

Victorian Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count, 2026

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Summary

Context:

The Victorian Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count is a statewide survey of game ducks and other selected waterbird species on popular duck hunting wetlands. It is conducted each year in the lead up to the Victorian duck hunting season.

The information gathered is used to inform management decisions including where further regulation of hunting may be required at specific wetlands during the forthcoming duck hunting season.

The start date of the hunting season sets the timetable for conducting the priority waterbird count. The count occurs as close as possible to the opening week of duck hunting season to allow adequate time for management decisions to be made prior to the season opening. In 2026, the Victorian duck hunting season took place between 18 March and 8 June 2026, so this year's Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count was conducted between 6 and 21 February 2026.

Aims:

The Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count (DSPWC) gathers count, location, and breeding data about game ducks, threatened species and breeding waterbird species to inform management decisions regarding the forthcoming duck hunting season. Specifically, the aims are to:

1. Identify wetlands that are open to hunting and are supporting significant numbers of threatened or rare waterbirds.
2. Identify cases of local breeding by waterbirds, particularly colony-breeding species.
3. Provide details on the distribution and numbers of game and priority non-game species of waterbirds on wetlands open to hunting.

Methods:

A total of 133 priority wetlands were identified across Victoria for assessment between 6 and 21 February 2026. A further fourteen non-priority wetlands were also surveyed by the Game Management Authority (GMA) and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) staff during the 2026 DSPWC survey period to check if they were supporting large numbers exceeding the disturbance trigger thresholds of Menkhorst and Thompson (2022) or active waterbird breeding.

Results:

In 2026, the total count of ducks belonging to the eight game species¹ was lower than the previous two years and just below the average since the DSPWC began in 2015 (excluding pandemic-affected counts in 2020 and 2021), but similar to counts observed in 2023.

There were more dry wetlands (i.e. those holding less than 5% water) than last year with 66% of wetlands categorised as dry compared to 49% in 2025 and 25% in 2024. The proportion of dry wetlands was >70% in all regions except Gippsland.

The species that most commonly exceeded trigger thresholds for management consideration (as specified in Menkhorst and Thompson 2022) during the DSPWC were Australasian Shoveler (*Spatula rhynchotis*) and Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*).

Conclusions and Implications:

The 2026 DSPWC identified a number of wetlands supporting threatened and disturbance-sensitive waterbird species at levels meeting trigger thresholds for management consideration.

Lower game duck counts recorded during the survey are likely to reflect hydrological conditions influencing waterbird distribution, rather than indicating a statewide decline in abundance.

The results demonstrate the continuing value of the DSPWC for identifying wetlands that may require additional management attention immediately prior to the duck hunting season.

¹ There are eight Australian native waterfowl species that are declared to be 'game' under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. However, the Australasian Shoveler has a prescribed year-round close season under the *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024* and cannot be hunted.

1 Introduction

Annual counts of waterbirds in the lead-up to the opening of duck hunting season have been conducted at wetlands across Victoria since 1987. The counts were initiated following a recommendation from a review of the management of duck hunting within the state (Loyn 1989, 1991).

Between 1987 and 2014, the purpose of the counts (then referred to as the Summer Waterbird Count) was to count waterbirds at as many wetlands as possible across Victoria, regardless of hunting status, but with an emphasis on eight duck species designated as game species under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. This information was used to monitor game duck and non-game waterbird distribution and abundance and inform management decisions about further regulation of hunting on specific wetlands during the forthcoming duck hunting season.

In 2015, a new approach was introduced that directed limited survey capacity to wetlands that have been: 1) historically important duck hunting sites; 2) are on public land or are open to hunting; and 3) have a history of supporting threatened waterbird species.

There has also been an increasing emphasis on broadening the focus of the surveys to include all threatened waterbird species, including those not often recorded during earlier counts. This change was in response to resource constraints and reflects a concern that duck hunting could have more nuanced impacts on waterbirds than direct mortality (Menkhorst 2019, Menkhorst and Thompson 2022). This changed approach is reflected in the list of target species (see Table 1), as well as the change of name of the count to Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count (DSPWC).

The overarching objective of the surveys is to inform decisions on the regulation and management of duck hunting in Victoria, including possible closure of individual wetlands to hunting during duck hunting season. The same objectives are applied annually, including in 2026. Specifically, the objectives of the 2026 DSPWC are:

1. Identify wetlands that are open to hunting and currently support large numbers of threatened or rare waterbirds.
2. Identify cases of local breeding by waterbirds, particularly colony-breeding species.
3. Provide details on the distribution and numbers of game and non-game species of waterbirds on wetlands open to hunting.

Data collected during the pre-duck season counts have also proven valuable for a range of other purposes, including informing the development of management plans for Ramsar sites and other individual wetlands, providing data for the Interim Harvest Model (e.g. Klaassen and Kingsford 2021) used by the Game Management Authority (GMA) to set daily bag limits for game ducks prior to the adoption of an Adaptive Harvest Management approach, and supporting the monitoring of population trends of individual species (e.g. Pacioni et al. 2017).

All count data obtained during these surveys are stored in departmental databases held at the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research (ARI) and submitted to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.

The results of these annual counts have been published in various reports (Martindale 1988; Hewish 1988; Peter 1989–1992; Purdey and Loyn 2008–2011, 2013; Purdey and Menkhorst 2014–2015), or are available as unpublished reports (Price 1993; O'Brien 1994; Pert 1995; Norman 1996–2006; Norman and Purdey 2007; Menkhorst and Purdey 2016; Menkhorst et al. 2017–2023; Stamation et al. 2024; Stamation and Rogers 2025) and since 2014 have been made available on the website of the Game Management Authority, Victoria (<https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/research/duck-research>). The purpose of these reports is to document the methods and outcomes of each annual survey and provide a record of the information used to support site-based management decisions ahead of the duck hunting season. They also provide a consistent record of the survey methods, assumptions and decision-making framework applied during the program, and contribute to the ongoing review and improvement of the DSPWC.

