



# DUCK SEASON 2024

Welcome to Geelong Field & Game's  
Duck Season 2024 expo and information evening





## Summary of conditions

- Summer rainfall totals were above to very much above average for much of Victoria, with rainfall in December 2023 and January 2024 above average across the state and below average for much of the state in February.
- Waterfowl counts experienced a significant upturn in all regions compared to the 2023 counts (with the exception of the Metro region where we are still seeking a volunteer). There were 153 wetlands counted in total.



## 2024 Duck Season opening times

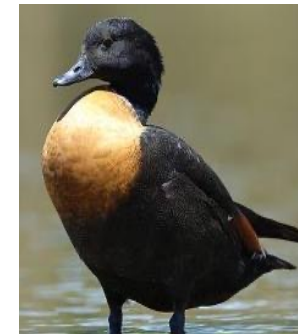
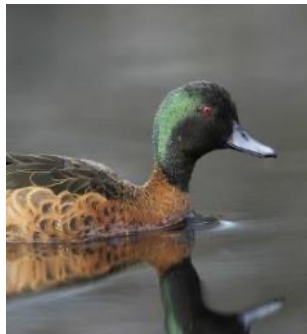
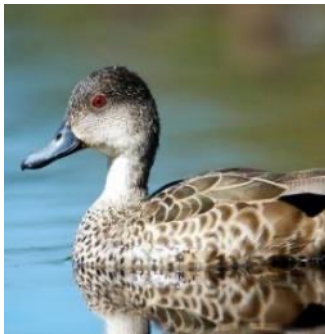
- Opening times are 8.00 am to 30 minutes past sunset, every day from Wednesday, April 10 through to Wednesday, June 5 across the whole of Victoria.
- Early hunting on the opening morning is hunting out of season. Heavy penalties apply, which may include losing your Game and Firearm Licences and/or your firearm or other hunting equipment.
- Visit [gma.vic.gov.au](https://gma.vic.gov.au) and create a MyGL (My Game Licence) account to keep up-to-date with the latest information.



## 2024 Victorian Duck Season bag limit and permitted species

The bag limit is six (6) birds per licensed hunter per day for the entire season.

The species that may be hunted in 2024 are (in order, left to right below)  
Pacific black duck, grey teal, chestnut teal, pinkear, mountain duck (Australian shelduck) and wood duck (maned goose).







Game ducks not to be taken in season 2024

**Australasian (blue-winged) shoveler and  
hardhead must not be hunted in 2024.**





## Retrieving, harvest and humane dispatch

- Regulations require hunters to immediately retrieve all game ducks that they shoot and to at least salvage the breast meat from a duck to ensure that harvested game is not wasted. It is also a requirement that at least one wing be left on each bird so they can be identified by compliance officers if necessary.
- Guidelines have been developed around the humane dispatch of ducks. Field & Game Australia expects that hunters will familiarize themselves with the guidelines and commit to their practice. Cervical dislocation is the most effective method and can be found in the guidelines available at [www.gma.vic.gov.au](http://www.gma.vic.gov.au)



## Retrieving, harvest and humane dispatch

- It is clear that the humane dispatch of ducks will remain a focus for activists during the 2024 season. With this in mind, have a solid retrieval plan.
- Please **don't** 'windmill' birds and **do** pick up birds in a manner that they can't be filmed flapping their wings and appearing to still be alive, when in fact they are dead and it's just the nerves that are making the bird move.







