

Game Hunting in Victoria

Where Can I Hunt?

Series No 9

One of the most frequently asked questions by hunters is “Where can I hunt?” Some areas can be easily determined due to distinct and easily recognisable boundaries (eg. roads), however, other areas can be difficult to determine and are only defined by physical features or lines on a map.

Wherever possible, DSE and other land managers, like Parks Victoria, will do their best to assist you when trying to identify areas that are available to hunting. Hunters need to do some homework also. To help us help you, we recommend the following:

- Identify the general area that you wish to hunt.
- Obtain a map of the area and narrow it down to areas likely to have game.
- Talk to Park Rangers about the location of Park boundaries.
- For Crown land, find out from the local DSE office whether the area is under licence or is leased. Some lessees and licensees do not allow hunting on leased or licensed lands.

If you intend to use a firearm to hunt, consider the Firearms Safety Code and remember that even though an area may be open to hunting, the use of firearms may be prohibited under the *Firearms Act 1975* for safety reasons.

Information on areas open to hunting can be found from a wide range of sources, including DSE publications and staff, the DSE Customer Service Centre, Parks Victoria, hunting organisations, parish plans, up to date maps, private land owners and Victoria Police.

Remember, find out for yourself. If in doubt about the legality of hunting in a particular area, **don't hunt there until you are sure**. The consequences for hunting in a closed area could result in the loss of your Game and Firearms Licences and the seizure and confiscation of your firearm, vehicle or other belongings.

Avoid hunting close to boundaries and, above all, act responsibly and ensure that your actions will not put the safety of yourself or others at risk. Never carry a loaded firearm or use a firearm in a town or populous place (eg. picnic area, camp site) or on or over any area of public or private land, where hunting is not permitted.

Also, you must not carry a loaded firearm or use a firearm on any thoroughfare or place open to or used by the public for passage with vehicles.

There are many land classifications throughout Victoria and, depending on the type, hunting may or may not be permitted. The following provides general information on where you may hunt. For more specific details of where you may hunt, please visit the DSE website at www.dse.vic.gov.au before you enter the field.

Resources Available

The Department has a number of resources which provide information on areas where hunting is or is not permitted in Victoria. A booklet *Victorian State Game Reserves - a hunters' guide* is available and contains maps of the 181 State Game Reserves and other information related to hunting.

The Department's internet site provides comprehensive information on game hunting opportunities and regulations including information on Victoria's State Game Reserves and deer hunting maps of the Grampians area and eastern Victoria. Hunters may view and print this information at www.dse.vic.gov.au. For more information, please contact your local DSE Office or the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



Photo: Simon Toop

Where Can I Hunt?

Land Classification	Hunting Permitted?
State forest and other unoccupied Crown land	Game species may be hunted during the open season only. Pest animals may be hunted at any time.
State Game Reserves	Game species may be hunted, but only during the open season. Sixteen State Game Reserves are available for quail hunting and six for Hog Deer hunting. Pest animals may not be hunted at any time, unless specifically authorised by the Department.
Sanctuaries	Game species may not be hunted at any time. Pest animals may be hunted.
Melbourne Water Catchment Areas	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
Forest Parks, Flora and Fauna Reserves and Nature Conservation Reserves	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
National Parks, State Parks, Coastal Parks, Wilderness Parks	Generally, hunting of any type is not permitted at any time, however, there are some exceptions. See below for details.
Alpine Resorts	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
Leased Crown land	Game (only during the open season) and pest animals may be hunted, but only with the permission of the lessee.
Licensed Crown land	Generally, game (only during the open season) and pest animals may be hunted at any time, unless the land is licensed under the Land Act 1958 (see below for details).
Private land	Game (only during the open season) and pest animals may be hunted, but only with the permission of the land owner/manager.

State Forest And Other Unoccupied Crown Land

Generally, hunting for pest animals and game species is permitted in all State forests and unoccupied Crown land (ie. Crown land that is not leased or licensed), however, some restrictions may apply.

