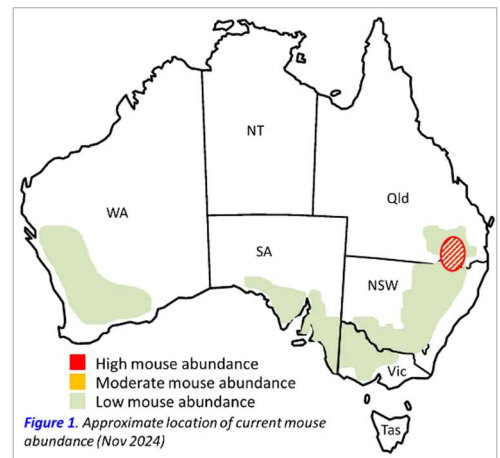


Monitoring mice in Australia – November 2024



Summary

- There is moderate mouse activity in parts of the Queensland Darling Downs (QLD) (Figure 1). Mouse activity is very patchy (moderate in one field, but low in the next). Growers should remain vigilant. Recent storm damage (esp. Qld), could pose problems for mouse numbers going into next year if there is lots of grain spilt.
- Mouse activity is low in all other areas. Low numbers of mice are unlikely to cause significant crop damage.
- Mouse breeding has started, so mouse activity will only increase through to autumn next year.
- Growers should actively monitor mouse activity (mouse chew cards are useful at this time of year). There is always a chance of isolated patches of higher mouse activity.
- Please report and map mouse activity using MouseAlert (www.mousealert.org.au) so other growers can see what mouse activity is being observed in their local area. Follow on X using @MouseAlert.



Management Recommendations

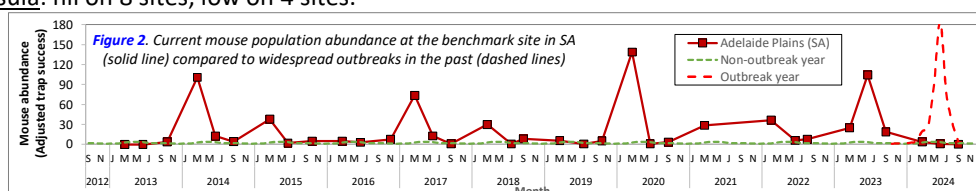
Although mouse numbers and activity are generally low, there are patches of low to moderate activity. Crop yields are likely to be low to average in many areas, which might mask mouse activity. Please be wary of frost-damaged or storm-affected fields that might mask mouse numbers and damage. As crops mature, abundant high-quality food will be available, and mouse activity could increase rapidly when conditions become favourable, which will be a concern for seeding in autumn 2025. It is therefore critical to harvest as cleanly as possible (avoid grain loss) to ensure there is no high-quality food available for mice. Low background food will increase the chance that mice will encounter rodenticide baits (if baiting is warranted). Monitoring in February-March 2025 will be important to track progress. See GRDC [Mouse Control](http://www.mousecontrol.org.au) website for more details about control options.

1. Growers are encouraged to **harvest as cleanly as possible** not just to maximise harvest but also to minimise food levels for mice. Food resources left in paddocks could sustain mouse breeding, leading to higher mouse numbers at seeding next year. **Clean up any grain spillages** to remove any background food for mice.
2. **Look for signs of activity as you harvest** and monitor through the stubble phase, as any paddocks with mouse activity now could develop into a problem in the lead up to autumn sowing.
3. **Be aware that only ZnP25 baits are currently available** (the Emergency Permit for ZnP50 has lapsed and this bait is not available). As with use of any agricultural chemical, use the product in accordance with conditions on the label, and report any [adverse or off target effects](#) via APVMA website.

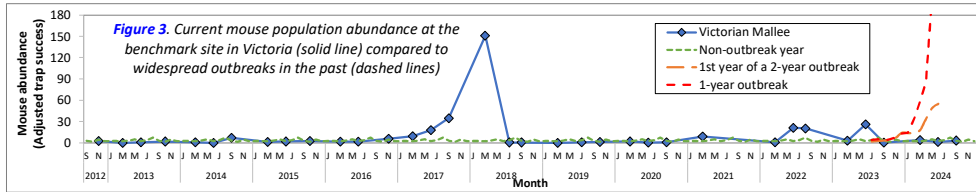
Current situation

Mouse numbers are generally low in all areas, but there are localised areas of moderate activity in some regions (Queensland Darling Downs and a few sites in central and northern NSW). Because of patchy activity between paddocks, growers are advised to monitor across multiple paddocks to gauge mouse numbers to inform management decisions. Focus on paddocks that are likely to have head loss (particularly barley). Monitoring in February-March 2025 will be important to track progress (please report on MouseAlert www.mousealert.org.au).

