

Licensed hunting on public land in NSW

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The facts

- Hunting is a **safe** and **legitimate** recreational pursuit that **mutually benefits** public land managers and the NSW community
- NSW has the **tightest regulations** governing hunting on public land compared to other Australian states and other countries
- **No hunting-related fatalities** or serious injuries have occurred on NSW public lands that are declared and open to hunting
- Hunting on public land occurs **alongside other users** such as bush walkers, mushroom pickers, motorbike and horse riders

Hunting means many things to many people. It is a recreational pastime, a cultural activity and a means to harvest free-range and organic meat for the family table. When managed and regulated, hunting has likely pest management and economic **benefits to NSW**, particularly in rural and regional areas.

Hunting has the potential to polarise both local and broader community opinion. It is the NSW Government's role to ensure that recreational hunting on public land is managed and regulated according to **community expectations** for safety and animal welfare.

NSW DPI Game Licensing Unit

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Game Licensing Unit (GLU) is responsible for the administration of the:

- *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* (the Act)
- Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2012 (the Regulation).

Responsibilities include:

- the public land hunting program
- hunter licensing
- hunter education and training
- the Game and Pest Management Advisory Board (who represent hunters)
- compliance and enforcement of hunting regulations.

GLU **works closely** with local communities, public land managers, the NSW Police Force and other agencies to **regulate licensed hunting** and **deter illegal hunting** on public land in NSW.

Hunting regulations in NSW are some of the **most stringent** in Australia and internationally.

Public lands must be declared

Before public land can be designated for hunting, it must be formally 'declared' for that purpose by the responsible Minister of Parliament.

There are **specific requirements**, such as a public notice period and publication in the NSW Government Gazette, which must be met before lands are 'declared' for hunting.



Declared public lands are assessed for licensed hunting

Once public land is declared for hunting by the Minister, the land manager **conducts a risk assessment** to international standards.

Variables such as location, work operations, land size and other recreational uses are considered for each public land area. For example, hunting is never allowed around recreation areas and in some areas bow hunting is the only permitted method.

Specific conditions to determine how hunting will be safely managed are then applied. If suitable, the forest is opened to hunters by placing it on a **booking system** that only licence holders may access.

Not all public lands that are declared for hunting are opened to licensed hunters.

Forestry Corporation of NSW

The Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) is responsible for **public-owned forests** under the *Forestry Act 2012* and its Regulation 2012.

Around **2-million hectares** of public State forest lands are declared and open to licensed, recreational hunters.

NSW State forests are **working forests** that must accommodate a range of recreational users. There are strict conditions governing how hunters access and use State forests for hunting to ensure the **safety of all users** and to **meet community expectations**.

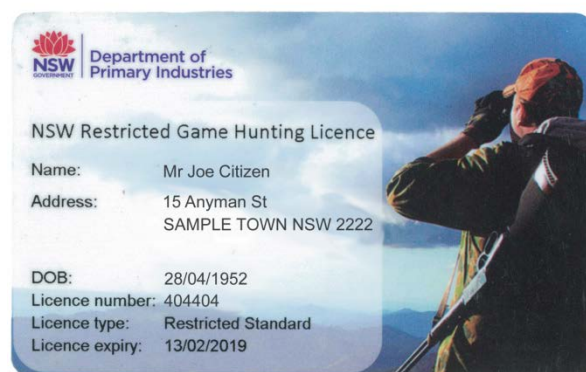
NSW DPI GLU issues written permission to hunt public lands on behalf of land managers such as FCNSW.

Licensing and other requirements

Before they may access the public land booking system, hunters must hold a NSW Restricted Game Hunting Licence (**R-Licence**).

To become eligible for the R-Licence, hunters must:

- **be a member** of a hunting club or organisation that is approved by NSW DPI (an Approved Hunting Organisation, or AHO)
- **pass an open-book test** based on hunter safety, ethics, animal welfare and hunting techniques (the R-Licence Accreditation Course).



AHOs

For a hunting club or organisation to be **approved**, they must have a constitution and a disciplinary framework for its members.

Membership with an AHO ensures licensed hunters have access to a **peer network** of responsible, ethical hunters.

R-Licence Accreditation Course

Conducted in-person, the R-Licence Accreditation Course ensures each hunter seeking to access public lands is equipped with a **framework** to guide responsible, ethical hunting.

