



# A guide to the use of hounds for hunting Sambar Deer in Victoria

Cover photo courtesy P Boag of Paul Boag's Outdoors

Published by Game Management Authority April 2021. ©The State of Victoria 2021

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by Game Management Authority,  
535 Bourke Street, Melbourne 3000

ISBN 978-1-74146-053-7 (pdf)

#### **Disclaimer**

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

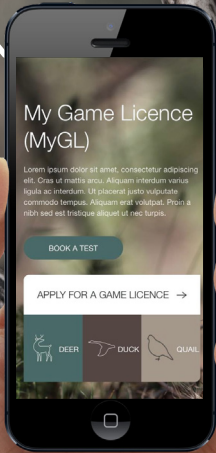
For more information about Game Management Authority go to [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)

# Contents

Introduction	3
Hound hunters' checklist	4
Quick find reference table	5
General information	6
Licensing	7
Hunting with hounds	10
Hunt in permitted areas only	10
Keep hounds and hunting away from prohibited areas	15
Make sure that hounds do not attack, bite or injure wildlife	15
Hound possessor	15
Limit the size of your hunting team	16
Hunt with hounds during the open season only	17
Use permitted hound breeds	17
Hound registration	18
Register your hounds	18
Cancellation of registration	20
Make sure your hounds can be identified	20
Registration of your hound with your local council	21
Powers of authorised officers	22
Using your hounds	23
Other important laws	26
Use of firearms	30
Ethical and responsible hunting	34
More information	37
Sample test questions	38
More to Explore – hunting maps	40

# My Game Licence (MyGL)

Victoria's new online Game Licence system



Go to [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne





# Introduction

**Deer hunting is an increasingly popular recreation in Victoria. A traditional method of hunting Sambar Deer is with the aid of hounds, also known as hound hunting.**

Hounds have been used to hunt Sambar Deer for over 100 years in Victoria. Hunting with hounds can be an effective way to hunt in environments that are difficult for stalking. It is also a very active and social recreation. However, given its highly visible nature and the fact that unrestrained hounds are used, there are a number of laws to ensure that hound hunting is conducted in a safe, controlled and humane manner and that impacts on other public land users and private landowners are minimised.

There are laws that regulate where and when hunting with hounds can occur, the number of hunters and hounds that can be used at any one time, and the breeds of hounds that can be used. It is also mandatory for hunters wishing to hunt Sambar Deer with the use of hounds to sit and pass the hound hunting test (exceptions apply - see page 7). All new hound hunters wishing to sit the test should read this guide which has been prepared to help you gain an understanding of your legal, safety and ethical requirements.

The Victorian Government is committed to providing ethical and safe recreational hound hunting opportunities in Victoria and the hound hunting test, supported by hunting organisations, is an important step in ensuring that this form of hunting continues into the future.



*Photo courtesy of R Waters*

# Hound hunters' checklist

## Before hunting

- Read through "A guide to the use of hounds for hunting Sambar Deer in Victoria".
- Familiarise yourself with the regulations governing deer hunting with hounds.
- Pass the Hound Hunting Test.
- Make sure your Game Licence is current and is endorsed for Sambar Deer hunting with the use of hounds.
- Improve and maintain your shooting skills.
- Ensure all hounds are wearing a collar with a permanent tag that has the owner's name and the hound registration number recorded on it.
- Ensure all hounds are microchipped and registered.

## While hunting

- Carry your Game Licence and Firearms Licence while in the field.
- Obey all firearm safety rules and always identify your target before firing.
- Hunt in permitted areas only and keep hounds and hunting away from prohibited areas.
- Do not use more than 5 hounds (or 8 provided that three hounds are under 12 months of age) on any one hunt.
- Do not hunt with more than 10 hunters [or 12 provided that two are Provisional Game Licence holders or the holder of a Non-resident of Australia Game Licence (conditions apply – see page 7)].
- Do not use vehicles to assist with the hunt.
- Maintain lawful, ethical and responsible hunting practices at all times.

## After hunting

- Make sure all hounds are recovered.
- If you are successful, carry out as much meat as practical and dispose of deer remains responsibly. Never leave a carcass in a waterway.
- Ensure campsites are clean.
- Transport any harvested deer thoughtfully by covering it up.

# Quick find reference table

Open season for hound hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 April until 30 November every year.</li> <li>• However, when Easter falls within the season, hound hunting is closed from the Friday before Easter until the Wednesday after Easter, inclusive.</li> <li>• During the season, hunting is not permitted from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise.</li> </ul>
Bag limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sambar Deer only - no limit.</li> </ul>
Maximum number of hunters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 hunters (or 12 provided that two are Provisional Game Licence holding juniors or Non-resident of Australia Game Licence holders) on any one hunt. Conditions apply – see page 7.</li> </ul>
Maximum number of hounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 (or 8 provided that three are pups under 12 months of age in training). All hounds must be registered with, or authorised by, the Game Management Authority.</li> </ul>
Permitted hound breeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beagles (maximum height at the withers 40 cm).</li> <li>• Harriers (maximum height at the withers 53.5 cm).</li> <li>• Bloodhounds (maximum height at the withers 69 cm).</li> <li>• The hounds must be pure and conform to the Australian National Kennel Council breed standards with the exception of the height requirement which is listed above.</li> </ul>
Hound registration period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the life of the hound after assessment, or until ownership is transferred.</li> </ul>
Hound identification requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent tag fixed to the collar with the full name of the hound owner and the hound registration number recorded on it.</li> <li>• All hounds must be microchipped in accordance with the Domestic Animals Regulations 2005.</li> </ul>

# General information

This guide has been prepared to provide hunters with an understanding of their legal, safety and ethical requirements when hunting Sambar Deer with the aid of hounds. It includes information on licensing requirements, where and when you can hunt, legal hunting methods, safe firearm handling practices, ethical considerations and other relevant information.

## Know the rules

The laws governing hound hunting are made by the Victorian Government and policed by authorised officers from the Game Management Authority (GMA) and Victoria Police.

It is your responsibility to know the current hunting laws. Never rely on another person to tell you what you need to know – they might not have the correct information.

The information in this guide is taken from a range of Acts and regulations, including the *Wildlife Act 1975*, *Firearms Act 1996*, *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012*, and the *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals in Hunting* under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*.

Copies of all legislation relevant to hound hunting in Victoria may be obtained from the Victorian Law Today webpage at [legislation.vic.gov.au](http://legislation.vic.gov.au). Alternatively, visit the GMA website: [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)



# Licensing

## Obtaining a licence

Any hunter wanting to hunt Sambar Deer with the aid of hounds must have a current Victorian Game Licence endorsed for deer hunting using hounds. This applies to all new and existing Game Licence holders, including interstate hunters. Exceptions exist for both provisional hunters under the age of 18 years and international visitors. Details on these licence types are outlined below.

### Hound Hunting Test

Prior to receiving a Game Licence to hunt with hounds, you need to pass the Hound Hunting Test. This ensures that all hound hunters are aware of their legal, ethical and safety requirements when hunting. All applicants must be at least 12 years of age.

### Provisional junior hunters

Junior hunters (aged 12 – 17 years old) are able to hunt Sambar Deer with hounds without passing the Hound Hunting Test.

This is by way of a Provisional Game Licence which is valid only for the calendar year in which it is issued. When hunting, juniors who hold a Provisional Game Licence must be under the direct supervision of an adult hunter who is the holder of a Game Licence endorsed to take or hunt Sambar Deer with the use of hounds.

The Provisional Game Licence provides a junior hunter with the opportunity to try hound hunting without having to take the Hound Hunting Test. If a junior hunter wants to continue hound hunting, they must obtain a full Game Licence, including passing the Hound Hunting Test. A Provisional Game Licence will only be issued once to a junior hunter.

International visitors International visitors may purchase a 14-day Non-resident of Australia Game Licence to hunt Sambar Deer with hounds without sitting and passing the Hound Hunting Test. When hunting, international visitors who hold a Non-resident of Australia Game Licence must be under the direct supervision of an adult hunter who is the holder of a Game Licence endorsed to hunt Sambar Deer with the use of hounds.

