

Submission to Shared Problem, Shared Solution

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to classify Deer as a pest animal.

Deer have been revered by humanity for millennia. There is evidence that until the domestication of sheep and cattle that deer and probably goats were the main source of meat to early man. Their antlers were some of the first tools used. They were used to mine flint in England.

With the domestication of cattle sheep and goats deer were elevated to the status of Game and became the property of the nobility. Now in this modern world where their numbers have increased to a level where they are seen as a nuisance by a few landholders there is a proposal to classify them as a pest and to be killed the use of poisons.

They were included in the Game and Feral Animal Act 2006 as Game. This recognises their status within the animal kingdom.

Provisions exist within existing legislation for the Game Licensing Unit to obtain an exemption from the Act to allow control programs to take place in locations where their numbers are excessive.

The former Game Council did oversee several programs where deer numbers were reduced e.g. Cowra, Port Macquarie and the Illawarra region.

This provision within the Act needs to be made known to landholders. The LLS needs to be made aware of this and to promote it within the region when there are reports of excessive deer numbers.

The current SPC programs run by the NPWS is restricted to one organisation and despite their claims of success is not reducing the number of pest animals to a satisfactory level.

Recommendation 23 i & ii. It will not be possible to have it both ways.

(i) If there is no need for a Game licence then there is no need for the shooter to be a member of a club. Will they be required to take out public liability insurance?

How will the property owner make contact with them? How will they contact a property owner? Is the DPI going to create another body to arrange all of this?

(ii) Then you want to have clubs involved. There is no incentive for shooters to join a club and become a hunter. What is the incentive for clubs to participate?

Recommendation 26 (iii) The use of poisons must have an animal welfare issue. Then there is the problem of secondary poisoning to the animals that prey on the carcasses. I find it confusing that the RSPCA considers hunters to be unqualified due to animal welfare issues. Yet they are satisfied that there is no animal welfare issue with the use of poisons such as cyanide and 1080.