



NATIONAL
FERAL PIG
ACTION PLAN

Demonstration site- Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance



Feral pig control: the key to turtle nest protection

Feral pig control is the focus of a unique collaboration by Indigenous Ranger groups to protect the future of threatened turtle species at remote beach locations on Western Cape York Peninsula, Queensland.

Some of the key results for 2021 included:

- 3,698 marine turtle nests were monitored
- 7 census beaches, covering 150km were monitored
- 2,693 pigs were removed



Credit: Cape York NRM

In 2021, almost 2,700 pigs were removed from key coastal areas, helping to bring the average nest predation rate down to 10% (the target is to achieve less than 30%).

The figures were revealed at the Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance (WCTTAA) annual forum held in Cairns in December, convened by Cape York Natural Resource Management.

WCTTAA is a partnership of five Indigenous ranger groups on Western Cape who have been working together in marine turtle conservation since 2015. Supported by Cape York NRM, the work is funded through the Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program.

The groups include Pormpuraaw Land and Sea Management Rangers, Mapoon Land and Sea Management Rangers, Napranum's Nanum Wungthim Rangers, NPARC/ Apudthama Rangers and Kowanyama Rangers.

Despite overall predation rates being among the lowest since the program began all ranger groups agreed keeping up with predator control and culling of feral pigs was the biggest challenge.

Feral pig culling is carried out through a combination of both aerial and on-ground activities, and is a large impost on Ranger time and resources in the remote Western Cape.

To address this challenge, the WCTTAA coordinate resources and target their efforts around the coastal wetlands and beaches with the highest turtle nesting densities.

The WCTTAA has also developed purpose-built aluminium cages which are used to protect the turtle nests from predators, and allow the hatchlings safe exit to make their way to the ocean.

“The work being carried out by WCTTAA has gone from strength to strength with up to 98 per cent of nests surviving to hatching in some localities,” Cape York NRM Biodiversity and Fire Program Manager and WCTTAA Coordinator Kerri Woodcock said.

“But feral pigs aren’t going away. They are a continued threat not just to our region but across the nation. Which is why we are excited about being a demonstration site as part of the National Feral Pig Action Plan.

“We look forward to contributing to the methodologies and learning from other regions to minimise the impact these creatures have on our land and sea.”

WCTTAA is supported by Cape York NRM, with funding through the Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program, a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments.

For more information, contact WCTTAA Coordinator at wcttaa@capeyorknrm.com.au or phone Cape York NRM on 1300 132 262 or visit their website at

<https://capeyorknrm.com.au/projects/western-cape-turtle-threat-abatement-alliance-wcttaa>

