

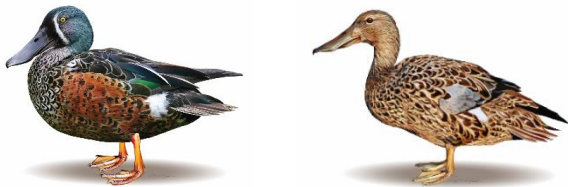
FACT SHEET

2025 Duck Season

Bag limit, season length and species

In 2025, the duck season will be 83 days in length, with a bag limit of nine game ducks per day. Hunting the Blue-winged Shoveler is not permitted. The season arrangements are:

- The duck season will open at 8am on Wednesday 19 March 2025 and close 30 minutes after sunset on Monday 9 June 2025.
- The start time is 8am for the first five days of the season, and 30 minutes before sunrise thereafter.
- The closing time is 30 minutes after sunset for every day of the season.
- The bag limit is nine game ducks per day for the entire season.
- The Blue-winged Shoveler **must not** be hunted.



Male (left) and female (right) Blue-winged Shoveler

Be sure to positively identify your target. If you are NOT SURE, DON'T SHOOT.

To maintain your identification skills, watch the GMA's Duck WISE video on the GMA website and complete the practise test. You can view or download Duck WISE on the GMA [YouTube channel](#).

Game ducks that may be hunted in 2025 are Pacific Black Duck, Mountain Duck, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Wood Duck and Hardhead.

Hunting times

For the first five days of the 2025 duck season, hunting starts at 8am. From the sixth day (24 March 2025) until the end of the season, the start time is 30 minutes before sunrise. Hunting finishes 30 minutes after sunset each

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day. Download the [Game Hunting in Victoria](#) manual for details on how to calculate sunrise and sunset times at your hunting location. Alternatively, there are sunrise / sunset apps available that will calculate these times for you. Make sure the times are specific to the date and place you are hunting.

No shooting of non-game species

Heavy penalties apply for the illegal shooting of non-game species. To avoid shooting non-game species:

- positively identify the target as a game species
- make sure the bird is within your maximum shooting skills distance (up to 30 metres for most hunters)
- target single or trailing birds or birds to the side of a flock – do not fire at lead birds or into flocks. Shooting into flocks may strike other birds including non-game species.

Hunters should be alert to the potential presence of threatened species, including the Blue-winged Shoveler and Freckled Duck. Freckled Duck may be confused with game ducks. They will also fly with flocks of game ducks. In flight, the Freckled Duck can appear similar to Black Duck and Hardhead. Freckled Duck and Blue-winged Shoveler must not be shot.

Please read the [Freckled Duck Fact Sheet](#) and Blue-winged Shoveler Fact Sheet for more information.

Where can I hunt ducks?

Duck hunting is permitted on a range of public land types, including State Forest, unoccupied Crown land and State Game Reserves and some water storage areas. Hunting is also permitted on leased and licensed Crown land and private land with permission of the landowner / manager. Hunting in grazing licence areas in State forest in eastern Victoria does not, however, require permission of the licensee. For more information about hunting on leased and licenced Crown land, contact The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) on 136 186.

Download the [More to Explore](#) app for maps of public lands that are open to duck hunting. There are three parks where duck hunting is allowed in designated areas (Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, Cape Conran Coastal Park and Lake Albacutya Park). Visit the Parks Victoria website for more information at parks.vic.gov.au. Contact the relevant water authority or land manager for information on hunting at water storages.

Wetlands closed to hunting or additional restrictions

Wetlands or parts of wetlands may be closed to hunting at certain times to protect concentrations of rare or threatened species or colonies of breeding waterbirds. Alternately, restrictions on hunting methods (e.g. no hunting from boats) may be imposed.

Regularly check the [GMA website](#) for details of wetland closures or additional restrictions on hunting.

Make sure you have your licences

All hunters, including juniors, must hold a valid Game Licence endorsed to hunt duck and a current Firearms Licence. People younger than 12 years old are not permitted to use a firearm and are not permitted to hunt or take game ducks.

To obtain a Game Licence endorsed for duck, hunters must first pass the Waterfowl Identification Test (WIT). Test exemptions exist for Junior Provisional and Non-resident of Australia Game Licences. In both cases, hunters require a relevant Firearms Licence and must be under the direct supervision of a fully-licensed adult duck hunter.

From 2025, all new Victorian Gamebird Licence applicants must complete online education modules and pass a knowledge test.

To access and complete the online education modules and knowledge test, prospective gamebird hunters must first register for a MyGL account.

From 2026, all existing gamebird hunters must complete the relevant education modules upon their next licence renewal or reapplication.

Existing duck hunters do not need to repeat the Waterfowl Identification Test upon renewal.

For more information, visit [Licensing](#).

