

# Media release

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## **Thornbury man penalized for hunting protected waterbird and littering**

A man from Thornbury has been found guilty in the Hamilton Magistrates Court of two hunting-related offences committed at Lake Bullrush during the opening of the 2015 duck hunting season.

The man was fined and placed on a Good Behavior Bond after he pled guilty to hunting protected wildlife and littering after he was caught shooting a Musk Duck and discarding a spent shell into the water.

Game Management Authority (GMA) Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said there are heavy penalties for not hunting responsibly.

“All hunters must clearly identify their birds before shooting and respect Victoria’s hunting wetlands. If you are NOT SURE, DON’T SHOOT,” Mr Hyams said.

“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 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 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 the 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.”

“Hunters are encouraged to hunt responsibly, respect other land users and respect the environment.”

Mr Hyams said hunters more than anyone know the importance of healthy habitats for healthy wildlife populations. Degradation of wetlands, including through littering, can reduce duck populations and hunting opportunities.

“Hunters must care for the environment and make sure they remove all spent shotgun shells and any other rubbish from the areas they hunt in.”

The GMA is working closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behavior in the field through the RESPECT: Hunt Responsibly program.

For more information on game hunting in Victoria and to view the Duck Wise Video, visit [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au)

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