

FACT SHEET

2018 Duck Hunting Season

Bag limit

In 2018, the duck season will be of normal length and bag limit however, the hunting of Blue-winged Shoveler will not be permitted.

- The bag limit is ten (10) game ducks per day, with **no Blue-winged Shoveler** permitted to be hunted.
- The duck season will commence on 17 March 2018 and close on 11 June 2018.

In response to continued low numbers, **Blue-winged Shoveler cannot be hunted** for the 2018 duck season. Game ducks that may be hunted in 2018 are Pacific Black Duck, Mountain Duck, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Wood Duck and Hardhead.

New opening times - opening weekend

On opening Saturday (17 March 2018) the season will open across the state at **09:00 am**.

On the opening Sunday (18 March 2018) the permitted time for hunting across the state will start at **08:00 am**.

Hunting ceases half an hour after sunset for every day of the season, including the opening weekend.

Hunting times - rest of the season

For the remainder of the season, duck hunting is permitted from half an hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset.

Download the *Game Hunting in Victoria* manual (www.gma.vic.gov.au) for details on how to calculate this or use the free *Game Hunting Victoria* phone App which can be downloaded from the iTunes Store or Google Play.

No hunting of Blue-winged Shoveler

Blue-winged Shoveler **cannot be hunted**, shot, taken or destroyed during the 2018 duck season.



Male (left) and female (right) Blue-winged Shoveler **cannot** be hunted in 2018

Make sure you can identify your ducks in the field. To maintain your identification skills, watch the GMA's Duck WISE video on the GMA website or pick up a copy from selected offices listed on the GMA website (www.gma.vic.gov.au).

No shooting of non-game species

Non-game species are occasionally shot when mistakenly identified or when flying among game birds. To avoid shooting non-game species:

- positively identify the target as a game species
- make sure the bird is within your effective shooting skills range
- target single birds or trailing birds – do not fire at lead birds or into flocks (this may injure other birds including non-game species).

Hunters should also be alert for Freckled Duck (appearance in flight is similar to Black Duck) as there is a total ban on the take of this threatened species. Please read our Freckled Duck Fact Sheet for more information at www.gma.vic.gov.au

Where can I hunt ducks?

Duck hunting is permitted in state forests, unoccupied Crown Land and State Game Reserves. Hunting is also permitted on leased and licensed Crown land or private land with permission of the leaseholder, licensee or land owner/manager respectively.

There are only three parks (Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, Cape Conran Coastal Park and Lake Albacutya Park) where duck hunting is allowed in designated areas. Go to the Parks Victoria website (www.parkweb.vic.gov.au) for further information.

Wetlands may be closed to hunting at certain times to protect concentrations of threatened species or colonies of breeding waterbirds. Wetlands can also be closed to provide refuge for waterbirds in dry conditions. Hunters should check the GMA website for the latest information.

New regulations

For responsible hunters recovering and using the game they have harvested is standard practice and is part of the enjoyment of sourcing, harvesting and consuming wild game.

However, some hunters make no attempt to retrieve the game birds they have hunted resulting in game wastage.

To ensure game birds are not wasted, game regulation changes will require hunters to immediately recover downed game birds after they are shot **and** to salvage at least the breast meat from harvested birds.

For further information, please visit the GMA website www.gma.vic.gov.au.

Make sure you have your licences

All hunters, including juniors (12-17 years), must hold a valid Game Licence endorsed to hunt duck. People less than 12 years old are not permitted to use a firearm and, therefore, are not permitted to hunt or take game.

When hunting duck, carry your current Game Licence endorsed for duck and Firearms Licence.

To obtain a Game Licence endorsed for duck, a hunter must first pass a Waterfowl Identification Test (WIT). Test exemptions exist for Junior Provisional and Non-resident of Australia Game Licences. In both cases, the hunter will require a relevant Firearms Licence and be under the direct supervision of a fully-licensed adult duck hunter. Full details can be found at www.gma.vic.gov.au.

Improve your chances

To improve your chances of bringing birds home and reducing the risk of wounding, practise the following:

- Pattern test your gun to ensure you are using the correct choke and shotshell combination to take the birds you are hunting (see Tom Roster's Lethality Table in the *Game Hunting in Victoria* manual)
- Only shoot at birds within your effective shooting skills distance (for most hunters this is within 30 metres)
- Don't hunt in areas where it is difficult to recover downed birds
- Use a well-trained gundog to retrieve downed birds
- Make sure you practice regularly to improve and maintain your shooting skills

Hunters can download a free copy of the *Be a better game bird hunter* handbook and introductory brochure from the GMA website. Visit the Shotgunning Education page at www.gma.vic.gov.au.



Compliance with game laws

There are heavy penalties if you breach the law, which may include losing your Game and Firearms Licences and/or your firearm or other hunting equipment. Make sure you obey our hunting laws to protect you and the game that you hunt.

Important regulations to remember

Hunting on private and public land

Game laws apply to both private and public land. Authorised Officers enforce the game laws on all land tenures.

Non-toxic shot

The use of lead shot for duck hunting is prohibited throughout Victoria. This includes duck hunting on all wetlands, waterways and dry lands on public and private land (there are some exemptions). Authorised Officers actively test hunters' shotgun ammunition during the season.

It is illegal to high-grade your ducks

High-grading involves reaching your bag limit then discarding or giving away ducks in order to take more ducks than the set bag limit. Hunters do this when they want to take a more preferred species or when they share their bag with someone else. You are only allowed to take the daily bag limit.

Retaining a fully-feathered wing

To ensure Authorised Officers can quickly and accurately identify all waterfowl in your possession, you must leave a fully-feathered wing on any harvested duck until immediately prior to cooking or the duck has been taken to your ordinary place of residence.

Hunting from a boat

On waterways (such as rivers, creeks, streams and channels), you are allowed to hunt duck from a boat under power, up to a speed of five knots. On open waters (such as lakes or swamps), you are not permitted to hunt duck from a motor boat if the motor is running, whether in gear or not.

All boat occupants must comply with Marine Safety Victoria boating safety requirements including wearing any required lifejackets while duck hunting from a boat. For detailed information, visit www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au

Report illegal hunting. Call 136 186.

The irresponsible or illegal behaviour of some can damage the reputation of hunters and create unsafe or unsustainable situations. It is important that hunters act responsibly and encourage the rest of the community to do the right thing. Don't tolerate illegal hunting. Call 136 186 or for emergencies call Victoria Police on 000.

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For more information about Game Management Authority go to www.gma.vic.gov.au