

2022 duck hunting season

THE Game Management Authority (GMA) has announced the arrangements for the 2022 duck season, including changes to the start times, daily bag limit and hunted species.

The 2022 season will start at 8am on Wednesday 16 March 2022 and will close 30 minutes after sunset on Monday 13 June 2022. The bag limit is four birds per day.

Spokesperson for the Coalition Against Duck Shooting, Craig Davey said, "The Victorian Government has declared war on native waterbirds, at a time when their numbers in Victoria are dangerously low.

"The Government should be held responsible for decimating Australia's native waterbirds, especially when their numbers are in serious trouble.

"Duck shooters must not be allowed to continue to shoot native waterbirds. The only option is for the Government to cancel the season. If not, concerned members of the public will again be out on the State's wetlands to help rescue wounded waterbirds," said Craig.

The GMA has stated that the Blue-winged Shoveler and Hardhead may not be hunted across Victoria as both species were recently listed as threatened due to declining populations.

The arrangements for the 2022 duck season are based on analysis and modelling of habitat and waterbird abundance surveys conducted across eastern Australia, and other data relating to game

duck abundance, habitat distribution and climate.

According to the GMA, the full-length season was recommended based on harvest modelling by two experts in waterfowl ecology and population dynamics, Professors Klaassen and Kingsford. They advised that reducing the bag limit is a more effective way to reduce the overall harvest of game ducks rather than reducing season length.

As in previous years, the GMA will continue to monitor conditions in the lead up to and during the season. Where warranted, wetlands may be closed to hunting, or hunting may be further regulated to protect concentrations of rare or threatened species.

State Member for Bendigo, Maree Edwards told the *Times* that she has read the GMA's release regarding the decision to open duck hunting this year and feels it is imperative that the Government takes significant advice from the GMA.

"I understand this is a very emotive issue for both those who are opposed and those who participate in duck shooting," said MP Edwards. "The Government doesn't make these decisions lightly.

"I think the restriction to four bags and prohibiting certain birds are significant."

"Duck shooters need to be aware that there will be punishment and consequences if they do the wrong things; entering private property and consuming alcohol and drugs. This will be enforced

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☆ Australia's rarest native duck, the Freckled Duck, collateral damage in Victoria's recreational duck shooting seasons.

Photo courtesy Eleanor Dilley

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by GMA members on the ground, as well as local police.

"I encourage communities to contact their local member of parliament if they have concerns," said MP Edwards.

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting inc (RVOTDS) say the announcement to open the 2022 duck shooting season being made on Saturday seems a 'pretty

gutless' attempt to keep the unpopular announcement under the radar.

"This is a very disturbing decision made by our Government during an age when we are better educated on the fragile status of our environment. All our efforts and resources should be put toward protecting our native wildlife and their habitats. We are dumbfounded at the

ignorant short sightedness and 'head in the sand' approach this Government is taking," said a representative of RVOTDS. "When our rural communities are crying out for opportunities to benefit from the booming trend of nature-based tourism which is hampered by shooting, stuck in the 50s (yet this) is where this Government is leaving us. Victorians deserve better."