

Bear-Skin Fescue - Statutory Weed Management Plan

Festuca gautieri (Hackel) K. Richter

Interpretation:

In this Weed Management Plan (approved 25 November 2006)
(amendments approved 21 June 2011):

- "Act" means the *Weed Management Act 1999*.
- "Approved quarantine place" means a place approved by the Secretary under section 70 of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* for the purpose of examining any prescribed matter imported into or to be exported out of the State.
- "Court fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Court fines may be imposed if a person is convicted of any offence against the Act.
- "DPIPWE" means the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania.
- "Infringement fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Infringement fines are imposed by way of an infringement notice that may be issued by a Weed Inspector.
- "Inspector" means a Weed Inspector appointed under section 34 of the Act.
- "Penalty unit" means the basic unit of the fine for which persons who fail to comply with any prohibition or requirement under the Act may be liable. See [values of penalty units](#) under the *Penalty Units and Other Penalties Act 1987* for more details.
- "Quarantine Tasmania" means that branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment that, in cooperation with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, maintains both overseas and interstate quarantine barriers for this State.
- "[Regional Weed Management Officer](#)" means a person employed in the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment under that specific title.
- "Regulations" means the *Weed Management Regulations 2007*.
- "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
- "Zone A" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which eradication of a declared weed is the principal management objective. These municipalities are either free of the declared weed, host only small, isolated infestations, or host larger infestations which are deemed eradicable because a strategic management plan exists and the resources required to implement it have been or are likely to be secured. See [Management of bear-skin fescue by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.
- "Zone B" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which

containment of the declared weed is the principal management objective. Such municipalities host large, widespread infestations of the declared weed that are not deemed eradicable because the feasibility of effective management is low at this time. These municipalities lack a strategic management plan for the weed and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication have not been secured. See [Management of bear-skin fescue by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.

- "Bear-skin fescue" means *Festuca gautieri* (Hackel) K. Richter (synonyms: *Festuca varia* Haenke ssp. *scoparia* A.Kern. ex Hack., *Festuca scoparia* A.Kern. ex Nyman, *Festuca varia* var. *gautieri* Hack. bas.) and includes whole plants and plant parts. It does not include products such as tablets, lotions, tinctures or other preparations that contain extracts of this plant or other dead, non-reproductive *Festuca gautieri* materials. People who are uncertain about whether products (e.g. dried materials) contain plant parts capable of producing a living plant should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

1. Purpose of this management plan:

The purpose of this Weed Management Plan is to:

- Provide direction upon the implementation of the *Act* with respect to bear-skin fescue.
- Specify measures to prevent the establishment and spread of bear-skin fescue in Tasmania.

2. Area covered by this management plan:

The State of Tasmania is covered by this management plan.

3. Description and distribution of the weed:

Bear-skin fescue is a perennial, tussock-forming grass from south west France and north east Spain.

This plant is naturalised in grazing operations in the United Kingdom and has recently been promoted in Australia as an ornamental species. It has low palatability for grazing animals in its native range where it is dominant, especially in dry hillside vegetation. It poses a weed threat to agricultural pastures and natural grasslands.

There are no known naturalised bear-skin fescue populations in Tasmania.

See the DPIPW [Bear-skin Fescue Information Page](#) for more information on this weed.

4. Importation of declared weed:

(1) A person must not import or allow to be imported into Tasmania any bear-skin fescue.

It is an offence against section 57(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted in court of that offence may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons travelling to Tasmania, in particular from areas infested with bear-skin fescue, should conduct thorough searches for the presence of the plant and apply appropriate hygiene measures, such as vehicle, baggage, footwear and clothing cleaning. In particular, any soil or plant material picked up from infested areas should be removed prior to entering Tasmania. Questions or concerns about hygiene issues should be directed to Quarantine Tasmania personnel before or directly upon disembarkation in Tasmania.
- Persons importing items to Tasmania that may contain bear-skin fescue should have these checked for the presence of the plant. This can be arranged through Quarantine Tasmania.
- Persons importing ornamental plants should ensure their stock does not include bear-skin fescue.

(2) Feed grain may be imported according to specifications in the Plant Quarantine Manual (Tasmania), *Import Requirement 30 – Declared Weeds, Pests and Diseases in Feed Grain*. This document establishes requirements for importing feed grain in order to minimise the risk of declared weed seed entry and establishment. *Import Requirement 30* should be consulted by all existing and prospective feed grain importers.

(3) A person must not import any livestock that may be carrying bear-skin fescue otherwise than in accordance with any measures prescribed under the Regulations.

It is an offence against section 57(3) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing this offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

The prescribed measures for importing stock under regulation 5 of the Regulations are as follows:

- a) the length of hairs in the coat is not to exceed 25 mm;
- b) seeds are not to adhere to the coat or anywhere else on the livestock;
- c) a permit for importation is obtained from the Secretary, DPIPW;E;
- d) importation is direct to an approved facility for slaughter.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons importing livestock to Tasmania should liaise with suppliers on the subject of possible bear-skin fescue contamination of stock, particularly in soil attached to hooves.
- Persons importing livestock should ensure their animals are confined to holding pens until coat inspection and complete bowel evacuation occurs. Pens should be checked for the emergence of bear-skin fescue.
- Anyone importing stock to Tasmania should make him/herself familiar with regulation 5 of the Regulations as that applies to declared weeds.