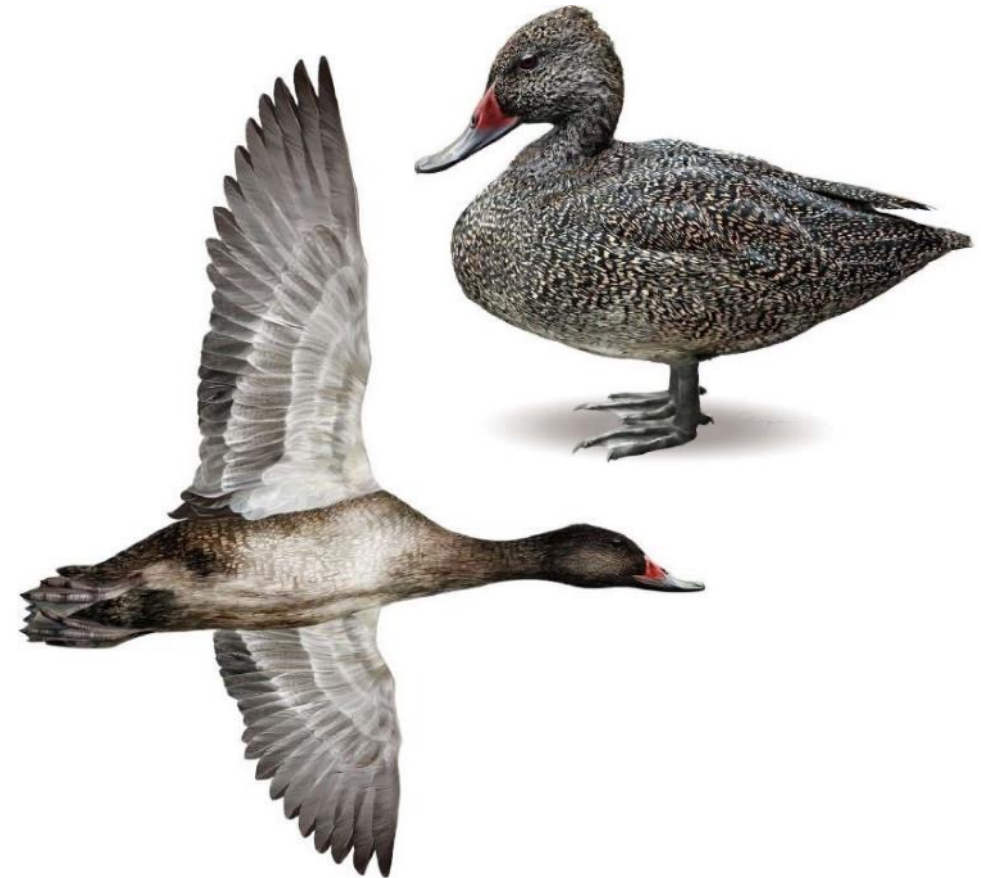
## Protected species: Freckled duck

Be aware the protected **freckled ducks** have been observed in Victoria.

**IF YOU'RE NOT SURE,  
DON'T SHOOT**



Before going hunting,  
practise your duck  
identification skills with  
the **DuckWISE** DVD.







## Where can I hunt in Victoria?

### **During the season**

- State Game Reserves
- State Forests and Forest Parks
- Some unoccupied Crown Lands
- Some water storages

### **During the season with permission**

- Private land
- Leased Crown Land
- Licensed Crown Land



## Where can't I hunt in Victoria?

### **No-go anytime**

- Sanctuaries
- Flora and Fauna Reserves
- Nature Conservation Reserves



### **No-go unless exempt**

- National Parks
- State Parks
- Coastal Parks
- Wilderness Parks



## Wetland closures

- A number of wetlands are under review by agencies and government departments. As of April 12, there were 34 wetlands closed to hunting for the 2024 season.
- FGA will share news of any closures via social media and our website: **[www.fieldandgame.com.au](http://www.fieldandgame.com.au)**
- It is your responsibility to stay up-to-date with any closures, which may come at short notice.
- Ignorance of a closure is not a defence.





## PFAS contamination

- We continue to be impacted by PFAS contamination.
- Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) advice is not to consume eel, carp and duck taken from the Heart Morass area, near Sale.
- EPA is taking a precautionary approach to PFAS as it is persistent, bioaccumulative and mobile.
- EPA continues to do further testing of game ducks in Victoria.



## 2024: The challenges

- Following the decision by the government to continue to allow game bird hunting in Victoria, we will be watched even more closely than usual by those who seek to have duck hunting banned.
- Activists and the RSPCA will film everything we do in an attempt to portray us as irresponsible, cruel and possibly even dangerous.
- **Do not 'windmill' birds.** Follow the humane dispatch guidelines.
- Report any illegal activity – be that from protesters or other hunters.



## Protester management

### **If you are targeted in the field:**

- Your first action should be to open and unload your firearm for safety.
- Second, start photographing or recording the protester's actions.
- Third, do not approach the protester; stay calm, politely inform them that they are hindering or obstructing your hunt, and ask them to leave.







## Protester management

If you are hunting in a group, it may be wise to have an observer stick with your vehicles.

**If you observe criminal activity (such as vandalism, property theft or damage):**

- Call 000.
- Photograph or record their actions – including vehicle registration numbers.
- Do not approach suspects or try to stop suspect vehicles.
- Do not engage with suspects – not even to try and stop them. If the suspect has been slashing tyres, they will be armed with an edged weapon. Observers are there to watch and record, not to be vigilantes.



## 2024: The good stuff

- Share your stories of the harvest – especially your preparation and enjoyment of wild food. Contribute to our magazine and get OUR story out to the public.
- When spending money in regional towns, let them know your dollars are hunting dollars.





