

**Allison Waddington**

---

**From:** Harris, Peter <Peter.G.Harris@team.telstra.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:53 PM  
**To:** DEER  
**Subject:** Submission by Peter Harris to the Legislative Council Inquiry into the wild fallow deer population in Tasmania

Submission by Peter Harris to the Legislative Council Inquiry into the wild fallow deer population in Tasmania

One constant in life is change & in my short life I believe this change is equal to or at a pace not ever seen before in history.

Prior to settlement Tasmania & it's inhabitants co existed with the environment & enjoyed the plentiful shell fish & native animals and provided for the latter with the use of fire

Then we come along and things start to change. We take possession, clear land, introduce animals, build roads, towns popup etc

The introduction of deer was part of this change here in Tasmania & mainland Australia. Others can elaborate on the introduction dates, place names of release etc better than I.

In the time since the introduction of deer their numbers and their range has naturally increased.

I'm not sure of the date change from protection to allow the deer to establish and then permitted to hunt but hunting of deer has been actively undertaken for decades and generations up to this day.

My minimal knowledge of the early days hunting is derived from information from my late father. In his day you were allowed to take 5 male deer each season and they had to be taken to the police station for their verification/sign off. No female deer were permitted to be taken. This seasonal licensing naturally allowed for herd number increase with the protection of the breeding stock. Poison was used on some occasions over the years which impacted on the deer herd. Some shot deer of both sexes year round to control numbers & feed their dogs so numbers were kept a little intact & herds were possible isolated? This is pre wood chipping where grazing was the main & mill logs for the sawmill. Fire was used extensively to create green fresh nutritious pick and wallaby and deer enjoyed and were drawn to this also.

Remember the snaring days – all part of this cycle in times past.

Then came deer farming and those fortunate to have large property holdings & deer present on their property protected the deer.

These deer would have otherwise been utilised as mentioned above or the permit system to take does may have been in then to also allow their numbers to be kept in check. Deer value saw live trapping as the 1<sup>st</sup> option by many.

Either way the deer were seen to be of value \$ and this value grew as the live capture continued so as to sell to those establishing deer farms. Once the saturation point was reached for the established farms the price dropped faster than it rose as the reality sunk in on the meat value being far less than the necessary stock establishment price.

Then a few changes over the next couple of years & then the big & necessary change when a game biologist was employed by government. From this came the establishment of the improved farmer/hunter relationship & herd improvement for the benefit of the deer, farmer & hunter – Game Management

That's a little on the history in brief brining us to where we are today

Environmental impact on public & private land

Environmental impacts are naturally occurring or manmade. The recent floods although Hydro are coping some blame for their cloud seeding we will call this a natural occurrence

Whatever we do in this modern age we impact on the environment. Example our farms have hooved animals that this country had never seen before settlement

Fallow deer frequent farmland but have the agility to move between this & the protection of the bush or cover. Are they impacting on the environment? Not as much as you or I but to align them with other introduced hooved animals namely sheep and cattle you will find that the latter are far more numerous and have a far bigger impact than deer have had, currently have or ever will have.

In public land deer density is much lower as fallow deer prefer the improved pasture & gather in herds/numbers. Minimal impact on public land but we should be encouraging the increasing number of deer hunters to participate in the balloted areas of public land & increase these balloted areas to accommodate these increasing hunter numbers. Private land already has the control tool – Game management. Farmers adopt a variety of control/take with some making handsome income from the presence of deer on their property.

#### Impact on commercial activities on private land

Life on the land has so many challenges – the environmental influence of drought/flood/fire/the foreign competition of produce produced in some cases without the strict codes of practices that our farmers are required to follow. Browsing damage by all manner of wildlife. Farmers have been the backbone of our nation. Let's hope that government don't stuff their way of life up any more than has already happened.

Yes deer have, may, can contribute and there is a need to have a sound Game Management Plan (GMP) in place to address the impact of this browsing. Do nothing & suffer the consequences. Be proactive and have in place your GMP to minimise losses. Farmers are doing this now – it's been happening for some time – the problem isn't a problem if you adopt the correct strategy. It could be a problem if you stuck your head in the sand, blame everything for your demise etc

If it's not farm land but small private holdings a lot of those owners enjoy seeing deer on their property. They come & go and their numbers are controlled by neighbouring larger properties.

#### Partly Protected Status of Fallow Deer

Don't jump in and change this as it's working. I'm old enough/been round long enough to have seen people come along and make their mark by changing things and then move on leaving behind their meddling mess. You know what I'm talking about. Once there gone they are not held accountable for their actions they are soon forgotten but others are left to try and rectify the damage.

Lots of money was spent employing Brian Murphy the game biologist to evaluate Tasmania's Fallow Deer and a way forward for the benefit of all stake holders = Game Management

Seasonal licence takes and crop protection permits as deemed necessary are the tools used & process enjoyed by all who follow this.

Don't fix it if it's not broken needs to be your focus. Isn't the hard work and wisdom of qualified professional people more valuable and precise than others who may wish to push their own agenda.

Game biologists have given us the answer and set up the tools necessary for today, tomorrow & into the future = Game management

#### Commercial opportunities for the use of wild population stock

Now I see where your heading with this. This commercial harvest push keeps raising its head. Someone sees that they can make a quick buck or easier buck. Don't worry about the collateral damage in doing so just as long as the promoters of this get their way. If ever this came in it would be to the detriment of all the work and dollars spent to date in building the foundation of property based game management which is working. Current deer farmers will see their lively hood gone. Places like Water Valley in SA who currently have markets to Tasmania will be undercut and lose their avenue of sale. I'm linking this commercial dot point with that of the supper trawler where there is a desire for a bigger piece of the cake for profit for a few at the expense of everyone else who they don't care about. There is no room for commercial harvest of the deer in Tasmania outside of that produced by the deer farmers. I would think that they would be alarmed by any thought of commercial harvest from the non farmed deer. Plenty of wallaby as can be seen by the road kill especially over summer so if the pet food industry are seeking more quantity this is an avenue & tool they can use. Not sure of the commercial wallaby licence holder numbers but possible an opportunity here for those seeking to promote commercial harvest.

I hope that you can see that the current process is working and that the work done by many talented hard working people in recent years has put us in a good place that is envied by others.

Regards Peter Harris