

Wild dog facts

Confirming the presence of wild dogs

If predation and subsequent loss of livestock lead you to think wild dogs may be present in the area, you should initially monitor the situation for a time.

Other signs of a wild dog population include:

- well-worn 'beats' around their home range boundary
- footprints on roads, tracks, livestock pads, and around dams or water holes
- stressed domestic stock.

Wild dogs hunt at any time, mostly in early morning or evening, but often all day if it is overcast or raining. Without careful monitoring it can be difficult to determine how serious your problem is and where best to apply control.

Verifying wild dog predation

The wild dog behaves in many ways which are probably determined by its experience and motivation (e.g. hunger or 'play'). As there is no certain way to distinguish between attacks by wild dogs or free-roaming domestic dogs, the following applies to both.

Footprints

The presence of dog tracks at a carcass does not necessarily mean that the animal was killed by a wild dog. However, if there has been an attack, depending on the type of ground and the amount of time that has elapsed since, both the wild dog and its prey will have left deep prints showing the toes spread out.

Carcasses

Wild dogs generally kill their prey by biting them on the throat, which damages the trachea and the major blood vessels of the neck. This often leaves blood at the mouth and the nose of the carcass, although it's important to distinguish blood from other bodily fluids that drain from a decomposing carcass.

Wild dogs often attack sheep from behind as they run away, injuring the sheep's hind legs. Inexperienced dogs or those attacking 'for fun' also frequently inflict considerable damage to the hind end of an animal, often leading to its death. In these cases, blood is often found caked on the sheep's hind legs, and the pattern this has made as it has flowed down the sheep's legs while the animal was still upright is clearly distinguishable from the blood or fluids which flow as a result of decomposition, or from animals feeding on the carcass.

Simply skinning the throat and hind legs of the carcass are often enough to reveal hidden damage. Tooth punctures in the hide, subcutaneous haemorrhage, bruises and tissue damage indicate the involvement of wild dogs.

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland (call 13 25 23 or visit our website at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

