

23rd June 2016

Wayne Turale
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BRONTE PARK.

On behalf of the Shooters and Fishers Tasmania.

To Members of Legislative Committee Enquiry into Fallow Deer Tasmania.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit views/ ideas from such a wide range of sources concerning this topic. I understand it may be considered to be a complex one with varied views on the status of the Fallow Deer herd in Tasmania.

I am aware that a number of other submissions have been submitted by individuals and I have tried not to duplicate any information with the following which has been prepared after consultation with some interested parties.

I am a recreational hunter of some 35 yrs now living in the Central Highlands at Bronte Park. I live here and have been the Hunter Manager Co- ordinator for a large tract of native bush land firstly for Boral, then Gunns Ltd and now the Tasmanian Land Conservancy. I have developed and managed Wildlife Management Plans and co ordinated recreational hunter interaction since 1997. Also I held a Commercial Game License for many years and was actively involved in the control of native and non native wildlife in this area and also on a large property in the North East.

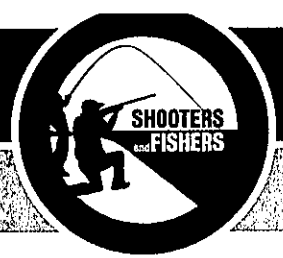
I travel overseas yearly to participate in recreational hunting and have done so since 1995. The countries I have visited, hunted in and become familiar with regarding regulations for Game control are Canada ,(British Columbia, Alberta) , New Zealand and 8 states of the USA.

I continue to travel to the USA yearly for this purpose.

The United States, I submit are regarded as the world leaders with regard to Wildlife Control and have developed a huge financial industry while still maintaining healthy and sustainable wildlife numbers. I believe there is much we can learn from their experience.

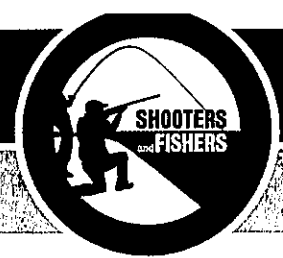
Environmental Considerations.

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- No independent studies have been undertaken to my knowledge , to determine environmental impact (if there is indeed any measurable impact) of wild Fallow deer on the general Tasmanian rural landscape.
- No independent studies have been done to my knowledge to establish accurate numbers of the wild fallow deer herd in this State.
- I am aware there was an independent study, funded by Tasmanian University (I believe), conducted of wild fallow deer numbers in the Central Highlands WHA in the early 2000's. I met the researcher (Mr Steven Locke) at the completion of his investigation and he indicated to me that deer numbers in this area were very low and environmental impact minimal. I understand DPIPW has this report. Has there been a change in numbers since this report and if so what is it based on.
- By nature, Fallow deer are a preferential grazing animal,(as opposed to browsers) which graze native and introduced pastures and crops. This diet preference determines that Fallow deer mostly occupy semi-open improved farmland habitat (as opposed to more environmentally sensitive areas such as native WHA) These therefore are areas which are or have been improved or commonly already intensively farmed or heavily impacted upon by up to 200 years of land clearance and domestic stock grazing.
- The above situation is opposed to the habits of other deer species like Sambar and Red deer for example, which occupy southern mainland Australia and are known browsers, have a broader diet range and therefore occupy areas of greater environmental sensitivity.
- Purely by their habitat preference and diet, it is therefore unlikely that Fallow deer are doing any measurable true impact on an native flora environmental scale.(With the absence of proof to the contrary) Rather, the overabundance of native browsing animals (Bennett's, Rufous wallaby and Brushtail possum) which have an evolved diet to predate on native flora. In some areas their numbers have reached beyond carrying capacity levels and maintain habitation in a broad range of environments, these I believe are likely to be of primary impact on the overgrazing of environmentally sensitive areas and therefore any measurable wildlife related impact on the environment.
- From a native vegetation point of view, native grasslands provide the most favorable areas for any wild resident Fallow deer grazing, yet Fallow deer have coexisted within this landscape for close to 200 years and have not made a measurable impact on this vegetation community as opposed to things like broad scale land clearance, irregular fire regimes and so on.



