

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 1992

NO. 149 OF 1994

CODE OF PRACTICE – APPROVAL

Under section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992, I approve the document entitled the **Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Kangaroos in the A.C.T.** as a Code of Practice.

Date: 31.10.94



BILL WOOD
Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 1992**

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HUMANE
DESTRUCTION OF KANGAROOS IN THE ACT**

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FOR THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF KANGAROOS
IN THE A.C.T.**

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice specifies the requirements for the humane destruction of kangaroos and wallabies in the Australian Capital Territory. It draws heavily on the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos endorsed in 1985 by all the Australian Nature Conservation Ministers and RSPCA Australia.

This Code of Practice details the conditions under which kangaroos may be humanely destroyed. As well as culling situations, this Code also deals with injured kangaroos and orphaned pouch young resulting from culling operations or other trauma situations.

In this Code the term "kangaroo" refers to any members of the Macropodidae family of the superfamily Macropodoidea. The four naturally occurring species extant in the ACT are the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Eastern Wallaroo, Red Necked Wallaby and Swamp Wallaby. This Code of Practice also applies to any member of the Macropodidae held in captivity.

In the ACT the destruction of Kangaroos is covered by four main Acts:

- * Animal Welfare Act 1992;
- * Nature Conservation Act 1980;
- * Weapons Act 1991 (when firearms or dartguns are used);
and
- * Veterinary Surgeons Registration Act 1965.

Compliance with this Code of Practice will satisfy the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1992.

A permit is required under Section 25 (1) of the Nature Conservation Act to kill an animal that is wildlife. Where the destruction requires the capture of an animal, a permit to take and kill is required. Permits issued under this Act can specify conditions under which kangaroos may be taken and/or destroyed to ensure that animals are taken and/or destroyed humanely. This could include the requirement for shooters to pass a competency test.

The Weapons Act requires shooters and firearms to meet conditions that may be specified by the Registrar of Firearms. Particular requirements may be applied for shooting near a public place.

The Code is divided into four sections covering the method of capture to enable destruction, the method of destruction for culling purposes, the destruction of injured kangaroos and pouch young, and the destruction of animals for scientific purposes. It also has three appendices specifying firearms, ammunition and points of aim.

2. Methods of Capture to Enable Destruction

A number of methods of destruction detailed in Section 3 rely on the prior humane capture of the kangaroo. Once the animal is captured, humane destruction should take place as soon as possible or if a delay is necessary, the animal should be confined in a dark secure bag. In the case of drugging and sedation, destruction should preferably occur prior to the animal becoming alert.

2.1 Trapping and Netting

Kangaroos cannot easily be driven like sheep or cattle and for the larger species there is a high risk of injury to the animal and handler.

Trapping of the larger kangaroos, such as the Eastern Grey, is impractical even for small confined populations. Trapping is stressful for these kangaroos and includes the risk of leg breakages and capture myopathy causing death. Trapping to enable destruction is not recommended.

Trapping is also stressful for the smaller macropods to varying degrees, depending on size of the species and temperament, but may be required in a limited number of situations.

Professional advice on the most humane and acceptable method available for trapping and netting of specific species would be required to be obtained from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service prior to a permit to take an animal being issued.

2.2 Darting

Capture darting by administering a tranquilliser with a blowpipe or dart gun is a reliable, humane method for those animals which can be approached within an effective range.

Effective range varies with equipment, operators and the temperament of the animals but as an indication, up to 8 or 12 metres could be allowed for a blowpipe and 20 or 25 metres for a dart gun.

The supervision by a veterinarian is required for the safe administration of restricted pharmaceuticals and to ensure an acceptable skill level of the operator.

2.3 Drugging

It is possible to capture kangaroos using drugs administered in water, salt blocks or in food such as pellets, lupins, lucerne or oats.

This capture technique would only be applicable in certain specialised circumstances and issue of permits will be considered on a case by case basis.

The types of drugs used and the rates of application should be determined under veterinarian supervision to ensure the safe administration of restricted drugs and to ensure the most humane method for the animal.

3. Methods of Destruction for Culling Purposes

3.1 Lethal Injection

Lethal injections can only be safely and humanely applied when the kangaroo is immobilised either through injury or sedation, or where the animal can be suitably restrained, eg a joey.

Supervision by a veterinarian is required.

3.2 Poisoning

Poisoning is not recommended as a method to reduce kangaroo numbers in the conditions of the ACT.

There is no suitable poison which would meet required standards of public safety, target specificity, animal welfare and control over rate of kill of the target species.

3.3 Shooting

When shooting a kangaroo, the primary objective must be to achieve instantaneous loss of consciousness. For the purposes of this Code, this is regarded as a sudden and painless death. Common sense 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 combination of firearms and ammunition specified in Appendix 1 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. Use of shotguns is prohibited except for circumstances specified in Section 4.1 and 4.2.