2 Methods

2.1 Count organisation

In 2026, the field component of the waterbird counts was shared equally by the DEECA and the GMA.

Within DEECA, three regional coordinators arranged on-ground logistics. The GMA nominated four regional coordinators to undertake surveys and one staff member responsible for timely data sheet submission.

Each regional coordinator was responsible for liaising locally with DEECA and GMA officers in their region, distributing instructions and count forms, and ensuring adequate coverage of regional wetlands without duplication. The coordinators acted as a conduit for issues encountered during surveys and were expected to review completed forms before forwarding them to the authors at ARI by a specified date.

Regional coordinators were also required to report any records of rare or threatened non-game species, and any evidence of breeding that might require management consideration as soon as possible.

2.2 Timing of the count relative to season opening

Dates for the counts are set to allow sufficient time for recommendations on further regulation of duck hunting and for management action to be legally enacted prior to the opening of the hunting season. The counts are conducted over a 14-day period, with the end date being set as close as possible to opening day of the duck season.

This timing aims to provide sufficient time to review the data, consult with stakeholders, and prepare any necessary legal instruments or implement other management actions before the season opens, while also reducing the potential for significant changes in waterbird abundance between the count and the commencement of the hunting season.

However, the period between the count and opening day is roughly three weeks in any given year. This timing is necessitated by the legal mechanisms under the Victorian *Wildlife Act 1975*, and is a risk in the decision-making process due to the potential for waterbirds to redistribute during this time.

To minimise the chance of error due to waterbird movements, wetlands at which significant values (numbers of a threatened species exceeding the threshold, or significant breeding activity) are identified during the count are secondarily monitored by GMA or DEECA staff prior to management decisions being finalised to ensure that the issue still exists at the site.

Further targeted monitoring by GMA or DEECA staff occurs throughout the duck hunting season to assess the need for further management intervention, such as further closures or re-openings.

2.3 Wetlands surveyed

The list of priority wetlands is largely consistent from year to year with only minor adjustments made annually to account for accessibility constraints (e.g. access through private land), available survey resources and wetland condition. Recent satellite imagery is reviewed to identify wetlands likely to be dry. While attempts are made to still visit these wetlands, some may not be surveyed where resources are limited. However, wetlands identified as dry from satellite imagery are not routinely excluded from surveys because remotely sensed imagery can underestimate the presence of surface water, particularly in wetlands with dense emergent vegetation or tree cover. The full list of 133 priority wetlands and 14 non-priority wetlands for 2026 is provided in Appendix 1, along with water levels recorded during the 2026 DSPWC.

2.4 Field methods

All targeted waterbird species were counted at each wetland (see below) using binoculars or tripod-mounted spotting scopes. Counts were typically conducted from the wetland margin, from one or more vantage points selected to provide the best possible coverage of the waterbody.

Observers recorded the wetland name, location (using Australian Map Grid reference or nearest town as a guide), date, time, priority species present and number of individuals of each priority species. An estimate of water level (as a percentage of its full supply level) was also recorded.

Where access constraints prevented complete coverage of a wetland, observers estimated the proportion of the wetland surveyed (as a percentage) and indicated the surveyed area on a map.

Observations of breeding by any waterbird species were also recorded, including numbers of broods or nests, and nest contents where appropriate. Count duration varied depending on wetland size and bird abundance.

Wetlands that were found to be dry, or almost so, with no birds visible, were generally not formally surveyed but were simply noted to be not supporting waterbirds.

2.5 Species counted and analysed

Species targeted for counting include the eight game duck species (i.e. native duck species that are declared 'game' under the *Wildlife Act 1975*) and thirteen rare or threatened non-game species (Non-game priority species: Table 1). These species were identified as being at risk of being mistakenly shot due to their resemblance or association with game species (e.g., Freckled Duck) or are particularly susceptible to the sorts of disturbance associated with duck hunting (Menkhorst 2019, Menkhorst and Thompson 2022) (Table 1). Menkhorst and Thompson (2022) also developed species-specific disturbance trigger thresholds based on population size, conservation status and susceptibility to disturbance from hunting. These thresholds provide a framework for interpreting DSPWC observations and identifying wetlands that may warrant further management consideration.

Other waterbird species were also counted as time permitted. This is a significant change from the previous Summer Waterbird Count (1987–2014) which targeted the eight game species plus eight specified non-game species, including some abundant species such as Black Swan and Hoary-headed Grebe.

Attention was also given to identifying active waterbird breeding colonies where disturbance by hunting may be amplified by the numbers of birds present in a relatively small area. Waterbird species that may breed colonially at Victorian wetlands open to hunting are listed in Table 2.

Table 1. The priority species for the 2026 Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count.

*Note that hunting of one game species, the Australasian Shoveler, is prohibited under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was listed as vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* in 2025, so has been included here, even though it was not one of the original 12 species identified in Menkhorst and Thompson 2022.

	English name	Scientific name
Game species	Australian Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>
	Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>
	Australasian Shoveler*	<i>Spatula rhynchotis</i>
	Chestnut Teal	<i>Anas castanea</i>
	Grey Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>
	Hardhead	<i>Aythya australis</i>
	Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>
	Pink-eared Duck	<i>Malacorhynchus membranaceus</i>
Non-game priority species	Australian Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula australis</i>
	Australasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>
	Blue-billed Duck	<i>Oxyura australis</i>
	Brolga	<i>Antigone rubicunda</i>
	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
	Freckled Duck	<i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>
	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>

	Plumed (Intermediate) Egret	<i>Ardea (intermedia) plumifera</i>
	Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>
	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
	Magpie Goose	<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>
	Musk Duck	<i>Biziura lobata</i>
	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [#]	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>

Table 2. Waterbird species that may breed colonially at wetlands open to hunting in Victoria.

