



# 2026

# HUNTERS

# HANDBOOK

**NOTE: new section on pages 14 & 15**  
**'WATERVALLEY DEER CONTROL PROGRAM'**

# HUNTING RULES & REGULATIONS

## GENERAL RULES

1. Prior to entering any ADA management area for hunting, all hunters must -
  - a. Complete a hunt booking via the web site. [www.dmsa.com.au](http://www.dmsa.com.au)
    - i. The web site will be available for bookings after 7.00pm SA time, 7.30pm Vic time on 9<sup>th</sup> January for bookings at McBride's and Suwinskis all other Taratap blocks will open after 7.00pm SA time, 7.30pm Vic time on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026
    - ii. **DO NOT** book for the day that you will be traveling to and from any block (unless you plan to hunt on that day)
    - iii. Plan to arrive at a time that will not impact on other hunters that may be in the bush.
  - b. possess a current Firearms License and a South Australian Basic Hunting Permit. The details of both are to be recorded on DMSA (you will be unable to book a hunt if these are expired)
  - c. provide details of your vehicle type, colour and registration via the web site.
  - d. have completed a firearms proficiency test (you will be unable to book a hunt if this has not been completed and recorded on DMSA)
  - e. be a financial member of the ADA (you will be unable to log into DMSA if your membership has expired).
  - f. dogs are **not permitted** on any ADA owned or managed properties. The exception being working dogs associated with the landowner or certified service dogs.
2. Hunters must strictly abide by the ADA National Code of Conduct (2008)
3. Every hunter must book and maintain their details via the website [www.dmsa.com.au](http://www.dmsa.com.au) :
  - a. Prior to arriving to hunt.
  - b. Of any deer that are harvested, including the species and quality as well as the Adjudicator if required.
  - c. new details of vehicle if changed (type, colour, registration)

4. Hunters can book up to two areas to hunt on the website.
5. A maximum of 6 hunters (plus one non-hunting family member per hunter until 30<sup>th</sup> April) are allowed on any day at Snuggery, Bald Hill, Park Hill, McBrides, and Tilley Swamp.
6. A maximum of 4 hunters (plus one non-hunting family member per hunter until 30<sup>th</sup> April) are allowed on any day at Suwinskis – see rule 10, Jacks Hut, Cluain, and Mount Scott.
7. A maximum of 4 hunters are allowed on any day at any North-West camp, however no family members are permitted at the North West.
8. Junior hunters (14 - 18 years) must be accompanied by an adult ADA member within the hunting program.
9. Inexperienced hunters may be accompanied by an eligible experienced hunter; both are required to book in through the website.
10. Hunters in the Taratap areas may be accompanied by family members provided:
  - a. that person/s are listed as family members, or junior members of the ADA.
  - b. names are included on the hunt booking process on the website.
  - c. Limited to one non-hunting family member in all areas per trip, except Suwinski's area where two non-hunting family members will be permitted per trip up until 30<sup>th</sup> April, after which all family members are permitted.
  - d. Members taking more than one family member should plan to be self-sufficient whilst in camp as priority to huts will be to hunting members.
11. Hunters will be permitted to take **one non-hunting ADA member** as an observer/helper **to Suwinskis only**, and must adhere to the following criteria:
  - a. non-hunting members must be listed on your hunt booking prior to entry, and
  - b. a **maximum of two trips** per year per non-hunting member will be permitted.
12. Trail/Game Cameras are permitted to be used in any area, and they must:
  - a. not be pointed at adjoining properties if they are placed on the boundary.
  - b. be taken home at the conclusion of each hunt.
  - c. be identified with owners contact details (*Name and phone number*)
  - d. notify other hunters in the hut that trail/game cameras have been deployed.

The Branch has trail/game cameras installed in several ADA managed blocks to monitor deer movements and numbers as well as other pest animals. The locations of these cameras are displayed on a map in the relevant huts along with their GPS co-ordinates.

