



Foundation for Rabbit-Free Australia Inc.

First bushfires – then rabbits

“That great survivor, the European wild rabbit, is one animal that might largely escape unscathed the recent widespread bushfires” says Professor Wayne Meyer, Chair of the Foundation for Rabbit Free Australia (RFA).

“Where it does it has the potential to inflict yet more damage on the Australian landscape.”

“As burrowers rabbits will have avoided much of the direct fire damage and might now find themselves at least temporarily free from many of their natural predators.”

“We know that rabbits will get by on the small scraps of vegetation remaining after fire has passed through, and they will be the very first to pick green shoots that might emerge after rain.”

“Not content with waiting for green shoots, rabbits will be digging away at the roots of perennials, in many cases killing these plants.”

Professor Meyer stressed that now is an important time to implement control measures on rabbits before they recommence breeding in autumn.

“Of course landholders affected by the bushfires are confronted with a multitude of other tasks, but I would encourage them wherever possible to at least destroy warrens.”

“Most landholders will be aware of their rabbit sites and warrens are generally relatively easy to spot after a fire.”

“This could well be a task where Blaze Aid volunteers could assist.”

Professor Meyer acknowledged that Kangaroo Island was uniquely fortunate in not having wild rabbits which should assist the, albeit slow, recovery of the rich flora and fauna indicative of a rabbit-free environment.

RFA is a publicly subscribed fund to support research, raise awareness and encourage on-ground action to eradicate wild rabbits in Australia.

For more information on RFA projects and the latest news about rabbits, see RFA website (www.rabbitfreeaustralia.org.au), or follow RFA on Facebook (@RabbitFreeAustralia) or Twitter (@EastaBilby) to join the conversation.

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