

Media release

25 June 2015

Illegal hunters lose vehicles, firearms and other equipment

Four people will be charged for illegal hunting and weapons offences as officers from the Game Management Authority (GMA), Victoria Police and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning worked together to target illegal hunting around Jamieson last weekend.

GMA Acting Chief Executive Simon Toop said officers patrolled until early hours of the morning at key areas around Jamieson, the Delatite Arm of Lake Eildon, Sheeppark Flat and Running Creek.

“Officers spoke to 52 people and checked 30 vehicles last weekend after receiving numerous reports of illegal hunting activity from concerned members of the community and legitimate hunters,” Mr Toop said.

“Thirteen of these people were interviewed further and now four face a range of charges for serious offences which include the illegal taking of protected wildlife (deer), being in possession of a spotlight and firearm in recognized deer habitat during a prohibited time, possessing controlled weapons and evading police.”

“Two people were issued with infringement notices and fined for illegally hunting Sambar Deer with hounds in a prohibited area.

“Two people were also issued with a warning for illegal camp fires and one was issued with a warning for being in possession of a spotlight and firearm in a recognized deer habitat during a prohibited time.

“Several other incidents are still under investigation, including hunting with unregistered and illegal breeds of hound and the possession of a spotlight and firearm in recognized deer habitat during a prohibited time.

“One case of particular concern is the abandonment of an all-terrain vehicle, parts of a firearm, ammunition and a spotlight that was left in the bushland in an attempt to evade detection. The vehicle was impounded by Victoria Police.

“This was a first class cohesive and effective operation between the three partner agencies.”

Mr Toop said hunters are generally a law-abiding group but there are some who choose to do the wrong thing.

“Those who choose to break the law can be prosecuted, have their equipment, including their vehicles and firearms, confiscated and can face losing their Game and Firearms Licences,” Mr Toop said.

“Illegal hunting and irresponsible behavior can put people and wildlife at risk. The GMA provides information to inform hunters of when, where and how to hunt legally in Victoria, including via the Game Hunting Victoria phone app, the annual Hunting Guide and GMA website, so there is no excuse for not knowing the laws.”

“Spotlighting deer on private land is only legal under strict provisions where deer are causing damage. Recreational hunters must not use spotlights to hunt deer on public land as it can be dangerous, is illegal and damages the reputation of law-abiding hunters.”

The GMA and Victoria Police will continue to conduct routine patrols and operations targeting illegal spotlighters.

“GMA strongly encourages hunters and the broader public to report suspected illegal hunting activity 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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