

NATSHOOT: CODE OF CONDUCT - HUNTING

The Code, which follows serves as guideline for behaviour of Natshoot members in **the Hunt** (**RESPECT** is the key concept in this Code).

The Code constitutes an important part of the training and educational emphasis for Natshoot members in respect of Hunting.

This Code should be read together with the Natshoot Disciplinary Code.

This Code is centred on the principles of:

- **Respect for Life;**
- **Respect for Nature;**
- **Respect for the Law, and;**
- **Respect for Fellow Hunters, Land Owners and Fellow Conservationists.**

Natshoot members uphold this code with diligence, in sincerity and with responsible accountability

As Natshoot members we care about nature and it`s continued sustainable existence; and we show it by our direct and tangible contribution to the sustainable conservation of species and wildlife habitat by our responsible and accountable participation in The Hunt.

For the anti-hunter this is difficult to understand as s/he sees only the one animal which is hunted, without understanding the causality of the real economic cost in the conservation of diverse species and their habitat. Conservation is not free of charge and is not achieved by lip-service alone - as the anti-hunter seems to think ! It takes dedicated people with passion, commitment and a real love for nature, and millions of Rands, to enhance and maintain the status of our amazing wildlife populations in this country.

Although there is nothing wrong with it, perceived emotion towards nature makes no tangible nor effective contribution to conservation. As hunters we understand what love for nature means as we move in and with nature. As hunters we also know that love for nature entails the understanding, that in nature, the intricacies of life and the necessity of death, are prerequisites in ascertaining the preservation of future life.

As Natshoot members we declare that:

- all animals, including those perceived to be damage causing animals, are sentient creatures and should not suffer unnecessarily as a result of being hunted.
- we aim to always achieve the instantaneous kill of the quarry we hunt;
- we endeavour to ascertain that hunted quarry is retrieved (no matter how long it takes), but we understand with respect that there are times that this is just not possible, and;
- we ensure that hunted quarry is put to good use and not wasted.

Having positively identified our quarry, Natshoot members then take a shot only if they are sure:

- it is safe to do so;
- the firearm / cartridge combination is appropriate for the type and size of quarry;
- the target quarry is within personal range of shooting capability;
- the hunter is confident of bringing down the animal with one shot;
- the hunter is confident that s/he will be able to retrieve the hunted animal, and;
- that it is legal to do so

Therefore, Natshoot members can declare:

- we have respect for life;
- we have respect for nature and all she presents us with;
- we always respect the Law and ascertain that others in our hunting and/or shooting party do the same;
- we practise self-restraint and condemn killing sprees;
- we condemn any wastage of hunted game animals.;
- we avoid public displays of hunted animals;
- we do not compete in any form of competition which involves the killing of any animal for any prize;
- we keep our photos of our hunts for our private collections and display only those which show clear respect for dignity of quarry.

While on the shooting range or in the veldt, Natshoot members conduct themselves within the bounds of the following principles

Safety above all

No dead game animal or shooting target can ever compensate for a shooting friend being hurt or maimed or killed.

- Experienced hunters and shooters are aware where other hunters and shooters are at all times;
- We never shoot at an obscured object or at something we cannot make out clearly.
- We do not consume any alcohol before or during a hunt or a shoot.
- We perceive it as our responsibility and duty to immediately correct any transgression of safety rules or unsafe behaviour by anyone in our proximity – without prejudice and without fear or favour.

Conservation ethic

Because Hunting and the "Great Outdoors" cannot be separated, all true hunters are also true conservationists. NSA supports sustainable use as the cornerstone of effective conservation;

- Natshoot members underwrite the principles contained in the IUCN's World Conservation Strategy (1980 and later adaptations thereof);
- Natshoot members support the conservation of gamebirds as indicator species of the quality of the natural habitat;
- Natshoot members actively support the development of rural communities, based on the sustainable use of renewable natural resources in general and of game species in particular.

Knowledge of quarry and Law

- we strive to learn all ecological aspect of our quarry species;
- we always identify the animal before taking a shot, and;
- we obey the law and comply with all hunting proclamations and regulations.