Hunters are advised to consult the local DSE Office for specific information about any restrictions that apply to the area of State forest or unoccupied Crown land that they wish to hunt. Remember, many people use State forests and other Crown land for recreation and for their livelihood. Never shoot on or across public roads or tracks and never shoot towards populated areas, including camping and picnic areas and walking tracks.

If hunting is permitted, pest animals may be hunted at any time and hunting for game species is allowed only during the open season for that species. Make sure that you know when the open seasons are.

State Game Reserves

All State Game Reserves are available to duck hunting during the open season. Tower Hill State Game Reserve, near Warnambool, is closed to hunting every day between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm.

Six State Game Reserves are also open for Hog Deer hunting during the Hog Deer season. These are: Jack Smith Lake, Dowd Morass, Ewings Morass, Clydebank Morass, Heart Morass, and Lake Coleman State Game Reserve.

Stubble Quail may also be hunted on the following 16 State Game Reserves:

TITLE OF RESERVE	LOCALITY*
Mansfield Swamp	10 km west of Stanhope
Gaynor Swamp	10 km north of Colbinabbin
Wallenjoie Swamp	10 km north of Colbinabbin
Rowan Swamp	15 km south-west of Yarrowonga
Jack Smith Lake	30 km east of Yarram
Lake Coleman	20 km east of Sale
Jones Bay	5 km south of Bairnsdale
Macleod Morass	Near Bairnsdale
Clydebank Morass	12 km north-east of Sale
Dowd Morass	10 km south-east of Sale
Blond Bay	20 km south of Bairnsdale
Lake Connewarre	South-east of Geelong
Heart Morass	5 km east of Sale
Hateleys Lake	10 km west of Natimuk
Bow Lake	40 km east of Edenhope
Darlot Swamp	10 km north-east of Horsham

Pest animals or other non-game species such as sparrows or starlings may not be hunted on State Game Reserves at any time.

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Sanctuaries

Game species may not be hunted at any time in areas declared to be Sanctuaries. However, pest animals may be hunted. Major Victorian sanctuaries are: Mount Cole Sanctuary (South West Region, DSE), Gunbower Island Sanctuary, Kow Swamp and Reedy Lakes near Kerang (North West Region, DSE). The location of other sanctuaries should be checked with the local DSE Office.

Melbourne Water Catchment Areas

A number of catchments and reservoirs in the outer metropolitan and central highlands area are controlled by Melbourne Water and are part of the metropolitan water supply system. Public entry to these areas is prohibited to ensure a high-quality water supply.

Forest Parks, Flora and Fauna Reserves and Nature Conservation Reserves

Carrying and using firearms in these areas is prohibited. However, there is one exception: the Delatite Arm Reserve at Lake Eildon (North East Region, DSE) where an unloaded shotgun may be carried during the duck season.

National Parks, State Parks, Coastal Parks, Wilderness Parks

Most Wilderness, National, State and Coastal Parks are closed to hunting at all times. However, you are allowed to hunt in the parks listed below, subject to varying conditions. Hunters must not possess a firearm in, or transport a firearm through a park (except in some instances) when hunting is prohibited. Also, where hunting is allowed, firearms must only be those calibres or gauges permitted for the species available for hunting in that park.

