

**ANIMAL WELFARE  
STANDARD  
FOR THE HUNTING OF  
WALLABIES  
IN TASMANIA**



June 2003  
Animal Welfare  
Advisory  
Committee  
Tasmania

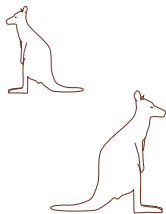
Animal Welfare Standard - Tasmania  
No. 13



DEPARTMENT of  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,  
WATER and ENVIRONMENT

Tasmania

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## INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THIS STANDARD

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is a statutory committee established under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* to advise the Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment on all animal welfare matters of importance to the State. As part of its statutory function, the Committee develops Animal Welfare Standards for adoption in Tasmania.

These standards are a set of recommendations and provide the community with guidelines on the appropriate use and management of animals. They also provide the courts with a clear statement of what is current best practice. The courts may use the standards as a yardstick to assess cruelty cases before them. However, the standards are only guidelines and failure to adhere to them is not an offence under the Act. Only breaches of the Act, including attached regulations, can result in prosecution.

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee has developed this Animal Welfare Standard for the hunting of wallabies for commercial, recreational and crop protection purposes in Tasmania. The Standard is designed to accommodate the special circumstances and environment that impact on wallaby hunting in Tasmania. There is an abundance of bush cover for wallabies in Tasmania and many hunting areas are close to dwellings. Tasmanian wallabies are also much smaller in size than kangaroos. Hunting practices in Tasmania may involve the use of dogs to flush the wallabies out of the bush cover during daylight hours, for shooting at close range with an appropriate firearm.

This standard has been developed in close consultation with individuals and organisations with interests in the shooting of wallabies in Tasmania. If followed, this standard will allow the shooting of wallabies to be carried out in a way that ensures that animals are dispatched as efficiently as possible with the minimum of suffering.

It must be stressed that the development of this standard should, in no way, be seen as an attempt to curtail wallaby hunting in Tasmania. The Animal Welfare Act, in fact, allows recreational and commercial 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. It must result in the sudden and painless death of the hunted animal.

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

This standard is based on current knowledge and experience on the hunting of wallabies 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 wallaby hunters and the general community.

## WALLABIES AND WALLABY HUNTING IN TASMANIA

Bennetts wallabies (*Macropus rufogriseus*) and, Tasmanian pademelons, also called rufous wallabies (*Thylogale billardieri*), are widely hunted in Tasmania for sport and recreation, to protect crops and pastures, and for the commercial trade in meat and skins.

Overall, the changes to the Tasmanian environment resulting from European settlement, have favoured wallabies. 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 wallaby populations in many parts of Tasmania to increase to levels where numbers need to be controlled to limit their adverse effects on agricultural and forestry production. A welfare problem may emerge if the overpopulation impacts on food availability and precipitates starvation and disease.

Hunting by recreational, commercial and landholder shooters is a recognised tool in controlling wallaby numbers and the damage they cause. Where shooting is not successful or appropriate, crop protection permits allowing the use of sodium monofluoroacetate (1080) may be issued.

Wallaby hunting in Tasmania is carried out using:

### ***Rifles***

These are generally used for night-time shooting with the assistance of a spotlight. Some hunters may stalk and use a rifle to shoot during daylight hours. Animals are searched for in open areas adjacent to cover and are shot while stationary.

### ***Shotguns***

These are widely used by recreational hunters for shooting wallabies during daylight hours. Dogs are generally used to flush the wallabies out of their bush cover and the moving animals are shot with a shotgun at close range. Shotguns are also occasionally used with a spotlight to shoot wallabies at night.



## LEGISLATIVE CONTROL OF WALLABY HUNTING

Both the Bennett's wallaby and the Tasmanian pademelon are classified as Partly Protected Wildlife under the *Wildlife Regulations 1999* of the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*, and may be taken during a declared open season by persons who have a wallaby hunters licence. The regulations also allow these species to be taken under permit for crop protection purposes.

