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# Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos

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Endorsed by the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers

The Council of Nature Conservation Ministers (CONCOM) was composed of all Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers having responsibility for national parks and wildlife. In July 1991 the CONCOM was amalgamated with the Australian and New Zealand Environment Council to form the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC).

Addresses of government nature conservation agencies are found on page 5.



Department of the Environment and Heritage

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## PREFACE

The Council of Nature Conservation Ministers (CONCOM) is composed of all Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers having responsibility for national parks and wildlife. CONCOM is advised by a Standing Committee consisting of the Heads of Commonwealth, State and Territory Authorities responsible for national parks and wildlife matters.

This 'Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos' has been prepared by the CONCOM Special Working Group on Cruelty Aspects of the Taking and Holding of Native Fauna. During the course of its preparation, drafts of the Code were circulated widely for public comment.

The Code sets an achievable standard of humane conduct and is the minimum required of persons shooting kangaroos.

Endorsed in principle by Council on 30 May 1985, the Code is intended to be implemented through education and State and Territory legislation as appropriate. This Code is based on the knowledge and technology available at the time of publication and may need to be varied in the light of new knowledge.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the code was originally published, there have been numerous comments on its value and suggestions on its improvement. In particular, the RSPCA and the National Advisory Committee on Kangaroos have recommended a number of changes. An ad hoc Working Group on the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos was formed to consider these suggestions and revise the code. The revised code was endorsed by CONCOM on 20 September 1990. Further comments are welcome, and should be forwarded to the Wildlife Management Section, Environment Australia - Biodiversity Group, GPO Box 787, CANBERRA ACT 2601.

## INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice has been produced to ensure that all persons intending to shoot a free-living kangaroo are aware of the welfare aspects pertinent to that activity. In this Code the term 'kangaroo' means all species of the family Macropodidae within the superfamily Macropodoidea and so applies to kangaroos, wallaroos or euros, wallabies and pademelons.

All shooting of kangaroos, whether on public or private land, is subject to law. The laws may differ between localities and the Government Wildlife Authority in the state or territory in which the shooting will occur can advise on the relevant provisions. Except where specifically exempted by law, states and territories will require the shooter to have a licence or permit issued by the Government Wildlife Authority and this Authority will specify any conditions or restrictions applying to that licence or permit.

When shooting a kangaroo the primary objective must be to achieve instantaneous loss of consciousness and rapid death without regaining consciousness. For the purposes of this Code, this is regarded as a sudden and painless death. Commonsense is required to assess the prevailing conditions. Where the conditions are such as to raise doubts about achieving a sudden and painless kill, shooting must not be attempted.

The Code is divided into three sections covering the method of shooting, despatch of injured kangaroos and pouch young and shooting for scientific purposes, and has three schedules specifying firearms, ammunition and points of aim. In each section an introduction provides background to the conditions which must be adhered to by all persons shooting kangaroos.

## METHOD OF SHOOTING

The species of kangaroos which are shot differ in size and there is enormous variation in the terrain and prevailing weather conditions at the time of shooting. The combinations of firearms and ammunition are considered adequate to ensure a sudden and painless death for the target animal under most environmental conditions, provided that the shooting is done in accordance with the other conditions set out in this Code. However, it is the shooter's responsibility to ensure a sudden and painless death for target animals, and under unusual conditions firearms and ammunition that exceed the minimum requirements may have to be used.

With a centrefire rifle a sudden and painless death is consistently achieved by the projectile striking the brain of the target animal. Thus the brain is the required point of aim for this class of weapon. Centrefire rifles are specified for all kangaroo shooting except where the smaller wallabies are to be shot in or adjacent to forest or scrub. Such shooting is often carried out in daylight; the animals are flushed at close quarters and are unlikely to be stationary. In these cases the licence or permit issued by the Government Wildlife Authority may authorise the use of shotguns. At ranges up to the maximum specified in Schedule 1 a shotgun will cause a sudden and painless death if the pattern is centred on the head, neck or chest of the target animal. The shooter must be able to place a clear shot into one of these target areas whether the animal is moving or stationary.

### Firearms

#### Conditions

- (i) The minimum specifications for firearms and ammunition are set out in Schedule 1. Kangaroos shall only be shot with a combination of firearms and ammunition that complies with or exceeds those minimum specifications.
- (ii) In the environmental conditions in which the shooter operates the combination of firearm and ammunition selected must ensure the sudden and painless death of each target animal. Evidence of compliance with the minimum specifications in Schedule 1 is no defence in administrative and/or legal proceedings concerning a breach of this Code if the combination used by the shooter has not achieved a consistently sudden and painless kill.
- (iii) Kangaroos must be shot using a centrefire rifle unless use of a shotgun is specifically allowed by the licensing authority.
- (iv) A rifle must be sighted in against an inanimate target before commencing each day's shooting.

