

Media release

10 May 2016

Lake Elizabeth set to open to duck hunting

Lake Elizabeth State Game Reserve near Kerang is set to open tomorrow for the 2016 duck hunting season.

The lake was previously closed to hunting after surveys by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Game Management Authority detected the presence of a significant number of threatened Blue-billed Ducks.

Regular monitoring of the Lake revealed that threatened Blue-billed Duck numbers have declined significantly and the area is now appropriate for duck hunting prior to the close of the season on 13 June.

Johnson Swamp State Game Reserve and Part of Lake Toolondo Reservoir are still closed for the 2016 season to protect rare, vulnerable or threatened species and Kow Swamp near Gunbower and Reedy Lakes near Kerang will remain closed to reinforce their sanctuary status.

All closed wetlands will continue to be monitored by government officials throughout the season and may be opened to hunting if circumstances change and the threatened birds decline significantly or move to other locations.

Hunters are reminded that the daily bag limit is four birds for the remainder of the duck season and to be vigilant of the Blue-winged Shoveler at Lake Elizabeth as it must not be hunted in 2016.

The Blue-winged Shoveler has been prohibited for hunting this season, given the low population numbers caused by continuing drought conditions across eastern Australia.

Heavy penalties will be imposed on anyone caught taking, hunting or responsible for the illegal destruction of the Blue-winged Shoveler including fines up to \$3,790, loss of Game and/or Firearms Licence, forfeiture of equipment (including firearms) and a criminal record if found guilty in court.

Hunters must positively identify their target before they pull the trigger. The 2016 Victorian Hunting Guide containing current duck hunting regulations and the Duck WISE DVD which assists hunters in maintaining their waterbird identification skills are both available at www.gma.vic.gov.au

The GMA website also contains a wealth of other information to assist hunters in complying with the law.

Authorised officers and Victoria Police will continue to be active throughout the state to ensure hunters act in a safe and lawful manner.

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