English name	Scientific name
Australasian Darter	<i>Anhinga novaehollandiae</i>
Australian Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula australis</i>
Australian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>
Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis moluccus</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
Fairy Tern	<i>Sternula nereis</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Plumed (Intermediate) Egret	<i>Ardea (intermedia) plumifera</i>
Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Magpie Goose	<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>
Nankeen Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>
Pied Stilt	<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>
Red-necked Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra novaehollandiae</i>
Royal Spoonbill	<i>Platalea regia</i>
Silver Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>
Straw-necked Ibis	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	<i>Platalea flavipes</i>

3 Results

3.1 Number of surveyed wetlands

The 2026 DSPWC contributes to a dataset now spanning the 39 years from 1987. In 2026, 133 priority wetlands were identified (see Appendix 1) and assessed for priority species. Eighty-eight of these wetlands were dry (i.e. holding less than 5% water). A further fourteen 'non-priority' huntable wetlands (mostly reservoirs) were identified for inclusion in the DSPWC, given they had the potential to provide refuge for priority species in a drying landscape (see Appendix 2).

The numbers of priority wetlands in each DEECA region and the number that were surveyed or not surveyed in 2026 are shown in Table 3. Table 4 shows the annual effort since counts began in 1987, and the numbers of game ducks counted.

Table 3. Coverage of priority wetlands in the 2026 Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count by DEECA region.

Any wetlands that were determined dry by satellite and may not have been visited are still considered to have been 'assessed' for reporting purposes.

DEECA region	Number of priority wetlands	Number of priority wetlands holding water and surveyed	Number of priority wetlands that were dry	Number of priority wetlands not assessed
Barwon South West	29	9	20	0
Gippsland	15	14	1	0
Grampians	34	7	27	0
Hume	15	3	12	0
Loddon Mallee	40	12	28	0
All	133	45 (34%)	88 (66%)	0 (0%)

Table 4. Summary Duck Season Priority Waterbird Counts conducted in Victoria from 2015 to 2026.

SWC = Summer Waterfowl Count; DSPWC = Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count.

Program	Year	Count Period	Number of wetlands surveyed	Total Count of game species
DSPWC	2015	16 – 28 February	126	159,666
	2016	15 – 26 February	131	92,168
	2017	13 – 24 February	127	283,430
	2018	12 – 23 February	144	262,397
	2019	11 – 22 February	135	225,733
	2020*	30 March – 12 April & 22 – 30 April	62	3,250
	2021*	19 April – 4 May	84	45,730
	2022	7 – 20 February	139	40,202
	2023	7 – 20 February & 16 - 28 March	127	52,129
	2024	27 February – 14 March	133	132,246

Program	Year	Count Period	Number of wetlands surveyed	Total Count of game species
	2025	7 – 22 February	134	141,142
	2026	6 - 21 February	133	55,023
	Mean		133	144,414

*Count severely affected by COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions.** Mean excludes the 2020 and 2021 counts.

3.2 Game species

In 2026, the total count of ducks belonging to the eight game species was 55,023. This was lower than the counts recorded in the previous two years and similar to the low count recorded in 2023 (Table 4) when it is presumed that high rainfall events across inland Australia attracted waterbirds from Victoria (Menkhorst et al. 2023).

Like previous seasons, the Grey Teal made up 45% of the total game duck count across all 147 wetlands surveyed. Chestnut Teal contributed a further 18%, Australian Shelduck 11%, Pink-eared Duck 10% and Pacific Black Duck 9%. The combined contribution of the remaining game species (Australian Wood Duck, Australasian Shoveler and Hardhead) was 7%.

There were thirty-five wetlands where game ducks and threatened species were recorded including several wetlands where relatively large concentrations of game ducks overlapped with the presence of threatened species (see Appendix 3). There were also four wetlands that are not currently on the priority list where game ducks and threatened species both occurred, namely, Lake Gilmour and Great Spectacle Lake in Loddon Mallee region and Lake Tooliorook and Lake Gnarpit in Barwon South West region.

3.3 Threatened waterbirds considered sensitive to disturbance

Sightings were made of ten of the 13 threatened non-game waterbird species targeted for attention during the 2026 DSPWC (see Table 1). These sightings are briefly summarised below.

3.3.1 Blue-billed Duck

The Blue-billed Duck is a non-game species that is listed as Vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. During the 2026 DSPWC, the Blue-billed Duck was recorded at six wetlands. The largest count was 244 at Lake Lonsdale (Grampians) on 13 February 2026, followed by 132 at Tower Hill Lake (Barwon South West) on 19 February 2026. The total number of Blue-billed Ducks observed during the 2026 DSPWC was 456 (compared to 510 in 2025). This is broadly consistent with the relative lower counts recorded since 2020 (with the exception of a higher count in 2024) and remains well below the higher counts recorded between 2015 and 2019.

3.3.2 Freckled Duck

The Freckled Duck is a non-game species that is listed as Endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Freckled Duck are at risk of being shot during duck hunting season because in flight they can be difficult to distinguish from Pacific Black Duck, and sometimes Hardhead. They can sometimes be seen flying in mixed flocks with game ducks. During the 2026 DSPWC, the Freckled Duck was recorded at four wetlands. The largest aggregation was 90 at Lake Lonsdale (Grampians) on 13 February 2026. The total number of Freckled Duck observed during the 2026 DSPWC was 100. This was similar to the count in the previous two seasons, but below the 2023 count of 246 and well below the highest total of 1,626 observed in 2018.

3.3.3 Musk Duck

The Musk Duck is a non-game species that is listed as Vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. It was recorded at 18 wetlands during the 2026 count, but there were only eight wetlands where numbers exceeded 10 and no wetlands where numbers exceed the trigger thresholds of 137 individuals. The largest count was 53 at Lake Elingamite (Barwon South-West) on 17 February 2026, followed by 41 at Lake Bolac, on 13 February 2026 (Grampians). The total number of Musk Duck observed during the 2026 DSPWC was 277, down from 472 in 2025.

