

Feral ferrets invade Blue Mountains

By LINDA SILMALIS

THE humble ferret has been identified among a raft of exotic pest species that have moved into the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains area.

Ferrets, declared a pest in New Zealand, are linked to the decline of native birds.

They also run rampant in Queensland, where they are as hated among conservationists as cane toads.

The carnivorous species has been identified as a potential threat to the unique Blue Mountains environment in a report prepared by the

Department of Environment and Climate Change.

A departmental officer said there had been four sightings of ferrets in the region.

"They have been seen in the Grose Valley, in the lower part of the Blue Mountains.

"We don't know if they're escaped pets or if they were dumped in the park."

Other new pests listed on the department's watch list include American corn snakes, which have been sighted in the nearby Hawkesbury district.

The report identifies funding as one of the biggest challenges in controlling such pests.



Running rampant: Ferrets