

Community Deer Management

Knowledge to Action

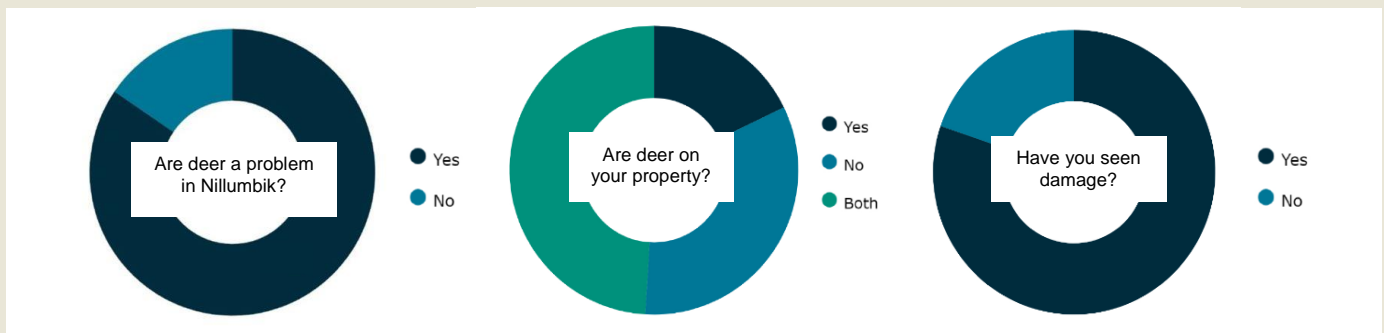
Preliminary Results of Survey



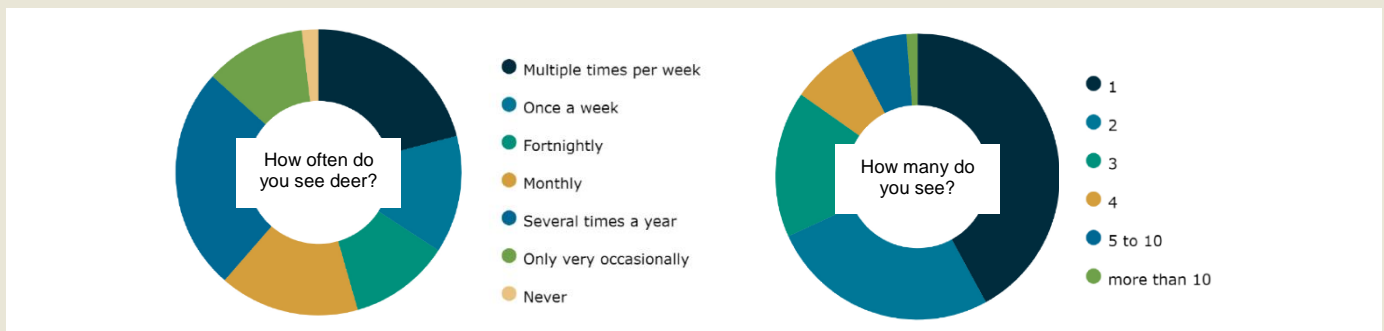
Council has been running the Participate Nillumbik's *Community Deer Management - Knowledge to Action* survey since February 2020. Results are perhaps unsurprising to those that have witnessed the rapid increase in deer sightings and damage over the last few years in Nillumbik, including more frequently in quite urban areas.

160 survey responses have been received so far, with 144 of these from Nillumbik residents. Most responses have been from postcodes 3099 (Hurstbridge – Strathewen), 3095 (Eltham and Research) and 3097 (Bend of Islands, Kangaroo Ground and Watsons Creek). The following are results from the Nillumbik submissions only.

Sightings and Reports of Deer and Damage



83% think that Deer are a problem, with 69% of people seeing deer on their own property and 80% seeing damage that has been caused by deer.

