

MR64/0212

10 February 2012

FOLLOW UP RABBIT AND HARE CONTROL IN MULLIGANS FLAT WOODLAND SANCTUARY

In an effort to permanently remove rabbits and hares from Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, a follow up control program will be conducted in the area next week, Stephen Hughes, Manager, National Parks, Reserves and Rural Lands said today.

The program follows on from control work undertaken in the Sanctuary in December 2011.

“To ensure the successful and safe delivery of the program, Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve will be closed to the public from 1 am Wednesday 15 February 2012 to 6 pm Friday 17 February 2012,” Mr Hughes said.

“The program will again utilise trained detection dogs, which have been successfully used to ‘flush’ out rabbits in locations such as Macquarie Island, coupled with shooting and phosphine gassing methods which will be undertaken by trained and highly qualified ACT Government rangers.

“In December 2011 the trained detection dogs helped find 60 warrens within Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary which were then able to be destroyed using phosphine gas. A further 13 rabbits and two hares were shot by rangers.

“The follow up program will allow the detection dogs and our rangers to explore other areas of the Sanctuary and to reassess previously controlled locations.”

Mr Hughes said since the formation of the Sanctuary in 2009, the ACT Government has been actively controlling feral pest species.

“As well as protecting the critically endangered Yellow Box–Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland, the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary aims to create an environment free of feral pests and allow for the reintroduction of animals that have long since disappeared from the region.

“While foxes and cats were removed within the first year of the Sanctuary’s operation and rabbit and hare populations have been significantly reduced, it has proven more difficult to completely eliminate these pests. With the proposed release of the Eastern Bettong into the Sanctuary this Autumn, we need to further reduce the population of rabbits and hares in the area. Once Bettongs are reintroduced into the Sanctuary control options for these pests will be limited.”

Notification signage will be placed at all public entrances to the reserve to alert people to the closure. Residents of Forde will be notified by the Forde developer. Gates to the Sanctuary will also be locked to prevent access.

For enquiries on the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary rabbit and hare control program please call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Statement Ends

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