

# Media release

Friday, 10 March, 2017

## Four wetlands set to close for the opening of the 2017 duck season

Three wetlands will be closed and another will be partially closed for the start of the open season on March 18.

The following wetlands or parts of wetlands will be closed from the start of the 2017 season to protect or provide refuge for significant numbers of threatened birds:

- Lake Natimuk and Natimuk Creek Lake Reserve (north west of the township of Natimuk): will be closed to hunting due to a large number of Freckled Duck.
- Lake Muirhead State Game Reserve (35 km south west of Ararat): will be closed to hunting due to a significant number of Brolga which are flocking prior to the breeding season.
- Big Reedy Lagoon State Game Reserve (8 km north west of Yarrowonga): will be closed to hunting due to a significant number of Great Egret.
- Tower Hill State Game Reserve (13 km north west of the township of Warrnambool): will be partially closed to hunting due to a significant number of Blue-billed Duck. The western half of the lake will be closed to hunting but the eastern half will remain open to hunting.

As in previous years, Kow Swamp near Gunbower and Reedy Lakes at Kerang will be closed for the entire season 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 safeguard that ensures risks to threatened species are managed.

“Surveying bird numbers and closing wetlands where appropriate helps ensure that rare and threatened species are protected. It’s part of our shared responsibility to ensure that hunting in Victoria is conducted respectfully and responsibly,” Mr Hyams said.

“Government officials will continue to monitor the four wetlands closed throughout the season. These wetlands may be opened to hunting if circumstances change and the number of threatened birds reduces or they move to other locations.”

“Hunters can check for any closures before they depart for their hunt by visiting the GMA website.”

Victoria’s 2017 duck season opens on Saturday, 18 March and closes on Monday, 12 June.

The bag limit is 10 birds per person per day and the hunting of the Blue-winged Shoveler is prohibited in 2017 due to the continued low numbers of the species.

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

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