

# Media release

Friday, 17 October, 2017

## **No hunting from motor boats allowed at Lake Linlithgow during duck season**

The use of motor boats for duck hunting will be prohibited at Lake Linlithgow near Hamilton during the 2017 duck season to help protect a significant population of threatened birds discovered in the area.

Game Management Authority (GMA) Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said the decision comes after surveys conducted by the GMA identified significant numbers of Blue-billed Ducks at the lake.

“Following advice from a member of the public, a recent survey by GMA staff confirmed a significant concentration of between 500-600 threatened Blue-billed Ducks at Lake Linlithgow,” Mr Hyams said.

“Blue-billed Ducks like deep open water and are using the middle of this very large lake. Given the wetland is approximately 4km long and about 3.5km wide, the major threat to the birds is from hunters who can venture out into the centre of the lake by motor boat.”

Mr Hyams said while regulations prohibit the hunting of ducks on the open water from a moving motor boat, hunters can legally hunt from a motor boat while drifting or anchored.

“While the natural tendency of the birds is to avoid disturbance by swimming away or diving, hunters in motor boats can reach the birds and could mistakenly shoot them or cause them to fly which could then expose them to hunting.”

“Given this, the use of motor boats for duck hunting has been prohibited at the lake this year or until such time as the birds reduce in number or leave the area.”

While the use of motor boats for hunting will be prohibited, hunters will still be able to hunt from the approximately 13 kilometres of shoreline and use unpowered vessels, such as sneaker punts, to recover downed birds.

This helps minimise the possibility of birds not being recovered if they fall in areas that can't be waded.

“While the use of motor boats will be prohibited, hunting can still continue around the lake shoreline while giving an increased level of protection to Blue Billed ducks.”

“Surveying bird numbers and amending hunting arrangements 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.

The 2017 duck hunting season will open this Saturday at 7.10am in the eastern zone, 7.20am in the central zone and 7.30am in the western zone, and close half an hour after sunset on Monday 12 June.

Hunters are strongly advised to refresh their waterbird identification skills by watching the educational video Duck WISE and reading the new Game Hunting in Victoria hunting manual. Hunters can also challenge themselves by taking the online waterfowl identification practice test. All of these resources can be found at <http://www.gma.vic.gov.au>

A full bag of ten ducks is permitted during the season, however, 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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