The cameras located in the field at Snuggery and Bald Hill are marked by a length of survey tape secured to a tree either side of the camera but not directly next to the camera. If you notice an issue with the identification of a camera, please report it to the executive via the **General Incident Form** on the website. The cameras are checked regularly, and the tape replaced if required. **Please do not interfere with the cameras.**

## DRONES

1. Can only be used with prior approval of the Branch Executive
2. All members in the hut must agree to the use of the drone.
3. Users must comply with relevant government regulations.
4. Cannot be used in conjunction with hunting activities. i.e. aerial scouting of hunting areas.

## HUNTING RULES

1. Hunting at **Taratap** commences on **7<sup>th</sup> February 2026** and closes on the second Sunday in October (11<sup>th</sup> October 2026) **except for Suwinskis and McBride's** only which will open on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and close on the 21st of December 2026. **Bookings are not to exceed 5 consecutive days. Single bookings over 5 days will be deleted.**
2. Hunting dates for the **North-West** blocks will be released via email and the Branch Facebook page after confirmation is received from Wetlands and Wildlife. **Bookings are not to exceed 5 consecutive days. Single bookings over 5 days will be deleted.**
3. Hunting is suspended on all **TOTAL FIRE BAN DAYS** hunters may stay in camp or leave the area by 9.00am:
  - a. Fire Information is broadcast on ABC radio (1161) from 4.00pm, also radio station 5SE (963)
  - b. Visit the CFS website ([www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)) or call the CFS hotline 1300 362361.
  - c. It is the hunters' responsibility to be aware of all fire restrictions whilst you are in the hunting area.
4. **All** hunters/members **are required** to wear at least one item of blaze orange on their upper body that has 360° visibility (e.g. cap, vest, shirt or jacket) whilst in the field in any ADA accessible area.

5. Minimum rifle calibres:
  - a. .243 for Fallow, chital, Hog deer, goats and small game animals with a minimum projectile weight of 80 grains
  - b. .270 for Reds, Rusa and Sambar deer with a minimum projectile weight of 130 grains
  - c. .243 for Junior hunters, Fallow, Chital, Hog deer, goats and small game animals with a minimum projectile weight of 80 grains
6. Minimum Muzzle loading rifle calibres:
  - a. .38 for Fallow, Chital, Hog deer, goats, and small game animals with a minimum projectile weight of 200 grains
  - b. .45 for Reds, Rusa and Sambar deer with a minimum projectile weight of 230 grains
7. Shooting from a vehicle is not permitted.
8. Hunting with a bow is prohibited in South Australia.
9. Checking zero of rifles is only permitted at Suwinskis designated firearm sighting area (**see Regulations for Suwinskis sighting area**).
10. Any deer species and type including females, fawns and calves can be harvested in all areas.
11. **All deer** must be shot in the shoulder/chest region.
12. Hunters are encouraged to **maximise** their daily harvests, up to their **ability to recover and process carcasses** ensuring that all usable meat is utilised.
13. The carcass of any deer to be recovered **must** be recovered on foot or with a cart, except where the use of vehicles is permitted.
14. Spotlighting or the use of thermal and night vision devices by members is not permitted at any time, all animals are to be taken by 'fair chase.' The Branch Executive and Spotlighting Coordinator will manage all spotlighting operations.
15. Carcass remains of an animal that is shot in the bush greater than 100 metres from an access track may be broken down and scattered, however hunters **are encouraged to recover** all usable meat.
16. Hunters **must** complete a harvest report via the website for each booking with details including deer species and quality, and the name of the independent member if required at the completion of the hunt. If no animals were harvested a report is still required just tick the 'Nil' harvest box.