- The rapid expansion of pivot irrigation systems for crop production throughout rural Tasmania has drawn wild deer from areas of their traditional range into areas not normally frequented by them, or in the numbers frequented by them. This is exacerbated in times of drought as recently experienced. This gives a false indication of numbers of deer. For example deer may be seen in large numbers on some irrigated crops during daylight hours and a novice may believe deer are in 'plague' proportions where the truth is those deer are the total or main herd for many square kilometers because of their predisposition to improved rather than native pasture, particularly in times of drought.
- All of the above said and with what is currently the 'emotive' concern over the presence of Fallow deer in reserved land areas or areas of environmental significance such as WHA (which is not traditional fallow deer range and where deer should be excluded from)the demand for the removal of fallow deer is warranted. The answer lies in granting access for individuals to perform effective, humane & regulated control of deer. It's a free service and they're called hunters. Again as in the concept of access to private lands risk management such as blaze clothing, insurance should be addressed. A review of state reserve classifications that currently don't allow for hunting (therefore inhibiting any take of deer in such areas), together with central ownership of hunter management is urgently required in this state and this should be delivered via the development of a stand-alone Game Management Authority. Selective responsible hunting is a far more environmentally sound option than returning to the dark days of the use of 1080 poisons.

Commercial activities on private land

- Similarly, no studies have been undertaken to determine any impact of the harvesting of wild Fallow deer to legal established commercial Fallow Deer activities in Tasmania.
- The largest study undertaken on wildlife impact on Tasmanian agriculture (The \$5 million federally funded alternatives to 1080 program) found that the largest economic impact on Tasmanian farms was attributed to browsing damage caused by Bennett's wallaby, Tasmanian Pademelon and Brushtail possum. This impact measured up to 90% pasture losses being experienced by Tasmanian farms.
- It is recognized that the preferential grazing habits of wild fallow deer can indeed negatively impact farm production, if the issue is not managed but its impact is commonly miniscule if you draw upon the above study outcome with reference to the impact of native browsing animals, together with the relative overabundance of native browsing animals compared to Fallow deer.

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- The vast majority of private landowners that have wild fallow deer on their properties realise that Fallow deer are an asset to achieve various property objectives and therefore engage in cooperative management arrangements with hunters who want access to deer. These cooperative approaches with hunters offset impacts on farm production from wildlife by way of landowners generating income from hunting access fees (many \$1000's of per annum), access to free browsing animal control performed by hunters (including deer), free property security, free weed control, free fencing and other free trade skills. All this delivered through entering into a cooperative arrangement with hunters and simply providing access.
- Any impact of wild Fallow deer is commonly well managed through a current crop protection permit system, however there needs to be a much greater emphasis on value adding to this approach by reducing some administrative functions associated with crop protection permits and instead a much greater utilization of licensed hunters by investigating further opportunities for extending the duration of current recreational hunting seasons (particularly for antlerless deer) and increasing bag limits. Simply put, an extension to the antlerless season negates the need for crop protection permits. This can be regulated dependent on wildlife numbers as is done in progressive wildlife control countries such as the USA.
- There is a clear disconnect between the number of unfilled crop protection tags and hunters seeking access to recreational hunting opportunities for the purpose of experiencing the traditional harvesting wild venison for private consumption. For example a property holding 100 crop protection permits issued to only a handful of permitted hunters can hardly be expected to be an effective measure. Many Tasmanian hunters are meat hunters first and would enthusiastically be involved with effective deer control if possible. Regulated with the use of risk management policies ie blaze clothing, compulsory self funded public liability insurance with agencies such as the ADA and SSAA reduce the risks/costs to land owners. Again this is a free service .
- Similarly, a review of the state reserve classifications with a view to increasing hunting opportunity and therefore take of deer in these areas, will undoubtedly assist private landowners in the management of deer. Presently, reserved land areas are simply acting as a refuge point for deer and browsing animals.

Considerations re Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010

- The partly protected status of wild Fallow deer carries with it, sensible checks and balances through licensing and permits that assist in managing lawful access, lawful hunting and the use of high powered firearms in many rural areas.

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- There is both a historically and currently a significant link between trespass, firearm related offending and property damage (cut fences, gates being removed) in rural areas attributed to the unlawful actions of game thieves of Fallow deer. Removing checks and balances surrounding licensing and permitting would undoubtedly increase the incidences of this activity and therefore significantly jeopardize public safety with owner/trespasser confrontations in remote rural areas.
- From a species management point of view, Fallow deer could well be redefined under any status or level of protection. However, this will not change the on-ground management issues involving Fallow deer in Tasmania and in the instance of the above example, any 'knee jerk' approach carries significant risk.
- Therefore the way forward is for all parties to adopt some collective ownership of the matter and a willingness to work cooperatively on a future deer management strategy. A stand- alone Game Management Authority should be developed to review this matter and properly coordinate and facilitate a workable plan on the ground that achieves the needs of land owners in maintaining control of individual deer herds.

