

# Media release

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## Melbourne man fined for illegal hunting during 2016 duck season

A man from Cairnlea in Melbourne's western suburbs has been found guilty in the Geelong Magistrates Court of destroying protected wildlife during the 2016 duck season.

The man was ordered to pay a donation of \$500 to Wildlife Victoria and placed on a Good Behaviour Bond after he pleaded guilty to shooting a Blue-winged Shoveler at Lake Connearre State Game Reserve, near Geelong, in March.

Normally part of a hunter's bag, the Blue-winged Shoveler was prohibited from being hunted during the 2016 duck season after assessments prior to the season identified low numbers of the species.

Game Management Authority (GMA) Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said his officers investigated the incident after receiving video footage.

"Anyone who witnesses suspected illegal hunting activity should report it," Mr Hyams said.

"Thanks to the footage provided and our own intelligence and further investigation, GMA Game Officers were able to identify the man involved in the incident. On questioning, he admitted to shooting the prohibited duck."

"It is critical that hunters maintain the highest behavioural standards, comply with the law and continue to meet the community's expectations concerning their conduct when hunting."

Mr Hyams said there are heavy penalties for people caught hunting prohibited species or not hunting responsibly.

"Hunters caught breaking the law can have their Game and Firearms Licences cancelled and the courts can impose fines, forfeit equipment and even impose terms of imprisonment," Mr Hyams said.

Mr Hyams said all hunters must pass the Waterfowl Identification Test prior to receiving a Game Licence to hunt game ducks, so there is no excuse for shooting protected species.

"The Waterfowl Identification Test is now available in HD video and there is a practice test on the GMA website so hunters can practice before sitting the test and revise regularly to maintain their identification skills," Mr Hyams said.

"The GMA's website <http://www.gma.vic.gov.au> also has *A Guide to Australian Waterfowl* which includes diagrams on Victoria's game ducks with important information on their distribution, habitat, and colour diagrams of key identifying features, including images of game ducks in flight."

"The GMA has also released the Duck Wise DVD which contains important information and high quality video footage on how to identify game ducks in the field and hunt proficiently and safely."

"All hunters must clearly identify their birds before shooting act responsibly and observe all relevant laws. If you are NOT SURE, DON'T SHOOT."

The GMA strongly encourages hunters and members of the public to report suspected illegal hunting activity. Reports can be made by calling 136 186 or online through the GMA website [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au) Reports can be made anonymously although it assists Game Officers in their investigations if there is a point of contact.

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