17. Females shot late in the season may be carrying a foetus, if the sex of the foetus can be identified then it **must** be included on the harvest report as a fawn/calf.
18. Every effort **must be made** to locate a wounded deer and if not found, the hunter must advise the website by completing a **General Incident Form**.
19. Hunters **must not** pursue a wounded deer outside the boundary of an ADA management area. Incidents must be reported to the Branch President who will attempt to contact the landowner.
20. The antlers of any male deer dispatched for humane reasons **must** be surrendered and will be the property of ADA unless that hunter makes a written application to retain them.
21. The lower jaw bones of all mature male deer (2 years plus) must be boiled, clearly marked with the hunters' name, the block and date taken as well as deer species and submitted by the end of November.
22. Goats, rabbits, hares, foxes, and feral cats can be shot in the North-West area.  
**Please note that minimum calibre rules still apply.**
23. Rabbits, hares, foxes, and feral cats may be shot on all properties. **Please note that minimum calibre rules still apply.**
24. Hunters **must** complete the Harvest report on the website before another hunt can be booked. You can only have **two active bookings** on the website.
25. You cannot book two separate blocks for the same day. If you wish to move to another block, you **must** complete the reports for your first booking prior to making another booking.
26. If two or more members hunt together in the field then only one set of harvest and sighting reports are required from the primary hunter, the others should complete a nil harvested report.

## PENALTY RULES

1. The Branch Executive has the right to impose penalties for any breach of the rules or exploitation of general hunting methods and ethics.
2. An initial breach of the rules will result in a 6-month suspension of hunting privileges and a 12-month probation period commencing at the conclusion of the suspension. Any further breaches during the probation period will result in a 12-month suspension of hunting and the recommencement of a 12-month probation period at the conclusion of the suspension.

Each breach will be reviewed/investigated by the Branch Executive who has the power to increase or decrease the penalties depending on the circumstances involved.

3. A hunter who hunts outside the boundary of an ADA management area will be suspended from hunting for a period of up to 5 years.
4. The antlers of all male deer that are shot must be presented at the next General Meeting attended.
5. Failure to harvest compulsory deer before the conclusion of the current hunting season **will** result in a reduction in hunting privileges in the next eligible year.

## COMPULSORY HARVEST REQUIREMENTS

1. The compulsory deer allocation is determined by the Branch Executive each year. The default requirement will be one fallow doe and one fallow fawn until instructed otherwise.
2. The compulsory harvest requirements will be displayed on the website and will also appear during the hunt booking process.
3. Compulsory deer **must be** harvested each year.
4. Hunters should make every effort to harvest their compulsory deer by the end of June 2026.
5. The lower jaw bones of all compulsory deer need to be boiled, dried, and clearly labelled with the hunters' name and the date and block that they were harvested. They must be returned to the branch by the end of November 2026. (See Hunting Rule 20)
6. Failure to harvest compulsory deer before the conclusion of the current hunting season **will** result in a reduction in hunting privileges in the next eligible year.

## DEER HARVESTING CRITERIA & RULES

1. All **eligible** hunters may retain the antlers of one male deer every two years per Species provided they are not under any penalties.
2. In a group of male deer, hunters are encouraged to firstly harvest the poorest non-trophy male at **McBrides, Snuggery and Bald Hill**. The antlers of any male shot under this rule must be presented at the next general meeting attended and **may be retained** by the ADA for hunter educational purposes. However, if you wish to keep the antlers a request must be made to the executive on the day they are presented.
3. Hunters who are successful in harvesting a trophy deer **must provide photographic evidence of the animal in the field to the Branch Executive**.

## LANDOWNER RULES

1. No member shall enter any area managed by the SE Branch without approval from the Branch Executive.
2. Vehicles **must** be left at the huts or designated parking areas.
3. The landowner has **the right** to postpone any hunts.
4. **No** hunting is permitted within 500 meters of any residence/hut/camp.
5. Hunters are to advise the website using the incident forms of any noticeable problems with landowner's livestock, fencing or watering points.
6. No hunter shall climb on or enter any infrastructure on any property. (e.g. tanks & windmills)
7. Hunters must be aware that the landowners, staff and visitors may be working or on any property in the hunting areas from daylight onwards.
8. All gates are to be left as found. Please note that where double chains are fitted both are to be secured.
9. Hunters are required to report any issues with deer enclosure fencing to the SE Branch fencing coordinator using the **General Incident Form**.

