

FACT SHEET

No hunting of Blue-winged Shoveler

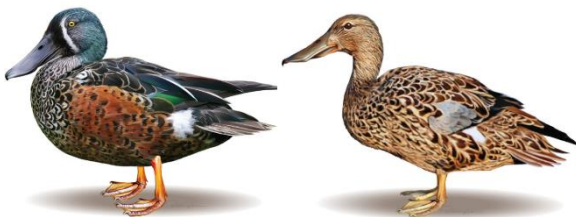
Blue-winged Shoveler (*Spatula rhynchotis*) cannot be hunted during the duck season in Victoria.

In 2021, the species was listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the Wildlife (Game) Regulations in 2024 introduced a year-round close season. The information below will remind you of the key distinguishing features to look out for in the Blue-winged Shoveler.

Importantly, if you are NOT SURE, DON'T SHOOT. The penalties for illegally shooting protected species could include a substantial fine, imprisonment or both.

Appearance

The Blue-winged Shoveler is a distinctive species with a slender build and broad, blue-grey bill. Male and female Shovelers have different plumage, with the male being more colourful than the female.



Male

Female

When in breeding condition, the male has a shiny blue-green head, white face crescent in front of a yellow eye, black back, blue patch on the upperwing, a distinct white patch on the rump and deep chestnut-coloured flanks and belly. Outside the breeding season, this colouring fades and becomes dull. The male also has bright yellow/orange legs and is the only native duck to do so.

The female Shoveler lacks the bright colouring of the male and is predominantly brown with a fawn-

coloured belly. Females also have the blue patch on the upperwing. They also have yellow/orange



Female

Male

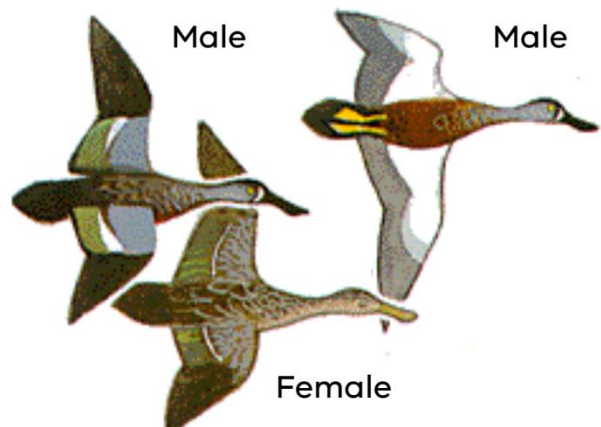
legs, which may be more drab in colour than the males. Immature birds resemble females.

In flight

The Blue-winged Shoveler flies quickly, erratically and often in tight formation when flying in a flock.

It has very quick wing beats with a distinctive whirring sound. In good light, the upper wing patch is obvious in both males and females and is fringed with white. Beneath the wing, the front feathers are white and clearly contrast with its darker rear feathers and belly.

The Blue-winged Shoveler has a distinct profile with a relatively short tail and long bill and head, which gives it a front-heavy appearance. At relatively close range, you can clearly see the distinctive wedge-shaped bill of the Shoveler.



Male

Male

Female

On the water

On the water, the Blue-winged Shoveler is a medium-sized duck which floats low. The large shovel-shaped bill, which gives the bird its name, finishes flush with the top of its head making it wedge-shaped in appearance. The male also has a white patch on its rump.



Habitat and distribution

The Blue-winged Shoveler is an uncommon duck which is distributed throughout south-eastern and south-western Australia.

Shovelers prefer permanent, well-vegetated freshwater or saline wetlands with areas of open water and are usually found in inland cumbungi swamps and coastal tea-tree swamps.

Blue-winged Shovelers are seldom heard but do have a soft chatter when flying.

To see high definition video footage of the Blue-winged Shoveler and other waterfowl species, visit the GMA website and go to the Education section to find the DuckWISE education videos, or visit: gma.vic.gov.au/education/duck-hunting-education/duck-wise-education-video

Tips for identifying Hardhead

- Quick and erratic flight
- Large shovel-shaped bill
- Blue patch on upper wing
- White underwing
- Yellow/orange legs
- Male has a yellow eye
- Found in well-vegetated freshwater or saline swamp.

Penalties

The Blue-winged Shoveler is listed as a threatened species under Victoria's *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. It is a serious offence to hunt, take or destroy threatened wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

The penalty for doing so is a fine up to the value of 240 penalty units or 24 months imprisonment, or both. Remember, if you are not sure, don't shoot.

Hunting on private and public land

Game laws apply to both private and public land. Authorised Officers and Victoria Police will enforce the game laws on all land classifications.

Report illegal hunting

To report illegal hunting, visit gma.vic.gov.au and complete the online form or call 136 186.

Hunters and members of the community are urged to report illegal hunting to the GMA. People breaching game hunting or public safety laws may face significant fines and penalties, including court prosecution and criminal conviction.

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For more information about Game Management Authority go to www.gma.vic.gov.au