

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)

A fair go for responsible people.



Regional Project Coordinator
Parks Victoria
Mt Beauty

5 May 2017

Re: Pilot project – monitor habitat use and movement of Sambar Deer in the Australian Alps to enhance management/control efforts.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for the details you have provided regarding the above-mentioned project. SSAA Victoria is a major hunting stakeholder in Victoria and many of our members are passionate deer hunters. Sambar are held in high esteem by hunters and are seen by many as the premier game animal in Australia. SSAA Victoria wants to see them managed as a valuable and highly regarded game species.

While wanting to preserve Sambar as a game animal, SSAA Victoria acknowledges that Sambar deer can have negative environmental impacts in some areas, especially if population densities are high. Sensitive alpine bogs at high elevations are one such area and SSAA Victoria recognises the need for control measures in these cases. As you are well aware, we are actively involved in partnerships with Parks Victoria, under the CPM Program, to manage negative deer impacts where they are occurring. Our members also contribute significantly to controlling deer numbers through recreational hunting, which helps to reduce negative impacts that can occur through over abundance.

Hunting organisations have been calling for scientific research into Victoria's Sambar deer populations for decades and welcome any research projects into the species. Species can only be effectively managed when we have accurate scientific knowledge of them. Understanding habitat use and movement patterns is fundamental to developing that knowledge and seems like an excellent place to start. Ultimately, we would like to see much more research done, with the objective that effective wildlife management practices can be applied to the species. This should then ensure the population is sustainable, while not adversely affecting the Victorian environment. SSAA Victoria understands that this is not necessarily Parks Victoria's objective. However, we feel that there is enough common interest to warrant working together and we will provide some funding for the pilot program.

As discussed with you verbally, SSAA Victoria, in partnership with the SSAA National body, is able to offer funding of \$15,000 per annum over the two years of the trial program; if the project is successful in gaining AALC funding. That is a total of \$30,000 over two years.

SSAA Victoria is also able to offer “in-kind” support, with extensive volunteer labour being available during the capture phase of the operation, if required. Hunters are keenly interested in all facets of deer and have a long history of assisting with various deer related projects and research. This cooperation goes back over 40 years to when SSAA members worked in partnership with the Fisheries and Wildlife Department during hog deer trapping on Snake Island from 1976 to 1979. The current CPM program continues to demonstrate the effectiveness and benefits of hunters and government departments working together.

Looking at the administrative side of the project, also as discussed, SSAA Victoria would request a representative on the Project Steering Committee. That inclusion will enable us to feel that we have a real involvement in the project. We would also want to publicise our involvement in this ground-breaking research and keep our members informed of the progress of the trial as it unfolds. A copy of the final report detailing the results of the trial would also be required at the completion of the pilot project. We would use those results to help develop SSAA deer related policy and for the information of our members.

At this stage commitment can only be made to funding of the pilot project. If the project is successful there may be scope to provide additional funding for future projects, however, no such commitment is guaranteed or implied. Formal funding agreements will obviously have to be drawn up before payments can be made, but SSAA is committed to providing the funding indicated.

SSAA Victoria sees this as a very worthwhile project and hope that it is successful in gaining AALC funding. We look forward to hearing from you in due course to discuss any issues that might need clarification and to finalise administrative details.

Yours sincerely,

David Laird
SSAA Victoria
Hunting Development Manager