

Australian Society for Kangaroos

'Dedicated to the victims of the largest wildlife slaughter in the world'

MEDIA RELEASE

CALL FOR MORATORIUM INTO KANGAROO CULLS AS POPULATIONS CRASH IN WEST AUSTRALIA

The Australian Society for Kangaroos is calling on the West Australian government to place an immediate moratorium on the commercial, non commercial and open season slaughter of kangaroos in Western Australia as the state's Red and Western Grey Kangaroos crash below critical densities across most of the state.

According to regional data provided by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Red Kangaroos and Western Grey kangaroos are at catastrophic densities of less than one kangaroo per square km across most of Western Australia, putting the iconic marsupials at significant risk of local, regional and potentially state wide extinction if the large scale shooting of kangaroos is not suspended immediately.

Nikki Sutterby, President of Australian Society for Kangaroos expressed her deep concern for the ongoing large scale slaughter of kangaroos in Western Australia despite these catastrophic densities:

“Despite these alarming densities, the West Australian government authorised the slaughter of 350,000 Red and Western Grey kangaroos and their joeys by the commercial kangaroo industry this year, as well as continuing to allow uncontrolled numbers to be shot without license under the state's open season policy, which in combination has left West Australia's kangaroos in serious danger of local, regional and potentially state wide extinction”, said Ms Sutterby.

According to a government scientific report titled “Kangaroo Options in the Murray Darling Basin”, when kangaroo densities fall below five kangaroos per square kilometre, it means *'the nominal value of kangaroo densities taken to indicate the effective loss of the species'*.

This report, written by government scientists and published by the Murray Darling Commission in 2004, gives clear warnings about the risks of hunting kangaroos at densities below five kangaroos per sq/km:

'Strategies that produce average densities of less than 5 kangaroos per square kilometre would result in minimum densities of less than 2 kangaroos per square kilometre, and could be considered a threat to species conservation and',

'Critical minimum densities are not clearly defined but populations below 2 kangaroos per square kilometre would generally be considered at risk of extinction'.

'Pastoralists would need to accept that reduction of kangaroos to very low densities (<5 k km²) over large areas is neither commercially feasible, ecologically defensible or economically justified, and finally Reduction of kangaroo densities to less than 5 kangaroos per square kilometer over large areas would result in the demise of the kangaroo industry'

which is exactly what occurred when West Australia's main kangaroo meat processing company closed down recently citing a lack of kangaroos as their main reason.

Ms Sutterby repeated her concerns by saying, "So there are clear warnings from the government's own scientists that allowing the ongoing large scale slaughter of kangaroos at these catastrophic densities is highly likely to result in the extinction of these unique and iconic marsupials in Western Australia, and unless the federal and West Australian government takes immediate action and suspends this uncontrolled killing we could lose these amazing native animals from the landscape forever."

Please find below links to media and government reports and documents referred to in this media release. Government population data quoted in this media release is available on request.

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https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/animals/kangaroos/30_grey_kangaroo_plan.pdf

https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/animals/kangaroos/fauna_note_31_red_kangaroo_management_plan.pdf

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-03/wa-kangaroo-meat-shock/7379196>