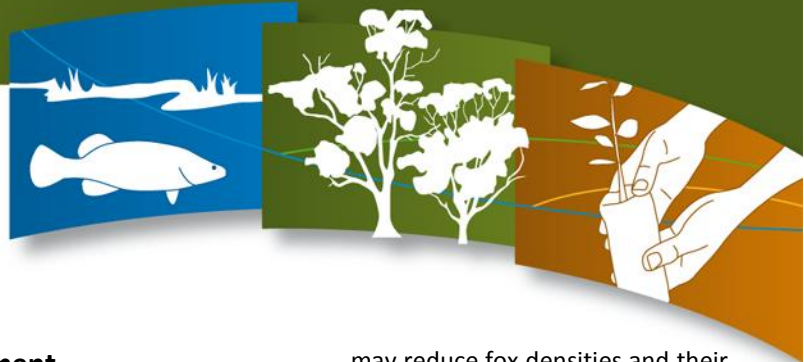


# Rabbit management

*Oryctolagus cuniculus*



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority  
*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

## History

*The introduced European rabbit is one of the most widely distributed mammals in Australia. It is also the second most abundant mammal, only being outnumbered by the mouse. Rabbits are an established pest animal in Victoria under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.*

## Impacts of rabbits

Rabbits are considered to be the most serious vertebrate pest in Victoria. They cause serious environmental damage such as soil disturbance and heavy grazing, causing destruction of native vegetation. Impacts to agricultural and pastoral industries are also significant. The effects on production are most evident in drier areas.



( source: [www.getfarming.com.au](http://www.getfarming.com.au) )

## Management

Many rabbit infestations occur in areas where management is difficult and/or costly to implement. Rabbit management requires widespread public support for success; the key to this is education.

An integrated approach of two or more control measures ensures a longer term effect on rabbit numbers. The standard primary rabbit control technique involves the destruction of warrens/refuges, after initial fumigation or baiting where rabbit densities are high. Following primary treatment, ongoing maintenance such as further fumigation or ripping is essential.

An alternative non-destructive approach to rabbit control is required for areas of high sensitivity such as cultural heritage sites. In these circumstances, fumigation and covering the warrens with wire/mesh to prevent access/escape is a non-destructive technique. Another option is implosion where explosives are used to cause sub-surface disturbance whilst creating minimal disturbance on the surface, however a permit is often required to use this technique.

A possible negative side effect of rabbit control may be that foxes may predate more heavily on native species as an alternative food source. On the other hand, since rabbits are the primary food source for foxes the long term control of rabbit numbers

may reduce fox densities and their impact on the environment. Hence a combined approach to manage both rabbits and foxes would be ideal.

## Benefits of rabbit management

Effective rabbit management has benefits for both public and private land.

Rabbit management can lead to:

- a reduction in soil disturbance and nutrient inputs
- reduction in overgrazing of native vegetation
- increased opportunity for the establishment of native plant species
- reduced competition with other species for resources such as food and shelter
- increased land value and production.

For further information contact North Central CMA on 03 5448 7124 or visit:

\*[www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au)

\*Rabbit Management Strategy:  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

Information contained within this fact sheet has been sourced from:  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au), and  
[www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au).

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