### Test preparation

All applicants are advised to read this guide prior to sitting the Hound Hunting Test to ensure they know and understand the legal requirements for hound hunting, safe firearm handling practices, ethical responsibilities and other information relevant to the hunting of Sambar Deer with the aid of hounds.

There are a total of 30 multiple choice questions in the test. To pass, you must answer 23 (75%) of the questions correctly. This includes five key questions



that must all be answered correctly to gain a pass. The test will take approximately 30–40 minutes to complete and will only need to be successfully completed once.

For information on where and when you can sit the test, please visit the GMA website: [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au).

If you have a disability or illness that may affect your ability to complete the test, please inform the test centre coordinator when booking so that suitable arrangements can be made.

## Sitting the test

On the day of your test, you will need to bring the following to the test centre:

- proof of your identity
- receipt of payment for your test session (current prices can be found at [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)).

Pens and the test paper will be supplied.

## Proof of identity

When you sit the Hound Hunting Test, you will need to prove who you are by taking certain documents to the test centre. Acceptable documents include any one of the following:

- a current photographic Australian driver's licence
- a passport (not expired by more than two years)
- a current Firearms Licence.

You may also present a birth certificate or Australian naturalisation/citizenship document. However, if you provide either of these documents, you will also need to present another form of identification that includes a photo of yourself, such as a Student Identity Card.



## Paying for and receiving your licence

### New licence applicants

If you successfully complete the test and do not have a current Game Licence, you will be sent a Certificate of Proficiency in the mail. Once you receive your Certificate of Proficiency, you will need to apply for a Game Licence to hunt Sambar Deer with the aid of hounds. This can be done through MyGL at [licensing.gma.vic.gov.au/](http://licensing.gma.vic.gov.au/)

Visit the GMA website: [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au) to apply for a Game Licence and access MyGL.

## Existing licence holders

If you pass the test and have a current Game Licence endorsed for 'deer', the GMA will automatically make the necessary changes to your existing licence and will send you an updated replacement licence free of charge. You can hunt on your payment receipt until your amended licence arrives in the mail.

If you pass the test and have a Game Licence, but it does not include a 'deer' component, you will be sent a Certificate of Proficiency in the mail. Once you receive your Certificate of Proficiency, you will need to amend your licence details and pay an amendment fee online. This can be done through MyGL at [licensing.gma.vic.gov.au](https://licensing.gma.vic.gov.au).

Please note that an administration fee will apply to amend your licence if it is not already endorsed for 'deer'. You will also be required to pay the difference between the cost of your existing licence and the licence to hunt Sambar Deer with the aid of hounds.

## Carry your Game Licence

You should always carry your Game Licence when in the field. You should also ensure that your licence is current and authorizes you to hunt Sambar Deer with hounds. If you are approached by an authorised officer or a member of Victoria Police, they may ask you to show them your licence.



*Photo courtesy of M Hesse*

# Hunting with hounds

## Hunt in permitted areas only

Sambar Deer generally occur in the forests of the Victorian Eastern Highlands and can be hunted with hounds in the area bounded on the south by the Princes Highway and on the west broadly by the Hume, Goulburn Valley and Maroondah Highways (see Fig. 1 below).

Within the broad area available for hunting with hounds, there are several smaller areas where hound hunting is specifically prohibited. These include areas around Marysville and Warburton (see Fig. 2), Jamieson and Kevington

(see Fig. 3), Merrijig and Mount Timbertop (see Fig. 4) and Rubicon (see Fig. 5). Within some of these areas, deer stalking is also prohibited.

For more details on legal hunting areas, download the free More to Explore phone app, visit [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au) or scan the code:

