

## Harbour removal

- Rabbits are also able to live above ground where there is suitable habitat.
- This can include in log or rock piles, in weeds such as blackberry or gorse, as well as under houses or sheds.
- It is important to clear any of this harbour, but please contact the Bass Coast Shire Council before clearing any indigenous vegetation.

## Fencing

Rabbits can be excluded from your property by using rabbit-proof fencing. Although expensive, this is a cost-effective, one off expense. With regular maintenance of the fence and control within the fenced area, you can aim for your property to become rabbit free.

## Rabbit diseases

Rabbit-specific diseases have been released in Australia as a form of biological control. These include Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV), previously known as calicivirus. Alone, they cannot control rabbits, however they are useful in knocking down rabbit population numbers.

For further information and advice on rabbit control, please contact the Bass Coast Landcare Network Rabbit Project Officer or Agriculture Victoria.

Disclaimer: The advice in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Information used in this brochure has been sourced from: Agriculture Victoria [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au)

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# Rabbit Control in Rural Areas

**Rabbits are Australia's most significant pest animal. They cause several problems, including:**

- Destroying vegetation and your garden
- Competing with native animals and stock for both food and shelter
- Causing soil erosion



**Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, it is a landholder's legal responsibility to control rabbits. There is no one quick solution to rabbit control. Effective control is only achieved by using a combination of methods.**

## How to plan a rabbit control program

### Work with your neighbours

Rabbits are not contained by property boundaries. Find out what your neighbours are doing about rabbits, and perhaps you can work together and co-ordinate control. Your hard work can be wasted if rabbits recolonise your property from other areas.

### Identify areas of rabbit activity

Rabbits are territorial and live in warrens, but can also harbour around buildings, sheds or weedy areas. Look for signs of fresh diggings, scratchings or dung. Establish a map of warrens for your property, including active entrances.

### Calculate rabbit numbers

Set a specific walking route on your property, which you can regularly return to. Walk this route with a strong torch at dusk and count how many rabbits you see. It is also useful to note where they run to when disturbed. Spotlighting can be done pre and post control to see how effective your control work has been.

**Remember, one rabbit is too many!  
One pair of rabbits can easily and quickly re-infest your property.**

## Methods of rabbit control

To achieve effective and efficient rabbit control, a combination of methods needs to be used together.

### Baiting

Baiting for rabbits is normally done during late summer/early autumn as there is little other food available for rabbits. Combining baiting with other methods such as warren ripping can achieve long-term results in reducing rabbit numbers on your property. Two types of bait, 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate) or Pindone, can be used.

Rabbits typically feed within 25m of their warren. This is where your rabbit activity map is useful, so you can target baiting to their feeding areas.



## Tips for baiting

- Conduct free feeding (carrots or oats) to get an idea of how much bait to lay down.
- Protect other wildlife and your stock by laying your bait at dusk.
- Ensure that all bait is disposed of as per label instructions.
- Remove any carcasses to avoid secondary poisoning of other animals.

## Fumigation, ripping of warrens and harbour removal

Destroying rabbit warrens is an essential step in any rabbit control program. This is best completed when rabbit numbers are low, e.g. after baiting.

### Warren ripping:

- Map the location of all warrens – then, using machinery such as a tractor or bulldozer, the warren structure can be destroyed.
- Is best done during hot and dry conditions.

### Warren fumigation:

- Is where poisonous gas, such as phosphine, is introduced into the warren system.
- This strategy does not destroy the warren system – you should monitor these warrens in case of re-establishment.
- Note that you need to have an Agricultural Chemical Users Permit (ACUP) to purchase fumigants.