

WILDLIFE ADVOCATE

Representing The Quiet Australian

FACT SHEET

The Dingo Under Threat

History

The dingo is Australia's native high order carnivore. It is the largest native carnivorous mammal in Australia and plays a vital role in maintaining the balance within ecosystems.

Dingoes have been present in Australia for at least 3,500 years and perhaps as long as 11,000 years. They play an important ecological role, helping suppress populations of kangaroos, feral animals, and there is anecdotal evidence they help maintain populations of endangered species by excluding introduced feral predators like cats and foxes.

Dingoes are not dogs. Rather they are a relative of the Asian and Middle Eastern wolves. Unlike dogs, dingoes communicate over long distances through a series of howls, rather than barks as is the case in dogs.

Under Threat

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has recently upgraded the dingoes status to 'vulnerable'. Other researchers¹ believe the situation is so dire that 'pure' dingos may be extinct in some areas.

According to the IUCN, the main causes for the loss of the Australian dingo are:

- (i) poisoning campaigns to control 'wild dogs'; and
- (ii) hybridisation with domesticated dogs gone wild

Domestic dogs dumped by senseless owners are causing the loss of our native wildlife, including the native dog - the dingo. Because of the proliferation of these wild dogs, and their impact on sheep grazing etc, landholders have continuously laid baits for many years to control wild dog numbers. Unfortunately, these baits also kill the dingo.

In addition, the larger and stronger domestic dog also competes with dingos for feed and causes pack disruption & induces breeding with feral / domestic dogs. As a result there has been an increase in the proportion of 'hybrids' or 'crosses' which have in turn put pressure on the 'pure' dingo populations.

**All Australians need to control their dogs or
we may lose the dingo forever**

For more information go to: www.dingoconservation.org.au

¹ *The conservation status of the dingo (Canis lupus dingo) in Australia, with particular reference to New South Wales: threats to pure dingoes and potential solutions*, L K Corbett 2001