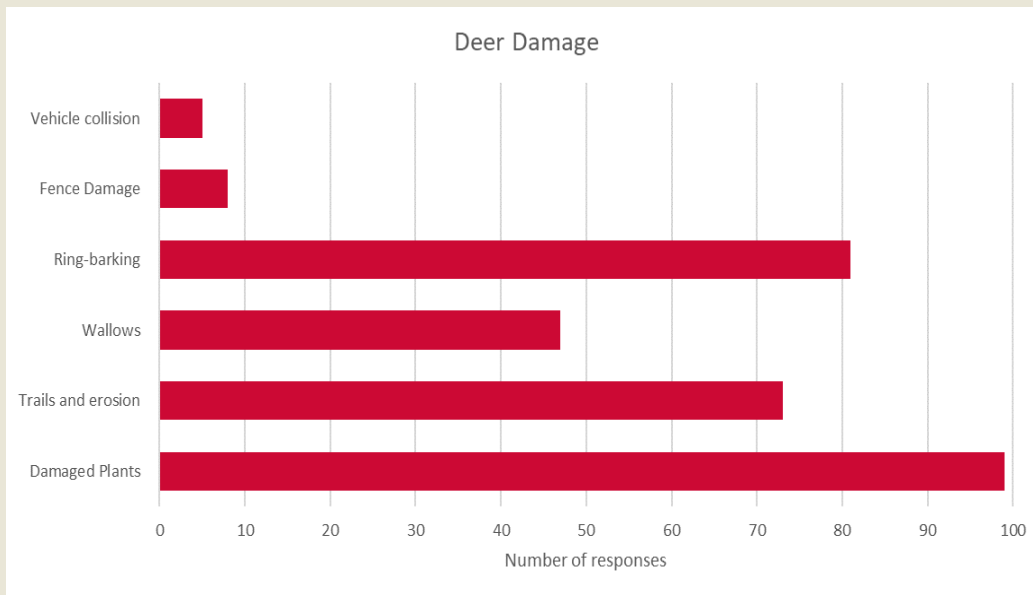


Deer are frequently seen in Nillumbik. 24% of survey responses indicate that they see deer several times per year. 20% see deer multiple times per week! Only 2% never see deer in Nillumbik.

87% see between 1 - 3 deer at a time, which makes sense as Nillumbik mostly has Sambar Deer, which are solitary animals. The majority of deer are seen in bushland or rural farming areas.



Only 6% of survey submitters record deer sightings using DeerScan. This makes it challenging for Council to understand the scale and location of the problem. Please report deer sightings, damage and deer control (including numbers removed) through DeerScan (www.feralscan.org).



Thankfully not too many vehicle collisions or fence damage.

Ring-barking can kill trees.

Wallows damage habitat for frogs, and other wetland species.

Deer often use kangaroo trails, but their hooves result in deeper, wider trails.

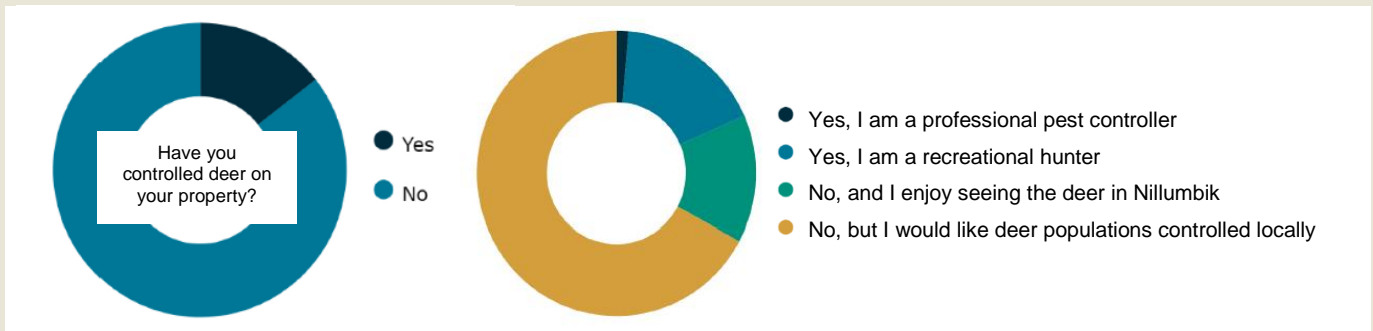
Deer can decimate an urban garden in a single night by browsing and trampling.

