

Media release

18 August 2015

Illegal deer hunting activity targeted in North East Victoria

A major compliance operation targeting illegal deer hunting in Victoria's North East has been undertaken over the past week in response to concerns of illegal spotlighting activities raised by local residents and hunters.

The Game Management Authority (GMA), Victoria Police and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) conducted the operation, focusing on key hunting locations around Corryong, Mitta Mitta, Tallangatta, Mansfield, Myrtleford and Murrindindi over several nights.

Officers spoke to more than 70 people, educating hunters about their lawful obligations when hunting deer and enforcing all legislation relating to spotlighting deer, firearm safety, camp fires and litter.

The operation revealed a high level of compliance but also uncovered unsafe and illegal behaviour that will lead to charges against five people for illegal hunting and firearm offences. GMA officers seized four firearms, ammunition, spotlights and knives from the five.

Officers also issued one official warning for hunting pig with a dog; one official warning for not being in possession of authority to hunt on private property; and two infringement notices for illegally taking firewood and felling a tree.

GMA Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said the GMA, DELWP and Victoria Police will continue to conduct operations targeting illegal deer hunting activity in the North East.

It seems some hunters are just not getting the message and continue to undertake illegal and unsafe activities such as spotlighting. Their behaviour shows a great disrespect to the local community, other hunters and for the pursuit of hunting more broadly " Mr Hyams said.

"Spotlighting is only legal for pest control under strict provisions on private land. Using this method of hunting illegally goes against the best traditions of hunting in Victoria and impacts the reputation of all hunters."

"These practices will not be tolerated and those who choose to break the law will be prosecuted, may have their equipment confiscated and may lose their Game and Firearms Licenses."

"Spotlighting deer can be dangerous and there are strict laws in place to ensure safe hunting practices.

"Illegal hunting and irresponsible behaviour can put people and wildlife at risk. It is vital to the future of hunting that hunters act safely and responsibly at all times."

"The GMA provides information on when, where and how to hunt legally in Victoria, including via the Game Hunting Victoria phone app, the annual Victorian Hunting Guide and GMA website, so there's no excuse not to know the game hunting laws."

The GMA strongly encourages hunters and the broader public to report hunters doing the wrong thing by calling the Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or the Victoria Police.

For more information on game hunting in Victoria, visit www.gma.vic.gov.au

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