# SAFETY RULES

## GENERAL SAFETY

1. **No alcohol** to be consumed by a member until their days hunting has been completed.
2. Landowners request that hunters make themselves visible and known to anyone who is in the area. (Landowners may be shooting deer or vermin themselves and need to know the whereabouts of others for the safety of everyone).
3. All hunters **must** wear at least one item of blaze orange that has 360° visibility (e.g. cap, vest, shirt or jacket) when in the field. The wearing of blaze orange will improve the visibility of hunters particularly while ....
  - a. in the bush in poor light of the early morning and late evening
  - b. removing a carcass or deer head from the hunting area to a hut or vehicle.
4. Hunters must be aware that the landowners and others may be in the hunting areas and will not be wearing blaze orange.
5. No fires are permitted in the open **at any block** during the Fire Danger Season **this includes comfort fires, unless directed** by the Branch Executive. The **FIRE DANGER SEASON** for all blocks commences on **1<sup>st</sup> November** and ends on the **30<sup>th</sup> April 2026**. These dates may change depending on local regulations.

Any cooking fires **MUST** comply with the regulations listed by the CFS.

If a fire pit or drum is used outside the fire danger season it is to be completely extinguished prior to leaving and any rubbish removed.

6. Members using non-motorized transport (bicycles including e-bikes or battery powered/assisted bikes) within the hunting area must comply with general government safety requirements associated with the mode of transport. This method of transport is **ONLY PERMITTED** to be used on the existing personal vehicle or recovery tracks and are not to be taken into the paddocks.

## FIREARM SAFETY

1. All members **must** comply with Government regulations pertaining to the transport, storage and handling of firearms and ammunition.
2. Hunters **must** have rifles unloaded and the action open within 200 meters of the hut/camp or when approaching a Landowner or any other person.
3. **Do not** rely on the safety catch.
4. Rifles **must** always be treated as a loaded firearm.
5. Rifles should always be carried with the muzzles pointed in a safe direction.
6. Use a safe method of crossing fences i.e., hand the unloaded rifle to another hunter or place the unloaded rifle through the fence and lay it on the ground before crossing the fence.
7. **Never** lean your rifle against a hut, vehicle, tree, or fencepost.

## HUNTING SAFETY

1. **Never** look at any person through the scope.
2. **Always** make a positive identification of the target before shooting.
3. **Do not** shoot at movement in the bush under any circumstances.
4. Be aware of the ground behind a deer before shooting to ensure that nothing will be threatened if the bullet misses or passes through the deer.
5. When carrying out a deer head it is recommended that the antlers are pointing downwards.
6. **Do not** shoot at a deer on the horizon.
7. Extreme care must be taken if shooting over a fence pop-hole on the scrub edge in poor light. Other hunters may be in the area or coming out of the bush by following a game trail.
8. If two hunters are together, only one rifle should be loaded, especially if they are hunting in the bush. The lead hunter should be carrying the loaded rifle.

## DEER RECOVERY RULES

1. Deer recovery carts are provided in all Taratap hunting areas. These must be left undercover where possible and please advise the Vehicle Maintenance Officer of any maintenance requirements on the carts via the website **General Incident Form**.
2. Where vehicle access is permitted, specific details are included for each hunting area.
3. Maps showing recovery roads, tracks and vehicle sites are located in the huts and on the website.
4. After hunting is completed on foot you may return to the hut/parking point for your vehicle.
5. Take the recovery cart and continue on foot from the parking point.
6. Vehicles may only leave Taratap huts after 8.30 am unless all hunters in the area have returned to the hut.
7. An **ADA HUNTER** sign which is available on the last page of the handbook, **must** be displayed on the dashboard of a parked vehicle and during recovery.
8. Do not block gateways or tracks with your vehicle.
9. Ensure that all gates are left in the same condition in which they were found.

## HARVEST REPORTS ARE TO BE COMPLETED AFTER EACH HUNT

Please fill in harvest reports as accurately as possible.

1. If no deer are harvested, you must still complete the reports on the website.
2. Harvest reports must be completed before further hunts can be booked.

## DATA COLLECTION

Reporting is required to demonstrate that ADA is working with responsible landowners and managers.

