

Feral deer

Cervus spp.

What does it look like?

Feral deer are medium to large-sized mammals with hoofs. Males grow antlers in spring and shed them in winter.

There are two commonly known species of deer present in the East Coast/Tairāwhiti region; Red deer and Fallow deer. Red deer are the larger of the two species and tend to be reddish-brown, occasionally with white spots around the spine. Fallow deer are the most variable of any deer species in New Zealand/Aotearoa with four quite distinctive colour phases. The most common colour is brown-black back with paler grey-brown underside and neck, and no spots.

Why is it a problem?

Deer are selective browsers and target particular forest species over others. This can result in significant changes to forest composition and has effects on the fauna that rely on those plants.

Deer can destroy the understory of native forest by browsing, grazing, bark stripping and trampling, which in turn may increase soil erosion. Feral deer can reduce production by damaging crops and exotic forests. They have also been implicated in the transmission of bovine Tb.



Control methods

Shooting: A method of control for landowner/occupiers following appropriate firearms regulations and safety procedures. It is advisable to inform or co-ordinate control efforts with your neighbours particular next to a shared boundary.

Use appropriate calibre for shooting target species.

Related links

Gisborne District Regional Pest Management Plan <https://www.gdc.govt.nz/environment/reports-and-publications/pests/regional-pest-management-plan>
Department of Conservation (Deer Species) <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests/deer/>

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Rules

Council will work with landowner/occupier, including developing agreements for the effective management of this pest to protect the values of specific sites.

For more information about this Rule, refer to our Regional Pest Management Plan page 44, under Related Links.

Management programme

Site-Led