

## FACT SHEET

# No hunting of Blue-winged Shoveler for the 2018 duck season

Blue-winged Shoveler (Australasian Shoveler) cannot be hunted for the 2018 duck season. The information below will remind you of the key distinguishing features to look out for in the Blue-winged Shoveler.

**Importantly, if you are not sure, don't shoot.** The penalties for illegally shooting protected species and Shoveler could include a substantial fine, imprisonment or both.

## Appearance

The Blue-winged Shoveler is a distinctive species with a slender build and a broad, blue-grey bill. **Male and female Shovelers have different plumage**, with the male being more colourful than the female.

In breeding condition, the male has a shiny blue-green head, white face crescent in front of a yellow eye, black back, blue patch on the upperwing, a distinct white patch on the rump and deep chestnut-coloured flanks and belly. Outside the breeding season this colouring fades and becomes dull. The male also has bright yellow/orange legs and is the only native duck to do so.

The female Shoveler lacks the bright colouring of the male and is predominantly brown with a fawn-coloured belly. Females also have the blue patch on the upperwing.

## In flight

The Blue-winged Shoveler flies quickly, erratically and often in tight formation when flying in a flock.

It has very quick wing beats with a distinctive whirring sound. In good light, the blue upper wing patch is obvious in both males and females and is fringed with white. Beneath the wing, the front feathers are white and clearly contrast with its darker rear feathers and belly (see diagram over the page).

The Blue-winged Shoveler has a distinct profile with a relatively short tail and long bill and head, which gives it a front heavy appearance. At relatively close range you can clearly see the distinctive wedge-shaped bill of the Shoveler.

## On the water

On the water, the Blue-winged Shoveler is a medium-sized duck which floats low. The large shovel-shaped bill, which gives the bird its name, finishes flush with the top of its head making it wedge-shaped in appearance. The male also has a white patch on its rump.





## Tips for identifying Blue-winged Shoveler

- Quick and erratic flight
- Large shovel-shaped bill
- Blue patch on the upperwing
- White underwing
- Yellow/orange legs
- Found in well vegetated freshwater or saline swamp.

## Habitat and distribution

The Blue-winged Shoveler is an uncommon duck which is distributed throughout south-eastern and south-western Australia.

Shovelers prefer permanent, well-vegetated, freshwater or saline wetlands with areas of open water and are usually found in inland cumbungi swamps and coastal tea-tree swamps.

Blue-winged Shovelers are seldom heard but do have a soft chatter when flying.

To see high-definition video footage of the Blue-winged Shoveler and other waterfowl species, visit the GMA website and go to the Education section to find the DuckWISE education videos ([www.gma.vic.gov.au/education/duck-wise](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au/education/duck-wise))

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