

GUIDELINES FOR THE HUMANE KILLING OF MUTTONBIRDS (SHEARWATERS)

The *Animal Welfare Act 1993* prescribes penalties for persons who do not kill Muttonbird chicks in a humane manner. It is that person's responsibility to kill any chicks that they are harvesting quickly and humanely.

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee has endorsed these Guidelines in the expectation that they will provide clear instructions which, if followed, will ensure that the killing of muttonbirds is carried out in a way which ensures that animals are killed as efficiently as possible with the minimum of suffering. These guidelines have been approved by the Minister for Primary Industries as Animal Welfare Guidelines under s 44B of the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*.

Two methods have been endorsed. It is the responsibility of the harvester to use the method that will ensure a humane kill that does not cause unreasonable or unjustifiable pain or suffering to the chick.

The following method is recommended as suitable for use by less experienced muttonbirders:

1. *Hold the bird by the feet, head down, in one hand.*
2. *Place the index and middle fingers of the other hand in the form of a V immediately behind the bird's skull.*
3. *Finally turn the bird's head upwards and away. This method immediately dislocates the neck and results in a quick, painless death.'*

The following method is recommended as suitable for use by more experienced muttonbirders, including those killing chicks for commercial or cultural purposes:

1. *Immediately when removing the bird from the burrow, secure the head firmly between the index and middle fingers of one hand, immediately below the skull.*
2. *Secure the head in place with the thumb.*
3. *Raise the bird in a pendulum movement to a near vertical position (head now facing down).*
4. *In one fluid movement drop the bird (or allow the bird to fall) until it reaches a position just lower than horizontal (when the weight of the bird is felt), then snap the hand and wrist upwards and towards yourself (like when cracking a whip) while pressing the thumb firmly into position below the base of the skull.*