### Shooting platform

#### Conditions

- (i) Kangaroos must not be shot from a moving vehicle or other moving platform.

### Target animal

#### Conditions

- (i) The target kangaroo must be clearly visible.
- (ii) When a rifle is used the target kangaroo must be stationary and within a range that permits accurate placement of the shot.
- (iii) When a shotgun is used the target kangaroo must be within the range specified in Schedule 1 and in a position where a clear shot can be fired at the head, neck or chest.

### Point of aim

#### Conditions

- (i) A shooter using a rifle must aim so as to hit the target kangaroo in the brain (see diagram in Schedule 2), except in the case of an injured or wounded animal where a brain shot may be impractical.
- (ii) A shooter using a shotgun must aim so that, whether the target kangaroo is stationary or mobile, it will be hit in the head, neck or chest by the centre of the pattern.

## INJURED KANGAROOS AND POUCH YOUNG

No matter how carefully the shooter aims, some kangaroos will not be killed outright. Wounded kangaroos must be dispatched as quickly and humanely as possible.

When killing a wounded animal a brain shot may be impractical. For example, the accurate placement of a shot in the brain may require capture and restraint of the animal; this would increase suffering and be inconsistent with the objective of sudden and painless death. In such circumstances a heart shot may be the most humane means of dispatch. In some special circumstances, where a wounded kangaroo is encountered, it may not be practicable to shoot the animal, as at a practical range the acceptable points of aim may be obscured, and at a close range the use of

a high powered rifle may be unsafe. In these special circumstances a heavy blow to the skull to destroy the brain may be the most appropriate and humane means of dispatch.

Kangaroo shooters often shoot more than one kangaroo out of a group before driving to the carcasses to retrieve them. This is acceptable provided that where an individual kangaroo is wounded no further kangaroos are shot until all reasonable efforts have been made to dispatch the wounded animal.

Shot females must be examined for pouch young and if one is present it must also be killed. Decapitation with a sharp instrument in very small hairless young or a properly executed heavy blow to destroy the brain in larger young are effective means of causing sudden and painless death.

Larger young can also be dispatched humanely by a shot to the brain, where this can be delivered accurately and in safety.

#### Conditions

- (i) The shooter must be certain that each animal is shot dead before another is targeted.
- (ii) If a kangaroo is thought to be alive after being shot, every reasonable effort shall be made immediately to locate and kill it before any attempt is made to shoot another animal.
- (iii) When located, wounded animals must be killed by a method that will achieve a rapid and humane death, where practical by a shot to the brain.
- (iv) Under circumstances where a shot to the brain of an injured animal is impractical or unsafe, a shot to the heart is permissible (see Schedule 3).
- (v) In circumstances where, for dispatch of a wounded kangaroo, a shot to either the brain or heart is impractical or unsafe, a very heavy blow to the rear of the skull to destroy the brain (see Schedule 2) is permissible. To ensure a humane kill, a suitably hard and heavy blunt instrument must be used (e.g., metal pipe, billet of wood etc., carried for this purpose).
- (vi) If a female has been killed, the pouch must be searched for young as soon as the shooter reaches the carcass.
- (vii) The pouch young of a killed female must also be killed immediately, by decapitation or a heavy blow to the skull to destroy the brain, or shooting.

### **SHOOTING FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES**

Permits to shoot kangaroos for scientific purposes are sometimes requested. Because of the circumstances and locations in which such shooting may take place, and because of specific research requirements (e.g. to obtain anatomical items such as intact skulls for diagnostic examination and museum reference collections), it may be necessary to allow exemptions from the general conditions such as point of aim and shooting platform.

Such variations must never detract from the primary responsibility of the shooter to provide a sudden and painless death for the target animals.

#### Conditions

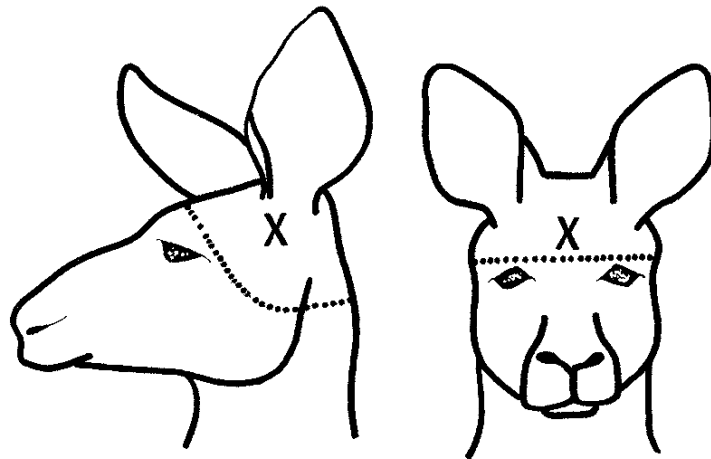
- (i) The provisions of this Code shall apply to the shooting of kangaroos for scientific purposes except where express provision to the contrary is included in the permit/licence under which the animals are shot.
- (ii) The licensing authority should only issue such a permit/licence if it is satisfied that;
  - (a) the Animal Care and Ethics Committee (or equivalent) at the relevant institution has examined and approved the proposal; and
  - (b) the method of shooting will result in sudden and painless deaths for the animals authorised to be killed.
- (iii) The waiving of any requirements of this code shall not relieve the shooter of the absolute requirement to provide a sudden and painless death for the target kangaroos.

