

Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance

Non-indigenous animals investigations

Since the implementation of the **Biosecurity Act 2015**, the **Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team** have been responsible for investigating reports of persons being in possession of non-indigenous animals within NSW.

In 2020-2021, compliance officers seized eight prohibited non-indigenous animals, resulting in fines of \$10,000 and one successful prosecution.

Background

Non-native animals can pose biosecurity risks to the NSW economy, environment and community. Non-native animals impact negatively on the natural environment and commercial enterprises through predation, competition for food and shelter, destruction of habitat, and by spreading exotic animal diseases. In addition, some non-native animals can threaten human health and safety through the transmission of diseases.

Section 152(1) of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) provides that a person who engages in a prohibited dealing is guilty of an offence. Schedule 3 of the Act provides a list of non-native animal species classed

as prohibited dealings. The maximum penalty which can be imposed against an individual for this offence is \$220,000.

What we did

We conducted a number of investigations in collaboration with other regulators such as NSW Police, Strike Force Raptor and the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS). As a result, compliance officers were involved in the execution of search warrants and the seizure of eight non-indigenous animals: four Corn snakes, three Burmese pythons and one African spurred tortoise (*see photos A and B below*).



Photo A: Corn snake



Photo B: *Burmese python*

Outcomes

In the 2020-2021 financial year, ten penalty notices were issued to offenders with a total accumulation of \$10,000. There was also one successful prosecution of a Milperra man dealing with 90 Red-eared slider turtles and two Alligator snapping turtles (*see photo C*). The offender was fined \$4,950 (plus \$2,405 in costs) for contraventions of the Act relating to non-indigenous animals. Another matter is scheduled to be put before the court in September 2021.



Photo C: *Alligator snapping turtle*

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge NSW Police and NPWS officers, and in particular officers in Strike Force Raptor for providing intelligence and assistance throughout many of these investigations. We have worked together in numerous search warrant executions and the collaborative approach to enforcement action has yielded positive results.

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