3.3.4 Brolga

The Brolga is a non-game species that is listed as Endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. The number of Brolga observed during the 2026 DSPWC was 300, observed across 7 wetlands. This included an aggregation of 208 at Bradys Swamp (Grampians) on 13 February 2026, 50 at Green Lake, north of Lake Cooper (Loddon Mallee) on 17 February and 30 at Lake Wongan (Grampians) on 19 February

2026. Lake Muirhead was dry during the 2026 DSPWC, and held no Brolga. In previous seasons, when wet, Brolga have occurred in Lake Muirhead in large numbers.

3.3.5 Great Egret

The Great Egret is listed as Vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. This species was present at 19 of the monitored wetlands with the largest aggregation of 10 at Lake Cooper (Loddon Mallee) followed by eight at Morley's Swamp (Gippsland). Numbers at all wetlands were well below the trigger thresholds of 146 individuals for this species. The total number of Great Egret observed during the 2026 DSPWC was 61, down from 120 in 2025.

3.3.6 Plumed Egret

The Plumed Egret is listed as Critically Endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. In total, seven Plumed Egret were reported across four wetlands: Clydebank Morass and MacLeods Morass (both in Gippsland) as well as Hospital Swamp and Lake Connnewarre (both in Barwon South West). Numbers at all wetlands were well below the trigger threshold of 87 for this species.

3.3.7 Little Egret

The Little Egret is listed as Endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Breeding in Victoria appears to be confined to several tiny colonies near Geelong, Queenscliff and at Mud Islands. Former breeding colonies at Gunbower Island on the Murray River have been inactive for several decades. Five Little Egret were reported during the 2026 DSPWC at a single wetland, Lake Connnewarre (Barwon South West). Low numbers of Little Egret are consistent with other years, with no more than 28 individuals recorded in total during a DSPWC, and numbers often totalling 5 or less.

3.3.8 Latham's Snipe

Although not formally listed as threatened in Victoria, there is concern that Latham's Snipe is declining. It has recently been listed as Vulnerable under the *EPBC Act 1999*. The species is a summer visitor to Victoria and most migrate from Victoria by the end of February.

Two Latham's Snipe were recorded at Lake Colac (Barwon South West) on 18 February 2026. Two Latham's Snipe were also recorded at Lake Colac in the 2025 DSPWC as well as a further two at Hospital Swamp (Barwon South West).

3.3.9 Curlew Sandpiper

The Curlew Sandpiper is listed as Critically Endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. A total of 24 Curlew Sandpiper were observed during the 2026 DSPWC, across three wetlands: Lake Colac and Lake Elingamite (Barwon South West) as well as Lake Wongan (Grampians). Lake Tutchewop (Loddon Mallee) was dry during the DSPWC in 2026 and held no Curlew Sandpipers, in contrast to 2025 when the wetland held water and a large mixed flock (>1000) of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper were observed.

3.3.10 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is listed as Vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. It is a summer visitor to Victoria, with most birds departing on northwards migration between March and the end of April. A total of 1548 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper were recorded at Lake Wongan (Grampians) on 19 February 2026. Whilst the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has only recently been listed in Victoria, and hence not included in Menkhorst and Thompson (2022) list of vulnerable species, this count does represent more than 1% of the flyway population (van Swinderen et al. 2025) and thus is considered of international significance. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper were recorded at a further eight wetlands, but in numbers of 80 or less.

3.4 Breeding and moulting

The Victorian duck hunting season is timed to occur after the main waterbird breeding period (July–January in Victoria) and after game species have completed their post-breeding moult. The survey results indicate that breeding by waterfowl was largely finished statewide at the time of the 2026 DSPWC, with only one report of duck chicks during the count period. These were four Pacific Black Duck chicks at Lake Taylor (a non-priority wetland in Grampians) on 16 February 2026.

There was one instance of colonial nesting observed in the south-central portion of Dowds Morass State Game Reserve (in Gippsland) on 9 February 2026, with an estimate of 30 Australasian Darter nests with juveniles present.

3.5 Further regulation of hunting activity

In 2026, information collected during the DSPWC contributed to decisions to further manage or regulate hunting activity. This included the closure, partial closure or further regulation of nine wetlands due to the count of at least one threatened waterbird species meeting trigger thresholds (see Menkhorst and Thompson 2022) or the presence of colonial breeding, ahead of the commencement of the 2026 duck season; two of these wetlands were reopened during the season as the trigger threshold was no longer met and one of these was closed again due to numbers of threatened species increasing above trigger thresholds (see Table 5). A further six wetlands were closed prior to the 2026 duck season for reasons outside of the DSPWC and hunting from boats was prohibited at one wetland (Lake Gnarpit in Barwon South West) during the season following agency verification of third-party reports of significant numbers of a threatened species (Table 6). It should be noted that meeting or exceeding trigger thresholds is cause to consider whether additional management action is required to minimise any significant impact to the species concerned. Management actions could range from non-regulatory awareness raising and education at the lower end of intervention scale through to closure of a wetland to hunting via a regulatory (legal) instrument.

Table 5. Wetlands that received further regulation of hunting based on the information collected during the 2026 Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count.

Wetland name	Action trigger	Management action
Bradys Swamp	Brolga	Closed to hunting
Dowds Morass SGR	Colonial nesting birds	Partial closure
Great Spectacle Lake	Australasian Shoveler	Closed to hunting
*Green Lake (north of Lake Cooper)	Brolga	Closed to hunting
**Lake Cooper	Australasian Shoveler	Closed to hunting
Lake Elingamite	Australasian Shoveler	Closed to hunting
Lake Lonsdale	Australasian Shoveler, Freckled Duck, Blue-Billed Duck	Closed to hunting
Lake Wongan	Brolga, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Closed to hunting
Tower Hill SGR	Australasian Shoveler, Blue-billed Duck	Partially closed to hunting [^]

*Reopened during the season as birds were no longer present at threshold levels and then closed again a couple of weeks later due to observations of Brolga above the threshold levels.