## Hunting on water storages

**Hunting is permitted on these water storages but is not permitted along channel networks.**

- Cairn Curran Reservoir
- Hume Reservoir (Victorian areas)
- Tullaroop Reservoir
- Lake Eppalock
- Laanecoorie Reservoir
- Lake Eildon
- Lake Buffalo
- Waranga Basin
- Kangaroo Lake
- Lake Nillahcootie
- Lake Charm
- Lake Tutchewop
- Lake Nagambie and the water of Goulburn Weir





## Victoria–NSW border



The border between the two states is the **southern** bank of the Murray River (the highwater mark).

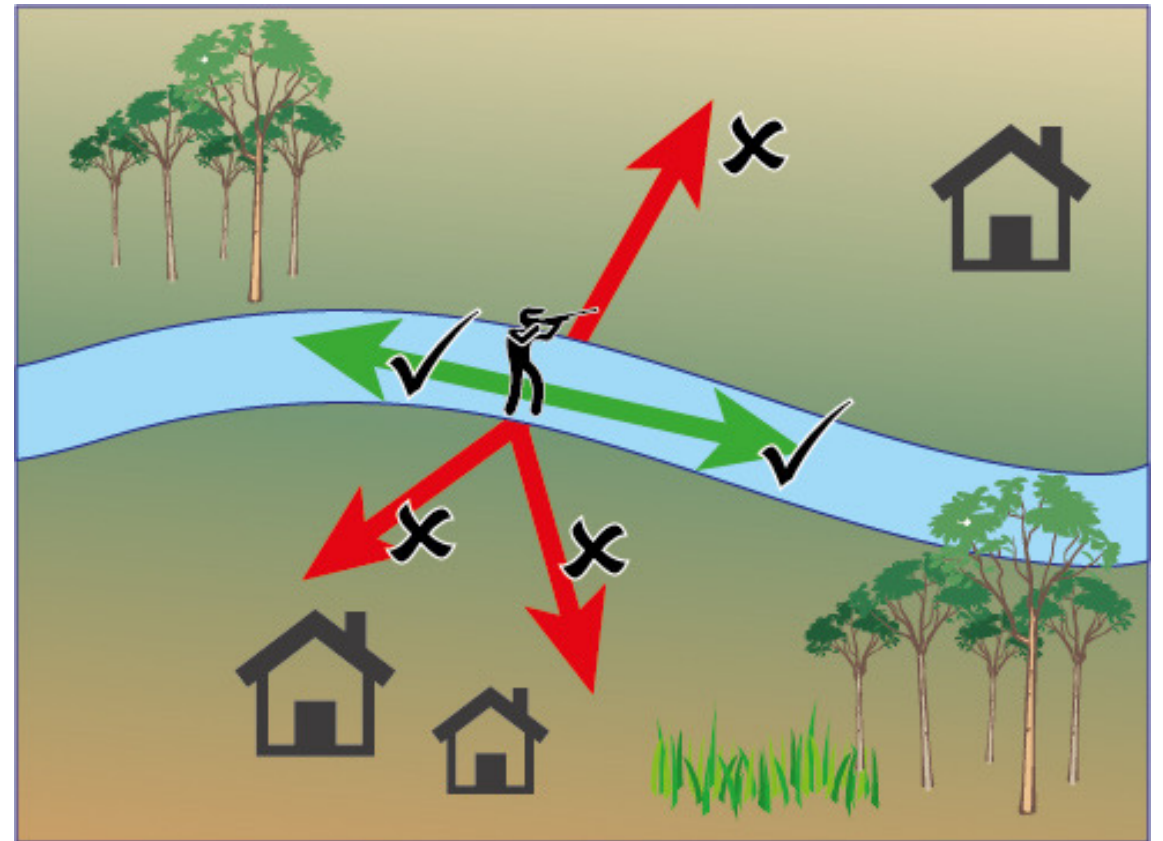
Under man-made lakes like Lake Mulwala and Lake Hume, the border is the original location of the southern riverbank.



