

Code of Practice

for the hunting of wild
fallow deer in Tasmania



TDAC

November 2012

Code of Practice

for the Hunting of Wild Fallow Deer in Tasmania

April 2012

Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee

Approved as an Animal Welfare Guideline under Section
44B

of the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*

by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water

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I. Introduction and Scope

This Code of Practice has been developed by the Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee (TDAC), a committee established in 1982 to represent the interests of deer hunters and provide advice to the relevant Minister of the day on all matters of importance relating to the sustainable management of the wild fallow deer herd in Tasmania.

This Code is intended to provide deer hunters with guidelines on the appropriate use and management of fallow deer. The Code has been approved by the Minister as an Animal Welfare Guideline under S44B of the ***Animal Welfare Act 1993***. As such, the Code provides the courts with a clear statement of what is current best practice. The courts may use the Code as a yardstick to assess cases before them. However, failure to adhere to the Code is not an offence under the Act. Only breaches of the Act, including attached regulations, can result in prosecution.

The TDAC has developed the Code of Practice for the hunting of fallow deer for recreational and crop protection purposes in Tasmania. The Code is designed to accommodate the special circumstances and environment that impact on deer hunting in Tasmania. There is an abundance of quality habitat for deer in Tasmania and many hunting areas are close to civilization. Hunting practices in Tasmania include stalking and still hunting. The use of hunting dogs is not permitted.

This Code of Practice has been developed in close consultation with individuals and organisations with interests in hunting and management of fallow deer in Tasmania. The development of this Code is in support of fallow deer hunting and has been designed to guide deer hunting practices in Tasmania to ensure that animals are killed as efficiently as possible with the minimum of suffering.

It must be stressed that the development of this Code should, in no way, be seen as an attempt to curtail hunting in Tasmania. The Animal Welfare Act, in fact, allows recreational hunting as long as it is carried out in a reasonable and acceptable manner, and without causing undue suffering to the animal. Hunting must, therefore, be conducted safely and humanely.

The recommendations contained in this standard in relation to firearms are fully in keeping with current Tasmanian firearm legislation.

This Code of Practice is based on current knowledge and experience on the hunting of fallow deer in Tasmania and the technology available at the time of publication. It may be revised as required, to take into account advances in technology and understanding of animal physiology and behaviour, as well as expectations of landowners, hunters and the general community.

2. The Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Herd

European fallow deer (*Dama dama dama*) are widely hunted in Tasmania for recreation and to protect crops and pastures. They are most commonly managed on a property by property basis with management principles varying between traditional management, trophy management and finally the most popular Quality Deer Management (QDM). QDM was introduced by the Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee (TDAC) in 1994 and provides for effective management of Tasmania's fallow deer herd. The aim of QDM is to promote a healthy deer population in balance with the habitat in which the deer reside and managed so as to provide benefits for a range of interests including landowners and hunters.

Fallow deer have assimilated into the Tasmanian environment after introduction by Acclimatization Societies in the 1830's. Other species of deer also introduced failed to persist. The fallow deer is a common sight in a range covering the majority of the grazing lands in central Tasmania. In particular, the clearing of areas of native forest for agriculture and forestry, and the creation of a mosaic of forests, pastures and crops has enabled deer populations in some pockets to increase to levels where numbers need to be managed to limit any adverse impact on agricultural and forestry production.

However as rural properties develop and improve pasture and crops, employ irrigation, increase fertilisation and

adopt improved grazing management practices to remain competitive in the various local and world agricultural markets, the availability of a quality food resource for browsing wildlife (including deer) increases, lifting carrying capacity and increasing browsing animal breeding success.

The concurrent development of habitat in the form of reserves, wildlife corridors, re-vegetation and plantations makes population management necessary. The productivity and viability of agricultural and forestry enterprises can be seriously affected without effective management performed by recreational hunting groups.

3. Legislative Control of Deer Hunting

Under the *Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010*, European fallow deer are scheduled as Partly Protected Wildlife. The Regulations contain provisions for the control of hunting including the imposition of bag limits and restrictions on methods to be used in taking fallow deer.

For instance the *Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010* prohibit the taking of wildlife, including fallow deer, with chemicals, poisons, bow and arrows and spears.

A person must not take a deer otherwise than by shooting with a rifle with a calibre of not less than 6millimetres (or .240inches) and which is capable of delivering a projectile having a kinetic energy of 1350joules (or 996ft-lb) at 100metres (or 109.26yards) from the rifle.

In addition, the regulations require that a person who wounds wildlife, including deer, when shooting it, must kill that wildlife as soon as practicable.

Open Seasons

Fallow deer are subject to open seasons during which they may be taken by shooting by licensed hunters.

A recreational deer licence authorises the holder to take either one adult male deer and one antlerless deer or two antlerless deer during the open seasons on land for which they have the owner or manager's permission to hunt.

Licensed hunters may hunt deer only in the period from one hour before sunrise, to one hour after sunset.

The Regulations also require the following in relation to the hunting of deer by licensed hunters during the open seasons.

A person must not use a dog or spotlight to take a deer.

