

Calici – West Australian Rabbit Control & Awareness Project 2018-2020

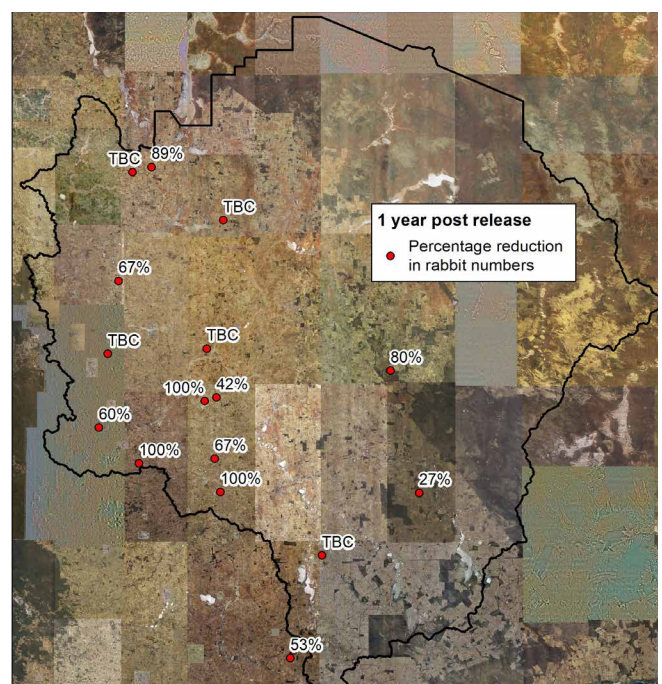
PROJECT CODE: HE1CAL

Overview of Progress: January 2019 to March 2019

13 landholders released the virus at 14 sites during autumn 2018, 2 further landholders released the virus in spring 2018. In April to June 2019 we received 1-year-post-release monitoring data from 11 of the 14 autumn 2018 release sites. From this data we found:

- On average, across these 11 sites, we saw a 71% decrease in rabbit numbers – this compares to the 40% predicted reduction in rabbit numbers for the South West
- Most project sites, one year on from the release, saw at least a 50% reduction in rabbit numbers, when compared to the pre-release counts
- Only one project site had a particularly low success rate, with only a 26% reduction in rabbit numbers 1-year-post-release

National data suggests that the 'rogue' RHDV2 strain of calicivirus was recirculating through South West rabbit populations in October 2018 and may have played a role in the rates of rabbit population reduction identified through this project.





Sarah Hyde's calicivirus release site, in Wickepin.

Sarah Hyde's calicivirus release site, in Wickepin, saw the most significant drop in rabbit numbers, with 41 rabbits counted prior to release and no rabbits counted at either the 1-month-post-release or 1-year-post-release counts. This is particularly significant considering the amount of damage rabbits were causing on the property prior to the release.

Lessons Learnt and Improvements

- Seeding and harvesting are difficult times of year for landholders to prioritise rabbit monitoring activities.

Acknowledgement

This project is in partnership with Southcoast NRM.