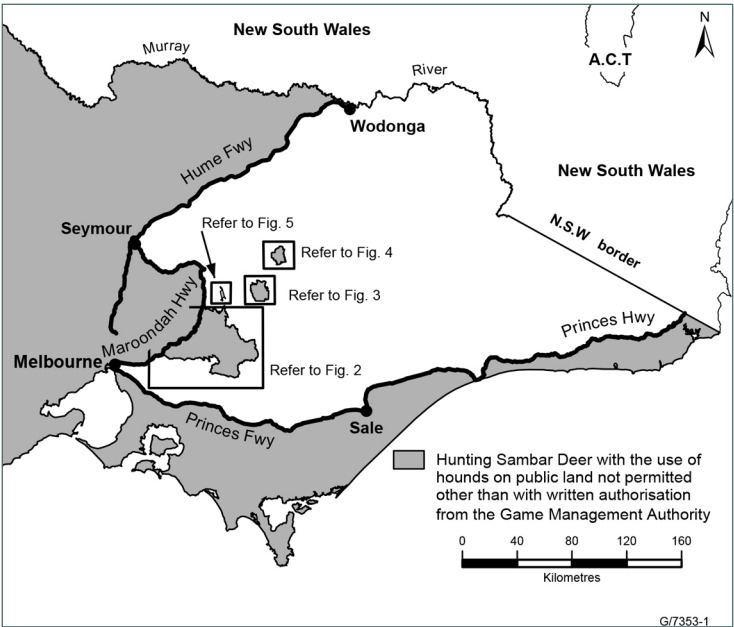


Fig. 1: Areas available in Victoria for hunting Sambar Deer with hounds

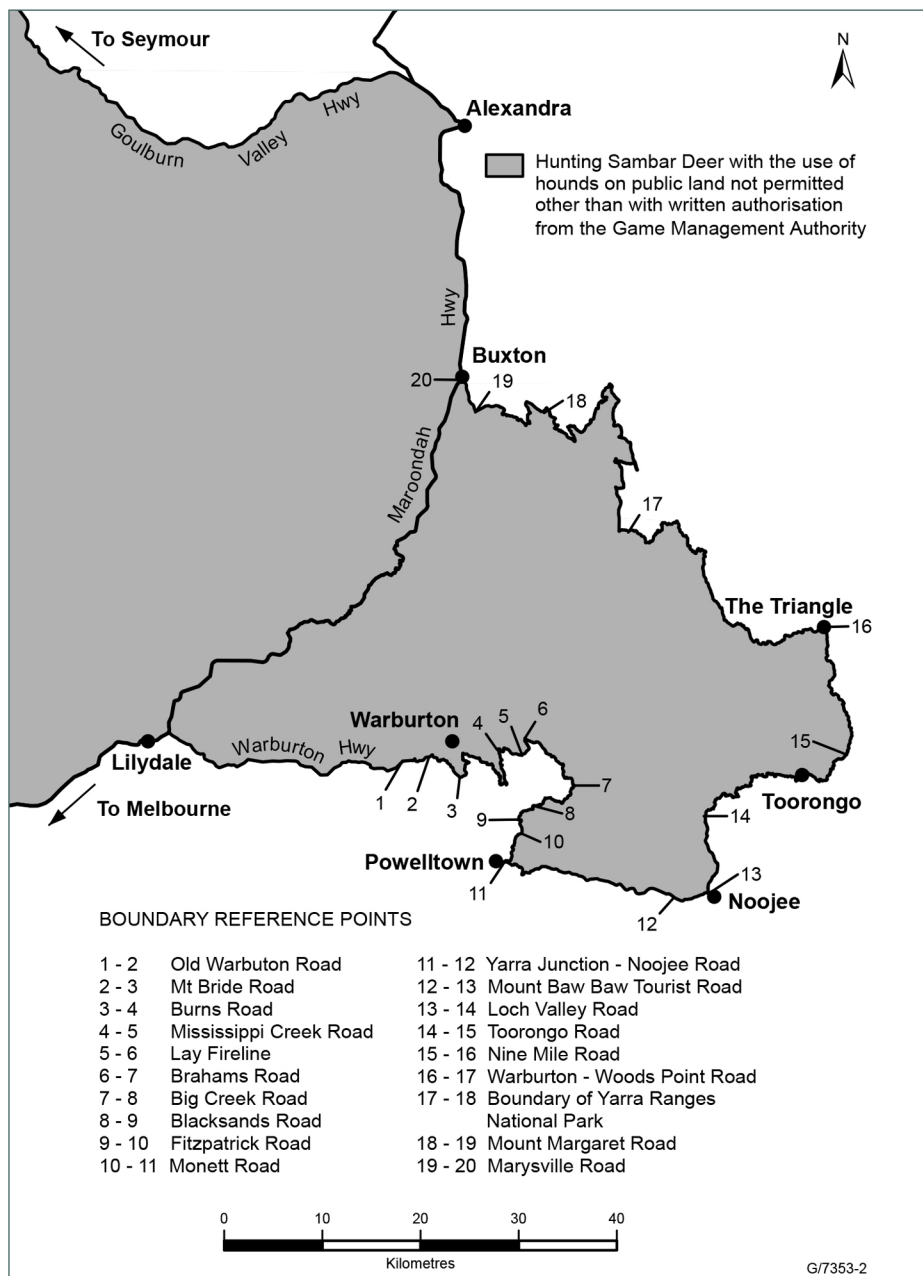


Fig. 2: Areas closed to hound hunting around Marysville, Warburton and surrounds

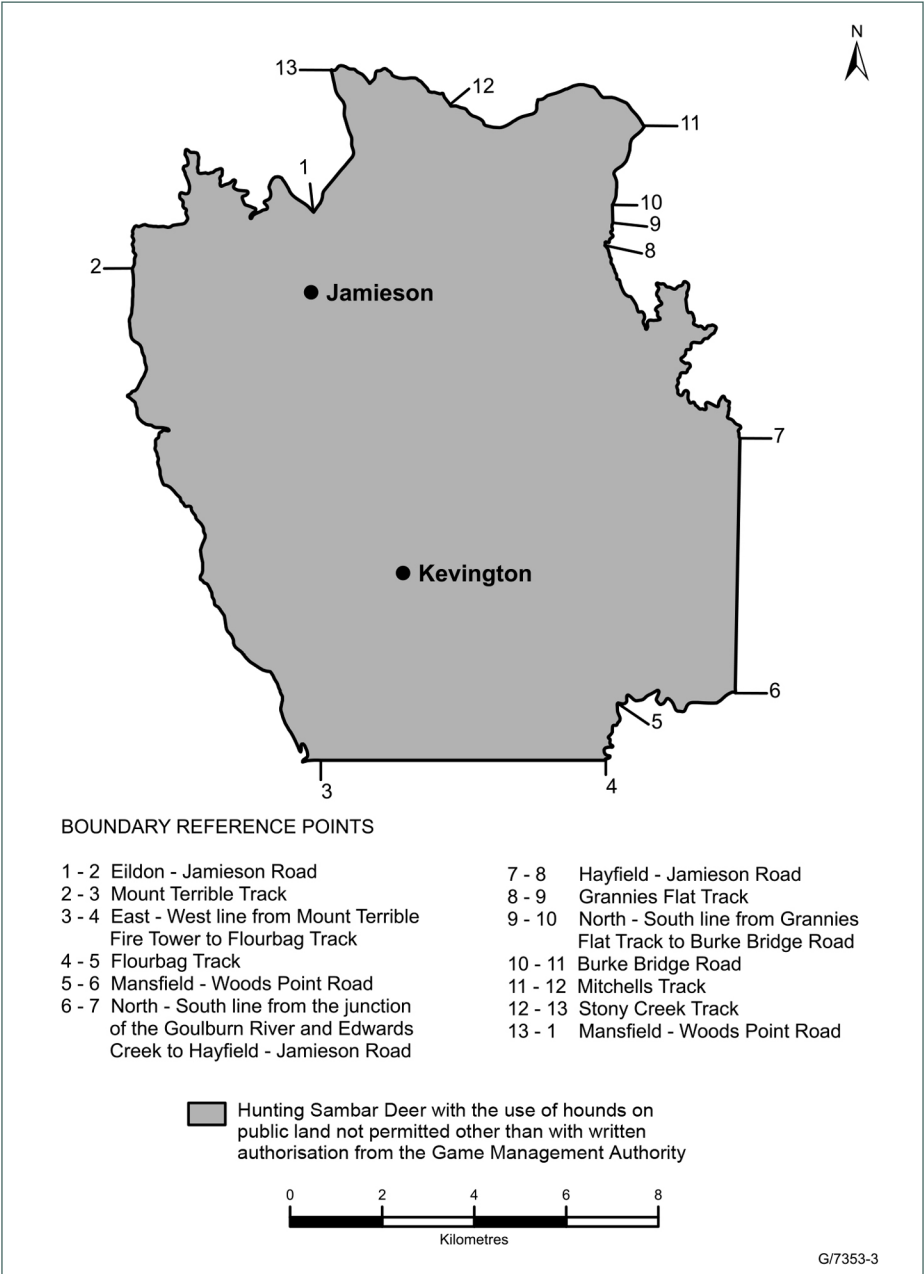


Fig. 3: Areas closed to hound hunting around Jamieson and Kevington



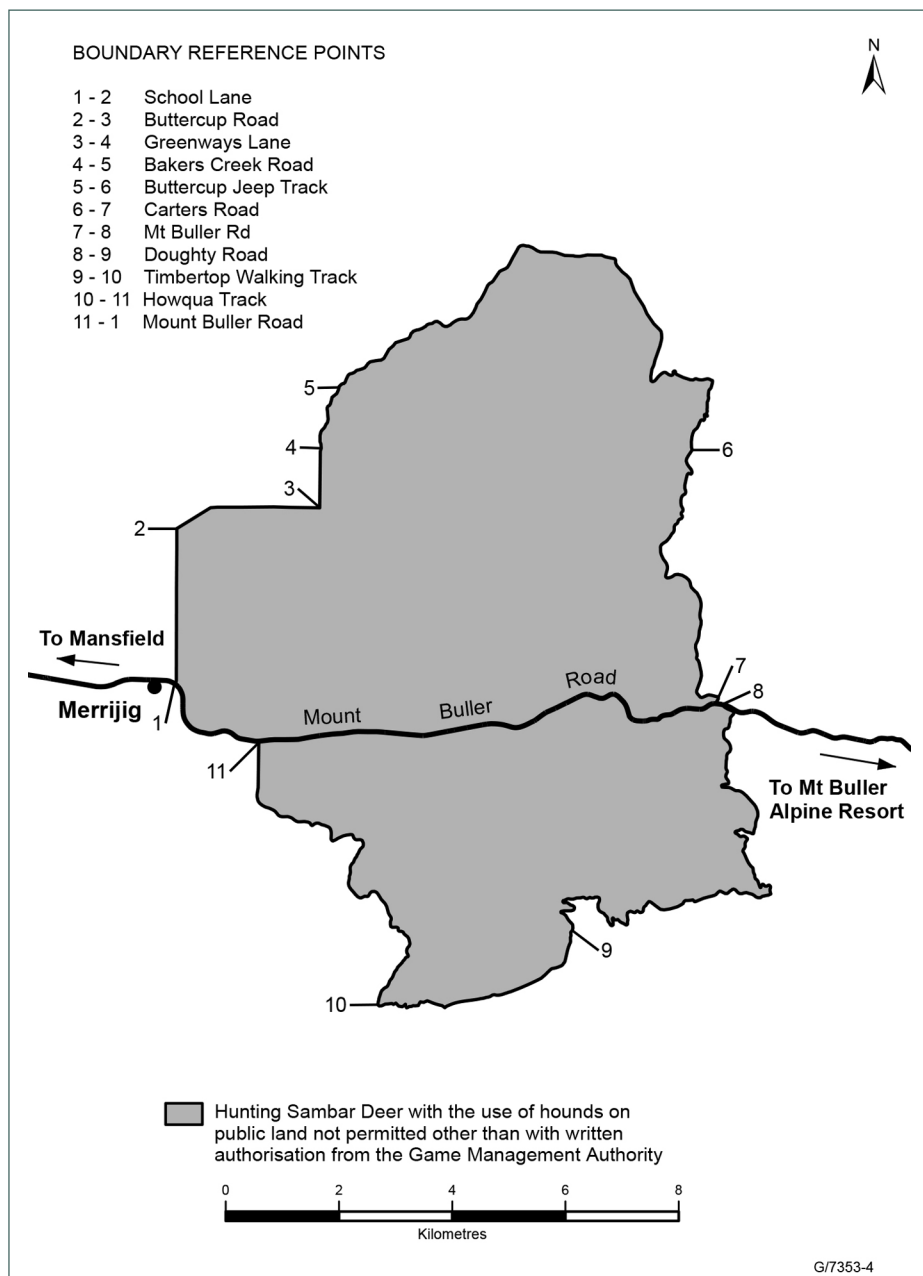


Fig. 4: Areas closed to hound hunting around Merrijig, Mt Timbertop and surrounds

