees.

