

Media release

11 March 2016

Five wetlands proposed for closure for the 2016 duck season

The Victorian Government is intending to close five wetlands to duck hunting this season to protect and provide refuge to significant numbers of threatened birds and to reinforce the status of two wetlands that are off limits to hunting.

Johnsons Swamp State Game Reserve near Kerang will be closed to hunting for the first four weeks of the season due to a significant presence of Australasian Bittern at the wetland. The presence of the Australasian Bittern will be closely monitored and the impact of hunting activity re-assessed in coming weeks. The wetland is currently scheduled to re-open to hunters on April 17.

Heywoods Lake State Game Reserve at Boundary Bend and Round Lake at Lake Boga will be closed to duck hunting as surveys coordinated by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning detected the presence of significant numbers of threatened Blue-billed Ducks.

Kow Swamp near Gunbower and Reedy Lakes at Kerang will be closed to reinforce their status as wildlife sanctuaries where hunting is prohibited.

Game Management Authority (GMA) CEO Greg Hyams said closing wetlands during duck season is a routine safeguard that ensures threatened species are not put at risk.

“Surveying bird numbers and closing wetlands where appropriate, helps ensure that rare and threatened species are protected while still enabling duck hunters to participate in their legitimate recreation,” Mr Hyams said.

“Any wetlands closed will continue to be monitored by government officials throughout the season and may be opened to hunting if circumstances change and the threatened birds move to other locations.”

“It is possible other wetlands will be closed this season and hunters should ensure they are aware of these before hunting by checking the GMA website or calling 136 186.”

The 2016 duck hunting season will last 12 weeks, opening on Saturday 19 March and closing on Monday 13 June.

The daily bag limit has been reduced to eight birds on the first day of the season and four birds per day for everyday thereafter. Also, the Blue-winged Shoveler must not be hunted in 2016.

Details of the 2016 duck season will be regularly updated on the Game Management Authority (GMA) website www.gma.vic.gov.au

Media contact: Nick Foster 0417 293 365