



Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals in Hunting (revision no. 1)

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Bureau of Animal Welfare, Attwood

Preface

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, administered by the Department of Primary Industries, has the purpose of protecting animals, encouraging the considerate treatment of animals and improving the level of community awareness about the prevention of cruelty to animals. It establishes fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals in general terms. Details of obligations are found in codes of practice that are made under the provisions of the Act. These set out minimum standards and recommendations relating to important aspects of the care of animals. They are developed following a process of consultation with stakeholders and the community.

They reflect the views and values held by Victorians with respect to the care and use of animals. It is recommended that all those who care for or use animals become familiar with the relevant codes.

Codes are issued after review by the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of members who have knowledge and expertise in particular areas such as animal welfare, veterinary science, animal uses in research, agriculture, the commercial use of animals and the standards and conduct of ethical use of animals.

This particular code has also been reviewed by the Hunting Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the code is to prevent cruelty and encourage the considerate treatment of animals that are hunted or used for hunting.

This *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals in Hunting (Revision Number 1)* was issued by a notice published in the Government Gazette on 17 March 2005 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code aims to prevent cruelty and encourage the considerate treatment of animals that are hunted or used for hunting.
- 1.2 This Code recommends membership by recreational hunters of approved hunting organisations.

- 1.3 To protect the welfare of hunted animals, this Code clearly defines the only type of animals that may be used to assist hunters and the acceptable method in which these animals can be used.
- 1.4 This Code does not approve of hunting where one animal is permitted to inflict an injury that causes another animal to suffer.
- 1.5 In this Code, hunting includes the use of any legal firearm or bow capable of humanely killing the animal hunted.

2. Definitions

'**Approved hunting organisation**' is a hunting organisation approved by the Bureau of Animal Welfare, which promotes ethical hunting, and compliance of members with this Code.

'**Bureau of Animal Welfare**' means the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Department of Primary Industries.

'**Firearm**' has the same meaning as under the **Firearms Act 1996**.

'**Foxhound**' is a dog classified by the Australian National Kennel Council as a 'foxhound'.

'**Game**' means any animal declared to be game under the **Wildlife Act 1975**.

'**Gundogs**' are dogs as defined under the **Wildlife Act 1975** and the associated regulations as 'gundogs' and conforming to the breed standards of the Australian National Kennel Council.

'**Hunting**' includes the pursuit, trailing, stalking, searching for or driving out of an animal where the deliberate intention is to kill the animals being hunted.

'**Legislation relating to hunting**' includes:

- **Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994** and associated regulations.

- **Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987** and associated regulations.
- **Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994** and associated regulations.
- **Firearms Act 1996** and associated regulations.
- **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986** and associated regulations.
- **Wildlife Act 1975** and associated regulations.

'Scent-trailing hounds' are dogs as defined under the **Wildlife Act 1975** and the associated regulations as 'hounds' and conforming to the breed standards of the Australian National Kennel Council.

'The Wild' in relation to any animal means the natural habitat of the animal, or independent, unpossessed or natural state and not an intentionally domesticated or capture state regardless of the location.

3. Hunter conduct

Minimum standards

- 3.1 Hunted animals must at all times be free and unrestricted in the wild.
- 3.2 Firearms and ammunition or bows and arrows must be used that will humanely kill the species being hunted.
- 3.3 An animal must only be shot at when:
 - * it can be clearly seen and recognised;
 - * it is within the effective range of the firearm, ammunition, or bow and arrow and the skills of the hunter; and
 - * a humane kill is likely.
- 3.4 Shooting an animal in the wild for the purpose of testing the proficiency of hunters, or hunting equipment, is not permitted.
- 3.5 A hunter must shoot to cause a quick and painless death.
- 3.6 Every animal which is shot must be immediately examined to ensure that it is dead. Every animal which isn't dead on retrieval must be humanely destroyed immediately.
- 3.7 If an animal is wounded and escapes, all reasonable attempts must be made to locate it so it can be killed quickly and humanely before hunting another animal.
- 3.8 Hunters must be aware of and observe all regulations and legislation that relates to hunting and the use of firearms.
- 3.9 The hunting of game birds released from captivity must only occur at establishments licensed under the **Wildlife Act 1975** for hunting of game birds.

