Monitoring mice in Australia – March 2025 *(Interim Update)*

Summary

- **There is moderate to high mouse activity in parts of the Queensland Darling Downs and Roma (QLD) and moderate activity on Eyre Peninsula (SA) and parts of WA** (Figure 1)**.** Mouse activity is very patchy (moderate in one field, but low in the next). Growers should remain vigilant. Moderate to high numbers will lead to damage at sowing.
- **Mouse activity is low in all other areas.** Low numbers of mice are unlikely to cause significant crop damage.
- **Growers should actively monitor mouse activity** (mouse chew cards and active burrow counts are useful at this time of year). There is always a chance of isolated patches of higher mouse activity, particularly where there was grain lost at harvest.

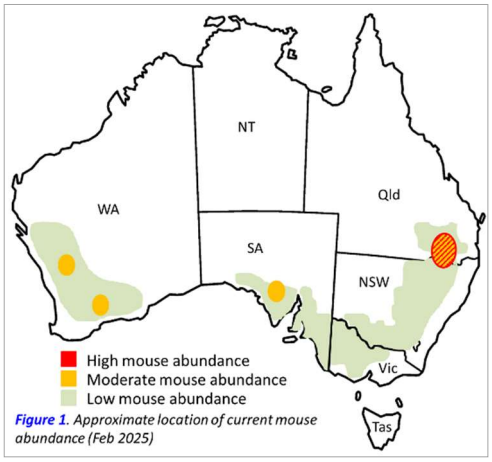


Figure 1. Approximate location of current mouse abundance (Feb 2025)

- **This is an *interim Mouse Update*** – a more detailed *Mouse Update* will be circulated after March 2025 monitoring has been completed.
- 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

Mouse numbers are moderate to high in many areas (highly patchy). Given the excellent conditions across many areas of southern Queensland, northern NSW and parts of WA, and in parts of Eyre Peninsula (SA; which was affected by hail), mice have been breeding through summer and autumn, which will peak in March/April at the time of sowing winter crops. See GRDC Mouse Control website for more details about control options. **Be aware that only ZnP25 baits are currently available** (Emergency Permits previously issued for ZnP50 have expired).

1. Actively gauge mouse numbers by walking through paddocks (mouse chew cards and active burrow counts are useful tools at this time of year).
2. At 6 weeks prior to sowing (now): If mouse activity is high and there is plenty of background food, reduce the background food through light tillage or sheep grazing, and strategically bait with ZnP25 as the only currently registered ZnP bait available. If mice are still a problem at sowing, be prepared to bait again at that time, ensuring a 6-week gap to overcome any behavioural aversion from ingesting a sub-lethal dose.
3. At sowing: If mice remain a problem at sowing, apply bait off the back of the seeder to prevent damage to the freshly sown crop.
4. Baiting at sowing is most effective if no other food sources are available.
5. Talk to bait suppliers early to ensure timely supply. As with any agricultural chemical, use the product in accordance with the label instructions, and report any adverse or off target effects via the APVMA website.

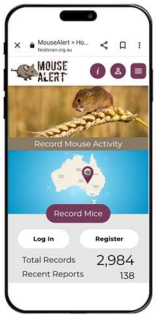
Current situation

Mouse numbers are generally low in all areas, but there are localised areas of moderate/high activity in some regions (Queensland Darling Downs, Roma and in Eyre Peninsula, SA, and parts of WA). 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 had grain loss (particularly barley) (please report on *MouseAlert* www.mousealert.org.au).

The 'Mouse Forecast'

New mouse forecast models have been developed and will be run once data have been collected from the autumn 2025 (Feb/Mar) mouse monitoring. A new set of forecast maps are being developed – watch this space!

Future activities



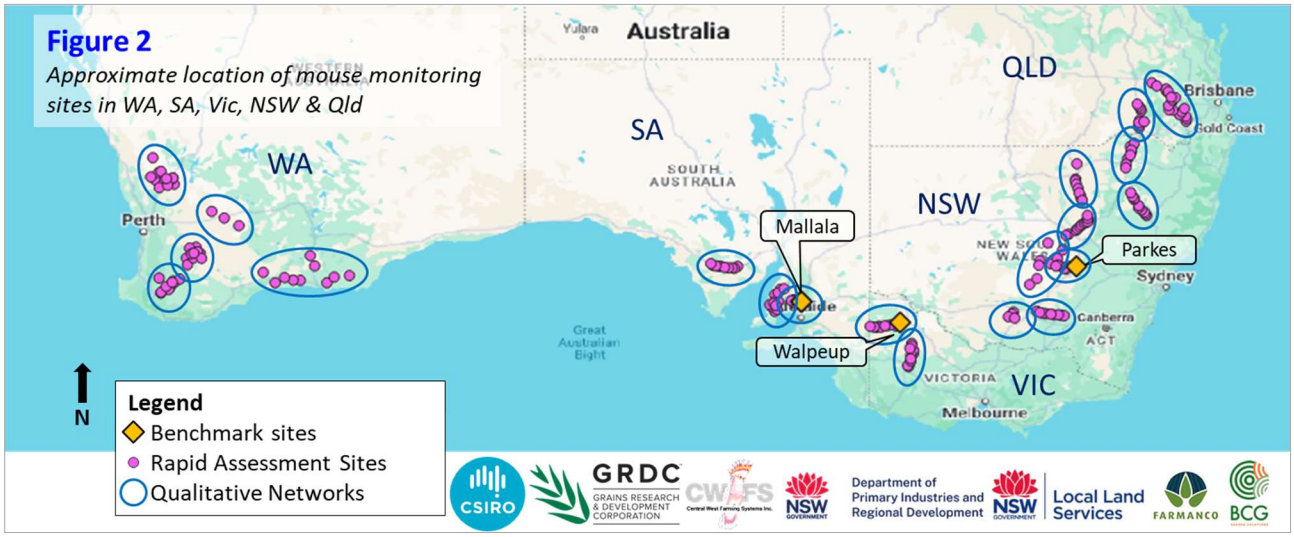
MouseAlert Smartphone app →
www.mousealert.org.au

The next scheduled monitoring is set for March/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

These *Mouse Updates* are put together through consultation with the National Mouse Group (NMG), which is a grower-led group made up of 20-30 members who meet three times a year to discuss the current mouse situation and develop management recommendations. The NMG is made up of grower representatives, state government staff and industry representatives from the five main grain growing states, plus GRDC and mouse researchers from CSIRO. These *Mouse Updates* are made possible through GRDC's investment in CSP2501-006RTX (*Mouse surveillance and monitoring to inform leading practice*). Monitoring data is collected three times a year (Figure 2; in collaboration with NSW DPIRD, NSW LLS, CWFS, BCG, & Farmanco) is used in the forecast models and and is summarised in these *Mouse Updates*.

- **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

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❶ GRDC Mouse Control website: https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/resources/mouse-management
❷ *MouseAlert* (hosted by FeralScan): https://www.feralscan.org.au/mousealert/
❸ Dept of Ag., Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF): https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/mouse-infestation
❹ CSIRO rodent management: https://research.csiro.au/rm/