## Rivers, creeks and streams

### Shot fallout area may be up to 350m

- Know the boundaries between the river reserve and private property
- Only shoot downstream or upstream – do not take passing shots out over the bank
- Do not shoot towards houses





## Important information to remember

### **No lead shot**

To preserve our waterways, only non-toxic shot maybe used. To avoid potential prosecution, before leaving home, take all lead shot shells out of your:

- Car
- Gun case
- Ammunition belt
- Hunting jacket

### **Ethical Hunting**

For more information on ethical hunting and hunter conduct, see:

- GMA's RESPECT & REDUCE campaign
- FGA's Code of Conduct & Ethics





## The duck season process – a year-round commitment

**Prior to this year's season announcement, months of work took place:**

- Waterfowl counts to survey bird populations and locations;
- Rainfall, environmental watering and meteorological data collected;
- Research into waterfowl refuge, migration, habitat and sustainability;
- Consultation with government, other organisations and stakeholders;
- Consultation with government around IAH framework and AHM;
- Participation in Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Group.

Much of this work is undertaken by FGA members, staff and volunteers.



## Banded birds

FGA volunteers have continued assisting Deakin University with avian Influenza research, banding Australian game ducks.

If you find a bird with a band this season, it's important to report this to the appropriate research department.

Look up the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) for more details.

**[www.environment.gov.au/science/bird-and-bat-banding](http://www.environment.gov.au/science/bird-and-bat-banding)**





## Waterfowl counts and wetland surveys

FGA performs waterfowl counts in November and February in the lead-up to the duck season. These counts help determine:

- Waterfowl population
- Location and population of protected species
- Waterfowl breeding habits (broods/chicks are counted)
- Range and location of nomadic waterfowl movements
- Any gaps in existing survey techniques
- Assessment of local habitat which may be overlooked in aerial surveys



## Waterfowl count summary, February 2024

Region	Game birds February 2024	Wetlands counted
Gippsland	74,563	43
Grampians / Loddon	16,742	30
GV/North East	13,040	23
Metro	5,000	0
Barwon & South-West	109,674	57





# Waterfowl count summary

Gippsland	February 2024	Gippsland	February 2024
Black duck	6716	Mountain duck	3460
Grey teal	40,592	Hardhead	289
Chestnut teal	22,452	Blue-winged shoveller	525
Pink-eared duck	179	Freckled duck	1
Wood duck	350		





# Waterfowl count summary

GV/Nth East	February 2024	GV/Nth East	February 2024
Black duck	1527	Mountain duck	36
Grey teal	4592	Hardhead	6353
Chestnut teal	173	Blue-winged shoveller	76
Pink-eared duck	93	Freckled duck	0
Wood duck	190		



# Waterfowl count summary

Gramps/Loddon	February 2024	Gramps/Loddon	February 2024
Black duck	1,689	Mountain duck	1969
Grey teal	11,650	Hardhead	59
Chestnut teal	160	Blue-winged shoveller	58
Pink-eared duck	422	Freckled duck	2
Wood duck	735		





# Waterfowl count summary

Metro	February 2024	Metro	February 2024
Black duck	1250	Mountain duck	3250
Grey teal	500	Hardhead	0
Chestnut teal	0	Blue-winged shoveler	0
Pink-eared duck	0	Freckled duck	0
Wood duck	0		







# Waterfowl count summary

Barwon SW	February 2024	Barwon SW	February 2024
Black duck	57,184	Mountain duck	9,134
Grey teal	39,743	Hardhead	353
Chestnut teal	1,624	Blue-winged shoveller	232
Pink-eared duck	924	Freckled duck	0
Wood duck	480		





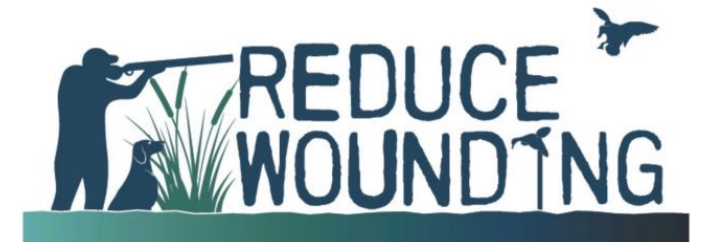
## RESPECT campaign

### **FGA endorses the RESPECT campaign:**

- Respect animals
- Respect the environment
- Respect other hunters
- Respect the hunt
- Respect non-hunters
- Respect the laws

### **Report illegal hunting:**

- Call 136 186
- Time and Date of activity
- Location
- Number and describe people involved
- Vehicle registration
- Activity





## Simple rules for good hunting

- Don't set up too close to another party
- When ducks are working another party's decoys, don't try to entice the birds away with aggressive calls
- Don't set up downwind of another party and take shots at ducks working their spread
- Don't sky-bust
- If you pack it in, pack it out
- Be courteous at boat ramps
- Always arrive on time
- If another hunter invites you on a public-land hunt, don't return to that spot on your own
- Leave your temper at home
- Know the rules





## Keep our wetlands pristine: Take your rubbish home

- Wetlands are beautiful – let's keep them that way.
- Take your rubbish with you – this includes spent cartridge casings.
- It takes a few seconds to pick up after yourself.
- Wetlands are important for carbon capture and water purity.
- Show your respect for the habitat – keep it clean!







