



AUSTRALIAN ALPS NATIONAL PARKS

Media Release

2019 Australian Alps feral horse aerial survey results are released

In autumn 2019, the Australian Alps National Parks Co-operative Management Program working with Parks Victoria, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and ACT Parks and Conservation Service undertook a feral horse aerial survey in the Australian Alps. The 2019 survey followed the 2014 model, by employing the same operational and statistical methodology. This allowed for the estimation of both the current population and the change in horse numbers in the surveyed areas over the past five years.

Results from both the 2014 and 2019 Australian Alps Feral Horse Aerial Survey indicate that the overall Australian Alps feral horse population is large, widespread and continues to increase in size. The estimated overall feral horse population within the combined surveyed areas has more than doubled over the 5 years between the 2014 and 2019 surveys.

Combining estimates for each of the three blocks surveyed, the population across the surveyed Australian Alps area increased from an estimated **9,190** in 2014 to **25,318** in 2019. This is an increase of **23%** per annum.

Such rates of population growth and increase are consistent with international research, survey and monitoring of feral horse populations across the world.

The methods used for the Australian Alps feral horse aerial survey are widely used by expert wildlife biologists and land managers around the world to estimate the density and size of wild populations of animals. They are widely accepted as providing robust and credible results. Studies using these methods have been published widely in peer-reviewed international scientific literature.

The survey design, methodology and analysis for the Australian Alps Feral Horse Survey 2019 has been independently peer reviewed by external experts from St Andrews University, Scotland who are international experts in the application of Distance sampling survey techniques and CSIRO Australia to verify that the survey, analysis and reported results are scientifically rigorous and robust.



