

Southern Ark project

Benefiting the biodiversity of East Gippsland through fox control

Landholder FACT SHEET

Southern Ark is a new conservation initiative aimed at facilitating the recovery of native animals and improving the stewardship of public land in East Gippsland through an integrated, large-scale and ongoing fox control program.



Management of this program involves a number of government agencies, including the Department of Environment, the Department of Primary Industries, and Parks Victoria. In areas where the fox control program is being carried out on public land that adjoins freehold land, the **Southern Ark** project team will be working closely with landholders, to ensure that the project is carried out safely and effectively.

Southern Ark will be progressively implemented across approximately one million hectares of public land in far East Gippsland. Initial areas targeted will be the coastal region surrounding Orbost. The **Southern Ark** program will then gradually proceed inland to extend across the entire region of East Gippsland east of the Snowy River.

Far East Gippsland has been divided into six fox control sectors. These are the Cape Conran, Orbost, Snowy, Croajingalong, Coopracambra and Bendoc sectors. In the first year of the program, the aim is to establish three fox control sectors, which will cover the southern half of East Gippsland.

The bait being used is Foxoff®, which is very attractive to foxes. It is an efficient, economic and environmentally safe poison. The poison will be buried to a depth of 10 – 15 centimetres in specially constructed bait stations. The bait stations will be established at one-kilometre intervals alongside vehicle tracks running through State Forest and National Park. A key aspect of the **Southern Ark** project is that baiting will continue throughout the year, to ensure that the pressure is maintained on the fox population.

Signs will be established on all major tracks running off sealed roads to warn landholders and residents that baiting is taking place. While the chances of domestic dogs locating and excavating a bait are extremely remote, it is recommended that all landholders ensure that their dog(s) do not roam uncontrolled on forested public land. (Please note that dogs are generally not permitted in National Parks and are required to be under control in State forest.)

A process has been established that will investigate any instances of suspected poisoning from baits used in the **Southern Ark** project. Any animal believed to have consumed a poison bait should be delivered to the Snowy River Veterinary Clinic in Orbost, where vets will give their professional opinion regarding the possibility of poisoning. If they believe the animal may have ingested a poison bait that has been placed as part of the **Southern Ark** program, the manager of the project will advise the Regional Chemical Standards Officer, who will investigate the incident.

For those landholders who are keen to join forces and conduct fox control on their own properties, information on how to proceed can be obtained by contacting your local *Enhanced Fox Management Program* facilitator. For East and West Gippsland CMA this is Ian Brown, who can be contacted on (03) 5183 9121.

If you have concerns regarding the control of wild dogs for the protection of domestic livestock, the Department of Primary Industries remain as the first point of contact.

Public meetings about the **Southern Ark** project will be held in the future, in East Gippsland; please *check The Snowy River Mail* for details.

More information about the **Southern Ark** project is available at www.dse.vic.gov.au/southernark, or by calling the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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