Two types of wallaby hunters licence are available:

1. *Non-commercial hunters licence.* This licence allows a recreational hunter to take wallabies during daylight hours during the annual open season and retain the products for personal use.

2. *Commercial hunters licence.* This licence allows the holder to take wallabies during daylight hours during the annual open season and sell the products.

Landholders and licensed recreational and commercial wallaby hunters who are hunting under the authority of a crop protection permit, may also spotlight-shoot wallabies.

The *Animal Welfare Act 1993* prohibits the use of leghold traps or snares, while the *Wildlife Regulations 1999* prohibit the taking of wallabies with chemicals, poisons, bows and arrows and spears. The latter also imposes the following restrictions on the use of firearms for taking wallabies:

- a person must not use a firearm having a bore greater than the bore commonly known as No. 12;
- a person must not use a firearm that is fitted with a silencer;
- a person must not use any solid-jacketed military bullet of any calibre.

In the case of the commercial harvesting of wallabies for the domestic meat market, their shooting, handling, and transport must be carried out by accredited operators in accordance with the provisions of the *Meat Hygiene Act 1986*, and the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Game Meat for Human Consumption. Meat harvested for the overseas market is controlled by the *Commonwealth Export Control Act 1982*.

The Australian Government controls the overseas trade in native wildlife, which includes meat, skins and related products through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Under this legislation, a wildlife trade management plan to export kangaroo or wallaby products may only be approved if harvesting is ecologically sustainable and the animals are killed humanely with minimal pain and suffering. The controlling authority is the Department of Environment & Heritage (DEH). Products derived from commercially harvested wallabies may only be exported from Australia in accordance with a permit issued by DEH.

## *USE OF RIFLES FOR SHOOTING WALLABIES*

All shooters using a rifle to shoot wallabies 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 knowledge of the performance of the rifle being used.

Shooters are advised to use a rifle fitted with a telescopic sight for best results. Prior to each day's shooting, the rifle should be sighted in against an inanimate target. A shooter using a rifle should aim so as to hit the target animal in the brain. A shot to the heart may not cause instantaneous loss of consciousness but may be acceptable if a shot to the brain is impractical or undesirable. Where an animal is heart shot, the shooter must monitor the animal and properly despatch it before targeting another animal.

High velocity .22LR and .22 magnum rimfire ammunition is adequate to reliably kill animals humanely provided that the target animal is within a specified range. A centre-fire rifle is required for shooting animals effectively outside the designated range.

Hollow-point, or other frangible projectiles are recommended, as these are more effective in achieving a humane kill.

## Recommended Minimum Requirements for Shooting Wallabies with Rifles

### Point of aim:

That part of the head so as to hit the brain of the target animal (Attachment A). Where this is not practicable or undesirable a shot to the heart is acceptable (Attachment B). The animal must be monitored and properly despatched before another is targeted.

*It is recommended that shooters use a telescopic sight.*

### Firearm/ammunition specifications:

<i>Firearm</i>	<i>Minimum Muzzle Energy</i>	<i>Maximum Distance</i>
.22LR	190 joules (140ft-lb)	50 metres
.22magnum	370 joules (270ft-lb)	80 metres
Centrefire	975 joules (720ft-lb)	over 80 metres

### Projectile type:

Hollow-point, or other frangible projectiles are recommended.

## *USE OF SHOTGUNS FOR SHOOTING WALLABIES*

Shotguns are designed to kill moving targets at close range and can be very effective in causing a humane kill in which the animal undergoes a sudden and painless death. However, if used carelessly or negligently, they can cause serious wounding resulting in unnecessary pain and suffering.

All shooters should have the ability to shoot with adequate skill to hit the target so as to achieve a humane kill. This includes the ability to judge distance, wind direction and speed as well as knowledge of the performance of the shotgun and ammunition being used.

A shooter using a shotgun must aim so that the animal will be hit in the head, neck or chest by the centre of the pattern.

Differences in body size have resulted in different firearm prescriptions for Bennetts wallabies and Tasmanian pademelons.

Shotguns smaller than 20 gauge (e.g. 410 gauge) are inadequate to consistently achieve a humane kill over the range of conditions encountered in the field and are not recommended for this purpose.

