

# Fraser Island Dingo Conservation and Risk Management Strategy



## Fast facts on Fraser Island dingoes

- The dingoes of Fraser Island have significant conservation value due to their iconic status and because they have rarely interbred with domestic or feral dogs. Dingoes are an apex predator, with their role at the top of the islands' food chain helping to keep a healthy balance in the natural environment.
- Dingoes *Canis familiaris* and domestic dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* may look similar because they are both different subspecies of wolf. Dingoes differ to domestic dogs in a number of ways. For example, like wolves, coyotes and jackals, dingoes only have pups once a year whereas domestic dogs breed twice annually. Domestic dogs are also exactly that—domestic! This domestication occurred over tens of thousands of years; whereas dingoes remain wild unpredictable animals.
- Available data estimates that Fraser Island is home to 25–30 stable dingo packs occupying a defined territory, each pack containing between three and 12 individuals.

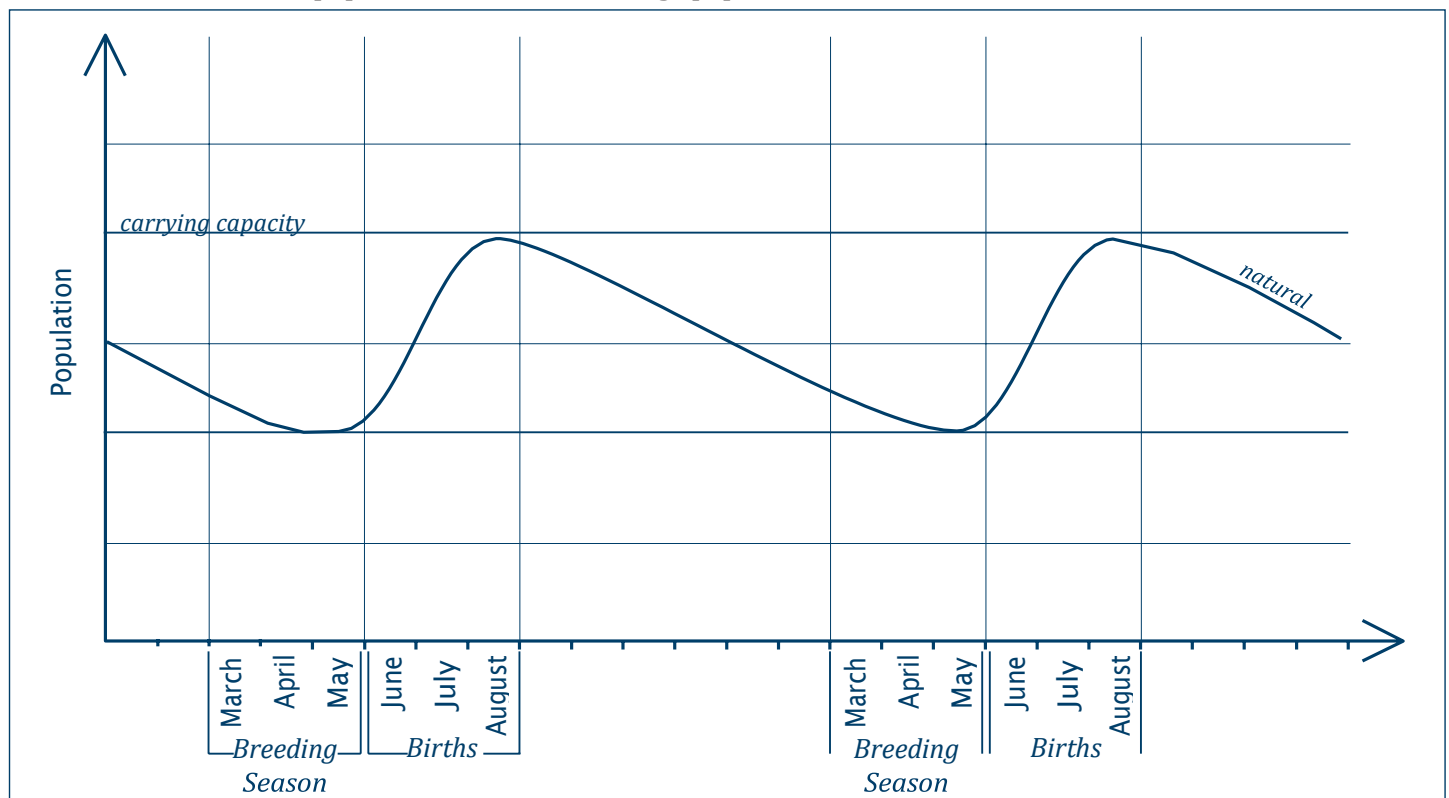
Feeding dingoes, whether intentional (for example, feeding stations) or inadvertent (such as through the improper disposal of rubbish) can cause problems. It disturbs the natural ecological balance by increasing the breeding capacity of dingoes and inflating the population above the carrying capacity of Fraser Island. This has negative results for dingoes as well as the populations of their prey.

Feeding dingoes can result in them losing their hunting skills and natural fear of humans. This can lead to dingoes becoming habituated and potentially behaving dangerously toward people—behaviour which, at its worst, means they may have to be humanely euthanised to avoid the risk of people being injured or killed.

