

Media release

8 April 2016

Part of Toolondo Reservoir closed to duck hunting

The Victorian Government is intending to close the east lake at Toolondo Reservoir to duck hunting to protect a significant number of threatened Freckled Duck.

The east lake will be closed to duck hunting as surveys coordinated by the Game Management Authority detected the presence of significant numbers of Freckled Ducks there.

Game Management Authority (GMA) CEO Greg Hyams said with the low water levels, the reservoir, which is usually a single water body when full, had receded to form three distinct lakes, north, south and east. It is the east lake that will be closed to hunting and the other two will remain open.

Mr Hyams said monitoring and closing wetlands is part of the routine approach to ensure threatened species are not put at risk.

“Surveying bird numbers and closing wetlands where appropriate helps ensure that rare and threatened species are protected while still enabling duck hunters to participate in their legal recreation,” Mr Hyams said.

“As part of regular monitoring of the site, a survey on Tuesday of this week showed that the number of Freckled Duck present had increased to a significant number which required intervention.”

Mr Hyams said that while the north and south lakes remained open to hunting, hunters are warned to clearly identify their target before shooting.

“The GMA has erected signs at the site advising hunters of the presence of Freckled Duck and it, together with partner agencies and Victoria Police, will be conducting regular enforcement patrols and surveillance”, Mr Hyams said.”

“There are heavy penalties for shooting Freckled Duck including a fine of more than \$36,000, up to two years imprisonment or both.”

“Wetlands will continue to be monitored by government officials throughout the season and may be opened or closed to hunting if circumstances change and threatened birds move to other locations.”

“It is possible other wetlands will be closed this season and hunters should ensure they are aware of these before hunting by checking the GMA website or calling 136 186.”

The 2016 duck hunting season will close on Monday 13 June. The daily bag limit has been reduced to four birds per day for the remainder of the season and the Blue-winged Shoveler must not be hunted in 2016.

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

Hunters are advised to check the GMA website for updates prior to hunting at www.gma.vic.gov.au

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