## Recommended Minimum Requirements for Shooting Wallabies with Shotguns

### Point of aim:

Centre of shot pattern to be head, neck or chest

### Gauge:

12, 16 or 20. It is recommended that 410 gauge not be used.

### Shot size:

Bennetts wallaby-

No. 2 or larger shot

Tasmanian pademelon-

No. 4 or larger shot

(*Rufous wallaby*)

### Minimum load:

28 g (= 1.000 oz) or greater for 12, 16 or 20 gauge.

### Choke:

Appropriate for target and range.

### Effective range:

Normally 30 metres, but up to 40 metres for 12 gauge used with a higher load and full choke.

## USE OF DOGS IN HUNTING WALLABIES

In Tasmania, recreational hunters use dogs during daylight hours to flush out wallabies from their bush cover for accurate shooting at close range. Dogs are also used to locate and retrieve shot wallabies and to allow wounded wallabies to be humanely dispatched. The use of dogs in this way is not prohibited under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, provided that it is carried out in a reasonable and acceptable manner.

The use of dogs for catching, injuring and killing wallabies is illegal. Section 10 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* states in part that a person must not keep, use or allow an animal to kill or injure another animal. An offence under this section carries a fine of up to \$5000 and/or up to 12 months imprisonment.

### Prescriptions for Use of Dogs in Hunting

- *Dogs may be used during daylight hours to detect and flush wallabies from cover for accurate shooting at close range.*
- *Dogs may be used to locate and retrieve shot wallabies and to allow wounded wallabies to be humanely dispatched.*
- *Dogs must not be used or allowed to injure or kill wallabies or pouch young.*
- *Any person found using or allowing dogs to kill or injure wildlife is liable for prosecution under Section 10 of the Animal Welfare Act 1993.*

## *DISPATCH OF WOUNDED ANIMALS AND POUCH YOUNG*

Wounded animals must be dispatched quickly and humanely as possible.

Wallaby hunters often shoot more than one wallaby from a group before retrieving the carcasses. This is acceptable provided that where an individual wallaby is wounded no further animals are shot until all reasonable efforts have been made to dispatch the wounded animal.

All adult females killed must be examined promptly for pouch young and, if one is present, it should be humanely killed without delay.

The rearing of pouch young is a complex and time-consuming process. In most cases pouch young should be killed. Under no circumstances should pouch young be left to die.

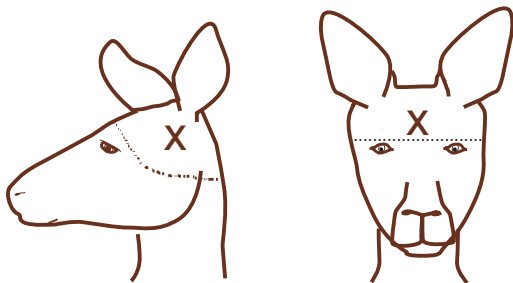


## Dealing with Wounded Animals and Pouch Young

- *Wounded animals must be dispatched as quickly and humanely as possible.*
- *If a wallaby is thought to be alive after being shot, all reasonable effort must be made immediately to locate and kill it before any attempt is made to shoot another animal.*
- *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 (Attachment A).*
- *In circumstances where a shot to the brain of an animal is impractical or unsafe, a shot to the heart is permissible. (Attachment B). The shooter must monitor and properly dispatch an animal before targeting another.*
- *When a shot to either the brain or heart of a wounded animal is impractical or unsafe, a heavy blow to the rear of the skull with a hard, blunt instrument so as to destroy the brain is permissible.*
- *The pouches of all female wallabies killed must be searched for young as soon as the shooter reaches the carcass.*
- *The recovered pouch young of a killed female should be killed immediately, by decapitation or heavy blow to the skull to destroy the brain, or by shooting.*

**Attachment (A)**

*Point of Aim (X) for a Shot to the Brain and Location of the Brain.*



**Attachment (B)**

*Point of Aim (X) for a Shot to the Heart.*