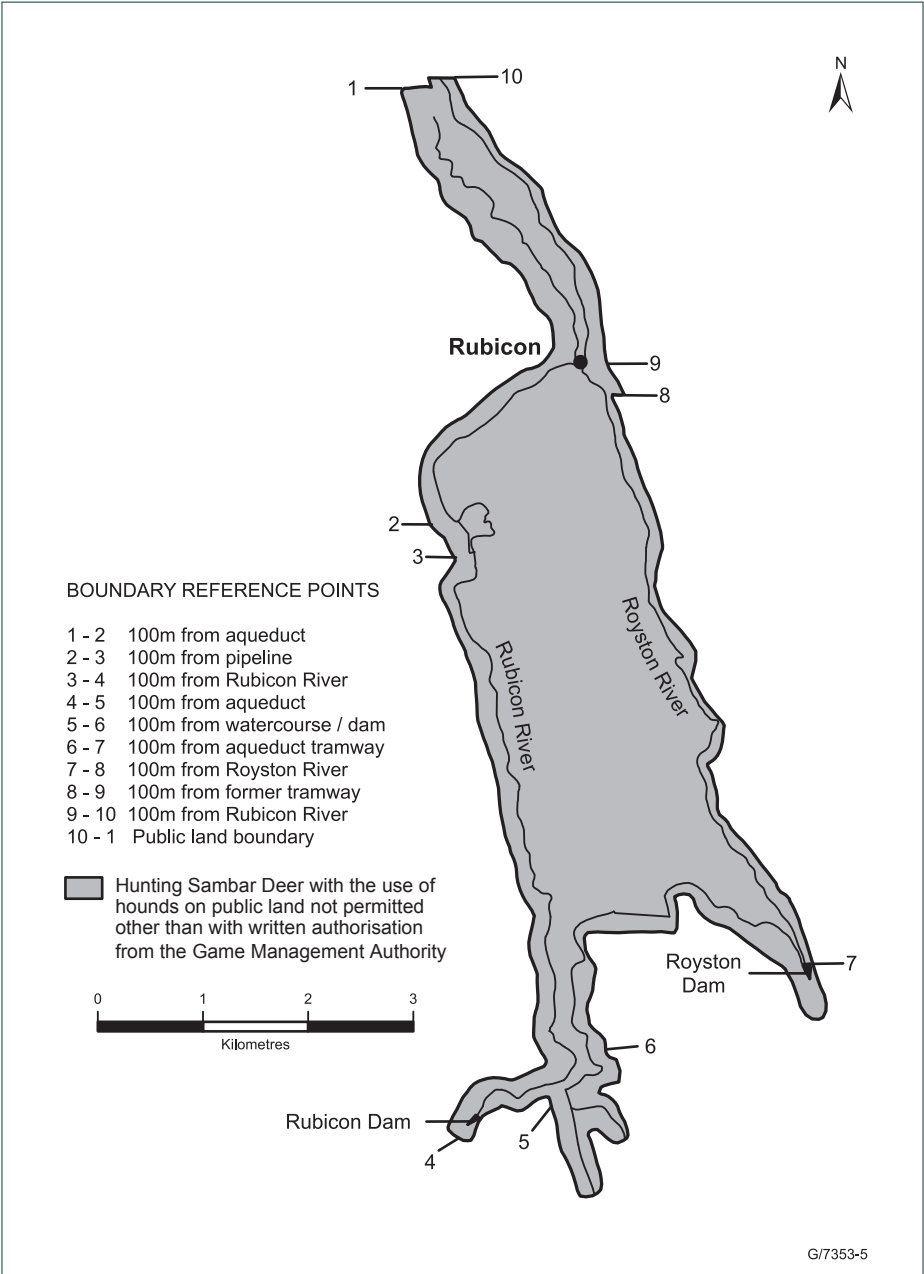


Fig. 5: Areas closed to hound hunting around Rubicon and surrounds

Within the broad area available for hound hunting, hounds are not permitted in national or state parks or in water catchment areas, nor are they permitted on private property without the permission of the landowner or manager.

If you are not sure if hunting is permitted in a particular area, don't hunt there. Hunting in a closed area could mean that you lose your Game and Firearms Licences. Also, your firearm, vehicle and other belongings involved in the commission of an offence could be confiscated.

For detailed deer hunting maps, and to find more information about where you can and cannot hunt deer, see [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)

## Keep hounds and hunting away from prohibited areas

When hunting, it is very important that you or your hounds do not enter areas where hound hunting is prohibited. It is a serious offence for your hounds to be in a prohibited area. Hounds must never enter or be used to hunt Sambar Deer:

1. in national or state parks
2. on private property without the permission of the landowner or manager
3. on any other area closed to hound hunting.

Hounds can travel long distances when hunting, so plan your hunt and do not give hounds a chance to enter prohibited areas. Make sure that you do not hunt close to boundaries. Keep a buffer

zone between where you intend to hunt and any prohibited areas. It is your responsibility to ensure that hounds do not enter prohibited areas.

## Make sure that hounds do not attack, bite or injure wildlife

It is an offence under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 for hounds to attack, bite or maim Sambar Deer or any other wildlife.

All hounds used for hunting Sambar Deer should only ever trail and flush deer and should never hold, drag down or bite any wildlife, including deer.

Hounds should have a non-aggressive temperament towards people, deer and other animals. You must never use a hound for hunting that displays any signs of aggression. The future of hound hunting depends on it.

## Hound possessor

The hound possessor is responsible to ensure that hound are registered, properly identified and are located within areas open to hound hunting.

Under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012, the person responsible for the hounds is the 'hound possessor'. This is the person who keeps or harbours hound(s) or has them in their care.

This means if you take hounds into the field that are not registered to you then you are still responsible for the hounds and are also liable to be penalised if any incidents occur in the field involving the hounds.

## Limit the size of your hunting team

Companionship is often one of the main reasons why people go hunting. However, hound hunters must remember that there is a limit on the number of hunters who can participate in a hound team. Each hound team can consist of no more than 10 hunters when actively hunting in the field (you are considered to be hunting if you are pursuing, trailing, stalking, searching for or driving out deer).

### Times when a hound team can exceed 10 people

To develop the skills of younger hunters, a hound team can consist of 12 hunters provided that two are Provisional Game Licence holders under the age of 18. When hunting, they must be under the direct supervision of an adult hunter who is the holder of a Victorian Game Licence endorsed to take or hunt Sambar Deer with the use of hounds.



A team may also consist of 12 hunters provided that two are holders of a Non-resident of Australia Game Licence. When hunting, they must be under the direct supervision of an adult hunter who is the holder of a valid Victorian Game Licence endorsed to take or hunt Sambar Deer with the use of hounds.

### No more than five hounds in a pack

There are limits on the number of hounds that may be used on a hunt to ensure that packs do not become unwieldy. You are allowed a maximum of **five** hounds per hunting pack (exceptions apply). Only one pack can be used on any one hunt.

### Times when a pack can exceed five hounds

To enable younger dogs to be trained, a maximum of **eight** hounds may be used provided that **three** of the eight are pups in training and less than 12 months of age.

All hounds over 12 months of age must be registered with GMA. All hounds under 12 months of age must be authorised by GMA. You can apply for authorising hound pups through MyGL at [licencing.gma.vic.gov.au](https://licencing.gma.vic.gov.au)

Remember, the fewer hounds you use, the greater chance you have of controlling their movements. Greater control over your hounds will assist you to ensure that hounds do not enter prohibited areas.

## Hunt with hounds during the open season only

Sambar Deer may be hunted with hounds from 1 April until 30 November every year. However, when Easter falls within the season, hound hunting is closed from and including the Friday before Easter until the Wednesday after Easter.

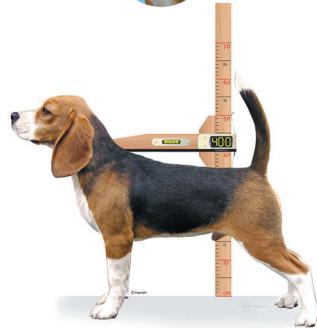
Hounds must not be used to hunt any other deer species.