## Keep our wetlands pristine: pick up your empty shells

- Our Field & Game shell picker makes retrieving your empty shells a breeze. This telescopic pole with magnetic end collects your spent shells easily and helps save the planet as well as your back!
- Use it in the field or on the range.
- Available now from the 'Shop' on the Field & Game website.

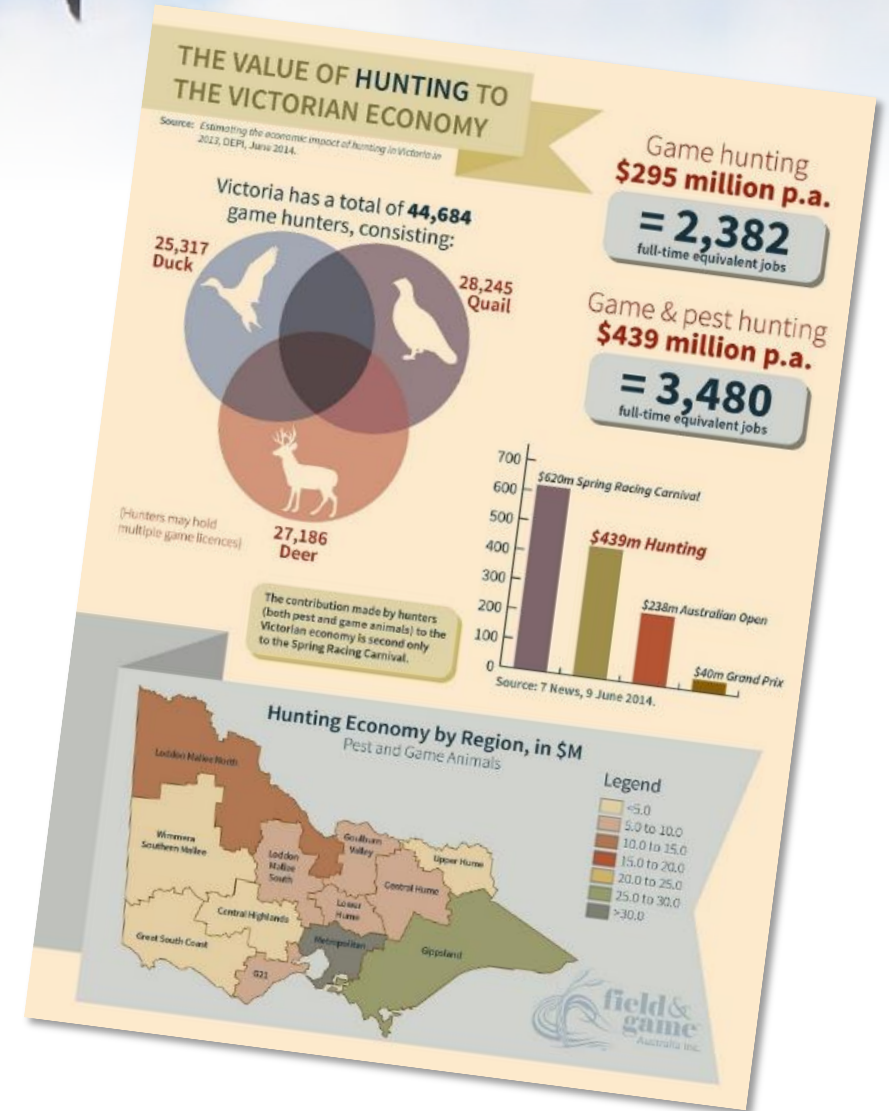


Thank you for hunting

Hunting contributes \$439 million to the Victorian economy, supporting local businesses, communities and jobs.

When you're spending your hard-earned dollars on hunting-related items and services, let the providers know!

Let's foster an appreciation for the contribution that hunters make.