Controlling Deer numbers

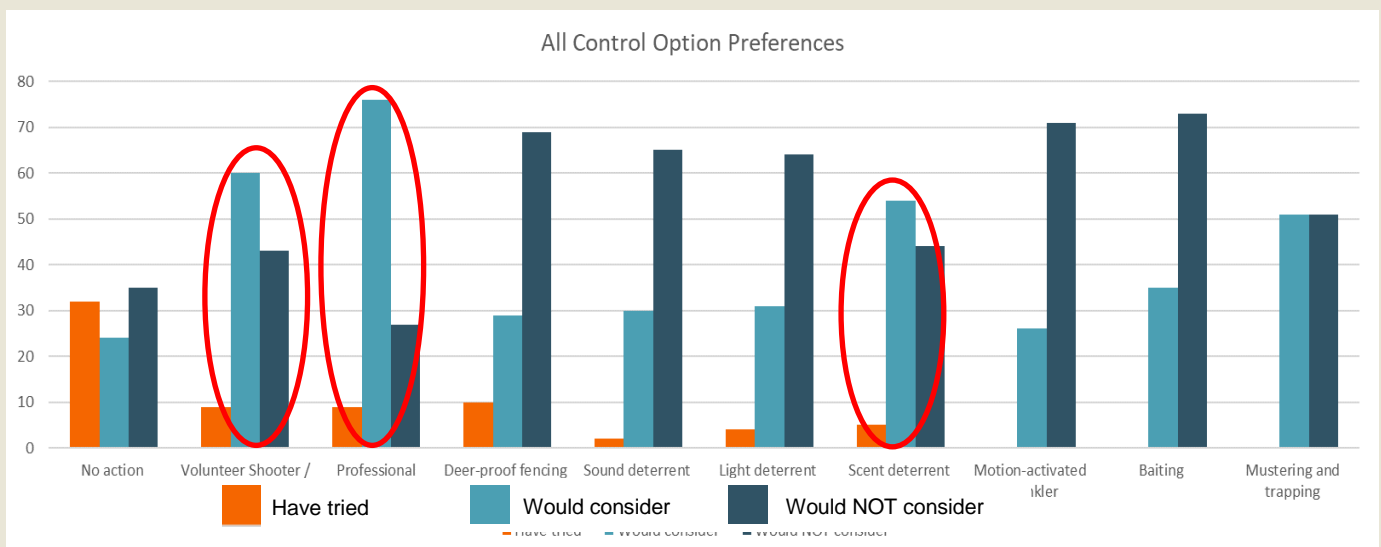
Not many survey responses indicated that deer control (by shooting) had been undertaken on their own property, however it is clearly an option that many are willing to consider (based on answers to later questions).

The lack of control undertaken could be due to the following:

- There may be no deer or only a few deer on the property, or no damage seen, so control is not required.
- There may be a lack of knowledge as to how to go about arranging deer control.