## Use permitted hound breeds

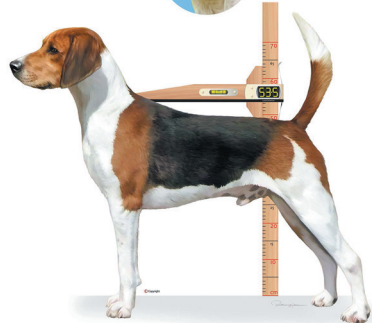
Only pure Beagles, pure Bloodhounds and pure Harriers conforming to Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) breed standards can be used to hunt Sambar Deer. These hound breeds must also conform to the following regulated heights measured at the withers:

Beagle	40 cm or under
Harrier	53.5 cm or under
Bloodhound	69 cm or under

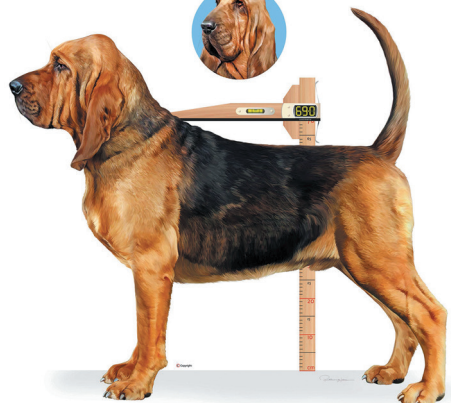
For more information on breed standards, see the ANKC breed standards page on its website [ankc.org.au/Breeds](http://ankc.org.au/Breeds)



*Beagle*



*Harrier*



*Bloodhound*



# Hound registration

## Register your hounds

All hounds used to hunt Sambar Deer in Victoria must be registered with, or authorised by, the Game Management Authority. Hounds will be recommended to the GMA by a person or body with relevant expertise for registration following a physical assessment against the breed standards.

## Hound assessments

There are currently three organisations with approved hound assessors; the Australian Deer Association, the Victorian Deer Association and Victorian Hound Hunters Incorporated. Approved hound assessors undergo training and are certified by the Game Management Authority as a person with relevant expertise. To have hounds registered, hunters should contact one of the following organisations to obtain details of their accredited hound assessors:

- Australian Deer Association ([austdeer.com.au](http://austdeer.com.au))
- Victorian Deer Association ([vda.org.au](http://vda.org.au))
- Victorian Hound Hunters Incorporated ([victorianhoundhunters.com.au](http://victorianhoundhunters.com.au))

Details of all registered hounds and their owners are stored and maintained on a game licensing database in accordance with principles set out in the *Information Privacy Act 2000*. Hunters can access their licensing information, hound information, apply to authorise a pup and transfer a hound online. This can be done through MyGL at [licensing.gma.vic.gov.au](http://licensing.gma.vic.gov.au)

## Hounds over 12 months of age

All hounds over 12 months of age must be presented to and assessed by an approved hound assessor. Only pure Beagles, pure Harriers and pure Bloodhounds conforming to the relevant ANKC breed standard and height limit prescribed in the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 can be recommended for registration.

Beagles must not exceed 40 cm at the withers, Harriers must not exceed 53.5 cm at the withers and Bloodhounds must not exceed 69 cm at the withers.

Hounds that have not been recommended for approval by a hound assessor will not be considered for registration.

In order to effectively assess a hound against the breed standard, the hound must be a minimum of 12 months old to ensure it exhibits adult characteristics. Mature hounds that have been assessed and conform to the relevant ANKC breed standard and the prescribed height limit will be registered for life after being accepted by the Game Management Authority.

**Note: Life-time registration remains in place until the hound dies, is transferred to a new owner, surrendered, suspended, or cancelled.**

Copies of the ANKC breed standards for Beagles, Harriers and Bloodhounds can be obtained from the ANKC website at: [ankc.org.au/Breeds](http://ankc.org.au/Breeds)

### Hounds under 12 months of age

As hounds under 12 months of age cannot be effectively assessed against the ANKC breed standards or the requirements specified in the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012, they cannot be recommended to the Game Management Authority for registration.

In order to use hounds under 12 months of age to hunt Sambar Deer, hunters must obtain a written authorisation from the Game Management Authority.

Hounds under 12 months of age must still be authorised to hunt, however, they will not be assessed against the ANKC breed standards and height requirements.

An application to request authorisation of a hound under 12 months of age, in accordance with Regulation 38(2) of the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 is available online at [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au).

Hound owners using hounds under 12 months of age for Sambar Deer hunting must carry the authorisation with them at all times while hunting.

No unregistered hounds or hounds without authorisation from the Game Management Authority may be used to hunt Sambar Deer.

### Transfer of hound ownership

To facilitate the transfer of hound ownership, go to MyGL at [licencing.gma.vic.gov.au](http://licencing.gma.vic.gov.au)

It is the current owner's responsibility to ensure a the transfer process has taken place, as they continue to be responsible for those hounds until the transfer of ownership is recorded.

## Cancellation of registration

The registration of a hound may be cancelled if:

- that hound subsequently displays any characteristics outside the breed standards or height requirements;
- the hound is found in circumstances that contravene the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012; or
- the owner is found guilty of an offence under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

If a hound has its registration cancelled, a notice of cancellation advising of the reasons for cancellation will be forwarded to the registered hound owner to allow him or her to make a submission to the Game Management Authority on why the hound's registration should not be cancelled.

If you have any further questions relating to the registration of hounds, contact the GMA Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or one of the hunting organisations listed in this guide.

## Make sure your hounds can be identified

To ensure that authorised officers or members of Victoria Police can readily identify hounds and their owners, all hounds used to hunt Sambar Deer must wear a collar which has a permanent tag or label on which is legibly printed the full name of the hound owner and hound registration number.

All hounds used for hunting must be microchipped in accordance with the Domestic Animals Regulations 2005. Hounds that do not comply with these requirements cannot be registered and must not be used to hunt Sambar Deer. For more information on the identification of hounds, contact one of the following hunting organisations:

- Australian Deer Association ([austdeer.com.au](http://austdeer.com.au))
- Victorian Deer Association ([vda.org.au](http://vda.org.au))
- Victorian Hound Hunters Incorporated ([victorianhoundhunters.com.au](http://victorianhoundhunters.com.au))

## Registration of your hound with your local council

All dogs three months of age and over must be registered with the local council and existing registrations must be renewed by 10 April each year.

If being registered for the first time, dogs must be microchipped prior to registration.

This requirement is in addition to registering your hound with Game Management Authority for the purpose of hound hunting.

You can find additional information about dog registration and microchipping on the Animal Welfare website: [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au)



# Powers of authorised officers

Authorised officers are there to help you understand the hunting laws and provide advice and information on hunting. They are also there to enforce the hunting laws to protect the resource, ensure that everyone has equitable access to hunting opportunities and that hunting is conducted in a safe and responsible manner.

When hunting, you may be stopped by an authorised officer or a member of Victoria Police.

An officer may not always wear a uniform, but they will always display their official identification to you.

If you are approached by an officer in the field, you will be directed to unload any firearm in your possession. You may also be asked to produce your Firearms and/or Game Licence and to provide your correct name and address.

Officers may also wish to inspect any game you have harvested or have in your possession.

Authorised officers and members of Victoria Police may stop and search any vehicle or boat to carry out inspections if an officer believes that a wildlife or

game offence has been committed. They may also seize any game or wildlife or any equipment that has been used in the commission of an alleged offence, including firearms, boats and vehicles.

## How can you help?

It is important that hunters act ethically while hunting, as well as encouraging the rest of the hunting community to do the right thing.

You can help protect your recreation by reporting alleged hunting-related offences.

Suspected offences can be reported to the Game Management Authority on 136 186 or [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au). All reports remain strictly confidential and, if you wish, you may remain anonymous, though it does assist investigating officers if they can talk directly to you.

**To report illegal hunting activity, call the GMA Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au). Your report can be lodged anonymously or you may wish to provide your personal details. All information provided to the GMA will remain confidential.**



# Using your hounds

## Care for your hounds

It is the hunter's responsibility to care for their hounds in the field and be aware of any signs of stress, injury or poisoning.