A person who has taken a deer must immediately fix and lock a prescribed tag to the deer.

Spikies (1½ year old male animals) may not be taken.

The head of a deer must not be removed or the body severed, unless the hunter labels all the parts with their name, address, and relevant licence and tag numbers.

Crop Protection Permits

The *Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010* provide for landowners or managers to apply for permits to take fallow deer on specified land to control damage to crops and pasture. These permits allow landowners, their managers or nominated hunters to take fallow deer using methods that are normally prohibited. These methods include shooting at night with the aid of a vehicle and spotlight. Female deer are not generally permitted to be taken during the period November to mid-March to avoid adverse welfare outcomes related to shooting heavily pregnant does and does with dependent young.

4. Use of Rifles for Hunting Deer

Fallow deer may be shot only using a rifle of .240 calibre or greater. The rifle must be capable of delivering a projectile with a minimum kinetic energy at 100 metres of 1350 joules (or 996 ft-lb). It is recommended that hunters use a rifle of .243 calibre or greater. The use of a shotgun to hunt fallow deer is not permitted in Tasmania.

Hunters are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the game species prior to hunting, by reference to experienced hunters, review of available literature or by participation in a hunter education course associated with hunting clubs or hunting associations.

All hunters using a rifle to shoot fallow deer should have the ability to shoot with adequate skill to place a projectile on a given target so as to achieve a humane kill in which the animal undergoes a sudden and painless death. They should be able to judge distance, wind direction and speed as well as having a good knowledge of the performance of the rifle being used and their own capabilities.

Hunters are advised to use a rifle fitted with a telescopic sight for best results. Prior to each day's hunting, the rifle should be checked for operational safety and accuracy. A shooter using a rifle should aim so as to hit the target animal in the brain, neck or heart. Immediately after an animal is shot, the hunter must monitor the animal to ensure that a humane and sudden death occurs.

Hollow-point, soft point or other frangible projectiles are recommended, as these are proven to be effective in achieving a quick and humane kill.

Recommended Minimum Requirements for use of a Rifle for Shooting Fallow Deer

Point of aim:

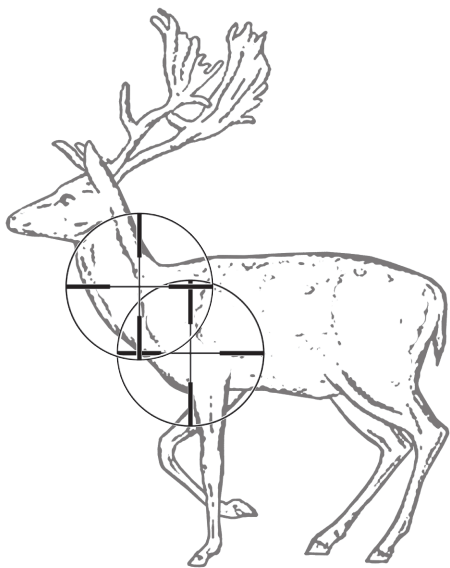
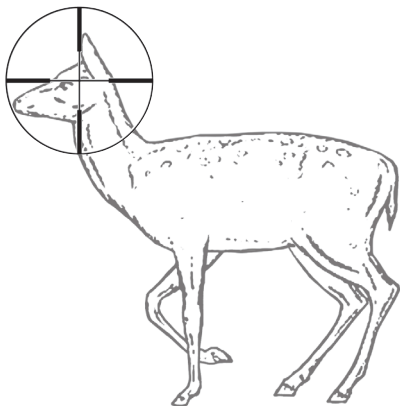
That part of the animal so as to hit the brain, neck or heart.

It is recommended that shooters use a telescopic sight.

Recommended Minimum Firearm/ammunition specifications:

Calibre of Firearm	Energy at 100metres
.243	1,350joules (or 996ft-lb) at 100m

Projectile type: Hollow-point, or soft-point projectiles are recommended.



5. Killing of Wounded Animals

Wounded animals must be killed as quickly and humanely as possible.

- If a deer is thought to be alive after being shot, all reasonable effort must be made immediately to locate and kill it.
- When located, wounded animals must be killed by a method that will achieve a rapid and humane death. A shot to the brain is recommended.
- In circumstances where a shot to the brain of an animal is undesirable, impractical or unsafe, a shot to the heart or base of neck is permissible.

6. Harvested Deer

The hunting regulations permit the dissection of a harvested deer to allow proper care of the meat and skin, provided all animal parts are labeled with the hunters name, address and relevant licence and tag numbers.

Hunters are encouraged to begin the cooling of deer harvested immediately to avoid spoilage, by field dressing, skinning and hanging in a cool shady place protected by a game bag to reduce risk of being blown by flies.

Venison is a quality food product and should be handled and transported accordingly in a clean environment, being mindful of safe health food practices.

7. References

Animal Welfare Standard for the Hunting of Wallabies in Tasmania, June 2003, Animal Welfare Advisory Committee Tasmania.

Code of Practice for the hunting of ducks in Tasmania. Game Management Liaison Committee Tasmania.

A Statement of Current Practices for Management of Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer February 2011, DPIPWE.



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