- * The minimum specifications for firearms and ammunition are set out in Appendix I. Kangaroos shall only be shot with a combination of firearms and ammunition that complies with or exceeds those minimum specifications.

- * 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 Appendix I 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.
- * A rifle must be sighted in against an inanimate target before commencing each day's shooting.
- * Kangaroos must not be shot from a moving vehicle or other moving platform.
- * The target kangaroo must be clearly visible.
- * When a rifle is used the target kangaroo must be stationary and within a range that permits accurate placement of the shot.
- * A shooter using a rifle must aim so as to hit the target kangaroo in the brain (see diagram in Appendix II), except in the case of an injured or wounded animal where a brain shot might be impractical.

3.4 Other Methods of Destruction

For immobilised animals destruction by use of a Captive Bolt Pistol is acceptable.

Other methods of capture and destruction not specified in this Code would require prior approval by the ACT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

4. Destruction of Injured Kangaroos and Pouch Young

4.1 Culling Situations

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

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 the suffering and be inconsistent with the objective of sudden and painless death. In such circumstances a heart shot may be the most humane means. 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 close range the use of a high powered rifle may be unsafe. In these rare circumstances a head shot at close range by a shotgun or captive bolt pistol is acceptable.

A skilled kangaroo shooter often shoots more than one kangaroo out of a group before driving to the carcasses to retrieve them. When a high standard of marksmanship prevails, 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 young at foot. If one is present it must be humanely killed. Decapitation with a sharp instrument for very small hairless young, or a lethal injection or head shot at close range by a shotgun or captive bolt pistol for larger young is acceptable. In the culling situation, it is the responsibility of the shooter to ensure one of these approved mechanisms is available.

Pouch young and young at foot should be humanely killed immediately.

4.2 Roadside and Other Situations

Under the Animal Welfare Act 1992 it is an offence for a person who injures an animal not to take all reasonable steps, including, where appropriate, seeking veterinary treatment to alleviate any pain suffered by the animal.

Individuals who injure or find an injured kangaroo should seek the specialised assistance from Wildlife Rangers, the RSPCA, the Wildlife Foundation, a veterinarian or the police. Similar assistance should be sought for pouch young or young at foot found near a dead mother. All dead female kangaroos should be checked for live pouch young.

In situations where it is impractical to contact any of the above then the application of a head shot at close range by a shotgun or captive bolt pistol is acceptable. In the absence of the above methods a well directed, heavy blow to the skull may be the most appropriate and humane means of dispatch. For injured animals not immobilised but within 25 metres, a shotgun or a high powered rifle, in appropriate locations, should be used. (For shotguns: 12 gauge minimum with BB cartridges. For high-powered rifles: as specified in Appendix 1).

It is an offence under the Nature Conservation Act to keep a kangaroo or wallaby (or joey) for more than 24 hours without a permit.

5. Destruction for Scientific Purposes

Any research on kangaroos must first be endorsed by the researcher's Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee and a permit under the Nature Conservation Act 1980 obtained.

Where the research methods fall outside the provisions of this Code then special permission must be obtained from the Minister responsible for the Department of the Environment, Land and Planning.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix I

Minimum Specifications for Firearms and Ammunition for the Purpose of Section 3.3

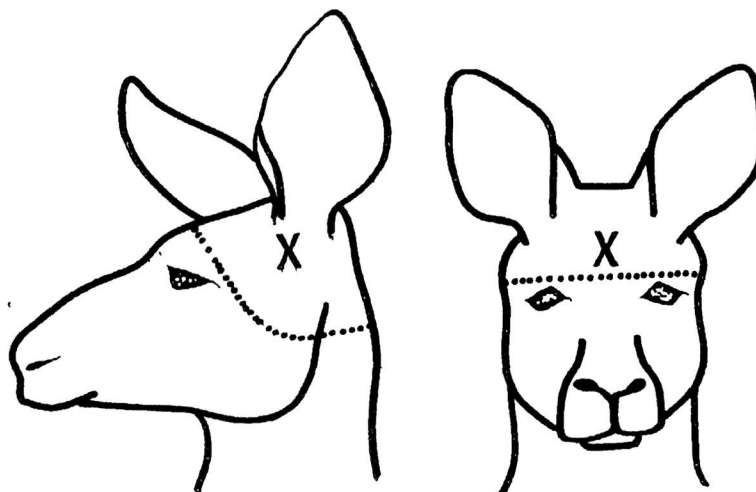
(Note: Ammunition must be loaded to at least the specifications shown to ensure a sudden and painless death for the target animals.)

A centre fire rifle, fitted with a telescopic sight. Nominal bore size 0.569 cm (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]

6.2 Appendix II

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



6.3 Appendix III

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

