



AWMS

Australasian Wildlife
Management Society

www.awms.org.au

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In July, the Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) will be hosting a webinar, aimed at student and early career members, titled “From Evidence to Action: Science for effective wildlife management”. The panel for the webinar consists of four outstanding and generous speakers, spanning research, government, and advocacy. Each speaker brings a different perspective and experience in how science informs wildlife management, and how this is best achieved.

Our free webinar has been shared by our partner societies on social media, and has received a disturbing amount of negative, abusive, and personal commentary. The source of this antagonism is seemingly the involvement of one of our panelists in discussions around management of invasive feral horse populations in southeastern Australia. These comments attack the integrity and professionalism of all of our panelists.

Negative commentary is not surprising to anyone who has worked in wildlife management. Especially so for species seen as charismatic. Management of kangaroos, dingoes, cats, horses, and deer all trigger varied and passionate responses from segments of the public. We are used to this. We dedicate our careers to tackling the difficult balance between competing interests: protecting native species while supporting agriculture and other land uses; safeguarding animal welfare while achieving effective management; and, juggling the competing expectations of Australia’s diverse community.

In light of these comments, we respond by sharing some of our guiding principles:

1. We see no place for bullying or harassment at any AWMS event.
2. You can love an animal, be opposed to their management, and do so in a respectful manner.
3. All management actions are imperfect, but rational ethical analysis is required to select the best action for any context.
4. The persistence of populations of invasive species nearly always comes at the cost of native species. In order to protect biodiversity, the control of invasive animals is necessary.

AWMS is dedicated to providing a forum for wildlife managers, especially students, to navigate complex wildlife management topics. Our free webinars are one way to achieve this goal, and the enthusiasm from members across Australia tells us we are achieving it.

Dr Stuart Dawson
AWMS President

Dr Jordan Hampton
Past AWMS President

Dr Tom Newsome
Past AWMS President

Dr Tarnya Cox
Past AWMS President