3. All deer that are shot must be photographed and the coordinates recorded in the field. This can be done using your phone or a camera and a GPS.
  1. A suitable side-on photograph must be taken of every dead deer but must not include people, firearms or showing major wounds.
  2. All photographs and site coordinates must be submitted with your hunting report via DMSA.

3. Preferably install and use the Context Cam application on an Apple iPhone or Time Mark on an Android phone (both apps will stamp the date and coordinates on the photo).
4. If you chose to use a handheld camera and a GPS, then a second close-up photo must be taken of the coordinates with the GPS sitting on the deer's body.
5. All data will be collated by the DMSA Coordinator and forwarded to the Landowners monthly.
4. Trail cameras or live deer photos are not permitted on any property and definitely no social media posts regarding deer control operations.
5. Failure to provide photos of deer harvested will result in a **penalty of a 1-month suspension** from the hunting program in the first instance.

## USE OF INFORMATION BOARDS

1. Information boards (blackboards and white boards) are located in each hut.
2. Hunters **must** specify which area they will be hunting on the information boards and stay in that defined area. Please indicate if you intend to hunt only one section of a block. i.e., the northern half of M3.
3. If a vehicle is used to access a parking point, then this is to be included on the notice board. i.e., vehicle parked at the double gates on the southern side of the track at P2.
4. This will indicate the general area where a hunter would be if they have not returned to the hut or vehicle.
5. It will also alert anybody arriving at the hut as to the location of other hunters.

## REGULATIONS FOR SUWINSKIS SIGHTING AREA

1. **No** use of the sighting area on **Total Fire Ban** days
2. Checking the zero of firearms can only be undertaken between **10 am and 2 pm**
3. The sighting area's intended use is for checking the zero of your hunting rifle only, not for comparing ammunition group sizes etc.
4. Maximum of 6 shots per sighting of firearm.
5. Members **must** check in at Suwinskis hut and report to any hunters present of their intention to sight in firearms.
6. If a member/s hunting at Suwinskis have not returned by 10am, no firing at the sighting area can commence until they have returned.
7. Before firing commences, red flags must be placed at entrance gate and the entrance track to the hut, sign placed on entrance gate and gate shut (not locked).
8. Members are to supply their own paper targets and remove all fired brass at completion.

## PROFICIENCY TEST REQUIREMENTS

Prior to participating in the South East Branch hunting program or deer control activity, all relevant South East Branch members must undertake and pass a firearm proficiency test prior to hunting and every 3 years thereafter. The proficiency test has several components – accuracy, competence, and safety.

The accuracy competence test is based on the premise that responsible deer hunters will strive for humane, one shot kills and accordingly requires a deer 'kill zone' sized target. The South East Branch deems this to be a 200mm diameter circle.

Given that deer hunters should always strive to stalk as close to the target animal as possible, and use a field rest wherever possible, the accuracy test allows the member to use any field position that would normally be available when hunting. The test involves:

1. From any field position at a target with a 200mm diameter circle at 100 metres.
2. Three shots are to be fired, and all must hit inside the target circle.

Detailed information will be provided by the test supervisor on the day.

The test can also be done at any accredited range and be witnessed by a qualified Range Officer.  
**Completed tests and targets must be returned to a member of the executive.**

# WATERVALLEY DEER CONTROL PROGRAM

The [LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT 2019](#) is the key legislation for integrated management of South Australia's land, water, pests, and biodiversity. The Act provides for the prevention or control of impacts caused by declared species of animals (including deer) and plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community.

**PART 9 of the Act** refers to the **Control of animals and plants**

**Section 192—Owner of land to take action to destroy or control animals or plants.**

- (1) Subject to this section, an owner of land within a declared area for a class of animals or plants to which this subsection applies must destroy all animals or plants of that class on that land.
- (2) Subject to this section, an owner of land within a declared area for a class of animals or plants to which this subsection applies must control and keep controlled all animals or plants of that class on that land.
- (3) An owner of land within a declared area for a class of animals or plants to which this subsection applies must—
  - (a) take any measures prescribed by the regulations or specified by a relevant authority in the prescribed manner for the control of all animals or plants of that class that are, or may be, on that land.

