

Pre-Harvest Survey Program

Program update: August 2018



Program update: August 2018

DELWP has begun a comprehensive pre-harvest survey program to detect threatened species or species with prescriptions in coupes planned to be harvested in State forests in Gippsland, the Central Highlands and the Hume regions. The program will be supported by threatened species surveys across national parks, conservation areas and reserves in State forests.

The pre-harvest survey program will deliver greater protection for threatened species and improve the quality of data used for planning of timber harvesting operations. Values found through the pre-harvest survey program will trigger management actions or zoning changes as required under the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014.

The pre-harvest survey program does not replace the need for VicForests to undertake its own assessment of biodiversity values before harvesting.

Together the pre-harvest surveys and threatened species surveys undertaken across the landscape will build a knowledge bank to inform forest and threatened species management.

The data generated from these survey programs will help us better understand the habitat of threatened species, and where they are located across the landscape, which will improve our ability to model and map the location of threatened species habitat.

This will enable us to improve DELWP's forest management systems, including forest management plans and regulatory frameworks and ensure the right measures are in place to protect our valuable plants and animals.

The Victorian Government's pre-harvest surveys program is funded as part of the State Budget 2018-19.

Independent scientific advice ensures the survey design meets rigorous scientific standards. The survey design will be continuously tested and improved throughout the program

Survey outcomes will continue to be made publicly available through this website as survey results become available.

Who conducts the surveys?

Surveys are currently being conducted by specialist botanists and fauna experts from the [Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research](#).

Surveys are also being undertaken by experts from specialist environmental survey companies.

What is the survey program design?

The survey program design considers a range of factors that influence the what, where, when and how we will survey. These include:

- The target species to be included for analysis in the survey program design

- Surveying constraints such as seasonality of plants and animals
- Other constraints – such as winter weather conditions.
- Species importance (depending on the coupe, silviculture method and likely impact of timber harvesting)

Planned coupes to be surveyed are prioritised using a high-performance computing process, which considers the range of factors.

A summary of the survey design can be found [here](#). A detailed design report will be published in September 2018. The survey program has been designed in collaboration with scientists at the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research and peer reviewed by scientists from the University of Melbourne. The pre-harvest survey effort and methods have been scrutinized and endorsed by an independent expert in survey design, Professor Brendan Wintle, University of Melbourne.

Program update: August 2018

The Pre-harvest Survey Program started in July 2018 and has continued through August, with camera trapping surveys for Spotted-tailed Quolls and other terrestrial mammals, flora surveys for threatened plants, habitat and sign searches for evidence of threatened species including owl roosts and nest sites, and Leadbeater's Possum camera trapping.

Surveyed Schedules

Under development.

What has been surveyed?

Surveying has been undertaken in over 160 coupes. Despite it being winter, several plant and animal observations have been recorded. Survey results to date can be found [here](#).

What's next?

A data management system is being developed to streamline survey data collection and reporting and to provide a web-mapping interface which will allow stakeholders to search and view. We are also improving our communications about survey findings to keep you informed about where we are surveying and what we are finding.

We are now engaging specialists to survey more plants, arboreal mammals, ground dwelling mammals, bird sign, owls, fish, crayfish and amphibian species that become more visible throughout spring, summer and autumn.

We will also be surveying aquatic species such as crayfish and fish which are best surveyed when stream flows are low and water clarity is high, which is in summer.

Previous updates

July 2018