There are **four allowable hunting methods** for public land hunters:

- firearms (rifles and shotguns)
- firearms (blackpowder)
- bows
- dogs.

To use any of these methods to hunt on public land, hunters must complete the relevant section of the accreditation course.

These requirements are often **in addition** to theoretical and practical firearms licence assessments prescribed by the NSW Police Force.

- Complying with the conditions of their written permission such as only using allowable hunting methods and not hunting from vehicles.
- Complying with legislation that prohibits shooting across roads or property boundaries.
- Wearing an item of high-visibility 'blaze' orange clothing on the upper body.
- Following signage as well as directions given by NSW DPI Compliance Inspectors, NSW Police Force Officers or public land managers.

R-Licence holders must **read, understand and abide** by the public land hunting conditions that are published on pages 100 to 104 of the NSW Game Hunting Guide. The guide is available by visiting www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.

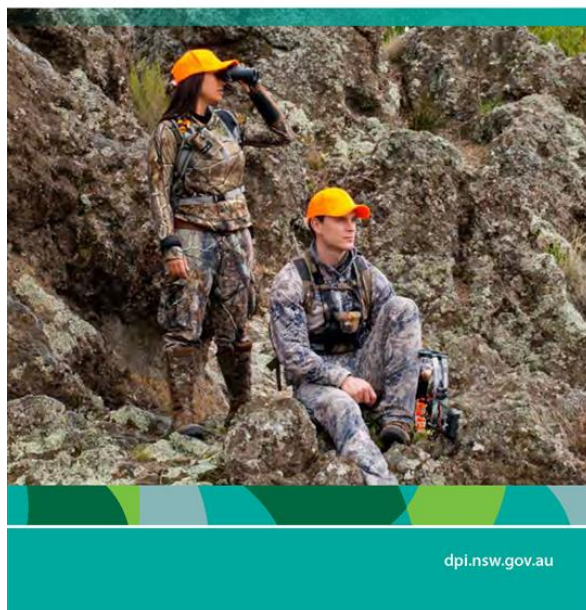


Public land hunting conditions

When hunting on public land R-Licence holders must abide by strict licence **conditions**, as well as conditions that are specific to each public land area. These include:

- Providing vehicle, contact details and, if hunting with dogs, the microchip number of hunting dogs and a description of the animal, at the time of booking a hunt on public land.
- Carrying an R-Licence and written permission to hunt the designated area at all times while on public land (written permissions may be carried digitally).
- Carrying a working GPS-enabled device containing detailed maps of areas where hunting is and is not permitted.

NSW Game Hunting Guide



Following their hunt, licence holders are **required to report** the number and type of animals they take and if any animal diseases

were present. They must also report any safety incidents or illegal activity that they observed during their hunt.

Heavy penalties apply for non-compliance with these provisions including game hunting licence suspension or cancellation, fines, the confiscation of hunting equipment and criminal proceedings.

How you can help

NSW State forest neighbours, State forest users and the community **can help stop illegal hunting**.

Report illegal hunting activity as soon as it is detected – do not confront illegal hunters.

Report illegal hunting to Crime Stoppers or complete the incident report form attached to each public land written permission.

Contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or <https://www1.police.nsw.gov.au/cs.aspx>

What to look out for

- **Any firearm use on public land at night** – licensed hunting using firearms is only permitted during daylight hours.
- **The presence of spotlights at night in conjunction with firearms use** – illegal hunters often use spotlights with firearms at night (note, night time hunting of pigs using dogs and spotlights is permitted on some public land areas).
- **The harming of native animals on public land at any time** – it is illegal to harm native animals on NSW public land.
- **Hunters not wearing an item of high-vis orange clothing** – licensed hunters must wear an item of high-vis orange clothing when hunting on public land.

More information

For more information on licensed hunting on public land in NSW contact the DPI Game Licensing Unit on **02 6363 7650**, game.licensing@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.

Shut the gate on ILLEGAL HUNTING

To report illegal hunting call **Crime Stoppers** on **1800 333 000** or report it online at www.crimestoppers.com.au

For information on hunting regulations in NSW go to the DPI Game Licensing Unit homepage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2019). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.