**SCHEDULE 1: Minimum Specifications for Firearms and Ammunition**

(Note: Ammunition must be loaded to at least the specifications shown to ensure a sudden and painless death for the target animals)

Species	Prescribed firearm and firearm/ammunition combinations
<b>Group 1</b>	
Red kangaroo ( <i>Macropus rufus</i> ), Eastern grey kangaroo ( <i>M. giganteus</i> ), Western grey kangaroo ( <i>M. fuliginosus</i> ), Euro or wallaroo ( <i>M. robustus</i> ), Agile wallaby ( <i>M. agilis</i> ), Whiptail wallaby ( <i>M. parryi</i> )	A centrefire rifle, fitted with a telescopic sight. Nominal bore size 0.569cm (0.224") and centrefire case capacity of at least .222 Remington.  Ammunition shall have an expanding projectile (soft or hollow point) of not less than 324 mg (50 grains) and provide a minimum muzzle energy of 1542 Joules (1137 foot-pounds).  [.222 Remington with 50 grain projectile must be loaded to achieve a muzzle velocity of 975 m/sec (3200 ft/sec) to achieve this minimum muzzle energy].
<b>Group 2</b>	
All members of the family Macropidae other than those listed in Group 1.	<p>a) A centrefire rifle fitted with a telescopic sight. Calibre and ammunition sufficient to achieve at least a minimum muzzle energy of 975 Joules (720 foot-pounds) {e.g. .22 Hornet; 45 grain projectile and loaded to achieve muzzle velocity (m.v.) of at least 2690 ft/sec, or .17 Remington; 25 grain projectile loaded to achieve m.v. of at least 3610 ft/sec}.</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Shotguns of 12 gauge or larger, using No.2, 1, BB or larger shot. Maximum range for shotguns of 30 metres.</p> <p>Shotgun cartridges must be loaded to provide a dense and random pattern (e.g. 12 gauge cartridge requires a shot load no less than 36g = 1.25 oz = 63 BB shot pellets).</p>

**SCHEDULE 2: Point of Aim (X) for a Shot to the Brain and Location of the Brain. (All kangaroos)**



Note: A shot to the side of the head is preferred as it is a larger target area.

**SCHEDULE 3:** Point of Aim (+) for a Shot to the Heart. (Applicable only as described for injured kangaroos and specified shotguns)



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**Government Nature Conservation  
Agencies - Addresses**

**Australian Capital Territory**

Director  
Parks and Conservation Service  
PO Box 1065  
TUGGERANONG ACT 2901  
Phone (02) 6207 9777 Fax (02) 6207 2335

**New South Wales**

Director-General  
National Parks and Wildlife Service  
PO Box 1967  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220  
Phone (02) 9585 6444 Fax (02) 9585 6455

**Northern Territory**

Director  
Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern  
Territory  
PO Box 496  
PALMERSTON NT 0831  
Phone (08) 8999 4537 Fax (08) 8932 3849

**Queensland**

Executive Director (Conservation)  
Department of Environment  
PO Box 155  
BRISBANE ALBERT STREET QLD 4002  
Fax (07) 3225 1769

**South Australia**

Chief Executive  
Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal  
Affairs  
GPO Box 1047  
ADELAIDE SA 5001  
Phone (08) 8204 9322 Fax (08) 8204 9321

**Tasmania**

Director of Parks and Wildlife Service  
Department of Environment and Land Management  
GPO Box 44A  
HOBART TAS 7001  
Phone (03) 6233 6461 Fax (03) 6223 8603

**Victoria**

Secretary  
Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
PO Box 41  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002  
Phone (03) 9412 4364 Fax(03) 9412 4540

**Western Australia**

Executive Director  
Department of Conservation and Land Management  
Locked Bag 104  
BENTLEY DELIVERY CENTRE WA 6983  
Phone (08) 9442 0300 Fax (08) 9386 7112

**Commonwealth**

Director of National Parks and Wildlife  
Environment Australia - Biodiversity Group  
GPO Box 787  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Phone (02) 6274 1111 Fax (02) 6274 1123