

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Purick to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services:

#### **Water fowl hunting season**

In regards to the water fowl hunting season and the three main Top End hunting reserves of Howard Springs, Lambells Lagoon and Harrison's Dam:

- 1. How many incidences of illegal shooting were reported for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 years for each of the areas surrounding the three hunting reserves?**

One offence was identified/recorded (July 2014)<sup>1</sup> by the Northern Territory (NT) Police Force (NTPF). This offence was ultimately prosecuted by the Parks and Wildlife Commission NT (PWCNT) resulting in a \$400 fine.

Conservation Officers under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Act* may also exercise powers, including prosecution.

The PWCNT regularly receive complaints about 'shooting' in or near the reserves during the waterfowl season, primarily from the neighbouring residents. However, these are not confirmed or recorded as 'illegal' activities until Rangers have gathered evidence and assessed each case on its merit.

- 2. How many of these reports of illegal shooting resulted in a fine or relevant court action?**

The PWCNT have issued five penalty infringement notices (PINS) on top of the aforementioned prosecution, under section 14 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws for Possession of a Firearm on a Park or Reserve. One warning letter was issued and 27 verbal warnings were given for various other minor breaches to permit conditions in relation to the waterfowl hunting season.

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<sup>1</sup> A search of PROMIS was conducted for offences recorded (that could be construed as 'illegal shooting') under the following pieces of legislation: *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conversation Act*, *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws* and *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulations*.

**3. How many times did NT Police set up a road side checking operation leading into or out of the hunting reserves and how many incidences were there of unlicensed firearms or unlicensed shooters?**

The Palmerston and Rural Division, incorporating Humpty Doo Police, run annual joint police operations with rangers from the Parks and Wildlife Commission. These operations coincide with the commencement of waterfowl hunting seasons and focus on compliance checks relating to hunting, firearms and incorporating road safety.

The 2015 Waterfowl Hunting Season commenced on 23 September 2015, at 6.00am and concluded on 6 January 2016.

The 2016 Waterfowl Hunting Season commenced on 1 October 2016, at 6.00am and concludes on 23 December 2016.

Police operations were run for the commencement and oversight of both seasons. The NTPF, including Humpty Doo, Palmerston and the Water Police continue to provide proactive and reactive patrols in response to related incidents and have been working closely with residents in the vicinity of Middle Point and Lambells Lagoon in response to recent reports of illegal shooting and trespassing on private property.

A snapshot of police responses in 2015 and 2016 are as follows for the Humpty Doo Police district as it relates to Middle Point and Lambells Lagoon:

**2015 season**

- 1 x Animal Incident/Cruelty
- 4 x Firearms Incidents
- 1 x Firearm Offence
- 2 x Shots Fired
- 1 x Fisheries Offence
- 7 x Reassurance Patrols
- 1 x Stealing
- 2 x Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) Patrols
- 1 x Traffic Offence
- 6 x Random Breath Tests
- 20 x Traffic Apprehensions
- 2 x Water Police Patrols

**2016 season**

- 7 x Firearms Incidents
- 1 x Infringement (possess firearm on land without authority)
- 3 x Firearms Enquiries
- 5 x Shots Fired
- 11 x Reassurance Patrols
- 11 x TCG Patrols
- 2 x Disturbance Noise
- 2 x Disturbance Generals
- 1 x Trespass
- 9 x Traffic Apprehensions
- 2 x Water Police Patrols

Police continue to work closely with residents in the rural area and with the PWCNT to monitor and enforce lawful use of firearms, hunting restrictions, trespassing on private property and related traffic offences.

**4. At each of the road side checking operation for the two past years, how many hunters exceeded the bag limit and were issued with an infringement notice?**

The NTPF do not capture 'exceed bag limits' for waterfowl. However, the following infringement notices by police relating to firearm offences are as follows:

Command	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Darwin Metro Command	9	14	7	30
Northern Command	11	9	3	23
Southern Command	7	6		13
Total	27	29	10	66