


Fox carcass found in Tasmania

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An image of a dead fox found in Northern Tasmania on Sunday. Picture: DPIPWE

A FOX carcass has been found in Tasmania for the first time in more than 10 years.

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment was alerted to the discovery on Sunday morning, after a member of the public called its Invasive Species Hotline.

It was reportedly found on the side of the road, just off the Frankford Highway, near Exeter.

The member of the public then travelled to Exeter Police Station where an officer sent the department an image reportedly taken by the person.

"Currently what we have is the carcass of a young male fox which died as a result of traumatic injuries. Much more investigation is required to see if any information can be identified that helps with understanding how it came to be at this location, including the possibility that it was dead prior to being at this site," Biosecurity Tasmania general manager Lloyd Klumpp said on Monday.

"Until we have the full results of veterinary examination and further investigation is completed, it is not possible to speculate in any way on the history of the carcass.

"Although, we are still investigating the report, we are grateful to the member of the public who has promptly reported the carcass as soon as possible after they saw it."

The last time a fox carcass was found in Tasmania was August 1, 2006, at Cleveland.

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No

(5 votes) 71.43%

Yes

(2 votes) 28.57%

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Carcasses were also found at Lillico Beach, in the state's North-West, in February 2006; Burnie in October 2003 and at Symmons Plains in September 2001.

The last piece of "fox positive" evidence found was a scat in July 2011.

Concerns were raised about the veracity of the state's fox evidence earlier this year, when it was revealed that five scats in the state's collection were found to belong to completely different species.

Earlier this month, a police investigation into evidence tampering by members of the state's Fox Eradication Program did not find any evidence of criminality.

The investigation is now being handled by corruption watchdog the Integrity Commission.

DPIPWE is also conducting its own review of the allegations.

Mr Klumpp said the carcass found on Sunday was at the department's Mt Pleasant laboratories at Prospect.

It will undergo a necropsy by a senior veterinarian pathologist.

He said it was too soon to draw any conclusions on the history of the animal.

The discovery is the culmination of a year of renewed debate about the species's existence in Tasmania.

Following Windermere independent MLC Ivan Dean's complaint to police about alleged fraud in the FEP in February, it was revealed in May that Primary Industries Minister Jeremy Rockliff had reported a fox sighting himself, after previously referring to the fox situation as "imaginary".

A 2009 internal government report – made public in July – highlighted concerns about sponge foam rubber in two scats found in the state's North-West in 2008.

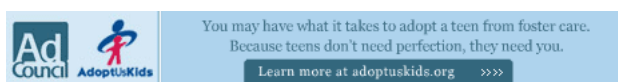
Last month, a Victorian man, who supplied foxes as part of research for the program, identified the foam rubber as the same used in his fox traps and suggested the scats could have been planted.

Weeks later, the federal Environment Department backflipped on its decision not to release three sensitive government reports into the FEP's performance, after previously stating their release could hurt Tasmania's relationship with the Commonwealth.

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