Hounds used to assist in the hunting of Sambar Deer should be healthy and in good physical condition. They should not be used under conditions where there is an unacceptable risk of injury or heat stress. To avoid heat exhaustion, hunt when temperatures are less extreme (e.g. early morning and evening) and be sure to provide your dogs with plenty of water.

If a hound is injured when in the field, ensure that it receives first aid or professional attention as soon as possible.

Snake bite is a serious and ever-present danger for Australian hound hunters and their hounds, and it is important to recognise the symptoms of a bite in order to save your hound's life.

Hounds bitten by venomous snakes will initially be hyper-excitable, may have dilated pupils, develop muscle twitches and may stagger, salivate or vomit. However, symptoms change quickly as the poisoning progresses so, with known or suspected snake bite cases, your hound should be taken immediately to a veterinarian.



Hound owners have a legal 'Duty of Care' to protect the welfare of their dogs. The *Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Dogs* provides an overview of basic dog welfare and health requirements.

For further information on vaccinations, parasite control, injuries, first aid and training tips, or to view the *Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Dogs*, please visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au)

Responsible hunters will also make every possible effort to locate any lost hounds as soon as possible. There are a number of hound recovery pens (see Table 2, page 24) across Victoria where lost hounds may be temporarily kept until their owners are able to recover them. Owners are reminded to ensure the pens are left clean and that payment of some kind is offered to caretakers of the pens.

Table 2. Hound Recovery Pens

Area	Location of pen	Phone number
Cheshunt	General Store	03 5729 8202
Mansfield	BP Service Station on the Buller Road	03 5775 2807
Jamieson	Jamieson Milk Bar	03 5777 0516
Licola	Licola General Store	03 5148 8786
Erica	2786 Moe-Rawson Road	0412 512 746
Dargo	General Store	03 5140 1219
Swifts Creek	7020 Great Alpine Road	03 5159 4231
The Springs	Opposite the TJ Divide & Woods Point Road	
Buffalo River	Abbeyards Hut	
Sheepyard Flats	Just before the Howqua River Bridge	

## Training your hounds

The regulations maintain a maximum pack size of five hounds but allow the use of up to three additional pups (hounds under the age of 12 months) in training.

This recognises that allowing an additional three pups with the five hound pack allows effective training of pups without compromising how a pack functions and impacting on the success of a hunt during the open season.

Remember, it is critical that hound pups are socialised when they are young. Exposing pups to a wide range of situations, people (including children) and other dogs will ensure a more stable, predictable hound.

## Confinement of hounds to your property

When not in the field, you are legally required to securely confine your hound to your property. This means your yard must have a closed gate and an escape-proof fence that your hound cannot jump, get under or through. There are significant penalties for failing to confine your hounds to your property.

## Dog attacks, menacing and dangerous dogs

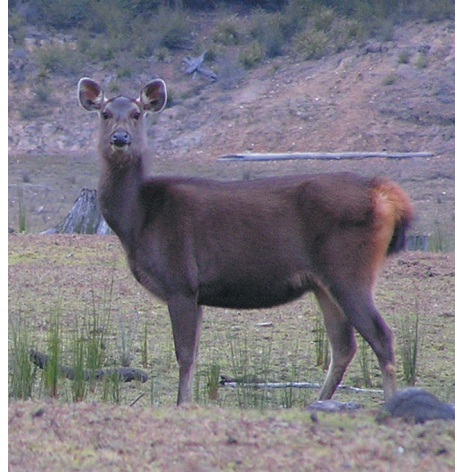
If your dog rushes at or chases someone, you could be fined, and your local council can declare your dog to be a 'menacing dog'. This means you will have to microchip it and you may have to leash and muzzle it in public.

If you do not comply with these requirements, council can then declare your dog to be a 'dangerous dog'. There are very strict controls on the housing, exercise and ownership of dangerous dogs.

You are liable if your dog attacks a person or animal outside your property, or someone trying to get to your front door. You are also liable if your dog attacks someone who has been invited onto your property.

An attack by your dog can lead to court action. If convicted, owners can face substantial fines. This is in addition to damages, which may potentially be thousands of dollars. In such situations, dogs are often ordered to be destroyed or declared dangerous. Strict ownership controls are imposed on dangerous dogs for the rest of their lives.

You can read more about confinement of dogs or the consequences of dogs attacking people or animals on the Animal Welfare website [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au)



*Photo courtesy of A Bennett*

# Other important laws

## Hunt at approved times

In Victoria, the hunting of deer is not permitted at night – that is, between half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise during the prescribed open season.

## Do not use spotlights

There are a number of laws in place to stop the illegal spotlighting of deer and it is important that all deer hunters understand their obligations when in the field. Hunters need to be aware that the use of artificial lights (including spotlights, vehicle headlights, infra-red devices, thermal imaging and night vision equipment) to hunt or assist in the hunting of any game is illegal.

It is illegal to be in possession of a spotlight and a firearm on any area of public land in ‘recognised deer habitat’ from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise. ‘Recognised deer habitat’ is defined as all areas of Crown land in the Victorian municipalities listed in Table 3 below.

It is also illegal to be in possession of a firearm and be in the company of a person in possession of a spotlight in recognised deer habitat from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise.

Table 3 Recognised deer habitat

Recognised Deer Habitat			
Alpine Shire Council	Corangamite Shire Council	Murrindindi Shire Council	Towong Shire Council
Ararat Rural City Council	East Gippsland Shire Council	Northern Grampians Shire Council	Wangaratta Rural City Council
Baw Baw Shire Council	Glenelg Shire Council	Pyrenees Shire Council	Wellington Shire Council
Benalla Rural City Council	Horsham Rural City Council	South Gippsland Shire Council	Whittlesea City Council
Cardinia Shire Council	Mansfield Shire Council	Southern Grampians Shire Council	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Colac-Otway Shire Council	Mitchell Shire Council	Strathbogie Shire Council	

Furthermore, it is illegal to be in possession of a spotlight and be in the company of a person in possession of a firearm in recognised deer habitat from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise.

Under the regulations, a spotlight **does not include:**

- domestic lights used for domestic purposes such as torches, lanterns and work lights used around camp;
- an emergency light used for emergency purposes such as a torch used to navigate out of the bush or a 12 volt light used when working on your vehicle;
- a light fitted to your vehicle that complies with the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 (this covers all spotlights and work lights that are fitted on your vehicle in a legal manner).

However, there are situations where deer hunters can be in possession of a firearm and spotlight in a vehicle or while on foot (see below).

The aim is to prevent illegal spotlighting without impacting on deer hunters genuinely using torches, lanterns or headlamps for safety, domestic or emergency purposes.

## Possession of a spotlight and firearm when in a vehicle

Hunters travelling in vehicles between 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise in recognised deer habitat can be in possession of a firearm and spotlight as long as:

- The firearm is unloaded and stored in a securely fastened case or container (e.g. gun bag or gun case) that is stowed in the boot or storage area of a sedan, dual cab or wagon and is not readily accessible by any occupant of the vehicle.
- For utes or single cabs, the firearm is unloaded and stored in a securely fastened case or container and stowed in a part of the vehicle not readily accessible by any occupant of the vehicle. The best approach here is to fit a lockable steel box to the tray and store the firearm in there.
- Any ammunition is stored separately from the firearm (but not in a glove box) and is in a part of the vehicle not readily accessible by any occupant of the vehicle.
- Any spotlight in or on the vehicle is not in use.

## Possession of a spotlight and firearm when on foot

Deer hunters on foot in recognised deer habitat between 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise can carry an artificial light (e.g. torch or headlamp) for on-foot navigation purposes as long as:

- The firearm and magazine is unloaded – this means that all cartridges must be removed from the firearm and any magazine.
- Ammunition is stored in a closed case or container – this could include a backpack or cartridge case.
- Any artificial light is not fitted to the firearm, scope or other fitting attached to the firearm.

## People exempt from spotlighting laws

Landowners/occupiers or their agents who are using a spotlight for the purposes of controlling pest animals to a distance of 250 metres outside the boundary of their property in recognised deer habitat are exempt from spotlighting laws.

