**Join the biosecurity frontline**

Bushwalkers, cyclists, campers and nature lovers are being asked to keep their eyes turned both upward and downwards as they head out to enjoy the sunshine!

This is the time of year that plant and animal biosecurity threats rear their ugly heads. Insects, pest birds and feral animals venture from their winter hideouts, tree pests and diseases attack new plant growth, and weeds start to sprout.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) carries out a range of surveillance programs each year to prevent the entry or spread of unwanted pests and diseases. Early detection is WA’s best biosecurity defence.

However, risks are growing and WA needs more ‘eyes on the ground’, and ‘in the sky’.

The risk of foot and mouth disease entering WA has helped raise awareness of biosecurity, and its role in protecting our livestock industries. However, good biosecurity also protects our environment.

Feral pigs could not only spread disease, but also destroy plants and pollute water sources. Pests such as invasive ants have been known to disrupt entire ecosystems, and diseases such as myrtle rust can destroy entire forests.

Even our local parks are at risk. Insects such as polyphagous shot-hole borer and pest birds such as sulphur crested cockatoos would make a formidable team, attacking our precious trees. Weeds could literally choke the life out of forests and waterways.

The best biosecurity system is one where everyone plays a role. If you are heading outdoors, play your part by looking out for anything unusual, such as strange bugs, or patches of dead shrubs or trees.

Large numbers of ants that look the same could be an invasive and aggressive ant species, such as Argentine ant or black sugar ant.

Other pests to keep a lookout for this season in natural areas, including local parks, include:

* [European wasp](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity-biosecurity-quarantineeuropean-wasp-declared-pest)
* [polyphagous shot-hole borer](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer)
* [myrtle rust](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/plant-biosecurity/myrtle-rust-threat-western-australia)
* [feral pigs](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pest-mammals/feral-pigs)
* [pest birds](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/pests/pest-animals/birds)
* [pokeweed](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/biosecurity-alert-pokeweed)
* [noogoora burr](https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/declared-plants/noogoora-burr-what-you-should-know)

If you something unusual, even if unsure, contact DPIRD immediately.