** Reopened to hunting during the season as birds were no longer present at threshold levels

[^] Tower Hill SGR was partially closed to hunting from the beginning of the season and then fully closed part way through the season due to an increase in the number of threatened species present on the open part of the wetland.

Table 6. Wetlands that received further regulation of hunting ahead of the 2026 duck hunting season for other reasons including surveys outside of the Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count period.

Wetland name	Action trigger	Management action
Kow Swamp	Reaffirm Wildlife Sanctuary status	Closed to hunting
Reedy Lakes (near Kerang)	Reaffirm Wildlife Sanctuary status	Closed to hunting
Richardson River (near Lake Buloke)	Reaffirm Wildlife Sanctuary status	Closed to hunting
Anderson Inlet	Known habitat for Orange-bellied Parrots	Closed to hunting
Lake Connewarre	Known habitat for Orange-bellied Parrot	Closed to hunting
*Lake Gnarput	Blue-billed Duck	Hunting from boats prohibited
Lake Nooramunga Marine & Coastal Park	Known habitat for Orange-bellied Parrot	Closed to hunting

*closed during the season following agency verification of third-party reports of significant numbers of threatened species.

4 Discussion

The total count of game ducks recorded during the 2026 DSPWC was substantially lower than in the previous two years, with 55,023 game ducks recorded across the wetlands assessed. This pattern is most likely to reflect hydrological conditions influencing waterbird distribution at the time of the survey, rather than indicating a statewide decline in game duck abundance. Overall, surface water availability in 2025 slightly increased by 9% compared to that in 2024, including an increase in wetland area (Ramsey and Fanson 2026). However, dry conditions across many Victorian wetlands, including some surveyed during the DSPWC, combined with extensive flooding elsewhere in Australia during summer 2025–26, likely resulted in waterbirds being redistributed across a changing hydrological landscape and away from many wetlands surveyed during the DSPWC. The list of priority wetlands surveyed is largely consistent among years, with only minor variation due to access and resourcing constraints (see Methods), so differences in counts are unlikely to reflect changes in survey coverage.

The DSPWC is based on a targeted subset of wetlands that are public land, open to hunting and known to support priority waterbird values and is primarily intended to inform site-based management decisions ahead of the duck hunting season. This distinction is important because the pattern observed in the 2026 DSPWC differs from that reported by the Victorian game duck abundance survey, which considers the distribution and abundance of the state's game duck populations at the statewide level. Ramsey and Fanson (2026) reported that the total statewide abundance of game ducks estimated from the October–November 2025 survey increased by around 22% compared with the 2024 estimate, which they attributed to a greater number of waterbodies containing surface water in spring 2025. In contrast, the DSPWC was conducted later, between 6 and 21 February 2026, when many priority wetlands had dried or held little water. Of the 133 priority wetlands assessed in 2026, 88 were dry and only 45 were holding water and surveyed, consistent with broader hydrological conditions across the landscape.

Summers from 2024 to 2026 were generally drier than the preceding wetter La Niña period (Porter et al. 2024; Bureau of Meteorology 2026), and many wetlands across the Victorian landscape appear to have dried rapidly during summer 2025–26. Water availability is a primary driver of waterbird distribution, and drying conditions at wetlands are expected to result in lower local counts as habitat suitability declines and birds redistribute in response to the availability of water and foraging resources. The differing patterns are therefore likely to reflect how waterbird distribution responds to changing hydrological conditions, with this response also influenced by survey timing, habitat coverage and survey design.

More broadly, extensive flooding in parts of tropical Australia during summer 2025–26, including the Lake Eyre Basin, may have contributed to the redistribution of waterbirds away from southern systems. Under such conditions, game ducks may shift across a wide spatial scale, including to regions outside Victoria, as well as to other habitats not well represented in the DSPWC surveys.

It should also be noted that the DSPWC surveys were conducted prior to flooding events that occurred in parts of north-west Victoria in late February 2026, highlighting the rapid and dynamic nature of hydrological conditions across the landscape.

Observations of threatened and disturbance-sensitive waterbird species during the 2026 DSPWC reinforce the importance of these surveys for informing site-based management decisions ahead of the duck hunting season. A number of species listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, including Brolga, Blue-billed Duck and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, were recorded at levels sufficient to trigger site evaluations that resulted in closures or additional management actions, and in some cases occurred in locally significant aggregations. Several of these wetlands also supported relatively high numbers of game ducks, indicating the potential for overlap between hunting activity and sensitive species and highlighting the importance of monitoring during the hunting season.

The presence and distribution of these species highlight the value of targeted surveys of priority wetlands, particularly in identifying where hunting activity may intersect with sensitive species or key behavioural stages such as breeding or pre-migratory aggregation. These findings are consistent with the broader objective of the DSPWC to identify wetlands requiring additional protection and to minimise disturbance impacts on threatened waterbird species during the hunting season.

4.1 Limitations and constraints

The limitations and constraints of the DSPWC should be considered when interpreting these results. The DSPWC is primarily a management-focused survey designed to identify wetlands that may require additional management attention ahead of the duck hunting season, particularly where threatened species, breeding activity or large concentrations of waterbirds are present. Survey effort is therefore directed towards wetlands on public land that are open to hunting and that consistently support game species and threatened species. While this focus introduces biases that limit the value of the survey as a comprehensive statewide monitoring program, it improves its effectiveness as a tool for supporting site-based management decisions.

While the DSPWC (and formerly the Summer Waterfowl Count) remains the longest-running annual land-based waterbird survey program in Victoria, survey coverage has declined substantially from a peak of 786 wetlands in 1991 to approximately 121–150 wetlands in recent years. Survey effort is now concentrated on wetlands most relevant to the survey's management objectives, resulting in a bias towards larger and more permanent wetlands and reduced coverage of smaller, ephemeral wetlands and wetlands on private land. Consequently, a substantial proportion of Victoria's waterbirds may occur on wetlands that are not included in the DSPWC survey network in any given year. This represents an important but unavoidable limitation of a targeted, management-focused survey program. Detectability also varies among species, habitat types and environmental conditions, and not all waterbirds present at a wetland will necessarily be recorded.