Compliance with game laws

Duck hunters failing to comply with season arrangements, regulations and hunting laws may face significant penalties, have their equipment seized or forfeited, and lose their Game Licence and their Firearms Licence. Make sure you keep up to date with the current laws by regularly checking the GMA website.

Other important regulations

Recovery and salvage laws

Once a bird is downed, a hunter must focus on that bird only and make all reasonable efforts to retrieve it immediately. Hunters must not continue to shoot at other birds once a bird has been downed and must immediately dispatch game that is still alive when recovered.

Hunters must salvage at least the breast meat from all harvested game ducks. If a hunter decides not to keep and take home the whole duck, they are required to recover at least both breasts of the harvested bird. A fully-feathered wing must remain attached to the breast/s (see below for more detail).

Hunters must remain in possession of the duck or duck breasts until immediately prior to cooking or until it is taken home.

For further information, including how to humanely dispatch a downed duck, please visit the [GMA website](#).

Hunting on private and public land

Game laws apply to both private and public land. Authorised officers can access and enforce the game laws on all land tenures.

Non-toxic shot

The possession and use of lead shot while hunting gamebirds, including ducks, is prohibited throughout Victoria.

This includes duck hunting on all wetlands, waterways and dry lands on public and private land (with some exemptions). Authorised Officers can test hunters' shotgun ammunition in the field.

It is illegal to high-grade your ducks

High-grading is not permitted. High-grading involves reaching the daily bag limit then discarding or giving away ducks to continue hunting. Some hunters do this when they want to take a more preferred species or

when they share their bag with someone else. Hunters can only shoot nine ducks per day in 2025.

Retaining a fully-feathered wing

To ensure Authorised Officers can quickly and accurately identify all waterbirds in a hunter's possession, hunters must leave a fully-feathered wing on any harvested duck until immediately prior to cooking or the duck has been taken to the place of residence. If a hunter chooses to breast their birds, a fully-feathered wing must remain attached to each breast if they are separated. If they are not separated, one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to the joined breasts.

Hunting from a boat

On waterways (such as rivers, creeks and streams), hunters can hunt ducks from a boat under power, up to a speed of five knots. On open waters (such as lakes or swamps), hunters are not permitted to hunt ducks from a motorboat if the motor is running, whether in gear or not.

All boat occupants must comply with Maritime Safety Victoria boating safety requirements, including wearing any required lifejackets. For detailed information, visit [Transport Safety Victoria](#).

Be responsible and REDUCE wounding

The GMA promotes responsibility and sustainability in game hunting in Victoria. To be a responsible hunter and to reduce the risk of wounding game ducks, all hunters should:

- pattern test their shotgun to ensure they are using the correct choke and shotshell combination for the specific birds being hunted
- practice regularly to improve and maintain shooting skills
- use decoys and calls to attract birds within effective shooting range
- not skybust (shoot at birds at excessive ranges) and only shoot at birds within your personal shooting skills distance, which for most hunters is no more than 30 metres. Duck callers and decoys can bring the birds within range
- have a retrieval strategy and don't hunt in areas where it is difficult to retrieve downed birds. Use a well-trained and [approved gundog breed](#) to retrieve downed birds
- practise and use the recommended humane dispatch methods in the [Guidelines for the humane dispatch of downed ducks](#)

- read the [Be a better game bird hunter](#) handbook and introductory brochure on the GMA website for tips and techniques for how to effectively and efficiently hunt and reduce wounding
- attend the [Gamebird Hunting Essentials Masterclass](#) run by Field and Game Australia and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Vic).

Report illegal hunting and public safety law breaches - call 136 186

It is important that hunters act responsibly by complying with hunting laws and encouraging other hunters to do the right thing. Non-hunters must comply with public safety laws to ensure the safety of Authorised Officers, hunters and themselves throughout the duck season.

Under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024, unauthorised and unlicensed persons cannot access specified hunting areas during the first five days of the duck hunting season until 11:00 am each day or after two hours before sunset. This restriction applies to waters of any State Game Reserve and of hunting areas described in Schedule 7 to the Regulations, as well as land within 25 metres of the shore of those waters. The adjustment has been made to align with the later start times for hunting of 8:00 am for the first five days of the season. For the remainder of the season, unauthorised and unlicensed persons can access the areas from 10:00 am and until two hours before sunset. For more information, visit [Public safety on wetlands](#).

Irresponsible or illegal behaviour will not be tolerated. Only those people who are authorised (e.g. hold an appropriate Game and Firearms Licence) may be on specified hunting areas during prohibited times or approach to within less than 10 metres of a hunter, regardless of whether they are hunting ducks or not. No-one may hinder, harass, interfere with or obstruct a hunter, regardless of whether a person holds an appropriate Game and Firearm Licence.

People are urged to report illegal hunting and breaches of public safety laws to the GMA through its website at gma.vic.gov.au, the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186 or by contacting Victoria Police.