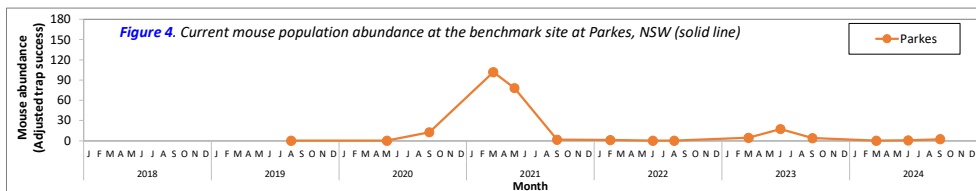
- **South Australia:** Mouse activity is generally low throughout SA. **Eyre Peninsula:** mouse activity is low. **Adelaide Plains:** nil activity from 6 sites, low activity on 3 sites, moderate activity on 1 site (50 active burrows/ha): 1 mouse was caught on trapping grids at Benchmark site at Mallala (<1% trap success), which is very low (Figure 2) with low densities (<5 mice/ha). **Yorke Peninsula:** nil on 8 sites, low on 4 sites.



- **Queensland: Mouse activity is highly variable.** Darling Downs: nil activity on 8 sites, low on 6 sites, moderate on 6 sites (~10% chew card activity or 50-100 active burrows/ha). Goondiwindi: nil on 2 sites, low on 6 sites, high on 1 site.
- **Western Australia: Mouse activity is generally low.** Albany: nil on 10 sites. Geraldton no report. Kwinana West nil activity on 7 sites, low on 1 and moderate on 2 sites. Kwinana East Nil on 11 sites, low on 2 sites. Esperance nil on 8 sites, low on 2 sites. We thank Farmanco for coordinating monitoring.
- **Victoria: Mouse abundance is generally low.** Mallee: nil activity on 12 sites, low on 2 sites. Ten mice were caught on trap grids at Benchmark site at Walpeup (<5% trap success = very low, Figure 3) with low density (~25 mice/ha). Wimmera: nil on 4 sites, low on 6 sites, moderate on 1 site (up to 50 burrows/ha).



- **New South Wales (Northern, Central & Southern): Mouse activity low.** Parkes: nil activity at 7 sites, low at 3 sites. Seven mice were captured at Benchmark site at Parkes (2% = very low) (Figure 4) with low densities (~20 mice/ha). Trangie: nil activity on 2 sites. Northern Moree: nil activity on 7 sites, low on 3 sites. Gin Gin: nil activity on 6 sites, low activity on 3 sites and moderate activity on 1 site (>5% chew card activity). Liverpool Plains: nil on 7 sites, and low on 1 site. Southern (Coleambally): nil on 2 sites, low on 1 site. Riverina: nil on all 9 sites. We thank North West Local Land Services, Central West Farming Systems and NSW DPIRD for mouse monitoring.



The ‘Mouse Forecast’

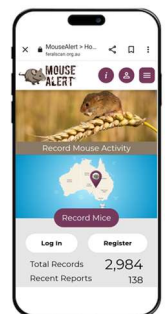
Northwest Victoria: The probability of an outbreak in autumn 2025 is **0.15-0.28 (low)** (depending on November rainfall). Peak abundance will be **low** in autumn (around **10-50 mice/ha**).

Adelaide Plains: The probability of an outbreak in autumn 2025 is **0.20-0.34 (low)** (depending on November rainfall).

Central Darling Downs: Mouse activity was highly variable across the Downs (nil activity on 8 sites, low on 6 sites, moderate on 6 sites). The Mid-Term Plague Prediction ranges from “**Low**” to “**Moderate**” for an outbreak in May 2025.

Future activities

The next scheduled monitoring is set for April 2025 in all regions. Please continue to report mouse abundance on your farm (presence and absence!) using **MouseAlert** (www.mousealert.org.au). Download the **MouseAlert** App from [iTunes app store](#) or [Google play](#) (click on hyperlink to download). You can also follow progress on X (formerly Twitter) ([@MouseAlert](#)). Instructions on how to use **MouseAlert** are available [here](#).



Background

This is an update on mouse abundance and activity for September/October for all regions. Mouse populations were monitored in typical grains farming systems in WA, SA, Vic, NSW and Qld during spring 2024 (Figure 5).

The monitoring provides data on the size (abundance) of mouse populations, breeding status and overall activity. This information is used in models that have been developed over the last 20-30 years to predict mouse outbreaks. This project is funded by the GRDC (until Dec 2024) to monitor mouse populations and forecast the likelihood of mouse outbreaks.

- **Benchmark sites (◆):** live trapping data collected for use in models in SA, Vic, and NSW.
- **Quantitative rapid-assessment sites (●):** mouse chew cards & active mouse burrow counts (190 transects, 19 areas).
- **Qualitative monitoring networks (○):** from farmers and agronomists in 19 local areas.



Further information & Handy resources

Dr Peter Brown – (Peter.Brown@csiro.au) CSIRO Health & Biosecurity, Canberra

Steve Henry – (X: [@MouseAlert](#)) (Steve.Henry@csiro.au) CSIRO Health & Biosecurity, Canberra

1 GRDC Mouse Control website: <https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/resources/mouse-management>

2 MouseAlert (hosted by FeralScan): <https://www.feralscan.org.au/mousealert/>

3 Dept of Ag., Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF): <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/mouse-infestation>

4 CSIRO rodent management: <https://research.csiro.au/rm/>