- **Alpine National Park** (North East, Gippsland Regions, DSE). In certain sections of the park, Sambar Deer may be hunted by stalking only from 15 February to 15 December. The use of dogs to hunt Sambar Deer is not permitted in this park. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park.
- **Avon Wilderness Park** (Gippsland Region, DSE). In certain sections of the park, Sambar Deer may be hunted by stalking only from 15 February to 15 December. The use of dogs to hunt Sambar Deer is not permitted in this park. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park.
- **Baw Baw National Park** (Gippsland Region, DSE). Sambar Deer may be hunted by stalking only in the area east of Thomson Valley Road from 1 May to 25 October each year. The use of dogs to hunt Sambar Deer is not permitted in this park. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park.
- **Lake Eildon National Park** (North East Region, DSE). In certain sections in the south-east of the park, Sambar Deer may be hunted from the first Saturday after Easter until 30 November. The use of dogs to hunt deer is not permitted in this park. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park. Check with the Lake Eildon National Park Rangers office on (03) 5772 2038 for details.
- **Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park** (Gippsland Region, DSE). In certain sections, game duck, Stubble Quail and Hog Deer may be hunted in season. Dogs are allowed for retrieval of game ducks during the duck season. Check with the Traralgon DSE Office for details on 03 51722111. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park. Hunters must have a permit from Parks Victoria to erect a hide or to cut vegetation for a hide in the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. Check with the Parks Victoria Sale office on (03) 5143 8200 for further details.
- **Lake Albacutya Park** (North West Region, DSE). The hunting of pest animals is allowed, as is the hunting of game duck during the open season. Dogs are allowed for retrieval of game ducks during the duck open season. Hunting is not permitted in part of the park, near the boat ramp. Check with the Mildura DSE Office on (03) 5051 4500 for details.
- **Mitchell River National Park** (Gippsland Region, DSE). Sambar Deer hunting by stalking is permitted east of the Mitchell River from 15 February to 15 December. The use of dogs to hunt deer is not permitted in this park. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park. A number of areas were recently added to the Mitchell River National Park. However, at the time of writing, hunting was not permitted in these areas. Check with the Parks Victoria Bairnsdale office on (03) 5152 0400 for further details.

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- **Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park** (Gippsland Region, DSE). Hunting for Hog Deer and for duck is permitted in certain sections in season. Check with the Yarram DSE Office on (03) 51839100 for details of which areas are open to hunting. Pest animals and other species must not be hunted in this park.

Parks Victoria is responsible for the management of national, state, regional and metropolitan parks and other conservation areas, such as State Game Reserves. For more information on hunting, camping, lighting fires and seasonal road closures in these areas, please contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63 or visit the Parkweb website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Alpine Resorts

All alpine resorts are closed to hunting at all times. However, you are allowed to transport a dog through an alpine resort in a vehicle. You are also allowed to transport firearms through a resort providing the firearm is in a safe and locked compartment of the vehicle.

Leased Crown Land

Game species in season and pest animals may be hunted on leased land, provided that hunters have obtained the permission of the lessee to enter the area. Remember, many people use leased land for recreation or for their livelihood. Never shoot on or across an area of leased land without the permission of the lessee and never shoot across public roads or tracks or towards populated areas, including camping and picnic areas and walking tracks.

If you are in doubt about the status of a particular area, please contact your local DSE Office.

Licensed Crown Land

Hunting for game species (during the open season for that species) and pest animals may be permitted on licensed Crown land. If an area is licensed under the *Land Act 1958*, hunters must obtain the permission of the licensee before carrying or using firearms on that area. This generally includes areas such as unused roads and water frontages, which may be licensed for grazing or other purposes.

If you are in doubt about the status of a particular area, or require any further information, please contact your local DSE Office.

Private Land

Game species in season and pest animals may be hunted on private land provided that hunters have obtained the permission of the land owner/manager. You must not shoot on or across public roads or tracks at any time.

If you are in doubt about the status of a particular area, or require any further information, please contact your local DSE Office.

Areas Closed to Deer Hunting

The hunting of Sambar Deer with scent-trailing hounds and gundogs is prohibited around Marysville and Kevington-Jamieson. Deer hunting by stalking is still permitted in the Marysville and Kevington-Jamieson areas. **All** forms of deer hunting are also prohibited around the township of Warburton, Rubicon Power Station and several areas around Halls Gap. For maps of these areas, and further information of closed areas contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or visit the DSE website at: www.dse.vic.gov.au.

Duck Hunting and the Murray River

The southern bank of the Murray River, including the original location of that bank beneath impounded waters such as Lake Mulwala and Lake Hume, is the State boundary between Victoria and New South Wales. South of that border, game ducks may be hunted during the open season on any area open to duck hunting. This includes flood waters that have flown over the southern bank of the Murray River, into Victoria.

If you are hunting ducks on Lake Mulwala or Lake Hume during the open season, it is your responsibility to be aware of your location on those lakes. The hunting of ducks in NSW is not permitted, unless as part of the NSW Game Bird Management Program. For more information on the NSW Game Bird Management Program please contact the NPWS Riverina Regional office on (02) 6966 8109.

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