Recommended best practice

- 3.10 Nets may be used to catch foxes that have gone to ground or rabbits forced from burrows by ferrets. No other devices should be used to restrict animals to an area.
- 3.11 To produce a quick and painless death a hunter should:
 - shoot to hit the area occupied by the brain or heart of an animal when using a rifle;
 - shoot to have the animal in the centre of the pattern at the point of impact when using a shotgun;
 - shoot to hit the heart/lung area when using a bow and arrow.

Guideline

- 3.12 A trained dog, scent-trailing hound or gundog may help to quickly locate an injured animal.

4. Use of dogs in hunting

Minimum standards

- 4.1 Dogs must not be used in hunts under conditions where there is an unacceptable risk to them of heat exhaustion or a serious accident.
- 4.2 Dogs used for hunting must not be permitted to worry, maim or injure animals.
- 4.3 Scent-trailing hounds that bite deer, or any gundog used to point, flush or retrieve that makes an unprovoked attack or maims another animal, must not be used for hunting.
- 4.4 Dogs must not be used to attack or hold pigs.
- 4.5 Any dog used to point or flush pigs that makes an unprovoked attack or maims another animal must not be used for hunting.
- 4.6 Scent-trailing hounds used for hunting deer must be registered with the Department of Sustainability and Environment. These hounds must be identified in accordance with the provisions of the **Wildlife Act 1975** and the associated regulations.
- 4.7 Scent-trailing hounds must not be allowed to wander unchecked or out of control of a hunter.
- 4.8 Juvenile scent trailing hounds must be accompanied by at least one trained hound when hunting.
- 4.9 If one scent-trailing hound team fails to locate a Sambar Deer, or loses the trail of a deer, use of another team of scent-trailing hounds on that trail is not permitted. A coordinated hunt by two or more teams is not permitted.

Recommended best practice

- 4.10 Dogs used to assist hunters should be healthy and in good physical condition. If these animals are injured, they should receive prompt first aid or professional treatment.

- 4.11 **Gundogs** used to assist hunters should be bred from stock that instinctively hunt in the manner prescribed in this Code. They should be selected for behavioural characteristics such as a non-aggressive temperament, obedience, be trained to obey commands from the hunter to only hunt certain types of wild animals and to ignore distractions in the field.
- Gundogs may be used to point or flush sambar deer, ducks, quail, foxes, hare, or rabbits or to retrieve duck, quail, hare or rabbits. A gundog should retrieve without causing physical injury so that the animal retrieved can be killed humanely by the hunter.
- 4.12 **Scent-trailing hounds** may be used to locate hunted animals by scent trailing subject to the conditions of this Code.
- Scent-trailing hounds should only be released from the leash on a Sambar Deer mark. Scent-trailing hounds should not be started on any female known or suspected to have a small calf.
- A maximum of two juvenile scent-trailing hounds in training may be used in any hound team.

Guideline

- 4.13 Dogs may be used to point or flush pigs.

5. General provisions

Minimum standards

- 5.1 When hunting deer, a female with a calf too young to survive alone should not be shot. If a female in milk is killed, every effort should be made to locate the calf. If the calf is too young to survive alone, it must be killed humanely.
- 5.2 Fox hunters who use hounds and horses must be members of an approved hunting organisation who use horses and hounds for hunting foxes. The only hounds permitted to be used for this purpose are 'foxhounds' identified by a legible ear tattoo and registered with the approved organisation.
- 5.3 A means of humane killing must be available to kill a fox if required during a hunt using horses and hounds.
- 5.4 Live animals must not be used to feed or train ferrets in captivity.
- 5.5 Ferrets that savage rabbits must not be used in hunting

Recommended best practice

- 5.6 **Duck hunting.** When hunting ducks a hunter should not fire into flocks of flying ducks but should single out a duck and fire when that duck is within range. A hunter may only fire at a duck on water if it is wounded and after ensuring it is safe to do so.
- 5.7 **Fox hunting with horses and hounds.** Foxes hunted using foxhounds and horses should not be headed or deliberately diverted for the purpose of prolonging the hunt. A fox that has gone to ground should not be pursued again on that hunt.
- 5.8 **Rabbit hunters** may use ferrets to drive rabbits from burrows. Ferrets used to hunt rabbits should be healthy and in good physical condition. Hunters should have digging equipment and every effort should be made to regain a ferret lost in hunting.

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