

Where can I hunt in State Forest

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The 3 million hectares of State Forest offer some great opportunities for hunting.

Hunting in State Forest

Generally, hunting for pest animals and game species is permitted in all State Forests, however, some restrictions may apply.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing State Forest. Hunters are advised to consult the local DELWP office for specific information about any restrictions that apply to the area of State Forest that they wish to hunt.

The Victorian hunting maps also show where hunting game and pest species is permitted on public land in Victoria. The Victorian hunting maps can be downloaded from www.gma.vic.gov.au or accessed on the More To Explore App.

Pest animals may be hunted at any time and hunting for game species is allowed only during the open season for that species.

The Game Management Authority (GMA) has primary responsibility for regulating game hunting in the state.

Anyone wishing to hunt game in Victoria, including juniors (12-17 years), must hold a current Game Licence. "Game" includes those species of duck, deer, quail, pheasants and partridges declared to be game in Victoria. Game hunting and Game Licences are managed by the GMA. Should you wish to apply for a Game Licence, you can download the form at www.gma.vic.gov.au.

No Game Licence is required to hunt pest animals in Victoria, however, if you wish to hunt pest animals with a firearm, you must be the holder of a current Firearms Licence. The hunting of pest animals on Crown land is an accepted genuine reason for hunters wishing to apply for or renew a Firearm's Licence. To satisfy the requirement of proof, DELWP can issue hunters with a Registration of Interest in Hunting Pest Animals on Crown Land. For information on where you can obtain a Registration of Interest form and the cost, please contact DELWP on 136 186.

For information relating to Firearms Licensing, contact the Victoria Police Licensing & Regulation Division on 1300 651 645.

Where can I hunt in State Forest

Some areas of State Forest are set aside and closed to all hunting. No game hunting is allowed in State Forest immediately surrounding the Rubicon Power Station, Warburton and surrounds, Halls Gap and surrounds, Warburton township and Mount Timbertop area.

As well as State Forest, there are many land classifications throughout Victoria and, depending on the type, hunting may or may not be permitted. Generally, the following applies:

Land classification	Hunting permitted?
State Forest, Forest Parks (Cobboboonee and Otway) and unreserved Crown land	Game species may be hunted during the open season only. Pest animals may be hunted at any time, noting, it is an offence to be in possession of a spotlight and firearm in recognised deer habitat. Hunting in grazing licences in State Forest in eastern Victoria does not require permission of the licensee. For other Land Act licences in Victoria permission must be obtained from the licence holder.
State Game Reserves	Game duck may be hunted during the open season. Sixteen State Game Reserves are available for Stubble Quail hunting, one for Sambar Deer hunting and six for Hog Deer hunting. Licensed game hunters can hunt foxes, hares and rabbits on State Game Reserves while hunting for game duck during the open season for duck hunting (some restrictions apply see www.gma.vic.gov.au).

More to Explore App

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Land classification	Hunting permitted?
Sanctuaries	Game species may not be hunted at any time. Pest animals may be hunted at any time.
Melbourne Water Catchment Areas	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
Flora and Fauna Reserves and Nature Reserves	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
National Parks, State Parks, Coastal Parks, Wilderness Parks, Regional Parks	Generally, hunting of any type is not permitted at any time, however, there are some exceptions for certain types of hunting in specific parks. For further information contact Parks Victoria (www.parks.vic.gov.au) or download the Victorian hunting maps.
Private Land and leased Crown Land	Game (only during the open season) and pest animals may be hunted with the permission of the landowner/manager.
Alpine resorts	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.

For more specific details of where you may hunt, check the Victorian hunting maps or call the nearest DELWP Regional office, before you enter the forests.

Firearms

Remember - Many people use State Forest and other public land for recreation and for their livelihood.

Normal firearm laws apply in State Forests and all public land.

- A licence is required and firearms must be registered.
- Firearms and ammunition must be securely stored when not in use.
- It is an offence to use a firearm in a dangerous manner.
- Use of firearms in camping areas is prohibited.
- It is prohibited to shoot into private property without the permission of the landowner/manager.

Apart from native game birds during their open season, all native birds and animals are protected by law. State Forests are popular recreation areas and some forests are licensed for grazing cattle. Take special care with firearms.

All firearm users must practice firearm safety to reduce the risk of firearm incidents. There is no such thing as a firearm "accident". In every case, at least one of the Firearm Safety Rules has been broken.

Responsible hunters will know and apply the basic firearm safety rules at all times and will encourage other hunters to do the same. The following firearms safety code will help avoid any risk of injury.

Firearms Safety Code

DELWP endorses the Firearms Safety Code, which was approved by the Firearms Consultative Committee and Victoria Police and promotes safe firearms handling practices. You should know the **ten basic safety rules** before you handle firearms and insist anyone who goes shooting with you follows these rules. If you wish to know more about firearm safety, or obtain a copy of the Firearms Safety Code, contact Victoria Police Licensing & Regulation Division on 1300 651 645 or visit www.police.vic.gov.au.

