Project Summary

Understanding and managing the impacts of deer on riparian vegetation

Project D2: Deer

This project will improve understanding of the impacts of deer and support the develop of a comprehensive deer control strategy consistent with the new Healthy Waterways Strategy .

Deer impacts along Victoria's waterways are increasing. Inventory surveys of values and threats along many of Melbourne Water's waterways have consistently found the impacts of deer to be a significant threat to river health and water quality.

In order to effectively manage the threat posed by deer, we need a better understanding of the relationship between deer abundance and impacts on riparian vegetation.

This project aims to quantify, predict, and map deer abundance and impacts on riparian vegetation. In collaboration with key stakeholders, we will develop the understanding necessary to guide the design of a comprehensive deer management strategy consistent with MW's Healthy Waterways Strategy.

Methods

During this project we will:

- Collate and curate existing data from various sources on deer abundance and impacts within the Melbourne Water region;

- Conduct a targeted field campaign to quantify deer abundance and impacts on riparian vegetation across a forested-agricultural landscape within the MW region.

- Use both the collated and collected data and relevant environmental data (e.g. elevation, slope, aspect, forest cover), to develop a predictive mapping tool to identify waterways at greatest risk from deer impacts.

Outcomes

This project will:

1. Quantify the threats posed by deer to riparian vegetation values; and

2. Map waterways at 'low, moderate and high risk' from deer impacts.

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Deer pugging within the dried streambed of the Macclesfield Creek. Zoos Victoria plan to fence off entire floodplain areas to protect critical lowland Leadbeater's Possum habitat

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