



Please
SAVE OUR DINGO!

The Australian dingo is a unique family-orientated predator that has lived on this continent for thousands of years and evolved alongside native prey species to establish efficient and well balanced ecosystems.

Our dingo is the only remaining large predator in Australia, and is responsible for keeping our wildlife healthy by keeping prey and pest species populations in check. Unfortunately, like our Tasmanian tiger in our shameful past, our dingo is being vilified and pushed towards extinction by powerful rural and hunting lobbies that cling to an abundance of ignorance, cruelty and greed.

Paying the ultimate price of insufficient action by the government to protect our wildlife, the Tasmanian tiger is now gone forever. Our dingo is currently the only native animal to be classified in many states as "vermin", and is being regularly baited with the aerially dropped super-toxin 1080. In Victoria last year, there was even a \$50 bounty in place on dingo scalps. If we do not pressure the government to take immediate action to protect our dingo, it will join the Tasmanian tiger as an extinct animal our future generations will only be able to marvel at in old photographs.

As part of their campaign to exterminate our dingo, rural and hunting lobbies spread myths to mislead the public. This makes efforts to drive dingoes to extinction easier by eliminating opposition. The following are some of the most common myths perpetuated, along with descriptions of what constitutes reality:

Myth #1

"Dingoes decimate native wildlife and ruin ecosystems."

Reality: Scientific studies of ecosystem conditions on either side of the dingo fence contradict this claim. On the side where dingoes are absent, kangaroos, wallabies, foxes and cats are overpopulating and destroying vegetation and endangered small marsupials. On the "useless" side where dingoes are present, kangaroo and wallaby populations remain healthy and balanced, allowing vegetation to regenerate; Foxes and cats are also suppressed as a result of predation by dingoes, allowing small marsupials to thrive.

Our dingo is beyond doubt Australia's keystone predator: The species which preys on the weak and sick of the most abundant prey species, keeping herbivore species from overpopulating and outcompeting one another. Dingoes have been doing this job successfully for thousands of years. With this in mind, it is absurd to suggest that they would suddenly pose a threat to wildlife.

Myth #2

"Dingoes are utterly devastating our sheep industry."

Reality: The reported losses of sheep to wild dogs in a given year in Victoria and New South Wales are at only around 3,600 and 1,200. Given that Victoria and New South Wales house upwards of 20,000,000 and 35,200,000 sheep, these losses could barely even be represented by a crumb on a pie chart or a percentage of just 0.02%. Vastly more sheep are lost in just a month during live export trips.

Livestock losses to wild dogs cost nowhere near as much as the continual baiting of our dingoes with the super-toxin 1080, and show that there really is no "wild dog problem" in Australia that can't be solved by compensating farmers for losses and/or making them practice more sensible husbandry using proven protective measures such as maremma guardian dogs and exclusion fencing.

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www.dingofoundation.org.au/leaflet

Myth #3

"Dingoes are not native, and have been proven to be just introduced feral domestic dogs from Asia. Therefore they are pests that need to be exterminated."

Reality: Various studies on geological records and samples of dingo mitochondrial DNA have shown that our dingo has been present on the Australian continent for at least 3,500 years, probably up to about 12,000 years. This is a very long time in the context of evolution and has been sufficient for the dingo to evolve and adapt to the Australian environment. By any official definition, the dingo is "native".

How the ancestor of dingoes, shown to be a pale-footed Asian wolf by skull morphology studies, arrived in Australia is unknown, can only be speculated about and this does not change the fact that dingoes are essential components of Australian ecosystems that must be protected if we wish to preserve our wildlife.

Because dingoes still retain most characteristics present in their wild Asian ancestors, it is also highly unlikely that they were subjected to any significant form of domestication that would warrant labelling them as "feral dogs". Dingoes truly are Australia's own form of wolf.

Myth #4

"Dingoes are vicious killers that attack humans unprovoked."

Reality: You can count the number of confirmed fatal attacks of dingoes on humans in our entire recorded history on just half a hand. Compare this to about 15,000 domestic dog attacks per annum.

Dingoes, like wolves in other parts of the world, have an inherent fear and distrust of humans. They generally avoid confrontations with people and flee at the slightest hint of trouble. The only incidents of "attacks" on humans by dingoes are recorded in areas where they are habituated to humans by irresponsible people, such as on Fraser Island. In those incidents the dingoes have lost much of their fear of humans as a result of feeding, and behaved more boldly when feeling threatened. There are also incidents of habituated juvenile dingoes attempting to play with people, which are often misinterpreted as attacks.

Myth #5

"The real danger to the dingo is the domestic dog, with which it is hybridizing itself to extinction."

Reality: Domestic dogs do not have the biological adaptations necessary for survival in the wild, unlike the dingo. Hence most are culled by natural selection before the rare opportunity to mate with a dingo even presents itself. On the rare occasion where mating is successful, the resulting pups are unlikely to survive due to the harshness of life in the wild; Even of pure dingo puppies only about half survive to their first year of age.

Hence, all successful wild living canine populations are either of pure or almost pure pre-settler dingo content, performing the same crucial ecological role. Hybridization is a process that has occurred for wild wolf species across the world since the dawn of the domestic dog, without presenting itself as a real threat. A recent study has shown that the black pelt colour in North American gray wolves is a characteristic they acquired at some point in history through hybridization with domestic dogs. Rather than harming the species, hybridization has actually presented it with a new opportunity for adaptation.

Hybridization is being exploited as a loophole to justify killing entire populations of dingoes. If they are ever to see real protection, the popular paradigm on hybridization needs to change.

Spread the word in the media and contact the federal and state ministers for the environment, demanding that ALL dingoes be protected, with no needless genetic discrimination!

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Join the Australian Dingo Foundation in the fight for our dingo. Visit our website:
www.dingofoundation.org.au