Note: The importation of this species into Tasmania is also restricted under the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997*. Quarantine Tasmania should be contacted for information on the relevance and application of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* to activities concerning plant species.

5. Procedures for notification of the occurrence of the weed:

Inspectors shall notify a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) of any bear-skin fescue occurrences. The Regional Weed Management Officer will then check the identity of the plant and if bear-skin fescue is confirmed the Principal Weed Management Officer will initiate a weed incursion response.

6. Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed:

(1) A person must not:

(a) sell bear-skin fescue or any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue; or

(b) purchase or offer to purchase bear-skin fescue or any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue; or

(c) grow, propagate or scatter bear-skin fescue; or

(d) store bear-skin fescue or any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue; or

(e) hire or offer for hire any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue; or

(f) use bear-skin fescue or any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue; or

(g) deal with bear-skin fescue or any material or thing containing or carrying bear-skin fescue in any manner that is likely to result in the spread of the declared weed.

It is an offence against section 56(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with ornamental plants should verify that these do not include bear-skin fescue. Any plant identification queries may be referred to a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).
- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with seed imported from areas in which bear-skin fescue occurs should verify that these products are not contaminated with bear-skin fescue.

(2) Section 56(1) of the Act does not apply in respect of feed grain for animals that is:

(a) carrying a declared weed; and

(b) imported into Tasmania in accordance with any measures prescribed for the purpose of section 57(2) of the Act and as detailed in part 4(2) of this Management Plan.

(3) It is a defence in proceedings for an offence under section 56(1) of the Act if the defendant establishes that he or she took all reasonable actions to prevent the commission of the offence.

7. Measures to reduce the number of bear-skin fescue plants, eradicate bear-skin fescue from an area or restrict bear-skin fescue to a particular area:

An Inspector may, by serving a notice on the owner of any place, require that owner to implement any of the measures described in this part of the Weed Management Plan or any other measures consistent with it.

It is an offence against section 13(3) of the Act to fail to comply with a requirement notice issued by an Inspector. A person found committing that offence may be liable to an infringement fine of 8 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 100 penalty units and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding 5 penalty units for each day during which the offence continues.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons discovering any plant resembling bear-skin fescue should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) without delay.
- Persons wishing to dispose of bear-skin fescue or any thing contaminated with bear-skin fescue should notify a Weed Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) first, in order to receive direction upon how best to do this.

8. Storage in a specified area of any thing contaminated with the declared weed:

Any thing found to be contaminated with bear-skin fescue may be removed to storage at an appropriate approved quarantine place. A [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) will determine whether removal to storage at any of these facilities or treatment/destruction of material *in situ* is most appropriate.

Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence against section 51(1) of the Act. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this requirement under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- A person who discovers or suspects he/she possesses any thing contaminated with bear-skin fescue should contact an Inspector or a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) without delay. The contaminated thing should not be moved, treated or disposed of prior to making this contact. If bear-skin fescue is confirmed, the person will be directed and advised in the proper management, including disposal, of the contaminated thing.

9. Any other measures the Minister considers appropriate to control the weed:

There are no other measures appropriate for the management of bear-skin fescue in Tasmania at this time.

10. Exemptions:

Persons wishing to gain exemption from any of provisions of the *Act* that relate to bear-skin fescue should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) to discuss the reasons for seeking the exemption and obtain an exemption application form.

Persons granted an exemption should ensure they understand fully, any conditions specified in the exemption. Queries can be directed to a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

11. Review of this Weed Management Plan:

A review of this Weed Management Plan may be undertaken at least once every five years if it is necessary and desirable to do so. The review will incorporate consultation with stakeholders deemed appropriate by the Secretary, DPIPWE.

12. Management of bear-skin fescue by municipality:

Each Tasmanian municipality is classified into one of two management zones (Zones A or B) for the purposes of implementing this Weed Management Plan for bear-skin fescue.

Zone A Municipalities - eradication: Eradication is the most appropriate management objective for Zone A municipalities which have little or no bear-skin fescue, or when a credible plan for eradicating

existing infestations is being developed and implemented. The ultimate management outcome for Zone A municipalities is achieving and maintaining the total absence of bear-skin fescue from within municipal boundaries.

Zone B municipalities - containment: Containment is the most appropriate management objective for Zone B municipalities which have problematic infestations but no plan and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication. The management outcome for Zone B municipalities is ongoing prevention of the spread of bear-skin fescue from existing infestations to areas free or in the process of becoming free of bear-skin fescue.

The decision regarding which category is most appropriate for a particular municipality at a particular time is made jointly by DPIPW and each municipality. Municipalities may change categories over time. For example, a Zone B municipality may decide to develop and implement a strategic plan for bear-skin fescue, with eradication as the objective. Provided the plan is credible, this municipality would qualify for inclusion in Zone A. Conversely, a Zone A municipality with widespread infestations may decide to stop supporting a strategic plan for bear-skin fescue eradication, in which case it would be re-classified as Zone B.

There are no known naturalised bear-skin fescue populations in Tasmania. Therefore all municipalities are currently classed as Zone A (eradication) for bear-skin fescue.