Refer to the current [FERAL DEER ERADICATION PROGRAM](#) that is being conducted by the Limestone Coast Landscape SA and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

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The South East Branch of ADA has been granted exclusive access to undertake deer control operations on the Brinkworth properties listed below:

- Park Hill
- Cattle Station Creek (Jacks Hut)
- Tilley Swamp
- Ravenswood
- Mount Scott

## HUNTING REQUIREMENTS

All general hunting rules and conditions in the 2026 Hunters Handbook apply to these properties **unless specified otherwise** below:

1. Hunting commences on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and closes on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2026.
2. Hunters are required to shoot deer of any species that is sighted provided a safe and ethical shot can be taken.
3. **Females are the primary target** in a group of deer, followed by fawns/calves and lastly males.
4. Only take ethical shots which can be affected by many factors including:
  - personal skill and experience
  - rifle calibre and projectile type
  - range and wind
  - type of rest available (if any)
  - likely deer behaviour after the first shot
  - location and any cover

5. There is no limit to the number of deer that can be shot on any day.
6. Copper projectiles are preferred where possible.
7. Hunting is not permitted within 500 metres of a residence or 200 metres of any ADA hut or camp.

## DEER RECOVERY

8. The carcass of any deer shot on open farmland must be recovered on foot or with a cart, except where the use of vehicles is permitted.
9. The carcass of any deer that is shot in the bush or near remnant vegetation can be recovered or simply dismembered and scattered around the location provided it is greater than 100 metres from any access track, fence line, troughs or watercourse.

## DATA COLLECTION

Reporting is required to demonstrate that ADA is working with responsible landowners and managers.

10. All deer that are shot must be photographed and the coordinates recorded in the field. This can be done using your phone or a camera and a GPS.
  - a. A suitable side-on photograph must be taken of every dead deer but must not include people, firearms or showing major wounds.
  - b. All photographs and site coordinates must be submitted with your hunting report via DMSA.
  - c. Preferably install and use the Context Cam application on an Apple iPhone or Time Mark on an Android phone (both apps will stamp the date and coordinates on the photo).
  - d. If you chose to use a handheld camera and a GPS, then a second close-up photo must be taken of the coordinates with the GPS sitting on the deer's body.
  - e. All data will be collated by the DMSA Coordinator and forwarded to the Watervalley office monthly.
11. Trail cameras or live deer photos are not permitted on any property and definitely no social media posts regarding deer control operations.
12. Updated maps for the above properties are available in DMSA.
13. Failure to provide photos of deer harvested will result in a **penalty of a 1-month suspension** from the hunting program in the first instance.

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# **SOUTH EAST BRANCH HUNTER CHECK LIST**

## **BEFORE YOU GO HUNTING**

- Complete a hunt booking via the website.
- Take a copy of the Hunters Handbook with you.
- Print out and take a copy of your hunt booking with you as this will have a permission to enter property statement.
- Have you got a printed map and an ADA HUNTER sign for your booking?
- Have you got diesel for the recovery vehicle?
- Hunters should carry their own First Aid kit.

## **AT THE HUNTING AREA**

- Be aware of Fire Restrictions.
- Empty the fire drum in the designated location prior to use.
- Write your movements on the information board.
- Be aware of all recovery rules.
- Does your deer require adjudication?
- On leaving area - clean hut, the area around the hut, the meat house, the shower, and toilet facilities.
- Extinguish fire pits and drums completely.
- Take your rubbish with you.

## **WHEN YOU GET HOME**

- Complete a harvest report listing all deer harvested via the website.
- Submit photographs with GPS coordinates as required under the Watervalley Deer Control Program and the broader hunting
- Report any major issues via the incident forms on the website.
- All required jaw bones to be boiled, dried, and clearly labelled for submission at the next General Meeting.
- Bring all antlered heads to the next General Meeting or function.

## **IF IN DOUBT**

### **READ YOUR HANDBOOK AND ASK QUESTIONS**

**..... ignorance is no excuse !!**

**ADA**

**HUNTER**