

Game Hunting in Victoria

2009 Duck Hunting Season

Environmental Conditions

There have been some improvements in climatic and environmental conditions across eastern Australia and aerial surveys show the waterbird population abundance and breeding index have increased compared to the two preceding years.

Improved localised conditions in New South Wales and Queensland, including recent high rainfall, have enhanced the likelihood of game ducks breeding.

While Victoria continues to exhibit drought conditions broader improved conditions have led to the declaration of a highly regulated duck hunting season.

The 2009 duck hunting season

In order to ensure duck numbers remain sustainable into the future, significant restrictions to bag limit, species available to be harvested and length of season will apply.

The open season

The 2009 duck hunting season opens on Saturday March 21 and closes on Friday May 8.

Bag Limit

There is a daily bag limit of five game ducks. A hunter may take up to two game duck (of any species) and an extra three wood duck.

Blue-winged Shoveler, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead may not be taken

There is a total ban on the taking of Blue-winged Shoveler, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead (White-eyed Duck).

The remaining five species - Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Mountain Duck (Australian Shelduck), Maned Duck (Wood Duck) and Chestnut Teal - may be hunted.

Opening times (opening morning)

On opening morning (21 March 2009), Victoria will be divided into three zones, each with different opening times.

The season will open at:

- **7:10 am** in the eastern zone
- **7:20 am** in the central zone
- **7:30 am** in the western zone

Hunting ceases half an hour after sunset on the opening day.

Opening times (rest of the season)

For the remainder of the season, duck hunting is permitted from half an hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset (see the 2009 Victorian Hunting Guide for calculations).

Where do I hunt ducks?

The 2009 Duck Hunting Season will be permitted throughout the state in state forests, unoccupied Crown Land and State Game Reserves. Hunting is also permitted on leased Crown Land, licensed Crown Land, or private land with permission of leaseholder, licensee or land owner/manager respectively.

There are only three parks, Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, Cape Conran Coastal Park and Lake Albacutya Park, where duck hunting is allowed in designated areas.

Following continued monitoring and assessment of Victorian wetlands and waterfowl numbers, further restrictions, including the closure of certain wetlands, may be implemented.



2009 Duck Hunting Season

Make sure you have your Game Licence

All hunters, including juniors (12-17 years), must hold a valid Game Licence to hunt duck. Persons less than 12 years old are not permitted to use a firearm to hunt or take game.

When hunting duck, you must:

- carry your current Game Licence endorsed for duck
- carry your Firearms Licence for any firearm in your possession.

To obtain any Game Licence endorsed for duck, the Waterfowl Identification Test must be passed first. Upon completion a Certificate of Proficiency will be issued, however, this does not need to be carried in the field while hunting duck.

Completing the Waterfowl Identification Test ensures the hunter will be capable of identifying game duck that can be hunted.

Avoid shooting non-game species

Non-game species are occasionally shot when mistakenly identified, or when flying among game birds. To avoid shooting non-game species hunters should:

- identify the target as a game species.
- make sure the bird is within shotgun range
- single out a bird and do not fire into flocks (this may injure other birds including non-game species).

In addition, try not to fire at birds on the water, as ricocheting shots could injure non-game birds or other hunters. If it is necessary to dispatch injured birds on the water, you should first make sure your line of fire is clear.

Hunters should also be alert for Freckled Duck (appearance similar to Pacific Black Duck), Blue-billed Duck, Blue-winged Shoveler, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead. There is a total ban on the take of these species.



Important regulations to remember

Non-toxic shot

The use of lead shot for duck hunting is prohibited throughout Victoria. This includes duck hunting on all wetlands, waterways and dry lands on public and private land. However, there is an exemption to this regulation. Hunters using muzzle-loading, Damascus steel or twist-barrelled shotguns for duck hunting are exempt from the mandatory use of non-toxic shot.

All other hunters must use non-toxic shot for duck hunting in Victoria.

Hunting from a boat

On waterways (such as rivers, creeks, streams and channels), you are allowed to hunt duck from a boat under power, up to a speed of five knots. On open waters (such as lakes or swamps), you are not permitted to hunt duck from a motor boat, if the motor is running, whether in gear or not.

Retaining a fully feathered wing

To ensure wildlife officers can quickly and accurately identify all waterfowl in your possession, **you must leave a fully feathered wing on any harvested duck** until immediately prior to cooking or the duck has been taken to your ordinary place of residence.

Breach of conditions

There are heavy penalties if you breach the law, which may include losing your Firearms Licence and/or your firearm. Penalties up to \$2685 may also be incurred. Make sure you obey the laws that are set in place to protect you and the game that you hunt.

The 2009 Victorian Hunting Guide

- For more detailed information about game hunting, refer to the 2009 Victorian Hunting Guide. The Hunting Guide will be mailed to all licensed game hunters for 2009 and will also be available at the DSE website: www.dse.vic.gov.au.

Where do I get more information?

- DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au)
- DSE Customer Service Centre
- (Ph: 13 61 86, email: customer.service@dse.vic.gov.au),
- DSE Game Management Unit
- (Ph: (03) 9637 9879)
- Parks Victoria (ph: 13 19 63, website: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au),
- Field & Game Australia
- (Ph: (03) 5799 0960)
- Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (ph: (03) 8892 2777)

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