

## **Certification for licensed deer hunters**

### **Background**

- The Department grants some 4,700 licences annually to hunt deer during the Open Season. In March 2015 the Department along with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine published the report *Deer Management in Ireland – A Framework for Action* which includes policy recommendations relating to deer conservation and management. An Irish Deer Management Forum was established to implement the various actions listed in the Report.
- The Forum has issued a number of recommendations including a recommendation that mandatory certification of deer hunters should be introduced on a phased basis over a five year period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 for existing licensed deer hunters and that new deer hunters should have the required certification from 1 January 2018.

### **Minister's Position**

- The Minister acknowledges the importance of ensuring that deer hunting is carried out in a safe manner. In that context the Minister is considering how best to implement the recommendations of the group having regard to a range of factors including the fact that there are many hunters with many years of experience, knowledge and expertise and also the need to ensure and the most appropriate training and certification process would ultimately be implemented having regard to the most up-to-date safety, conservation and hunting considerations in taking account of both local and international best practice.
- In that regard the Minister is satisfied that the most appropriate course of action is to consider the introduction of an appropriate training and certification process for first time applicants for deer hunting licences to commence from a date which will be determined in due course but certainly no later than 2020.