

Media release

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Hunting deer in North West Victoria ... the right way

With the expansion of deer populations throughout North West Victoria, Hunters are reminded to be aware of the game hunting regulations, particularly in relation to spotlighting deer.

Fallow Deer and even Sambar and Red Deer are becoming more numerous in the North West as deer enter Victoria from New South Wales and South Australia, expand from existing Victorian populations or become established after escaping from deer farms or through illegal release.

Game Management Authority (GMA) Senior Game Officer, Mark Jones, said anyone recreationally hunting deer in Victoria must hold a current Game Licence endorsed for deer hunting.

“As deer have not traditionally been present in this part of Victoria, many local hunters may not be aware of the laws that regulate deer hunting,” Mr Jones said.

“Deer are protected and can only be hunted recreationally by licensed hunters or destroyed by land owners or managers holding a permit or acting under a legal notice where they are causing damage. Hunters may help land owners or managers control problem deer with their permission.”

“The Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 prescribe the rules and requirements for recreationally hunting deer in Victoria and sets out the methods, seasons and bag limits for hunting deer.”

“Fallow, Sambar, Red, Rusa and Chital Deer can be hunted year-round with no bag limit and there is a one month season for Hog Deer, which are mostly only found in Gippsland. Minimum requirements for firearms, bows and crossbows to ensure hunting is humane are also covered.”

Mr Jones also said that gundogs and ‘deer hunting dogs’ may be used to assist in hunting Sambar, Fallow, Red, Rusa and Chital Deer in North West Victoria, but hounds must not be used.

“There have been reports of dogs being set onto deer. While accepted dog breeds can be used to help locate and track deer, it is an offence for any dog to attack, bite or maim deer or any wildlife in Victoria.”

Mr Jones said the illegal spotlighting of deer is a major enforcement issue for government agencies, such as the Game Management Authority and Victoria Police.

“Illegal spotlighting is dangerous, unethical and reduces recreational hunting opportunities for law-abiding hunters,” Mr Jones said.

“It is an offence to hunt deer at night and use artificial light, such as spotlights or powerful torches. It is also an offence to carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle and possess a loaded firearm or discharge a firearm on or across a public road or thoroughfare.

“Each offence can attract a substantial fine and Firearms and Game Licences may be cancelled. Equipment used in the commission of an offence can be seized by enforcement officers and forfeited by the courts. This includes vehicles, firearms and spotlights.”

For information about hunting deer in Victoria, hunters should visit the Game Management Authority website at www.gma.vic.gov.au, read the 2015 Victorian Hunting Guide or use the Game Hunting Victoria phone app, which can be downloaded for free.

“Joining a hunting organization is also a good way for hunters to learn about deer hunting techniques, bushcraft and being a responsible deer hunter,” Mr Jones said.”

The GMA website also contains information for land managers who are experiencing problems with deer and wish to control their numbers. Alternatively, they can apply to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for a permit to control deer or visit the website www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Anyone who witnesses any suspected illegal hunting behavior is encouraged to report it by calling the Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or contacting Victoria Police.

The Game Management Authority works closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behavior in the field through the *RESPECT: Hunt Responsibly* program.