These limitations are important when interpreting annual counts and comparisons among years. The DSPWC is designed to provide information on the distribution and relative abundance of waterbirds within a targeted network of priority wetlands, rather than a complete census of Victorian waterbirds. Consequently, changes in counts should generally be interpreted as changes in the number of birds recorded within the surveyed wetland network, rather than direct measures of statewide population change.

Exceedance of species-specific disturbance trigger thresholds (Menkhorst and Thompson 2022) does not automatically result in a management action. Rather, these thresholds provide a framework for identifying wetlands that may warrant further consideration, alongside other factors such as breeding activity, habitat condition, the distribution of sensitive species within the wetland and the likely level of hunting activity.

Despite these limitations, the DSPWC remains valuable for identifying wetlands that support threatened and disturbance-sensitive species, significant breeding activity and concentrations of waterbirds immediately prior to the duck hunting season. It also retains value as a long-term index of relative abundance and distribution at sites continuously monitored for within-state comparisons among years, provided these constraints are explicitly acknowledged. The survey complements broader-scale monitoring programs by providing wetland-scale information that can be used to support site-based management decisions.

4.2 Next steps and recommendation

The 2026 DSPWC highlights the continued importance of targeted, pre-season surveys for identifying wetlands that support threatened and disturbance-sensitive waterbird species and informing site-based management decisions. The following recommendations identify potential opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of the program, recognising that implementation will continue to depend on available resources, operational priorities and annual survey conditions.

1. Improving detection of threatened species

Detection of some threatened and disturbance-sensitive species may be influenced by the timing of surveys within the day. Where multiple visits are not feasible, consideration should be given to conducting surveys at times when target species are most likely to be present or detectable. For example, at wetlands known to support Brolga, surveys conducted earlier in the day or during periods of peak activity may improve detection, as birds may move between wetlands and surrounding (unsurveyed) habitats throughout the day.

2. Targeted survey effort for high-priority wetlands

Within existing survey effort, additional attention could be directed to wetlands with a known history of supporting threatened species. This may include more intensive searching of key habitats (e.g. vegetated margins or reed beds) for cryptic species such as Australasian Bittern, improving confidence in detection and absence records without requiring additional surveys.

3. Improved documentation of observations

The collection of supporting information for key observations would strengthen interpretation and verification of results. This may include:

- photographic documentation of large aggregations of threatened species, particularly where counts approach or exceed trigger thresholds or where identification may be uncertain.
- recording behaviour such as breeding activity, roosting and responses to disturbance.
- documenting observations of disturbance-sensitive species to assist in assessing risk at individual wetlands.

4. Review of priority species and management thresholds

Periodic review of the DSPWC priority species list and associated trigger thresholds is recommended to ensure alignment with current listing status under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Specific considerations include:

- ensuring consistency between the DSPWC priority species list, disturbance susceptibility assessments (Menkhorst and Thompson 2022) and current survey and reporting practices.
- Reviewing the DSPWC priority species list to ensure that observations of disturbance-sensitive species, such as the White-bellied Sea-Eagle, are consistently recorded during surveys where they are included in disturbance assessments and associated trigger thresholds (Menkhorst and Thompson 2022).
- considering alignment with Commonwealth definitions of nationally and internationally significant sites for migratory shorebirds.

5. Ongoing refinement of survey design

Continued refinement of survey design, including prioritisation of wetlands and allocation of survey effort, may help maximise the effectiveness of the DSPWC in supporting management objectives where resources allow. Where resources permit, consideration should continue to be given to the strategic inclusion of non-priority wetlands during dry years, particularly reservoirs and other drought refuges that may support concentrations of waterbirds not well represented within the priority wetland network. Existing use of satellite imagery and other information sources to identify wetlands likely to provide refuge habitat should continue to be refined as opportunities arise.

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Appendix 1: List of priority wetlands surveyed in 2026 and their recorded water levels

DEECA Region	Wetland Name	Latitude	Longitude	Dry
Barwon South West	Brown Swamp	-38.27	144.13	Y
Barwon South West	Bryans Swamp	-37.56	142.27	Y
Barwon South West	Bullrush Swamp	-37.77	142.23	Y
Barwon South West	Carter Swamp	-38.24	143.30	Y
Barwon South West	Cundare Pool	-38.09	143.59	Y
Barwon South West	Deep Lake (Derrinallum)	-37.93	143.17	N
Barwon South West	Eurack Swamp (Lake Eurack)	-38.13	143.70	Y
Barwon South West	Hospital Swamp	-38.23	144.41	N
Barwon South West	Lake Bookar	-38.13	143.12	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Bulkil Narra	-38.12	143.37	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Colac	-38.30	143.59	N
Barwon South West	Lake Colongulac	-38.17	143.16	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Connewarre	-38.23	144.45	N
Barwon South West	Lake Elingamite	-38.35	143.01	N
Barwon South West	Lake Gherang	-38.25	144.06	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Kariah	-38.17	143.21	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Kennedy	-37.77	142.18	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Koreetnung	-38.18	143.24	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Martin/Cundare Pool	-38.07	143.58	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Modewarre	-38.24	144.11	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Murdeduke	-38.17	143.89	N
Barwon South West	Lake Punpundal	-38.13	143.37	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Round	-38.13	143.21	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Struan	-38.01	143.42	N
Barwon South West	Lake Terang Goodwitch	-38.12	143.37	Y
Barwon South West	Lake Weering	-38.08	143.68	Y
Barwon South West	Lough Calvert	-38.18	143.69	Y
Barwon South West	Reedy Lake, Connewarre	-38.21	144.42	N
Barwon South West	Tower Hill Lake	-38.27	144.13	N
Gippsland	Blonde Bay State Game Reserve	-38.01	147.52	N
Gippsland	Clydebank Morass	-38.04	147.22	N
Gippsland	Dowds Morass	-38.14	147.23	N
Gippsland	Freshwater Swamp State Game Reserve	-38.56	146.96	Y
Gippsland	Heart Morass	-38.12	147.20	N
Gippsland	Hollands Landing Lagoon	-38.06	147.45	N
Gippsland	Jack Smith Lake	-38.50	147.00	N
Gippsland	Lake Coleman	-38.16	147.33	N
Gippsland	Lake Corringale	-37.78	148.49	N
Gippsland	Lake Curlip	-37.75	148.57	N
Gippsland	Lake Kakydra	-38.07	147.20	N
Gippsland	Lake Wat Wat	-37.76	148.52	N
Gippsland	MacLeods Morass	-37.84	147.63	N