Wounding of animals & Cruelty to animals (wild and domestic)

Natshoot members strive to improve their shooting skills on the shooting range and do not take shots at out-of-range game;

In the use of firearms for hunting, Natshoot members ascribe to the following prerequisites:

Appropriate calibre

A clean kill is caused by sufficient propulsion energy of the projectile and its striking force on the quarry's body, to penetrate and damage the well-protected and deep-lying vital organs. Using correct calibre in relation to size and range of quarry, is critical.

Know your firearm - only then will it serve you well !

Judge shooting distance

It is notoriously difficult to judge shooting distance well. One tends to under-estimate distance to quarry, especially as it increases. You need to know the distance to each animal you intend to harvest:

- to be sure you are capable of hitting it, and
- to make sure the calibre being used at that range will be lethal to the extent of resulting in a one-shot-kill.

Practise with objects at known range and with a rangefinder. Shoot at targets on the range at known distances. – within your personal range limit. Use trees or other features of known height to judge quarry range. Use a range finder by preference. Please do not shoot at game animals over distances you have not frequently practised shots over on the shooting range and over which you are confident to be accurate (the animal gives its life - we as hunters have to respect that).

Natshoot members never go into the hunting veldt without having ascertained that their firearms are properly sighted and ranged and without first having extensively trained on a shooting range (we also strive to always use any form of rest for our firearms before taking the shot in order to make doubly sure we achieve a one-shot-kill).

Shooting accuracy

If you cannot place your shot accurately and consistently on your quarry, chances are you will miss it completely (hopefully), but the quarry is likely to be wounded rather than being killed.

Practise on a variety of targets at varying distances until you are sure what your personal secure range of fire is. Practise on targets, not on live quarry.

Shoot within the limits of your personal skills and without ego

If you shoot beyond the range at which you can consistently kill your quarry, your shooting success will suffer, as will any animal you are shooting at. Every person has a maximum personal range limit within which s/he can consistently hit the quarry – you should not shoot beyond it. The “hope to hit” approach is irresponsible and does not show respect for your quarry. Determine your own range limits for consistently hitting your target – and shoot within them.

It is a serious debate if it is ethically justifiable to take shots at game animals further than 400m. There are very few (accent on few) who are capable to read wind and understand trajectory at that range. If you have not practised it numerous times, stay away from these kinds of shots on game animals (only the animal will suffer – ego has no place here as respect for life is always the criterion).

Shooting within the firearms' limits

For each type (i.e. size) of quarry there is a minimum calibre needed to ensure a clean kill. If you shoot with the wrong calibre, you are likely to wound and lose, rather than kill and retrieve. Select an appropriate calibre for your intended quarry, and do not shoot beyond the range at which the calibre is sure to deliver a clean kill.

Shooting doubles (wingshooting)

Do not shoot doubles (i.e. one bird with the one barrel and another with the other barrel). If you wound the second bird, you have no shot left to dispatch it effectively. The principle of hunting with compassion has precedence; thus, be able to use the second barrel on the same bird in case you have not brought it down with the first shot (barrel). This indicates the level of competence with which you should shoot and your understanding and adhering to the concept of respect for life.

Respect for landowners' rights and property

Natshoot members look after the land and their host's property.

- We make sure which species, and which gender may or may not be hunted and we adhere thereto.
- We close gates and do not start veldt fires.
- We believe in the farmer's and the guide's right to charge a fair price for the use of their facilities and services, and for hunting their game (or even to a share in the bag of gamebirds).

Putting something back

Natshoot members always put something back into their beloved activity of hunting and sport-shooting; and go out of their way to help young shots and hunters:

- They act responsibly and within the law and support the collective effort of their fraternity to promote the activity as well as the conservation of game species.
- They foster the spirit of goodwill and share the special magic of hunting as a cultural activity with hunters and sport-shooters all over the world.

No littering

Because of our respect for the environment, we do not litter. We clean up behind ourselves, and even the litter of others.

By Executive Order

1 March 2015