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Making it easier to control deer

Farmers and hunters play a crucial role in management, writes **Guy Barnett**

THIS government is focused on a sensible balance between managing the impacts of wild deer on agricultural production, conservation areas and forestry, and maintaining deer as a valued recreational hunting resource.

Recreational hunting is an important tradition and way of life for many families.

The Tasmanian deer hunting season opened at the weekend, with hunters eager to travel across the state to regional areas and support local communities while they pursue this important traditional sport.

We recognise landholders and traditional hunters can play an important role in managing deer on both private and public land.

We support the positive role that responsible recreational hunters play in conservation and wildlife

hunting licences will still provide annual take returns to assist with monitoring deer numbers. This complements the first comprehensive statewide deer census which is under way using aerial surveying, camera traps and citizen science to inform deer management strategies.

This year, the Tasmanian Liberal Government has made four additional areas of reserved land available for the 2020 deer hunting season, bringing the number of reserves available to 10.

They are Tooms Lake Conservation Area, Buxton River Conservation Area, St



and wildlife management in a safe, regulated way that ultimately benefits our natural areas.

The Government has introduced new measures for the 2020 season, designed to cut red tape and increase opportunities for farmers and traditional hunters to manage deer populations.

As part of the management strategy, landholders will be provided with five-year crop protection permits for antlerless deer and quotas and tags will no longer be required for antlerless deer for holders of crop protection permits and recreational hunters. We have also significantly extended the hunting season for antlerless deer, which now runs from March to November.

The 2020 deer game season has two parts, an adult male (buck) component and antlerless (doe) component. The buck season opened on February 29 and runs until April 5. There is now one season for antlerless deer, from March 15 to November 15. No changes are being made to the management of male antlered deer.

Holders of crop protection permits and recreational



LAND CARE: A doe in the Midlands.

Pauls Regional Reserve and Castle Carey Regional Reserve.

Some limitations on access have been placed on all four reserves to minimise disturbance during breeding season for some species including wedge-tailed eagles, as well as providing for other recreational activities.

These areas were added after considerable community and stakeholder consultation and have been rigorously assessed through the Reserve Activity Assessment process.

Following bushfires, the St Pauls Regional Reserve is closed until further notice to ensure hunter safety is not compromised.

Similar to other reserves available for recreational hunting, access to the new reserves is managed through a ballot system, which this year attracted 562 individual applications.

Find more information at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/RGL

Lyons Liberal MHA Guy Barnett is Tasmanian Primary Industries and Water Minister.

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