Any person acting in accordance with an Authority to Control Wildlife, Order or other authorisation issued under the *Wildlife Act 1975* that allows them to destroy wildlife (which may include some deer species) with the aid of a spotlight are also exempt from some spotlighting laws.

People acting under such authorisations or Orders are only exempt from the spotlighting laws for the land specified within that authorisation or Order. When they are transporting spotlights and firearms through recognised deer habitat, they must still comply with the *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012*.

## Use of GPS tracking collars and radios

Under the *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012*, the use of electronic devices that are not spotlights is permitted. This could include the use of GPS tracking collars for locating hounds or two-way radios for communication.

Hound hunters are encouraged to use these devices as a way of ensuring hounds don't enter areas that are prohibited.

## Do not use vehicles while hunting

Motorised vehicles may be used to travel to and from a hunting location. However, once a hunt has commenced, the vehicle must not be used as part of the hunt. The improper use of vehicles to hunt is considered to be highly unethical and is inconsistent with the concept of 'fair chase'.

Additionally, you should be mindful of your firing zone. Hunters should never stand on a road with a loaded firearm or discharge a firearm on, over or towards a road.

## Wild Dog Control Program

Wild dogs are mainly distributed throughout forested areas of Gippsland and the northeast of Victoria, and generally throughout the northwest. They are recognised as a significant threat to the livestock industry.

One of the control techniques used for wild dogs includes trapping by professional dog trappers. Trapping in Victoria is regulated by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2008 and the use of traps requires authority from the land manager. If you come across a wild dog trap while hunting, leave it where it is.

Land managers use 1080 poison baits in the control of wild dogs throughout affected areas. These baits are potentially lethal to your hounds and baited areas will be sign posted with warning signs.

**For more information on baiting programs, contact the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.**



# Use of firearms

## Obey firearm safety rules at all times

When using firearms to hunt deer, it is your responsibility to ensure that your actions do not put yourself or the safety of others at risk. You should know the basic firearm safety rules before handling firearms and insist that people who go hunting with you follow these rules.

Never carry a loaded firearm or use a firearm in a town or high visitation area (for example, picnic or camping areas), or on or over any area of public or private property where hunting is not permitted.

### IF IN DOUBT, DON'T SHOOT!


Identify your target beyond all doubt and what's behind it. Identify all of the animal. Do not fire at movement only, colour only, sound only or shape only. Before you shoot, ask yourself, could it be a person?

Keep your finger away from the trigger until you're absolutely certain it's safe to fire.

## The Ten Basic Rules of Firearm Safety

1. Treat every firearm as loaded
2. Always point firearms in a safe direction
3. Load a firearm only when ready to fire
4. Identify your target beyond all doubt
5. Check your firing zone
6. Store firearms and ammunition safely
7. Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms
8. Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp
9. Never fire at hard surfaces or water
10. Don't climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms

If you wish to know more about firearm safety, contact details for your local Divisional Firearms Officer can be found on the Victoria Police website at [police.vic.gov.au](http://police.vic.gov.au)



# IF IN DOUBT, DON'T SHOOT!



HUNT SMART®  
HUNT SAFE  
with Errol Mason

The Firearm Safety Foundation Vic. Inc have recently produced and distributed the **DVD Hunt Smart® Hunt Safe**. A free copy can be obtained by contacting GMA on **136 186**.

**FIREARMS SAFETY  
IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

 FIREARM SAFETY  
FOUNDATION (VICTORIA) INC

[www.firearmsafety.org.au](http://www.firearmsafety.org.au)



## Take only safe shots

When using a firearm to hunt, your safety and the safety of other members of the public (including other hunters) must be your number one priority. If you cannot identify your target, do not shoot. Never shoot at colour, shape, sound or movement alone. Make sure that you do not shoot if people, livestock or buildings are nearby, in front of, around or beyond your target.

In a bail up situation where the deer stops running from the hounds, it is safer if one person in the hunting team is chosen to dispatch the deer. If you are the chosen hunter, wait until you have the opportunity for a clear shot. Once you have identified your target, check what is in front of, beyond and around the deer, especially if it is at close range. A projectile that will stop quickly in a deer at medium range may pass through when close up. Always make sure you are aware of the location of other hunters and hounds.

Deer often bail up in water, so you need to take extra care to ensure the chance of ricochet is minimised. Remember that another hunter may also be approaching from a different direction.

If you have any doubts at all, pass up the shot. No one will criticise you if your reason for not shooting was that a hound was in the way or you thought that another person might be in or near your firing line. **No deer is worth a firearm incident.**

## Avoid alcohol and drugs

The recommended limit for blood alcohol while handling a firearm is .00. Some drugs and medication can also impair your judgment and coordination. If a medicine container carries a warning that users should not operate machinery or drive a vehicle while on this medication, then they should not be using a firearm either.



*Photo courtesy of J Cousins and G Maggs*

## Use approved methods

Firearms and bows used for hunting Sambar Deer must meet the following specifications:

- a centrefire rifle having a calibre of no less than 6.85 mm (0.270"), with a projectile weight of no less than 8.45 grams (130 grains); or
- a muzzleloading rifle having a calibre of no less than 11.45 mm (0.45"), with a projectile weight of no less than 14.91 grams (230 grains); or
- a firearm of no less than 20 bore and no greater than 12 bore, with a single solid projectile, having a weight of no less than 15.88 grams (245 grains) and that firearm must be fitted with a front and rear iron sight (other than beaded sights) or a telescopic sight or a reflex sight; or
- a long bow, recurve bow or compound bow having a draw-weight of no less than 22.5 kilograms (50 lbs), using an arrow with a broad-head having a combined minimum weight of no less than 26 grams (400 grains) and a minimum of two sharpened cutting blades; or

- a crossbow having a draw-weight of no less than 68 kilograms (150 lbs), using a bolt with a broad-head having a combined minimum weight of no less than 26 grams (400 grains) and a minimum of two sharpened cutting blades.

## Be proficient before you hunt

For most hunters, the opportunity to shoot a deer is limited to rare occasions, so proper preparation and regular practice is essential to maximise your chance of success.

Develop and practice your shooting skills in a safe environment, such as a target range, before entering the field. Make sure that you know the capabilities of your firearm and ammunition.



# Ethical and responsible hunting

## Respect hunting ethics

It is important that all hunters maintain the highest ethical standards while hunting.

Ethical hunting means that a person knows and respects the deer hunted, follows the law and behaves in a way that will satisfy what society expects of a hunter. Ethical hunters are familiar with the places they hunt, the deer and other wildlife that live there and the way they should behave when hunting.

There are three key aspects to ethical hunting:

- knowing and respecting the deer: understanding the deer and their habitat, and treating them fairly and with respect
- obeying the law: laws have been introduced to ensure that hunting is conducted in a safe, responsible, humane and sustainable manner
- behaving in the right manner: hunter behaviour has a direct impact on public opinion and support; remember that your actions may impact on the future of hound hunting.

## Respect 'fair chase'

One of the key components of ethical hunting is the concept of 'fair chase'. This means giving the deer a sporting chance. All ethical hound hunters will ensure that deer are not unduly harassed during a hunt.

## Concentrate on shot placement

When using a firearm, all hunters have a responsibility to dispatch game as quickly as possible. When hunting, you should always concentrate on hitting the deer in a vital area, such as the heart/lung zone (just behind the shoulder). These areas cover vital organs and give you the best opportunity for a clean shot that will dispatch the deer humanely.



## Follow up every shot

Sometimes your first shot may not be fatal. If this happens, it is your responsibility to handle the matter swiftly and ethically. This means focusing on the wounded deer – you should follow the deer, find it and ensure that it is dispatched quickly and humanely.

## Respect dispatched game and the public

Once a deer is dispatched, it should be properly handled to minimise waste. Bring out as much meat as you can and ensure that the carcass is not left near a road, track or a waterway. To protect the environment and reputation of hunters, dispose of all deer remains responsibly (through burial if possible) and no less than 100 metres from waterways. Remains, including entrails, should never be disposed of, or left, in rivers or other bodies of water. The improper disposal of deer remains can pollute waterways and portray a negative image of hunters and hunting.

