

Media release

13 March 2015

Victorian duck hunters reminded to hunt safely this season

The current dry conditions across Victoria will see many hunters turning to creeks and rivers in addition to the state's traditional wetland hunting grounds to hunt ducks this season.

Game Management Authority (GMA) CEO Greg Hyams said hunters need to act safely and responsibly at all times while hunting and appreciate the differences when hunting on rivers and creeks.

"Safety is the number one priority. Anyone hunting ducks must act safely and legally to ensure their actions do not put the safety of themselves or others at risk," Mr Hyams said.

"All hunters must adhere to the provisions of the *Firearms Act 1996* and the Victorian Firearms Safety Code when handling firearms and must insist anyone who is hunting with them does the same."

"Hunters failing to comply with the law may incur heavy penalties if found damaging property, using firearms in a dangerous manner or shooting on or across private property without the landowner's permission."

"The risks are heightened when hunting along creeks or rivers as many of these waterways are within close proximity to private land and shot can fall out onto private property if hunters are not vigilant about where they are shooting."

"Penalties for using firearms in a dangerous manner or damaging private property can incur a maximum penalty of approximately \$17,700 or up to two years imprisonment."

"Shooting onto or across private property without landowner permission can incur a maximum penalty of approximately \$8,850 or up to 12 months imprisonment. Hunters could also lose their Firearms Licence and firearms if found guilty of an offence."

Mr Hyams encouraged all hunters to read the GMA's 2015 Victorian Hunting Guide and watch the new Duck WISE video to refresh their knowledge of the Firearms Safety Code and how to handle their firearms safely.

The Duck WISE video has valuable information on waterfowl identification and how to hunt more effectively and efficiently in the field. Duck WISE can be viewed at the GMA's website www.gma.vic.gov.au

The Game Management Authority is working closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behavior in the field. Hunters are encouraged to hunt responsibly, respect other land users and educate young and new hunters.

Victoria's 2015 duck hunting season will open on March 21 and close on 8 June 2015.

Notes

Victoria Police's Licensing and Regulation Division is responsible for regulating the Victorian firearm industry and administering the *Firearms Act 1996*. This involves assessing applications for firearm licences, permits and authorities, as well as ensuring that people who possess, carry, use or work with firearms do so in a way that is legal and safe.

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