DEECA Region	Wetland Name	Latitude	Longitude	Dry
Gippsland	Morley's Swamp	-38.09	147.44	N
Gippsland	Victoria Lagoon	-38.04	147.45	N
Grampians	Black Swamp (Balmoral)	-37.50	143.60	Y
Grampians	Boorooopki Swamp	-36.73	141.22	Y
Grampians	Bradys Swamp	-37.59	142.45	N
Grampians	Dock Lake	-36.77	142.30	Y
Grampians	Jacka Lake	-36.80	141.81	Y
Grampians	Lake Albacutya	-35.75	141.97	Y
Grampians	Lake Batyo Catyo	-36.52	142.94	Y
Grampians	Lake Bolac	-37.72	142.88	N
Grampians	Lake Buninjon	-37.48	142.78	Y
Grampians	Lake Burrumbeet	-37.50	143.64	N
Grampians	Lake Carpolac	-36.85	141.32	Y
Grampians	Lake Clarke	-36.87	141.86	Y
Grampians	Lake Coorong	-35.73	142.40	Y
Grampians	Lake Fyans	-37.14	142.63	N
Grampians	Lake Goldsmith	-37.54	143.36	Y
Grampians	Lake Hancock	-36.55	142.92	Y
Grampians	Lake Hindmarsh	-36.04	141.91	Y
Grampians	Lake Karnak	-36.83	141.51	Y
Grampians	Lake Koynock	-36.82	141.51	Y
Grampians	Lake Linlithgow	-37.75	142.22	Y
Grampians	Lake Lonsdale	-37.03	142.63	N
Grampians	Lake Muirhead	-37.49	142.61	Y
Grampians	Lake Natimuk	-36.70	141.94	Y
Grampians	Lake Turangmoro	-37.73	142.89	Y
Grampians	Lake Wongan	-37.61	143.15	N
Grampians	McGlashins Swamp	-37.09	141.76	Y
Grampians	Merin Merin Swamp	-37.23	143.80	Y
Grampians	Pine Lake	-36.79	142.35	Y
Grampians	The Green Swamp (Glenthompson)	-37.61	142.52	Y
Grampians	Toolondo Reservoir	-37.02	141.95	N
Grampians	Walkers Swamp	-37.57	142.48	Y
Grampians	Wally Allens Swamp	-36.77	141.48	Y
Grampians	Winter Lake	-36.88	141.27	Y
Grampians	Yarrackigarra Swamp	-36.72	141.24	Y
Hume	Big Reedy Lagoon	-35.98	145.92	Y
Hume	Black Swamp (Nine mile creek)	-36.14	145.45	Y
Hume	Buffalo Dam (Lake Buffalo)	-36.71	146.66	N
Hume	Doctors Swamp (Murchison Swamp)	-36.62	145.18	Y
Hume	Dowdle Swamp	-36.10	146.03	Y
Hume	Jubilee Swamp	-36.57	145.76	Y
Hume	Lake Moodemere	-36.05	146.39	N
Hume	Lehmann Swamp	-36.56	145.61	Y
Hume	Loch Garry	-36.23	145.31	N
Hume	McBurney Swamp	-36.58	145.56	Y
Hume	Moodie Swamp	-36.23	145.79	Y
Hume	Morphett swamp	-36.54	145.78	Y

DEECA Region	Wetland Name	Latitude	Longitude	Dry
Hume	Reedy Lake Nagambie	-36.72	145.10	Y
Hume	Rowan Swamp	-36.29	145.98	Y
Hume	Tungamah Swamp	-36.15	145.92	Y
Loddon Mallee	First Marsh (The Marsh)	-35.67	143.74	Y
Loddon Mallee	Gaynors Swamp	-36.52	144.83	Y
Loddon Mallee	Gil Gil (Lake Gil Gil)	-36.33	143.04	N
Loddon Mallee	Green Lake (north of Lake Cooper)	-36.44	144.84	N
Loddon Mallee	Heywoods Lake	-34.79	143.21	N
Loddon Mallee	Hird Swamp	-35.86	144.09	N
Loddon Mallee	Horseshoe Bend Billabong	-34.14	142.06	N
Loddon Mallee	Johnson's Swamp	-35.82	144.07	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Bael Bael	-35.69	143.74	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Boort	-36.13	143.74	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Buloke	-36.27	142.96	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Cooper	-36.50	144.81	N
Loddon Mallee	Lake Cope Cope	-36.46	143.03	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Cullen	-35.64	143.77	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Elizabeth	-35.70	143.82	N
Loddon Mallee	Lake Grassy	-36.46	143.06	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Leaghur	-35.98	143.80	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Lyndger	-36.11	143.75	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Meran	-35.88	143.81	N
Loddon Mallee	Lake Murphy	-35.81	143.87	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Nurrumbeet	-36.47	143.06	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Tutchewop	-35.51	143.75	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Wandella (Brandy Lake)	-35.74	143.88	Y
Loddon Mallee	Lake Yando	-36.04	143.78	Y
Loddon Mallee	Little Lake Buloke	-36.32	142.95	Y
Loddon Mallee	Little Lake Meran	-35.85	143.81	N
Loddon Mallee	Mansfield Swamp	-36.44	144.88	Y
Loddon Mallee	McDonalds Swamp	-35.70	144.07	Y
Loddon Mallee	Meridian Basin	-34.26	141.98	Y
Loddon Mallee	Racecourse Lake	-35.61	143.79	N
Loddon Mallee	Richardson's Lagoon	-36.03	144.57	Y
Loddon Mallee	Round Lake (Lake Boga)	-35.47	143.61	N
Loddon Mallee	Round Lake 2 (Kerang/Lake Meran)	-35.85	143.80	N
Loddon Mallee	Second Marsh (Middle Marsh)	-35.62	143.74	Y
Loddon Mallee	Third Marsh (Top Marsh)	-35.60	143.73	Y
Loddon Mallee	Tobacco Lake	-35.86	143.80	Y
Loddon Mallee	Wallenjoe Swamp (L. Wallenjoe)	-36.48	144.88	Y
Loddon Mallee	Woolshed Swamp	-36.17	143.72	Y
Loddon Mallee	Wooroonook Lake (Church)	-36.27	143.21	Y
Loddon Mallee	Wooroonook Lake (Main)	-35.27	143.20	Y

