

# Media release

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## Hunters reminded to refresh their bird identification skills

The Game Management Authority is reminding hunters participating in the 2017 duck hunting season to plan ahead and refresh their bird identification skills before the season commences.

Game Management Authority (GMA) CEO Greg Hyams encourages all hunters to read the new Game Hunting in Victoria Manual and watch the Duck WISE video to refresh their bird identification skills. Hunters can also challenge themselves by doing the Waterfowl Identification Practice Test on the GMA website.

“We want to remind all hunters to ensure they are familiar with the restrictions to the 2017 duck season and have brushed up on their duck identification skills,” Mr Hyams said.

“Pockets of rare and threatened species are scattered throughout the state and hunters should be on the look out and take the time to positively identify their target.”

“The bag limit has been set at 10 birds per person per day but the hunting of the Blue-winged Shoveler, will be prohibited due to the continued low numbers of the species.”

“Seven of the eight species of game duck can be hunted during 2017. They are, Pacific Black Duck, Mountain Duck, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Wood Duck and Hardhead.”

“The Duck WISE video has valuable information on how to accurately distinguish game from non-game species, including how to identify key characteristics that set game species apart.”

“It also includes information on the Firearms Safety Code, how to handle firearms safely and how to hunt more effectively and efficiently.”

The Game Hunting in Victoria Manual containing duck hunting regulations and the Duck WISE video for maintaining waterbird identification skills are both available at the GMA'S website [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au)

Mr Hyams said hunters must be sure of their target before they pull the trigger, and if you are not sure, don't shoot.

“The illegal shooting of threatened species can put pressure on populations and hunters can incur a fine of more than \$37,000, up to two years imprisonment or both”, Mr Hyams said.

Penalties can also include a loss of Firearms or Game Licence and the forfeiture of any equipment, including firearms, used in the commission of an offence.

“Hunters should keep up to date with all the latest information on the hunting seasons, including any possible wetland closures, by regularly visiting the GMA's website.”

The GMA is working closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the field.

GMA Game Officers, other authorised officers and Victoria Police will be active throughout the state during the season to ensure hunters act in a safe and responsible manner.

People are encouraged to report any suspected illegal hunting to the GMA by calling 136 186 or online at [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au) or to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. Reports can be made anonymously.

Victoria's 2017 duck hunting season will open on Saturday 18 March and close on Monday 12 June.

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