

FACT SHEET

How to humanely dispatch a downed duck using the cervical dislocation method

Responsible duck hunting requires downed ducks to be immediately recovered and dispatched humanely.

By law, hunters must make all reasonable attempts to immediately recover downed game birds. On recovery, the game birds must be immediately killed (i.e. dispatched).

If possible and safe to do so, using a **swatter load** is the preferred method to humanely dispatch a duck (see the swatter loads fact sheet). The cervical dislocation method can be used if firing a swatter load is not possible or safe.

See the *Guidelines for how to humanely dispatch downed ducks* for more information on different dispatch methods.

Cervical dislocation

If a swatter load can't be used to dispatch a downed duck, cervical dislocation is an alternative option when the duck has been recovered. Cervical dislocation separates the skull from the top of the spine. It results in rapid death and is a humane way to dispatch a duck.

Hands free

If you choose to use the cervical dislocation method, you will need two hands to dispatch a downed duck. Make sure you safely disengage and secure your firearm while doing this.



Render the duck unconscious

If the duck is still alive when you recover it, you may choose to render it unconscious. This is done by delivering a forceful blow directly to the top or back of the duck's skull. Use a hard, heavy and blunt instrument such as a fishing priest, metal pipe or a steel rod, or strike the duck's head against a hard

surface. See the blunt force impact fact sheet for more information.

Enough force must be used to render the duck unconscious with ONE blow.

If you cannot render the duck unconscious, you can still perform cervical dislocation.



Steps for cervical dislocation

1. Secure your firearm and make it safe.
2. Secure the duck firmly by holding its legs above the hocks in one hand and its head in the other. Position the underside of the duck's body towards yours and secure the duck firmly close to your body, between hip and chest height.

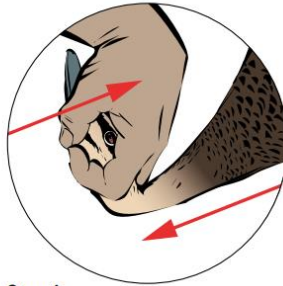


Steps 1 and 2.

3. With the other hand, grip the duck's head between your first two fingers and place your thumb under the bill.
4. Position the duck's head bending backwards until it is almost at 90 degrees to its neck.
5. With each hand, apply increasing force in opposite directions, stretching the neck downwards and the legs upwards. At the same time, pull the head back towards the neck. This should be performed in a firm, single, swift motion until you feel the skull separate from the neck.
6. Using your thumb and forefinger, feel along the neck up towards the base of the skull for a clear separation between the neck bones and the skull. If you can't feel this separation or gap, immediately repeat the procedure.



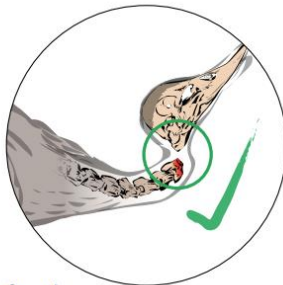
Step 3.



Step 4.



Step 5.



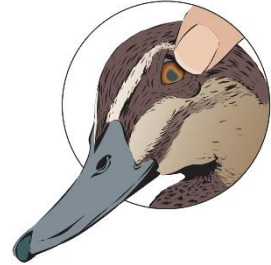
Step 6.

7. Always confirm the duck is dead by checking the vital signs and performing a touch test. To perfect the technique, practice on dead ducks when possible.

**Duck welfare is not compromised
if the head is removed during
cervical dislocation**

Vital signs

Always check vital signs to ensure the duck is dead. If the duck's eyes are open, its body and neck are limp, there is no movement, wings are drooping, it is not breathing, and it has no heartbeat - then you have effectively dispatched the duck.



Perform a touch test by placing one finger on the duck's eyeball. If the duck does not blink, it is dead.

Windmilling

'Windmilling' or swinging the duck by the neck around in an arc/circle is NOT recommended as it may not immediately kill the duck.

Other unacceptable methods to dispatch downed ducks include:

- **Drowning**
- **Suffocation**
- **Rib compression (thoracic compression)**