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RESTRICTED DUCK SEASON STRIKES RIGHT BALANCE

A restricted 2010 duck hunting season that strikes a balance between ensuring sustainable duck numbers and the interests of hunters has been approved by the Victorian Government.

Acting Minister for Environment and Climate Change Tim Holding said improved conditions in parts of Victoria meant a less restricted season than last year was now possible.

“Where climatic conditions are favourable and game ducks can be hunted sustainably, it is appropriate to allow a duck season,” Mr Holding said.

“After consulting the latest scientific data on waterfowl numbers, and receiving advice from the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Hunting Advisory Committee, the Government has decided to approve a restricted season of 72 days which is two weeks shorter than the normal season.

“The most recent index of population data collected across eastern Australia indicates game duck numbers have increased since this year’s season.

“And on balance I am convinced that hunting will not adversely affect populations of ducks at the levels allowed for the 2010 season.”

Mr Holding said that as well as the restricted season which will run from 20 March to 30 May 2010, the Government had decided to free-up limits on the number of ducks per bag.

This season hunters will be allowed five game ducks per bag (with a maximum of one Australasian Shoveler), plus an additional three Wood Ducks. This is significantly below the traditional 10 bag limit but an increase of three above last season’s limit.

Mr Holding said the Government was mindful of the continued drought conditions across the State and would closely monitor areas to ensure hunting was sustainable.

“Despite some regional improvement compared to previous years the state continues to suffer from prolonged drought conditions,” Mr Holding said

“Victoria has a significant number of refuges that may not be hunted at any time and the Government will consider further closures of wetlands before the opening of the season should it be required.”

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