Appendix 2: List of ‘non-priority’ wetlands surveyed in the 2026 Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count.

DEECA Region	Wetland Name
Barwon South West	Lake Gnarput Lake Tooliorook
Grampians	Deep Lake (Nerrin Nerrin) Greens Swamp Lake Taylor
Loddon Mallee	Cairn Curran Reservoir Great Spectacle Lake Lake Gilmour Lake Lascelles Lake Marmal Little Lake Spectacle Sandhill Lake Tullaroop Reservoir Waranga Basin (partial count ~30% of wetland area)

These wetlands (mostly reservoirs) were identified for inclusion in the DSPWC, given they had the potential to provide refuge for priority species in a drying landscape

Appendix 3: Wetlands where game ducks were recorded in the 2026 Duck Season Priority Waterbird Count, including total counts of game ducks, number of game species and number of threatened species recorded.

Wetland Name	DEECA Region	Priority Wetland	Total Count of Game Ducks	Number of Game Species Recorded	Number of Threatened Species Recorded
Lake Cooper	Loddon Mallee	Y	8530	6	3
Lake Lonsdale	Grampians	Y	4798	7	5
Lake Wongan	Grampians	Y	4291	3	3
Lake Bolac	Grampians	Y	3577	6	3
Little Lake Meran	Loddon Mallee	Y	3174	6	1
Lake Struan	Barwon South West	Y	2876	5	0
Morley's Swamp	Gippsland	Y	2640	5	1
Deep Lake (Nerrin Nerrin)	Barwon South West	N*	2449	6	1
Lake Coleman	Gippsland	Y	2275	5	3
Victoria Lagoon	Gippsland	Y	2235	4	2
Lake Wat Wat	Gippsland	Y	1934	5	1
Little Lake Spectacle	Loddon Mallee	N	1924	6	0
Lake Tooliorook	Barwon South West	N	1820	7	4
Tower Hill Lake	Barwon South West	Y	1682	7	3
Heywoods Lake	Loddon Mallee	Y	1550	4	1
Woolshed Swamp	Loddon Mallee	Y	1543	3	0
Lake Elingamite	Barwon South West	Y	1428	6	5
Clydebank Morass	Gippsland	Y	1350	4	1
Lake Gilmour	Loddon Mallee	N	1149	6	2
Round Lake (Lake Boga)	Loddon Mallee	Y	1080	7	3
Lake Elizabeth	Loddon Mallee	Y	1069	4	1
Gil Gil (Lake Gil Gil)	Loddon Mallee	Y	1044	4	0
Hollands Landing Lagoon	Gippsland	Y	1030	4	1
Great Spectacle Lake	Loddon Mallee	N	1022	5	1
Dowd Morass	Gippsland	Y	1010	5	1
Green Lake (north of Lake Cooper)	Loddon Mallee	Y	800	3	2
Cairn Curran Reservoir	Loddon Mallee	N	710	4	0
Greens Swamp	Grampians	N	610	4	0
Hird Swamp	Loddon Mallee	Y	602	4	2
Deep Lake (Derrinallum)	Barwon South West	Y	594	6	0
Bradys Swamp	Grampians	Y	511	3	2
Toolondo Reservoir	Grampians	Y	504	4	1
Blonde Bay State Game Reserve	Gippsland	Y	464	3	0

Wetland Name	DEECA Region	Priority Wetland	Total Count of Game Ducks	Number of Game Species Recorded	Number of Threatened Species Recorded
Lake Gnarput	Barwon South West	N	463	4	2
Buffalo Dam (Lake Buffalo)	Hume	Y	460	3	1
Hospital Swamp	Barwon South West	Y	340	5	2
Jack Smith Lake	Gippsland	Y	314	3	0
Lake Moodemere	Hume	Y	280	2	0
Lake Lascelles	Loddon Mallee	N	260	2	0
MacLeods Morass	Gippsland	Y	196	4	2
Heart Morass	Gippsland	Y	184	3	0
Horseshoe Bend Billabong	Loddon Mallee	Y	152	3	1
Round Lake 2 (Kerang/Lake Meran)	Loddon Mallee	Y	113	3	0
Tullaroop Reservoir	Loddon Mallee	N	106	3	0
Lake Connewarre	Barwon South West	Y	103	1	5
Lake Colac	Barwon South West	Y	87	5	4
Waranga Basin	Hume	N	80	2	0
Lake Curlip	Gippsland	Y	76	2	1
Lake Meran	Loddon Mallee	Y	71	3	0
Loch Garry	Hume	Y	35	3	0
Lake Corringale	Gippsland	Y	8	2	1
Lake Burrumbeet	Grampians	Y	8	1	0
Lake Taylor	Grampians	N	6	1	0
Racecourse Lake	Loddon Mallee	Y	3	1	0
Lake Fyans	Grampians	Y	1	1	1

*not open for hunting (included in error)

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