It is also important to respect the views of other members of the community when transporting trophies and other parts of harvested deer. Never display a deer on the way home. Wherever possible, cover the carcass and head with a blanket or tarpaulin. As well as providing protection from dirt, dust and insects, this ensures members of the non-hunting public will not be offended or form a negative perception of hunting.

## Respect the opinions of non-hunters

Hound hunting is a particularly visible and audible form of hunting. As such, hound hunters must be mindful of other members of the public. People who are unfamiliar with hunting practices may be intimidated by the presence of firearms, so be sympathetic to their concerns and, as much as possible, keep firearms out of sight.

Be considerate, be courteous and show the public that hunters are responsible and ethical. Don't block tracks, warn people away from areas or chase deer with vehicles.

The image of hound hunting depends on how you conduct yourself as a hunter, how you handle your firearms and how you respect the deer you hunt.

## Respect private property and landowner rights

Responsible behaviour on private property means respecting the rights of landowners or managers. If you have been given permission to hunt on private property, you should ask the landowner or manager where they want you to hunt, if there are any areas you should avoid and where you should park your car. You should always respect their decisions. Leave gates as you find them and be sure to hunt well away from people, livestock, buildings and crops.

## Be aware of personal safety

Many hunters wear camouflaged clothes, which makes them difficult to see. While concentrating on the hunt and the hounds, there is a possibility that you could become lost or be mistaken for game by another hunter. To ensure your safety and the safety of other hunters in the field, it is recommended that all hound hunters wear some form of bright coloured clothing or hat when hunting.

Overseas studies have shown that deer cannot see bright colours and the wearing of these colours will not affect your hunting success. Many hunters take deer in Victoria while wearing bright-coloured clothing, such as blaze orange.

The wearing of some form of bright coloured clothing is also recommended when you are carrying a carcass out of the bush.

## Make sure you are fit

You must be physically capable of following a deer under any circumstances, over various types of terrain, sometimes over a full day. If you are well prepared physically, you will have a much better hunting experience.

## Choose your hunting team wisely

Choice of a hunting partner or team is important to your hunting experience and to your safety, the safety of other hunters in the team and the safety of members of the public. Hunt with people who have good ethics and avoid those who behave irresponsibly.

## Respect other road users

Four-wheel driving is a great way to enjoy the outdoor experience and is often essential to reach some secluded hunting areas. You should only drive your vehicle (including motor and trail bikes) on roads that are open to the public, avoid using muddy tracks and remove fallen trees across tracks rather than drive around them. Also, never park your vehicle in a position where it may impede access to other bush users.



**RESPECT  
HUNT RESPONSIBLY**



# More information

## Education courses

Some hunting organisations offer hunter education courses. These courses often address firearm safety issues, bush craft, legislative requirements for game hunters, game biology and hunting skills. Contact relevant hunting organisations to see if they offer these courses.

The Australian Deer Association runs a weekend, live-in hunter education course each year in Gippsland. The course, which includes lecture and practical sessions, is highly regarded and all participants receive a comprehensive set of notes.

## Microchipping days

Both the Victorian Hound Hunters (Inc) and the Australian Deer Association hold annual hound registration and microchipping days where accredited assessors assess hounds and, where those hounds meet the requirements of the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012, recommend them for registration with the Game Management Authority.

For further information, visit the websites of the Australian Deer Association at [austdeer.com.au](http://austdeer.com.au) or the Victorian Hound Hunters (Inc.) at [victorianhoundhunters.com.au](http://victorianhoundhunters.com.au)



# Sample test questions

Following are examples of the types of questions that you will find in the Hound Hunting Test. Four answers are given for each question and you will be asked to choose the one answer you think is best.

**Sample Q: 1. When is a hound permitted to enter private property?**

- A. when chasing deer.
- B. when permitted by the landowner or manager of the property.
- C. when over 12 months of age.
- D. when permitted by the hound's owner.

**Sample Q: 2. When can you use a motor vehicle during a hunt?**

- A. when hunting on private property.
- B. when hunting on an approved public road or track.
- C. when hunting over hilly ground.
- D. never.

**Sample Q: 3. When taking a shot, why is it important to check what is around the deer, especially if it is at close range?**

- A. another hunter or a hound may be approaching the deer from another direction.
- B. to check that there is no escape route for the deer.
- C. there may be something behind the deer that will make it run away.
- D. there may be a larger deer nearby.

- Sample Q: 4.** Which of the following firearms is approved for hunting Sambar Deer?
- A. any type of shotgun.
  - B. any type of muzzle-loading rifle.
  - C. any type of centre-fire rifle.
  - D. a centre-fire rifle with a calibre of no less than 0.270" (6.85mm).
- Sample Q: 5.** The only hound breeds permitted for hunting Sambar Deer are:
- A. Basset Hounds, Beagles, Foxhounds, Harriers and Bloodhounds, or their crosses.
  - B. pure Foxhounds and pure Harriers.
  - C. pure Beagles and pure Foxhounds.
  - D. pure Beagles, pure Bloodhounds and pure Harriers.

# More to Explore – hunting maps

Online hunting maps are available in the 'More to Explore' mobile phone app. The hunting maps show:

- all public land available to hunting in Victoria
- the species that can be hunted in specific areas, including game species and pests
- where hunting dogs are allowed.

The app also provides comprehensive information on State Forests, including camping sites, bushwalking tracks, mountain bike trails, 4WD tracks and seasonal road closures. The More to Explore app is available at no cost for iPhones from the App Store and for android phones from the Google Play store.

## Find areas to hunt



1. Go to the tabs at the top of the screen and slide along until you find 'Hunting'.

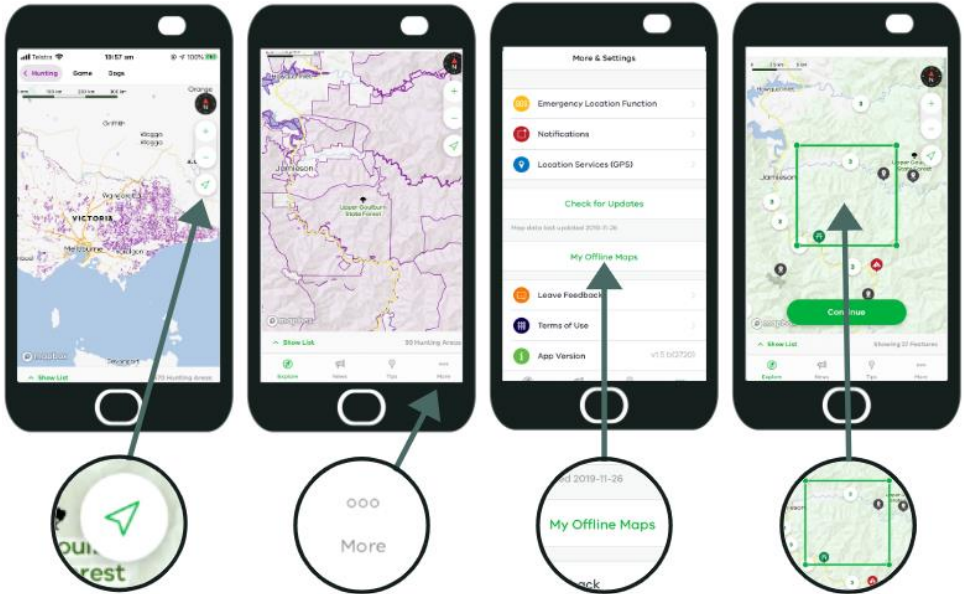
2. Zoom into the map and select the area you want to hunt.

3. Click the name of the selected area to view hunting details.

4. Scroll through the details section to find information on the species you can hunt.

## Using the maps offline

The maps can be downloaded and used when out of mobile range.



1. Ensure the georeference settings on the app are switched on.

2. Zoom into the area you want to hunt and select 'More' at the bottom of the screen.

3. Select 'My Offline Maps' then select 'Create Offline Map'.

4. Resize your map to the area you want to save. Select continue to save the map.

Once you have created and saved your map you can use it offline by activating the GPS function on the top right-hand side of the screen. There are many other features in the More to Explore App. The app is regularly updated to reflect changes in land status and show road closures and also features an emergency location function for public land users' safety.



More to Explore has been developed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Further details about the More to Explore app can be found at [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au)

