



NATIONAL  
FERAL PIG  
ACTION PLAN

# Protecting Peatland Ecosystems and Addressing Threats (PEAT) project



**This multifaceted, collaborative project aims to significantly increase our knowledge of the geodiversity and biodiversity within peatland ecosystems in Southwestern Australia. It will also assist in identifying and quantifying the impacts on peatlands, including *Empodisma* peatlands, recently recognised as a threatened ecological community (TEC). Understanding the impacts will help to design and inform management programs and therefore protect the future of the region.**



*Aerial photo showing expansive feral pig damage*

*Photo credits- Holly Winkle, UWA*



*Albany pitcher plant*

The second Stakeholder Reference Group meeting for this project was held in Walpole, WA on 1 February 2024. This group is chaired by Professor Carmen Lawrence. Dr. Narelle Dybing is a member of the reference group, representing the NFPAP.

Results were presented from the 2023 Walpole Wilderness Bioblitz, where 170 volunteers surveyed a range of different ecosystems across the region which will help to track how native flora and fauna are being impacted by threats including fire and feral pigs over time. Feral pigs are now accessing previously difficult to access areas exacerbating risks to threatened and vulnerable wildlife and plants such as the sunset frog and the Albany pitcher plant.

The reference group were briefed on how best practice research methods were being applied, with biosecurity protocols at front of mind, including risk mitigation for *Phytophthora dieback* spread and creating paths for feral pigs in the thick understorey of the peatlands.

The meeting was preceded by a 2-day annual planning event involving the research team. Guidance was received from Indigenous Elders in the region on the cultural significance of

the area, and the wildlife and flora at risk from threats including feral pig activity and drought. These discussions emphasise the value and importance of seeking management guidance from Traditional Owners and two-way learning.

Whilst in Walpole, Narelle met with Janine Liddelow from WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to discuss their feral pig management program. Thanks are extended to Glenn Ewing (DBCA) for enabling Narelle to see the challenging conditions in the peatlands where feral pigs are being controlled. While trapping is being used, the construction of traps is made difficult by the need to find suitable areas where feral pigs are present and vegetation will not interfere with gate closure; which can be challenging in peatlands with thick understorey.

Holly Winkle, PEAT project coordinator, showed Narelle several peatland regions with significant feral pig damage. Expansive diggings, uprooted trees and bare ground (with little to no evidence of regrowth) were commonplace.

Thanks are extended to Holly Winkle and the PEAT project team, including Dr David Edmonds and family for hosting Narelle in Walpole.