It is illegal to feed or interfere with dingoes or other wildlife. Heavy penalties apply.

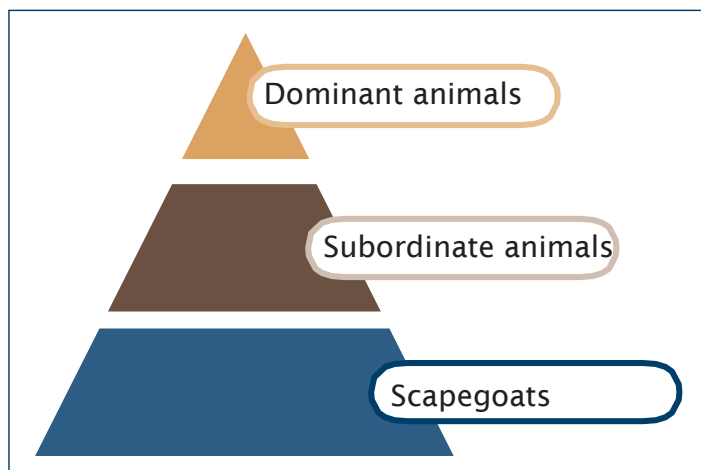
Avoiding feeding dingoes prevents negative outcomes for both people **and** dingoes.

Box 1. Indicative natural population trends of the dingo population on Fraser Island

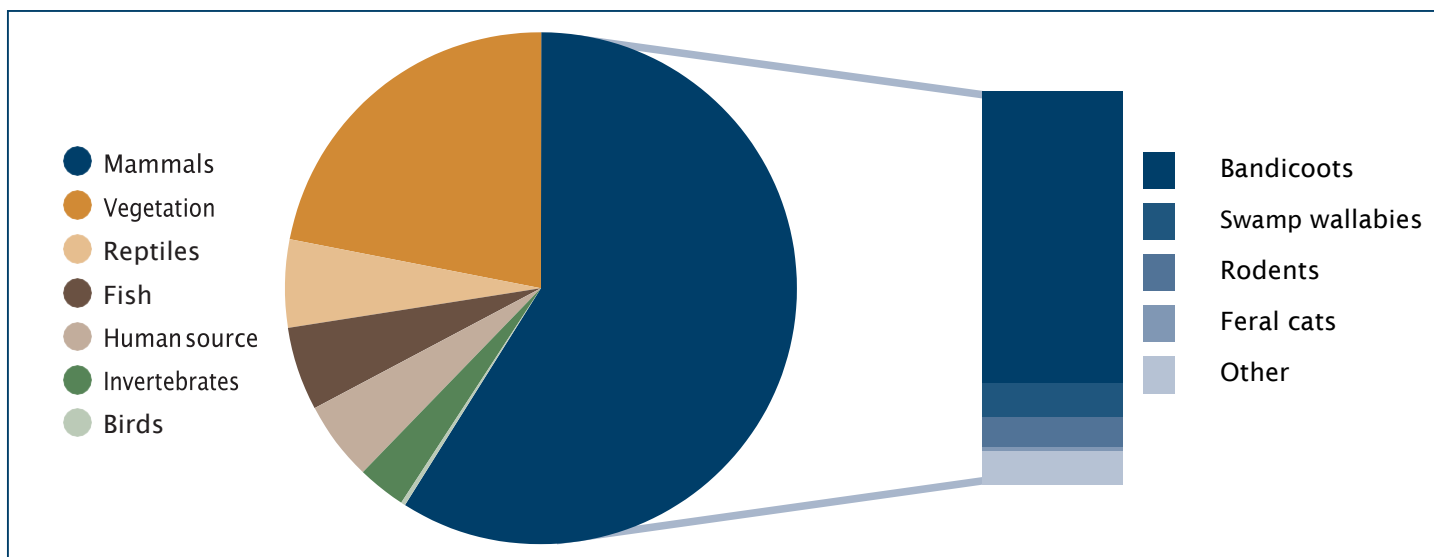


- The population of dingoes on Fraser Island naturally fluctuates throughout the year. Dingo numbers peak with dingo pup births in June–August, followed by a drop in numbers due to natural attrition (see Box 1).
- A dingo pack is dominated by its breeding male and female, with the subordinate animals aggressively competing for their place in the pack structure (see Box 2). The pack structure means not all dingoes have equal access to food, regardless of its availability. This results in some dingoes appearing quite lean.
- Fraser Island dingoes can also appear lean because they are very active, travelling up to 40 kilometres each day. However, studies have shown that adult dingoes on Fraser Island have a higher average bodyweight than pure dingoes on mainland Australia.
- The natural diet of dingoes is variable. Birds, reptiles, fish, invertebrates, vegetation and especially mammals are all on a dingo’s menu (see Box 3).

### Box 2. Social structure of dingo packs



### Box 3. Average diet of Fraser Island dingoes



## For further information

Contact the Department of Environment and Science

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Report negative dingo encounters—deliberate feeding, circling, lunging or being chased or bailed up by one or more dingoes, tearing tents or stealing property, nipping, biting or worse—to (07) 4127 9150 or emailing [dingo.ranger@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:dingo.ranger@des.qld.gov.au) as soon as possible.

**For all emergencies**, phone Triple Zero (000). Try 112 from a mobile phone if you have no reception.