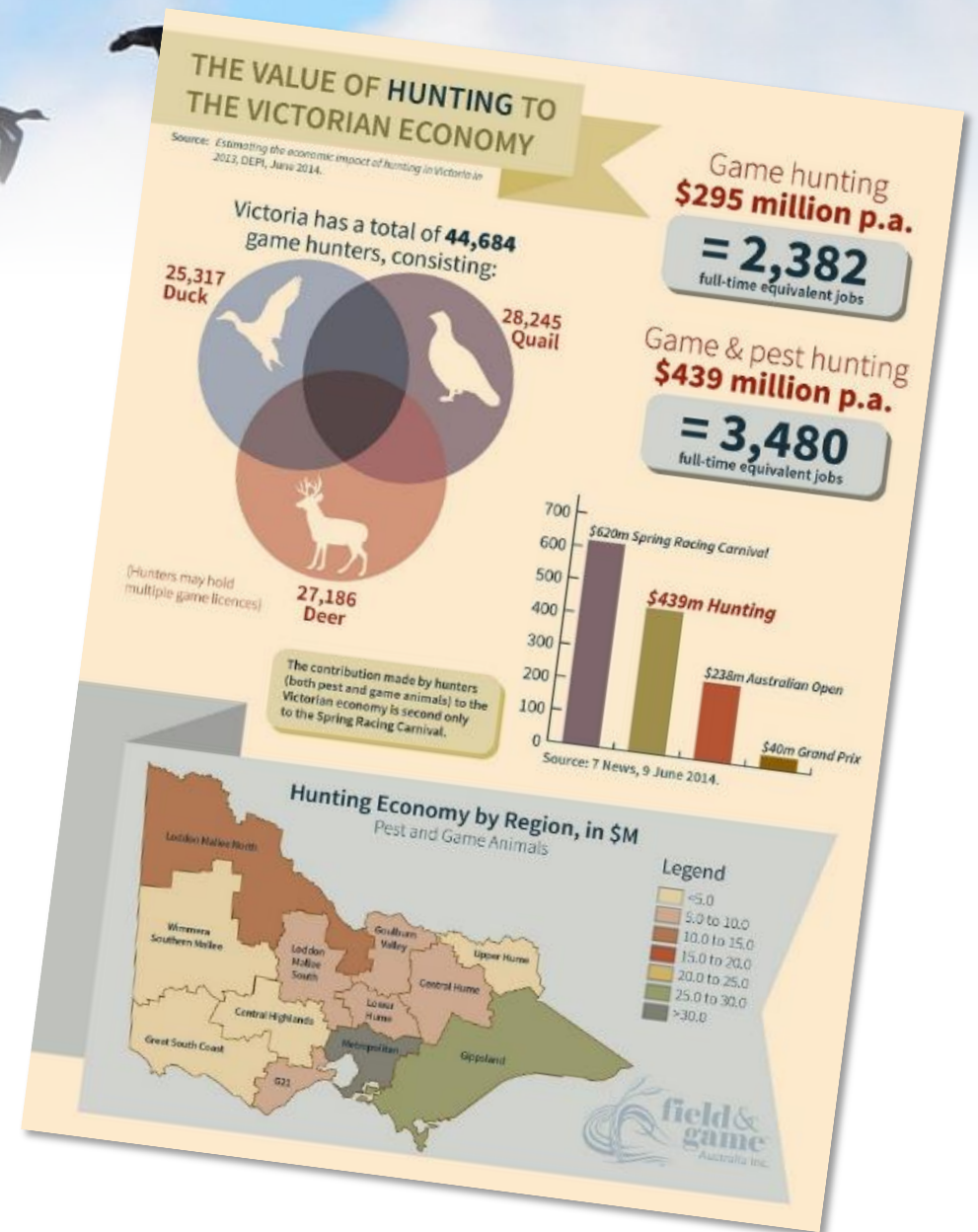


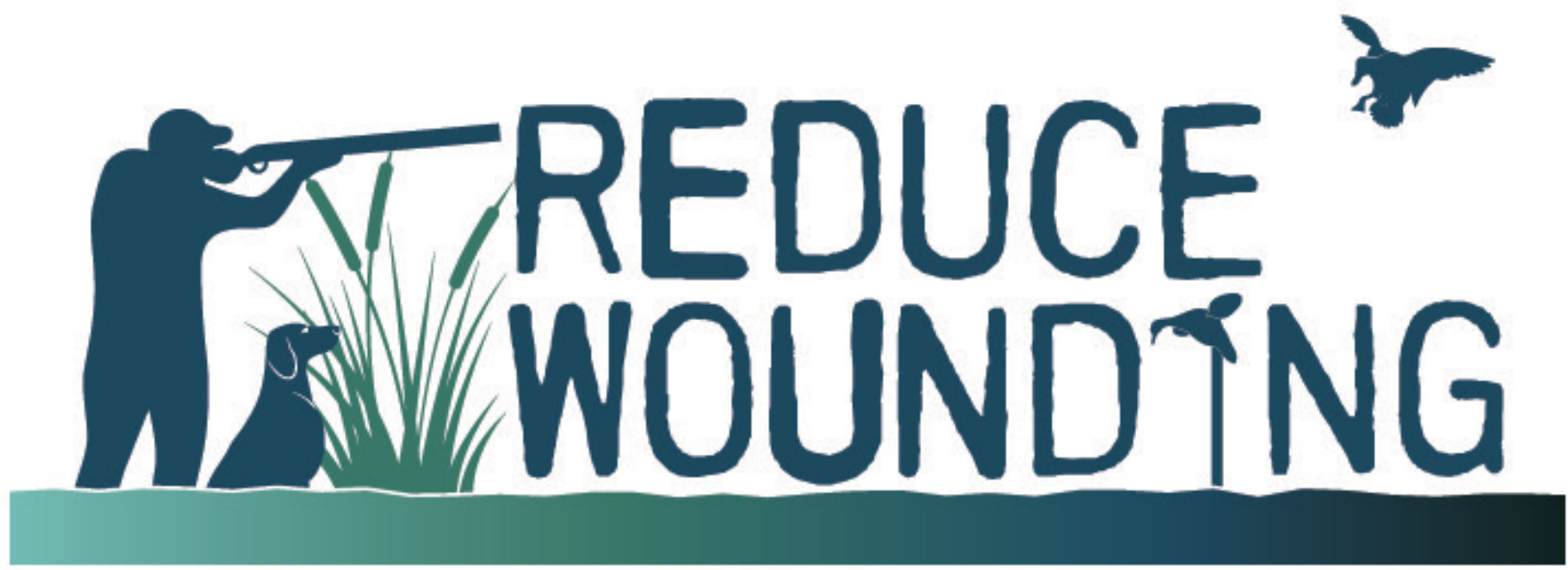


## National survey

In 2019, the Commonwealth Government's Department of Health commissioned the first national study of the social and economic impact of recreational firearms and hunting.

The results showed the value of hunting not only to the economy, but also to hunters' wellbeing.







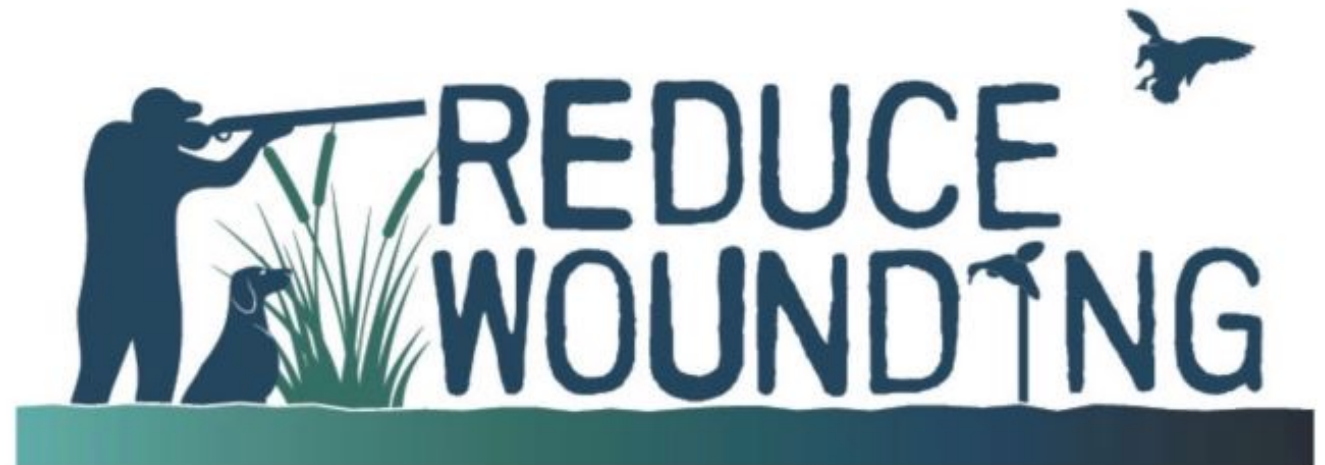


- Wounding can be an unintended consequence of hunting.
- As a conscientious member of Field & Game Australia, we expect you to take all available measures to reduce wounding.
- Factors that can contribute to wounding include poor shooting skills, shooting beyond your shooting skills distance and the capability of the technology you are using, a lack of knowledge about the correct equipment, animal anatomy and shot placement, and the lack of a retrieval strategy.
- Reducing wounding helps improve animal welfare outcomes, reduces waste, and ensures duck hunting in Victoria remains ethical and sustainable.