Impact of Commercial Operations.

- Wild Fallow deer are currently commercially used as a recreational hunting resource, with significant income being derived from deer by many landowners in varying forms. This recreational value 'per head' far exceeds any suggestion of there being a close to comparative value in a market for wild venison.
- Tasmania currently has a commercially farmed Fallow deer industry that suffers significant market fluctuations and therefore concerns around its viability. A wild venison market in Tasmania would most certainly put Tasmania's commercial deer farmers out of business. This is highly improper when considering the expense, commitment made by these "farmers" who have just had their crop devalued after years of development and expense. That simply is not acceptable.
- Farmed Fallow deer venison currently has a high level of quality control to ensure all venison that hits the market is of standard. This means control over the hygiene, sex, age and condition of all animals. On the other hand, a wild venison harvest cannot meet both the stringent hygiene standards, and the quality control aspect of the sex, age and condition of animals harvested. If it can't meet it , well then how is it used?
- One may ask if the market is there for the ready expansion of the Fallow Venison market as some claim, why hasn't it or isn't it happening? Surely the current legal Fallow Deer Farmers would be taking advantage of this opportunity if it in fact existed. Have they been consulted in this process?
- Studies elsewhere on the recreational value of deer hunting and therefore deer have been measured as a multi-million dollar industry. The recreational hunting industry in

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Tasmania has not been measured in its current form, including the large flow on benefits to the many rural communities (such as Bothwell, Ouse, Ross, Campbelltown, Cressy etc) which in the face of the huge downturn in the forest industry, rely more on the hunters dollar than anywhere else in this state. Again in the USA many rural business communities benefit substantially and survive the autumn /winter months from the revenue from recreational hunters. The predominant "Welcome Hunter" signs displayed in these towns is there for all to see.

- The value of the wild deer herd with regard to recreational hunting , for business's and the rural community in Tasmania needs to be measured and more properly understood before any further commercial opportunities are implemented.

Miscellaneous.

- Proper ownership of the management of wild deer must be granted to a stand-alone Game Management Authority. This Agency must be independent, inclusive and flexible in the approach to control of wild deer with regard to the existing current environmental conditions.
- This authority will focus on meeting with key stakeholders and developing and implementing a future wild deer management strategy for Tasmania. A future plan should investigate all matters concerning the current hunting seasons and bag/sex limits, crop protection system, hunter access , issues surrounding unlawful activities and lobbying for suitable penalties for offenders.
- An updated assessment and cooperative approach to deer management should deliver positive outcomes for all stakeholders in Tasmania.
- While it can be established that Fallow Deer numbers in some areas are increasing it can also be proved that in some areas of their traditional range they are decreasing. I can state without hesitation that the Fallow Deer herd in the area now called the 5 Rivers Reserve here in the Bronte Park area, the deer herd has been in steady decline for the past 5 years. This is without question. As I previously stated I manage the recreational hunters in this area and the harvest numbers and quality of animals has fallen away alarmingly. Along with antler quality and body weights. I can provide more details on this but for example from 17 hunters this past season only 3 male deer were harvested with body weights (dressed) of 34, 36 and 37 kg. This is at least 12 to 20 kg under what would normally be expected and antler development was commensurate. Also sighting of deer by hunters were also alarmingly low.
- The current Wildlife Management Unit has been a positive step forward in addressing wildlife management issues between Landowners/ Recreational hunters and Government Agencies. They have been responsible for progressing this situation in a positive constructive manner in a somewhat difficult environment for the past decade. Not an easy task with so many views and considerations at play. It is essential that they continue to be supported financially and with the expertise needed

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to continue in their role. Many Recreational hunters including myself believe they are not recognized or funded in the manner needed to fully perform their role. With the increasing numbers of Wildlife License sales and impact of native and non native species in the rural community it is obvious there is a continued need for this expertise.

Again thank you for this opportunity to express my views.

W. Turale

Allison Waddington

From: Lorraine Bennett <LBennett@sfp.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 June 2016 9:35 AM
To: DEER
Cc: wayneturale@skymesh.com.au
Subject: Deer Submission
Attachments: Deer submission.docx

Dear Jenny see attached submission from the Shooters and Fisherers Tasmanian party.

Lorraine Bennett

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