Treat every firearm as being loaded

Check every firearm yourself; do not take the word of another person that a firearm is unloaded. Pass or accept only open and unloaded firearms. Never accept or pass a firearm to another person unless the breech is open, and all ammunition has been removed from the firearm.

Always point firearms in a safe direction

Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction. A safe direction will depend on where you are and what you are doing.

Load a firearm only when ready to fire

Only load a firearm when you intend to use it and only in the area where it can be safely and legally discharged. Remember to unload it when you have used it.

Identify your target beyond all doubt

You must positively identify your target beyond all doubt before firing. **If in doubt, don't shoot!** Identify the whole animal and don't fire at only movement, colour, sound or shape. Before you shoot ask yourself: "Is this a person?"

Check your firing zone

Be aware of what is between you and your target, and in the area beyond your target. Projectiles that miss can travel up to 4.5 km, shotguns can also spread shot over a very wide area.

Store ammunition and firearms safely

You are required by law to have a safe and secure place to store your firearms. All firearms and ammunition should be stored separately, out of reach of children, out of view and in an approved cabinet.

Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms

When handling a firearm, you must be able to think clearly. Alcohol and drugs (even those prescribed) dull and slow your mental and physical reactions.

Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp

Before entering a car, home or camp, completely unload your firearm. Ensure that the action is open and that there is no ammunition in either the breech or the magazine.

Never fire at hard surfaces or water

Consider the area in which you are shooting. Could a ricochet occur? A ricochet will almost certainly result from shooting at water or smooth flat surfaces and rocks.

Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms

Before attempting to negotiate a fence or obstacle unload your firearm. Do not rely on safety catches. Safety catches, at best, only supplement the safe handling of firearms.

Observe this code: Insist others do the same



Bow Hunting

The use of long, recurve, compound and cross bows for hunting is permitted for pest animal hunting (excluding State Game Reserves) and game deer hunting. Hunters using archery equipment can only hunt in areas that are open to hunting. Please refer to the Victorian hunting maps.

Note that crossbows are listed as a prohibited weapon in Victoria and people using them must have a Prohibited Weapons Permit from Victoria Police.

If you are hunting game deer with bows you will also need a Game Licence and must abide by the minimum draw weights and arrow-head specifications (visit www.gma.vic.gov.au).

Game birds (duck, quail, pheasant and partridge) cannot be hunted with bows.

Contacts for Hunting Organisations

Many hunting organisations offer hunter education courses. These courses often address firearms safety issues, bush craft, legislative requirements for game hunters, game biology and hunting skills. For further details, contact relevant hunting organisations to see if they offer these courses.

- Australian Deer Association (Vic) www.austdeer.com.au
- Field & Game Australia Inc. (Victoria) www.fieldandgame.com.au
- Sporting Shooter's Association of Australia (Vic) www.ssaavic.com.au
- Victorian Hound Hunters Inc. www.victorianhoundhunters.com.au
- Australian Bowhunters Association www.bowhunters.org.au
- Victorian Deer Association www.vda.org.au
- Victorian Game and Deerstalkers Association www.vicgame.org.au
- Working Gundog Association of Australia www.wgaa.blogspot.com.au

RESPECT: Hunt Responsibly

A responsible hunter should always:

- Respect animals
- Respect the environment
- Respect other hunters
- Respect non-hunters
- Respect the hunt
- Respect the laws



For more information on these standards visit www.gma.vic.gov.au or call on 136 186.

Report illegal hunting

The irresponsible or illegal behaviour of some can create unsafe or unsustainable situations. It is important that hunters act responsibly and encourage the rest of the community to do the right thing.

Report illegal hunting to the GMA through its website www.gma.vic.gov.au, on 136 186, or to Victoria Police.

Safety information

- On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and State Forest are closed to the public. Do not enter parks or forests on Code Red Days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning.
- Be responsible for your own safety. Be aware of extreme weather events, carry your own first aid kit and let someone know before you go.
- Some roads within the forest are seasonally closed each year from the Thursday after the Queen's Birthday holiday through to the Thursday before Melbourne Cup. This is to protect track surfaces and the environment, and for public safety. Road closures may be extended beyond these dates, depending on weather conditions.

More To Explore App



Download the **More To Explore App** for comprehensive information and interactive maps on what to see and do in Victoria's three million hectares of State forest.

www.ffm.vic.gov.au/more-to-explore

For more information

Forest Fire Management Victoria is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact our Customer Contact Centre ☎ 136 186 (TTY: 1800 555 667) or visit www.ffm.vic.gov.au

For information on game hunting visit the GMA website at www.gma.vic.gov.au or call on 136 186.

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