

Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting in South Australia

Introduction

This Code of Practice sets a standard of humane conduct for persons involved in the destruction of birds by shooting. All persons involved should be aware of the legislative requirements, including animal welfare, for this activity.

When shooting, the principal objective must be to achieve rapid loss of consciousness and death of the bird. If the bird is not killed outright, rapid and appropriate action is required to ensure that it is dispatched humanely.

Legislation

The shooter must be conversant with the requirements of relevant legislation.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (NPW Act)

Introduced bird species are not protected in South Australia and may be destroyed.

Native birds are protected under NPW Act. Where necessary, a destruction permit (pursuant to Section 53(1)(c)) may be issued for the destruction of native birds causing economic and/or environmental damage. Where a destruction permit has been issued, no hunting permit is required although written permission of landowner is required in cases where the shooter is neither the landowner nor his/her agent.

Exceptions to the requirement to obtain a destruction permit include;

- unprotected bird species listed under Schedule 10 (Zebra Finch, Budgerygah, Red Wattlebird, Grey-backed Silvereye, Galah, Little Corella, Australian Raven, Little Crow, Australian Crow, Little Raven).
- bird species gazetted pursuant to Section 51A NPW Act, and
- certain duck species and stubble quail as specified under an open season gazetted pursuant to Section 52, NPW Act.

In these instances, native birds may be shot without a destruction permit. Landowners and shooters acting on behalf of the landowner do not require a hunting permit when hunting on that land. Shooters acting on behalf of a Corporation or local Council do not require hunting permits where the activity is authorised by, and confined to, the Corporation or Council area.

Hunting permits and written permission from the landowner are required by other persons hunting and/or shooting birds. Furthermore, duck and quail hunters require an open season hunting permit. Duck hunters are required to pass a waterfowl identification test.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985

The destruction of any bird by shooting should aim to minimise suffering of the animal.

Note that the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985* states that a person ill-treats an animal if that person;

- having injured an animal fails to take reasonable steps to alleviate any pain suffered by the animal, or
- kills an animal in a manner which causes the animal unnecessary pain.

Firearms Act 1977

The shooter must comply with the provisions of the *Firearms Act 1977*.

Summary Offences Act 1953

Shooters should be aware of the *Summary Offences Act 1953* and must comply with the provisions of that Act. Note that Section 51(1) of the *Summary Offences Act 1953* states that “a person who discharges a firearm or throws a stone or other missile, without reasonable cause and so as to injure, annoy or frighten, or be likely to injure, annoy or frighten, or so as to damage, or be likely to damage, any property, is guilty of an offence”.

Public Risk

No handguns should be used to destroy birds.

Any shooting activity must be planned and undertaken in a manner that avoids the possibility of injury to the public. Before discharging the firearm, the shooter must ensure that the background to the target area is free of persons, property, infrastructure and/or assets to eliminate any risk of collateral damage from spent shot.

The use of centre fire or rim fire rifles presents a serious risk to the public when fired without due regard for the background. These rifles should not be used in a built up area.

A shooter intending to use firearms in a built up area should notify the local Police.

Shooting should only take place during daylight hours.

Shooting Platform

The shooter should adequately prepare for the shot by ensuring stable footing and clear vision of the targeted birds. **Birds should not be shot from a moving vehicle or other moving platform such as a boat.**

Target Animal for Destruction

Shooters should have sufficient knowledge and skill to identify the bird species causing damage. **If in doubt, don't shoot.**

The target bird must be clearly visible to the shooter. Only one bird should be targeted at any one time. Shooting at a flock is not an acceptable practice.

If possible, shooting should be avoided at times when birds are nesting and there are dependent young present.

Injured Birds

The shooter must ensure that prior to shooting, he/she has the necessary equipment to kill any bird that is injured but not killed on the first shot.

Injured birds must be killed as quickly and humanely as possible by;

- second shot, or
- a blow with a heavy instrument to the rear of the skull to destroy the brain (the bird should be either restrained or immobile).

The shooter must take all reasonable steps to ensure that each bird is dead before another is targeted.

Disposal of Culled Birds

Killed birds must be gathered immediately and stored out of sight in an appropriate container for later disposal. Dead birds must be disposed of in a manner approved by local Council.

Human Health Issues

The transmission of avian diseases to humans is possible from the inhalation of feather dust. Persons handling dead birds should wear appropriate protective clothing including facemasks.

Other Conditions

The shooter must consider the sensibilities of any onlookers. Onlookers should be discouraged wherever possible.

Firearms and shot size specifications for the humane destruction of the birds listed.

With the exception of Cape Barren Geese, shotgun gauges other than those specified may be used. However, the shooter must make appropriate adjustments to optimum and effective ranges, accommodating the limits of the firearm. When using shotguns, ensure that choke configuration delivers a dense pattern on the target within the specified distances. For larger birds (Cape Barren Geese and injured Emus), tighter chokes are preferred e.g. ½ to full.

Bird Species	Firearm	Optimum range(m)	Effective range (m)	Shot size
Small birds to Starling size Silvereyes, Sparrows	410 shotgun 12 gauge shotgun	15 30	25 30	10's 10's – 12's
Blackbirds, Starlings	410 shotgun 12g shotgun	15 30	25 30	7's – 9's 7's - 9's
Red Wattlebirds, Rosellas, Lorikeets	12 gauge shotgun	30	30	6's – 8's
Birds up to Teal size Galahs, Little Corellas, Silver Gulls, feral Pigeons, Chestnut Teal*, Grey Teal*, Pink eared Duck*, White-eyed Duck*	12 gauge shotgun	30	30	4's - 6's
Birds up to Mountain Duck size Long billed Corellas, Sulphur crested Cockatoos, Cormorants, Magpies, Crows, Ravens, Black Duck*, Wood Duck*, Mountain Duck*	12 gauge shotgun	30	40	3's - 5's
Cape Barren Geese	Centrefire rifle with telescopic sights Shotgun – only 12 gauge	50 30	200 40	Manuf. specs 1's & 2's (36g)
Emu	Heart shot – centrefire rifle Head shot - shotgun (<i>injured birds only</i>)	50 5	100 10	Manuf. specs 1's, 2's

- Non toxic shot must be used, adjusting shot size as necessary.