## **FGA endorses the Reduce Wounding campaign:**

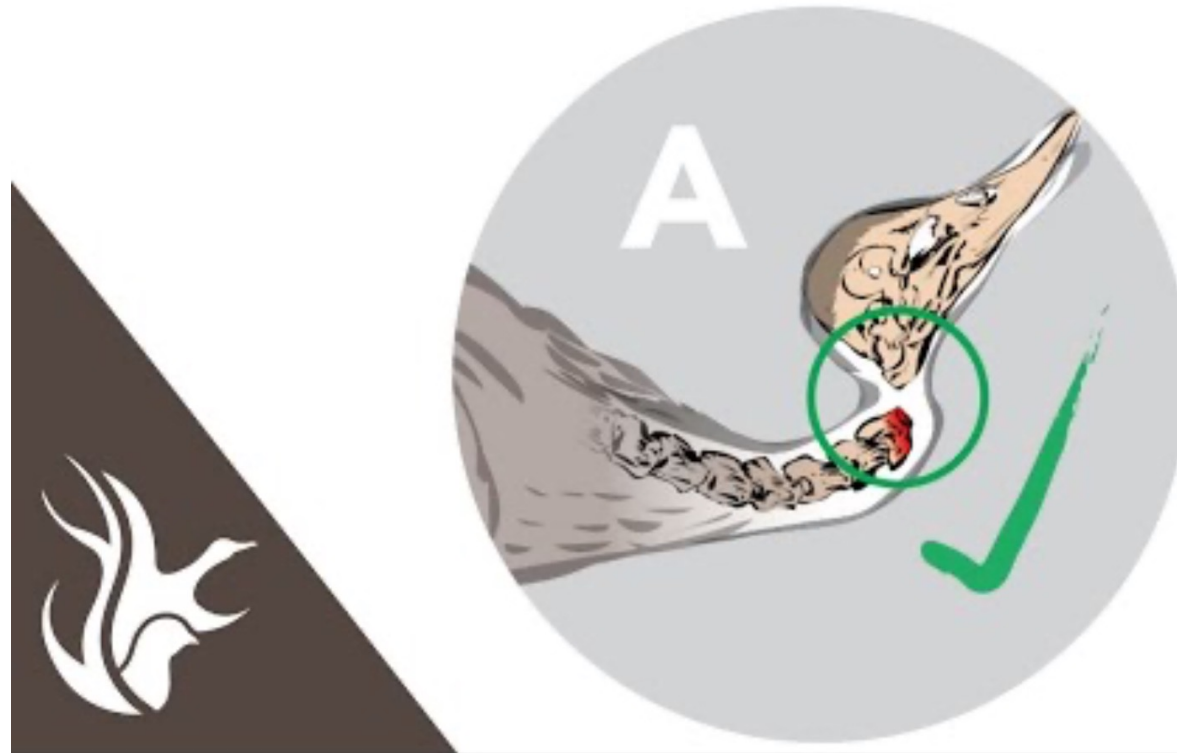
- R – Regularly practice
- E – Effective retrieval strategy
- D – Don't shoot beyond 30 metres
- U – Use decoys and calls
- C – Correct loads and chokes
- E – Every shot matters





## Humane dispatch of downed ducks: recommended methods

---







# You can help with the quail research program

The QR code below links directly with information regarding the Victorian Game Management Authority's quail research program:





## Why Join FGA?

- Field & Game Australia is the nation's premier organisation for hunting, conservation and clay target sports.
- Membership with Field & Game Australia provides a range of activities and benefits and contributes directly to supporting the future of your passion!
- Benefits for members include ...



## Why Join FGA?

- Public liability insurance: \$25 million
- Firearm insurance: up to \$15k per claim (conditions apply)
- Hunter education – Shotgun Education Program, gundog training and WIT training
- Access to over 55 clay target ranges across Australia
- Fully-staffed National Office offering help and advice
- Opportunities to become involved in conservation work
- ... but that's not all...





## Why Join FGA?

- Email and social media updates on the events and issues that concern you
- Four issues of *Field & Game* magazine a year
- Online events calendar and annual shoot book
- Come 'n' Try days and FGA Scurry League
- Advocacy – we talk to government!

**Field & Game Australia is working for the future of hunting and recreational shooting**





Thankyou!

**HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE SEASON**

Hunting's future depends  
on you - hunt responsibly

