

Prohibited pets



Many animals introduced into Australia have become serious pests. Examples include the cane toad, fox, cat, (European) rabbit and many other less common animals.

These animals cost Queensland a great deal of money and may have contributed to the extinction of several native animals. Introduced animals can spread infectious diseases, including exotic diseases (such as rabies) and other diseases that are dangerous to humans (such as herpes B).

The importation and keeping of some animals as pets is restricted by legislation. If there were no controls over the keeping and importation of potential pest animals, some animals would inevitably escape due to:

- poor cage construction
- accidental release or
- irresponsible owners releasing unwanted pets into the wild.

These animals could then multiply into feral populations.

The basic philosophy behind the law is: *prevention is much cheaper than cure*. Legislation protects Queensland's environment and economy from further damage due to new species of introduced animals.



Don't risk a fine

The *Biosecurity Act 2014*, prescribes animal species as prohibited or restricted invasive animals or as noxious fish. It is illegal to keep most declared mammal species as pets in Queensland. There are restrictions preventing the keeping of most of these species as pets.

Under the Act, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive animals.

The keeping of most native wildlife and certain introduced birds is regulated by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP).

Pets that are prohibited in Queensland

Prohibited mammals

All introduced mammal species are prohibited as pets unless listed as exceptions.

A sample of these prohibited mammals include:

- foxes
- squirrels
- ferrets/polecats/stoats
- rabbits
- hamsters
- monkeys/marmosets
- gerbils
- weasels
- dingoes.

Exceptions

Introduced mammals that can be kept as pets in Queensland (subject to local government by-laws):

- dogs
- cats
- horses
- goats
- donkeys
- guinea pigs
- black/brown rats
- house mice
- pigs
- deer (farmed species as long as these deer are kept within a deer-proof enclosure).

All other exotic mammals are illegal.

The keeping of native mammals is controlled by DEHP.

Prohibited reptiles and birds

All reptile and amphibian species introduced to Queensland are prohibited pets. Reptiles include snakes, lizards and turtles, including:

- American corn snakes
- red-eared slider turtles
- boa constrictors
- all tortoises.

Certain exotic birds are also prohibited.

Some native reptiles and birds may be kept under a permit issued by DEHP. Contact your local DEHP office.

Prohibited fish

Certain introduced fish are noxious in Queensland under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Noxious fish cannot be brought into Queensland.

The list of illegal pet fish includes:

- tilapia
- mosquito fish (gambusia)
- largemouth bass
- carp
- climbing perch.

Reporting prohibited pets

Please report any illegal activities such as the importation, sale and keeping of illegal animals. Your action will protect Queensland's environment and agriculture from degradation by introduced pest animals.

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

This fact sheet is developed with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

Fact sheets are available from Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) service centres and our Customer Service Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this fact sheet should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, DAF does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.