

# Media release

31 March 2016

## Irresponsible duck hunting will not be tolerated

The Game Management Authority is warning hunters of the severe penalties they could face if caught breaking the law during the 2016 duck season.

Game Management Authority Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said a number of protected birds, including threatened Freckled Duck, were found dead after the opening weekend of duck hunting season at Lake Toolondo near Horsham.

“Hunters are a generally law-abiding group, but unfortunately there are some who choose to do the wrong thing,” Mr Hyams said.

“This sort of behavior will not be tolerated. Illegal hunting can put people and wildlife at risk and damages the reputation of hunting. There are heavy penalties for failing to comply with the state’s hunting laws.”

“For those hunters who choose to break the law, penalties could include jail terms, fines, forfeiture of equipment used in the commission of an offence, conviction and the loss of Game and Firearms Licences.”

“The illegal shooting of threatened species can put pressure on populations. Hunters must be sure of their target before they pull the trigger, and if you are not sure, don’t shoot. Illegally shooting Freckled Duck can incur a fine of more than \$36,000, up to two years imprisonment or both.”

The 2016 Victorian Hunting Guide containing current duck hunting regulations and the Duck WISE DVD for maintaining waterbird identification skills are both available at [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au). The GMA website also contains a wealth of other information to assist hunters in complying with the law.

Four wetlands have been closed for the 2016 season to protect threatened species, including: Round Lake at Lake Boga, Heywood Lake State Game Reserve at Boundary Bend, and Johnson Swamp State Game Reserve and Lake Elizabeth near Kerang. Kow Swamp near Gunbower and Reedy Lakes near Kerang are also closed to reinforce their sanctuary status.

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 this season.

Mr Hyams encourages all hunters to act responsibly and report any illegal hunting to the Authority by calling 136 186.

“I strongly encourage hunters and the broader public to report any suspected illegal activity they see to ensure hunting is conducted safely and responsibly,” Mr Hyams said.

“Hunters should not tolerate the illegal actions of the irresponsible few and I urge all responsible hunters to work with the Game Management Authority and Victoria Police to stamp out this illegal behavior.”

“The Game Management Authority works closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behavior in the field through the Respect: Hunt Responsibly initiative.”

Authorised officers and Victoria Police will continue to be active throughout the state to ensure hunters act in a safe and lawful manner. Closed wetlands may be re-opened or further wetlands closed

throughout the season. Hunters are advised to check the GMA website for updates prior to hunting at [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au)

The Game Management Authority is currently investigating the incident at Lake Toolondo.

**Media contact: Nick Foster 0417 293 365**