

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No: 2367

Asked by: Mr Andy Meddick (Western Victoria)

Question:

To ask the Minister for Agriculture: In relation to “specified hunting areas” under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 and noting that only 100 duck shooters came out on the de-facto opening morning of the season this year: How can the Minister justify that the rules of duck shooting effectively closed the 222 public “specified hunting areas” to the public.

Reply:

I am advised that in May 1959, the Victorian State Wildlife Reserve Investigation Committee (the Committee) was formed to, among other things, advise on which areas of land should be reserved for wildlife and on what terms. The Committee proposed the establishment of a Wildlife Reserve System. The first Game Licence was introduced by the Department of Fisheries and Game in 1959, and, during its first year, the Department collected £34,863 in licence fees and established a Game Development Fund. This fund was used to establish the proposed Wildlife Reserves System and to publicly purchase private lands for waterfowl conservation, and to provide for duck hunting.

In 1996, the Parks and Reserves Branch and Flora and Fauna Branch of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources co-authored a report reviewing the Wildlife Reserve System and proposed further changes to the system based on a recommendation made by the Department in 1992 in a report titled *Appraisal and Review of Sanctuaries and Wildlife Reserve Systems in Victoria*. This report recommended that simply two categories of Wildlife Reserve should exist; State Game Reserves and Nature Conservation Reserves.

The “specified hunting areas” referred to by the Member includes all State Game Reserves and other wetlands identified in Schedule 8 of the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012. It is an offence for an unauthorised person to enter or remain in these specified hunting areas, at certain times of the day, for the duration of the duck season.

To be lawfully present in a specified hunting area during prohibited times, an individual must hold a current Victorian Firearms Licence (or interstate equivalent) and a current Game Licence; or be otherwise authorised by the Game Management Authority (GMA).

These restrictions apply to less than 2% of the more than four million hectares of parks managed by Parks Victoria and are intended to maintain public safety – they are time-limited and apply to the specified waterbody and within 25 metres of the water’s edge only.



Jaclyn Symes MP
Minister for Agriculture