

Media release

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Operation Elmer targets illegal deer hunting activity

Three Melbourne men are facing fines of almost \$3000 each after being found at night with firearms and a spotlight in recognized deer habitat near Myrtleford on the weekend.

The men were intercepted in the early hours of Saturday morning at Rose River as part of Operation Elmer, a joint compliance operation between the Game Management Authority (GMA) and Victoria Police.

The operation is being conducted in north east Victoria to target illegal behavior such as trespassing on private property with firearms, possessing loaded firearms on public roads or illegally possessing firearms and spotlights in recognized deer habitat at night.

GMA Compliance Manager Geoff Morsby said at 3am on Saturday, GMA and Victoria Police officers detected the three men and one male youth travelling in a white four-wheel-drive.

Mr Morsby said the officers conducted a search of the vehicle and found two centrefire rifles, ammunition, a spotlight and butchering equipment.

“The three men were interviewed and could not provide a legitimate reason or an authority to be in possession of the hunting equipment in recognized deer habitat at night,” Mr Morsby said.

“The equipment was seized and the three men will be charged on summons under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

“The maximum penalty for possessing a spotlight and a firearm in recognised deer habitat from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise is \$2952.

“One of the men will also be charged under the *Control of Weapons Act 1990* with possessing a prohibited weapon after being found with a flick knife during the search.

Chief Executive Officer of the GMA, Greg Hyams, said: “The vast majority of deer hunters do the right thing but the GMA is reminding anyone contemplating doing the wrong thing that heavy penalties apply for those found breaking the law.”

“Illegal spotlighting, particularly from public roads, is dangerous and will not be tolerated”, Mr Hyams said.

Anyone who sees or suspects illegal activity is urged to contact the GMA on 136 186.

Mr Hyams said regular patrols by Victoria Police and GMA officers would continue throughout north east Victoria for the remainder of the year as part of Operation Elmer.

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