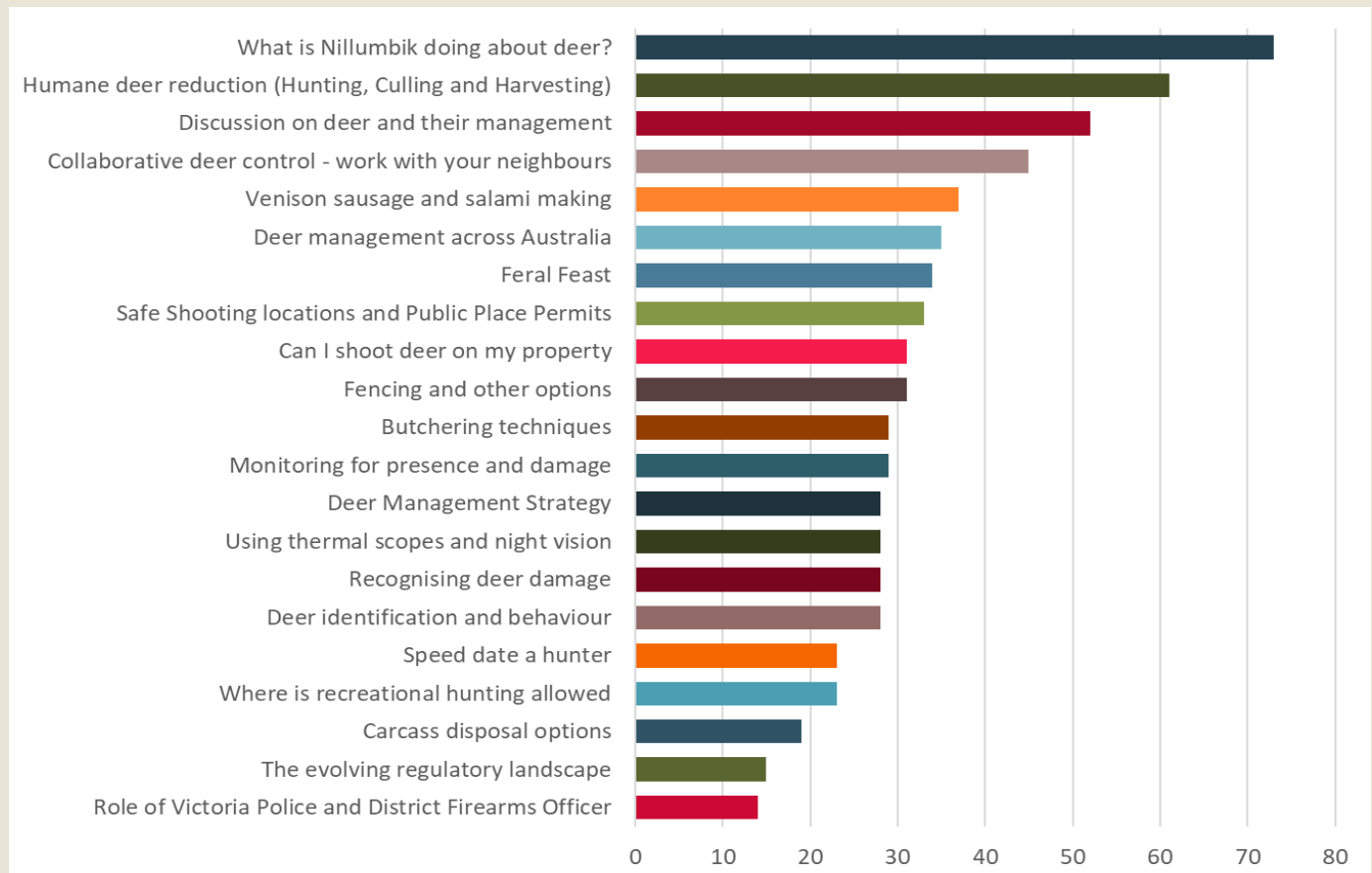
Deer management options



There appears to be a clear reluctance by landholders to undertake control options other than shooting. This may indicate the understanding that many of the listed techniques are either ineffective or only of short-term benefit (e.g. sound and light deterrents). Some options may also be expensive to implement, have the potential to impact other native fauna (e.g. fencing), or are regarded as inhumane (e.g. trapping).

Some of the above techniques, along with others not listed (e.g. contraception), have not been tried or tested in Australia and have not been recommended or approved by Government agencies – e.g. baiting or trapping. Nillumbik is not advocating for these actions, merely asking residents what they think is worth considering.

Interest in training, workshops and events



Based on interest in these topics, Council will host a number of online webinars (until we can meet in person), prepare some video tutorials and finalise a range of printable Fact Sheets.

We will schedule Zoom meetings shortly with those who expressed interest in joining a collaborative deer action group. This group will discuss obstacles to deer control, assist Council in strategically planning local deer control and help establish a Community Deer Directory.

If you and your neighbours are thinking about deer control and need assistance or property assessments to determine suitability for deer control, contact the Project Officer for help.

Get involved – Collaborate

If you have not yet had your say on deer in Nillumbik, the Participate Nillumbik Deer Survey is still open: <https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-deer-management>.



If you would like to know more about the Nillumbik Collaborative Community Deer Action project, check out the [webpage](#).

And please contact the Project Officer, Michelle Hanslow, for more information about joining a Nillumbik deer control network, a local deer action group, or to join in discussions at an information session. Email: environment@nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Phone: (03) 9433 3543