



Game Management Authority

121 Exhibition Street

MELBOURNE VIC

3000

Honker Hunters would like the opportunity to make a recommendation for the 2022 duck Hunting Season.

It would be an honor to receive an invitation to be involved in the process for the Proposed 2022 Duck Hunting Season.

Summary:

We would like to Call attention to the abundance of waterfowl across private dams, farmland, rivers and creeks in Victoria.

Each and every year we believe populations of waterfowl are missed during the annual waterfowl counts and observations across Victoria.

The Recommendation would like to highlight the abundance of waterfowl across these private property's in Victoria. E.g. dams, farmland rivers and creeks across parts of Victoria

Provided is an observation and some considering factors for your review.

Email – Honkerhunters.outlook.com.au

ASIC Approved Registration 2019 – HONKER HUNTERS

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following major factors should be reviewed for consideration.

- The Devastation the Wood duck and Mountain duck have on farmers crops in and out of a Waterfowl season.
- The two species are labelled a (pest) within the farming districts for the state of Victoria.
- The La Nina has been Firmly established in the tropical Pacific.

Climate models suggest La Nina will persist until the late southern hemisphere summer or early autumn 2022. La Nina events increase the chance of above average rainfall across much of northern and eastern Australia during summer.

- We can expect increased chances of wet conditions over summer leading into Autumn.
- As it stands now with increased habitat and conditions waterfowl breeding cycles have doubled and are still expected to improve as we move forward into 2022
- The current trend of waterfowl observations only include a very small percentage of Wetlands rivers and creeks and do not include private dams or farmland in Victoria.
- The current trend of waterfowl observation fails to see the majority of birds on these private dams and private land.

Dams- Water.viv.gov.au. Environment, land, water and planning Victoria estimates there are approximately 450,000 dams across Victoria.

Together Victoria's dams have an estimated total storage capacity of about 13,4000,000 megalitres. The size of our dams range from major storage dams to privately owned farm dams. The smaller privately-owned dams are the most common type of dam in Victoria.

Some consist of a small swimming pool size on farms or lifestyle properties but still hold major value to the economy and our way of life.

There are approximately 85,000 kilometers of rivers, streams and creeks in Victoria according to Travel Victoria. As well as providing for people and the life blood of the environment the possibility of habitat for waterfowl is extraordinary.

Agricultural land area is about 50 per cent of the total land area in Victoria.

Approximately 40 per cent (4.6 million hectares) is used for cropping, and 54per cent (6.2 million hectares) is used for grazing, with the remainder used for forestry and conservation purposes.

- **With the estimated private land and water coverage across Victoria the current waterfowl observations need to consider the possibility of the abundance of waterfowl being missed.**

OBSERVATION

Southern Victoria, Western Victoria, Northwest Victoria

The observation included private properties and general meetings with landowners to gain access for observation.

We travelled main roads, accessed private property and detoured when possible to pinpoint private water over the region.

Starting point Geelong - Observation over consecutive Days – Friday / Saturday / Sunday (4 Observers) 2 vehicles

TRAVEL AREA - Geelong, Modewarre, Winchelsea, Birregurra, Colac, Ondit, Beeac, Cressy, Berrybank, Lismore, Rokewood, Shelford, Inverleigh.

Note – High volume of Mountain Duck and Wood duck in the Cressy, Berrybank, Shelford area.

Landowners are concerned about the abundance of birds in the area. Birds are already moving in and onto their crops.

Farmers are asking for crop protection action.

TRAVEL AREA - Freshwater creek, Torquay, Breamlea, Ocean Grove, Mannerim, Swan Bay, Bellarine, Clifton Springs, Curlewis, Geelong – Corio Bay, Avalon, Point Wilson, Little River , Balliang

Note – high volume of Grey teal in Corio Bay and surrounding edges.

TRAVEL AREA - Rokewood, Skipton, Tatyoon, Ararat, Stawell, Dadswell's bridge, Wonwoondah, Nurrabiel, Toolondo,

TRAVEL AREA - Toolondo, West Toolondo, South Toolondo, Telangatuk East, Kanagulk

Balmoral, Gatum, Cavendish, Dunkeld, Penshurst, Mortlake, Terang

Note – High volume of Mountain Duck and Wood duck in the Toolondo, Telangatuk East, Kanagulk area. Birds are already moving in and onto the crops.

Again, some farmers were asking about crop protection.

CONCLUSION –

The 2022 waterfowl season for Victoria will be more than sustainable.

Due to the recent rain events the 2021/2022 crop harvest has been delayed.

We observed Mountain Duck feeding on established crops on numerous occasions.

Extremely high volumes of Mountain duck are moving in and decimating Farmers crops.

We observed Mountain duck moving from lakes and wetlands into farmland feeding on freshly harvested crops.

We observed an abundance of Mountain duck, Wood duck, Pacific Black duck, Grey teal on Private property dams and farmland.

We observed an abundance of wood duck on private dams, creeks and surrounding property.

Water levels and habitat on private property are above average.

Breeding is still active.

Wetlands observed were holding good numbers of species. Grey teal were predominant especially in Corio Bay area Geelong.

We located all 8 game species.

We see merit in increasing the daily limit to include extra numbers of Mountain duck and Wood duck.

Farmers would like to highlight wood duck and Mountain duck are pests.

Farmers and private landowners are continually viewing the 2 species grazing on freshly sown crops during the general preparation periods in March and April. They continue to move in and decimate the crop.

HONKER HUNTERS RECOMMEND

A Full-length season of 12 weeks

OPENING WEEKEND

Honker Hunters agree to help ease the pressure of the opening weekend.

Start time 8.00am for all of Victoria

Daily limit for opening weekend of - **5 birds**

The remainder of the Season should be:

Daily bag limit of 10 Birds – (plus additional)

Daily limit to include 2 Blue wing shovelers.

Daily limit to include an additional 2 birds – (Wood duck and or Mountain Duck)

The two species are predominantly deemed to be a (pest) of destruction by farmers. Especially in March/April when the crop is sown and the birds are grazing on fresh shoots.

The additional numbers included in the daily limit takes into consideration the concerns of farmers as many deem the birds to be pests over many districts.

Daily hunting times to start half an hour before sunrise and end half an hour after sunset.

Variations - Honker hunters would like to suggest the following modifications.

The daily limit to increase as per the recommendation and receive additional Mountain duck and Wood duck.

If hunting on private land that does not consist of any body of water then lead shot maybe used. Lead shot may be used if it does NOT poison the water e.g.: creek dam or spillage

CONCLUSION -

We conclude with the objective of the Game Management Authority.

We as hunters rely on the organisation to administer game management within Victoria.

The Game management Authority should not be considering arguments, recommendations or objections from anti-hunting groups pushing their own agenda. These groups should have no insight or value to determine a waterfowl season.

The decision for the 2022 waterfowl season should be based on facts and relevant data available. It should not be influenced by anti-hunting groups or political views.

Honker Hunters strongly advises the game Management Authority should not rely heavily on the Eastern Australian Water Bird survey. The Plane does not intersect major wetlands and while flying at excessive speed the height of the plane can NOT clearly identify species. The process is flawed and inaccurate and should not be used to determine a waterfowl season.

Honker Hunters would welcome an invitation to be part of the decision for the 2022 season and would be pleased to discuss the recommendation in greater detail with the Game Management Authority if requested.

Honker Hunters would like to thank you for your time in reading this recommendation

Yours faithfully

Troy Skene

Honker Hunters Australia